



## DEBATE PACK

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# Social Mobility Commission, State of the Nation report

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## Summary

The Social Mobility Commission has a duty to promote social mobility in England and provides an independent scrutiny and advocacy role on social mobility in England. The Commission is required to publish an annual report assessing progress on improving social mobility in the United Kingdom – this is the annual “State of the Nation” report.

The [2016 State of the Nation Report](#) warned that “Britain has a deep social mobility problem which is getting worse for an entire generation of young people”.

As well as noting differences between income groups, it highlighted differences between age cohorts and widening geographical divides.

This debate pack has been prepared ahead of the debate on the Social Mobility Commission State of the Nation report, to be held in the Commons Chamber on Thursday 23 March.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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# 1. Social Mobility Commission

## 1.1 The Commission

The Social Mobility Commission has a duty to promote social mobility in England and provides an independent scrutiny and advocacy role on social mobility in England. The Commission is required to publish an annual report assessing progress on improving social mobility in the United Kingdom – this is the annual “State of the Nation” report.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission is an advisory non-departmental public body. It was originally established as the ‘Child Poverty Commission’ by the Child Poverty Act 2010. Its remit was expanded to include social mobility following the Welfare Reform Act 2012. Child poverty was removed from the Commission’s remit by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, when it became the Social Mobility Commission.

The then Social and Mobility Child Poverty Commission published its first State of the Nation report in 2013. The most recent annual report for 2016 was published on 16 November 2016.

- [State of the Nation Report 2016](#)
- [State of the Nation Report 2015](#)
- [State of the Nation Report 2014](#)
- [State of the Nation Report 2013](#)

The Commission also undertakes and publishes other research on social mobility throughout the year. A list of recent publications is provided on [its website](#).

The Chair of the Commission is the Rt Hon Alan Milburn and the Deputy Chair is Baroness Gillian Shephard.

## 1.2 State of the Nation Report 2016

The 2016 State of the Nation Report warned that “Britain has a deep social mobility problem which is getting worse for an entire generation of young people”. As well as noting differences between income groups, it highlighted differences between age cohorts and widening geographical divides.

Although the report itself is over 200 pages long, a press release distilled the key findings:

- Britain has a deep social mobility problem - the poorest find it hardest to progress but so do families with an annual income of around £22,500
- people born in the 1980s are the first post-war cohort not to start their working years with higher incomes than their immediate predecessors

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<sup>1</sup> More information on the responsibilities of the Commission is provided on the [gov.uk website](#).

- millions of workers - particularly women - are trapped in low pay with only 1 in 10 escaping
- only 1 in 8 children from low-income backgrounds is likely to become a high-income earner as an adult
- from the early years through to universities and the workplace, there is an entrenched and unbroken correlation between social class and success
- in the last decade, 500,000 poorer children were not school-ready by age 5
- children in deprived areas are twice as likely to be in childcare provision that is not good enough, compared with the most prosperous areas
- families where both parents are highly educated now spend on average around 110 minutes a day on educational activities with their young children compared to 71 minutes a day for those with low education. This compares with around 20 to 30 minutes a day in the 1970s when there was no significant difference between the groups of parents
- over the last 5 years 1.2 million 16-year-olds - disproportionately from low-income homes - have left school without 5 good GCSEs. At present, just 5% of children eligible for free school meals gain 5 A grades at GCSE
- a child living in one of England's most disadvantaged areas is 27 times more likely to go to an inadequate school than a child in the most advantaged
- young people from low-income homes with similar GCSEs to their better-off classmates are one third more likely to drop out of education at 16 and 30% less likely to study A-levels that could get them into a top university
- young people are 6 times less likely to go to Oxbridge if they grow up in poor household. In the North East, not one child on free school meals went to Oxbridge after leaving school in 2010
- in the North East and the South West, young people on free school meals are half as likely to start a higher-level apprenticeship
- in London, the number of top-end occupational jobs has increased by 700,000 in the last 10 years compared to just under 56,000 in the North East
- despite some efforts to change the social make-up of the professions, only 4% of doctors, 6% of barristers and 11% of journalists are from working-class backgrounds
- home ownership is in sharp decline - particularly among the young. Rates among the under-44s have fallen by 17% in the last decade
- people who own their homes have average non-pension wealth of £307,000, compared to less than £20,000 for social and private tenant households

- there is a new geography of disadvantage, with many towns and rural areas - not just in the North - being left behind affluent London and the South East. In 40 local authority areas, one third of all employee jobs are paid below the living wage
- more than half the adults in Wales, the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber, the West Midlands and Northern Ireland have less than £100 in savings

The report sets out various recommendations relating to early years; schools; post-16 education and training; jobs, careers and earnings; and housing. The press release again brings together the key recommendations:

**Early years** - the government should:

- introduce a new parental support package at key points in a child's life to support children falling behind
- set a clear objective that by 2025, every child should be school-ready at the age of 5 and the child development gap has been closed with a new strategy to increase high-quality childcare for low-income families
- double funding for the early years pupil premium to ensure better childcare for those that need it most

**Schools** - the government should:

- have as its core objective the ambition, within the next decade, of narrowing the attainment gap at GCSE between poorer children and their better-off classmates by two thirds, bringing the rest of the country to the level achieved in London today
- rethink its plans for more grammar schools and more academies
- mandate the 10 lowest performing local authorities to take part in improvement programmes so that by 2020 none of those schools are Ofsted-rated inadequate and all are progressing to good
- reform the training and distribution of teachers and create new incentives - including better starting pay - to get more of the highest-quality teachers into the schools that need them
- require independent schools and universities to provide high-quality careers advice, support with university applications and share their business networks with state schools
- repurpose the National Citizen Service so that all children between the ages of 14 and 18 can have quality work experience or extra-curricular activity

**Post 16-education and training** - the government should:

- develop a single UCAS-style portal over the next 4 years so that youngsters can make better choices about their post-school futures
- make schools more accountable for the destinations of their pupils and the courses they take post-16

- school sixth form provision should be extended and schools given a role in supporting FE colleges to deliver the Skills Plan. The number of 16- to 18-year-old NEETs should be zero by 2022
- low-quality apprenticeships should be scrapped
- a new social mobility league table should be published to encourage universities to widen access
- over the next 10 years, higher education should be extended to those parts of Britain that have no or low provision

**Jobs, careers and earnings** - the government should:

- create a new deal with employers to define business' social obligations and the support they will get
- develop a second chance career fund to help older workers retrain and write off advanced learner loans for part-time workers
- work with large employers, local councils and local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) to bring new high-quality job opportunities backed by financial incentives to the country's social mobility cold spots
- support LEPs in social mobility cold spots to tackle local skills gaps and attract better jobs to the area
- all large business should develop strategies to provide low-skilled workers with opportunities for career progression
- introduce a legal ban on unpaid internships

**Housing** - the government should:

- commit to a target of building 3 million homes over the next decade - with one third being commissioned by the public sector
- expand the sale of public-sector land for new homes and allow targeted house-building on green-belt land
- modify the starter home initiative to focus on households with average incomes and ensure these homes when sold go to other low-income households at the same discount
- introduce tax incentives to encourage longer private-sector tenancies
- complement plans to redevelop the worst estates, with a £140-million fund to improve opportunities for social tenants to get work

## 2. Background reading on social mobility

### 2.1 General reading

- The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission's [2015 State of the Nation Report](#) includes a "Social mobility overview" (pages 15-20). This is an excellent short introduction to different measures of social mobility and to the academic evidence on social mobility trends in the post-war period.
- An [article by FullFact](#) (5 September 2014) summarises the different concepts of social mobility but notes some of the conflicting research findings.
- Gov.uk, [2010 to 2015 government policy: social mobility](#) (May 2015) gives an overview of policy under the previous government. See also the Government's [Social Mobility Indicators](#).
- HM Government, [Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: a Strategy for Social Mobility](#) (April 2011) gives an overview of the evidence on social mobility, with a particular focus on the different stages in people's lives. Note this [criticism](#) of one of the graphs in the report.
- National Equality Panel, [Anatomy of Economic Inequality](#) (Jan 2010), Chapter 11.1
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, [Social Mobility: A Literature Review](#) (March 2011)
- OECD, [A Family Affair: Intergenerational Social Mobility across OECD Countries](#), published in *Economic Policy Reforms 2010: Going for Growth* (March 2010). (An extended version of this paper is available [here](#).)
- Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, [Getting on, getting ahead: A discussion paper analysing the trends and drivers of social mobility](#), November 2008
- Stephen Aldridge, [Life chances and social mobility: an overview of the evidence](#), Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, March 2004

### 2.2 Other recent analysis from the Social Mobility Commission

The [Social Mobility Index](#) (June 2016) provides some information on social mobility at the level of local authorities:

The Social Mobility Index compares the chances that a child from a disadvantaged background will do well at school and get a

good job across each of the 324 local authority district areas of England. It examines a range of measures of the educational outcomes achieved by young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and the local job and housing markets to shed light on which are the best and worst places in England in terms of the opportunities young people from poorer backgrounds have to succeed.

Research published by the Commission since the 2016 State of the Nation Report includes:

- [The class pay gap within Britain's professions](#), March 2017
- [Low-income pupils' progress at secondary school](#), February 2017
- [Helping parents to parent](#), February 2017
- [Ethnicity, gender and social mobility](#), December 2016
- [Social and ethnic inequalities in post-16 choices](#), December 2016

### 3. Press Articles

[With Brexit on the horizon, it's time big business started doing its bit for social mobility](#)

David Lormer

Daily Telegraph, 20 February 2017

[Social mobility: Class pay gap found in UK professions](#)

Katherine Sellgren

BBC, 26 January 2017

[Children from poorer areas 'make two years' less progress' at school: Pupils on free school meals 20 months behind by age of 16 due to 'dramatically' growing progress gap, says report](#)

Sally Weale

The Guardian, 22 November 2016

['Treadmill families' going nowhere, says social mobility report](#)

Katherine Sellgren

BBC, 16 November 2016

[Social divisions more entrenched than ever: Grammar schools will make situation worse, says government commission](#)

Helen Warrell

Financial Times, 16 November 2016

[UK's social mobility problem holding back Thatcher generation, says report: Commission says those born in the 1980s are the first to not start their careers with higher incomes than their parents](#)

Richard Adams

The Guardian, 16 November 2016

[Theresa May under pressure to scrap David Cameron's 'Big Society' and support young jobseekers: Exclusive: Alan Milburn, the Government's social mobility adviser, will urge PM Theresa May to scrap her predecessor David Cameron's 'Big Society' agenda in favour of measures to boost career opportunities for young people](#)

Andrew Grice

The Independent, 14 November 2016

[Social mobility tsar calls for an end to unpaid internships and hits at 'elitist' UK: Radical reform needed of current system which favours children from wealthy families says government body led by Alan Milburn](#)

Daniel Boffey

The Observer, 12 November 2017

## 4. Press releases and speeches

### [State of the Nation report on social mobility in Great Britain](#)

Social Mobility Commission

16 November 2016

Britain has a deep social mobility problem which is getting worse for an entire generation of young people, the Social Mobility Commission's [State of the Nation 2016 report](#) warns today.

The impact is not just felt by the poorest in society but is also holding back whole tranches of middle- as well as low-income families - these treadmill families are running harder and harder, but are standing still.

The problem is not just social division, but a widening geographical divide between the big cities - London especially - and too many towns and counties across the country are being left behind economically and hollowed out socially.

The State of the Nation 2016 report, which was laid before Parliament this morning, lays bare the scale of the social mobility challenge facing the government. It finds fundamental barriers, including an unfair education system, a 2-tier labour market, a regionally imbalanced economy and an unaffordable housing market.

The Social Mobility Commission welcomes the high priority that the current, as well as successive, governments have given to social mobility, and finds that some real progress has been made. But it concludes that the twentieth-century expectation that each generation would be better off than the preceding one is no longer being met.

It points to evidence that those born in the 1980s are the first post-war cohort not to start their working years with higher incomes than their immediate predecessors. Home ownership, the aspiration of successive generations of ordinary people, is in sharp decline, among the young especially. Most shocking of all, today only 1 in 8 children from low-income backgrounds is likely to become a high-income earner as an adult.

The commission calls for new thinking and new approaches to deal with these deep structural problems. It recommends that an ambitious 10-year programme of social reform is needed which the government should lead and which employers and educators should join.

### [Britain, the great meritocracy: Prime Minister's speech](#)

Department for Education, Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, and The Rt Hon Theresa May MP

9 September 2016

When I stood in Downing Street as Prime Minister for the first time this summer, I set out [my mission to build a country that works for](#)

[everyone](#). Today I want to talk a little more about what that means and lay out my vision for a truly meritocratic Britain that puts the interests of ordinary, working class people first.

We are facing a moment of great change as a nation. As we leave the European Union, we must define an ambitious new role for ourselves in the world. That involves asking ourselves what kind of country we want to be: a confident, global trading nation that continues to play its full part on the world stage.

But at the same time, I believe we have a precious opportunity to step back and ask some searching questions about what kind of country we want to be here at home too.

In fact, it's not just an opportunity, but a duty. Because one thing is clear. When the British people voted in the referendum, they did not just choose to leave the European Union. They were also expressing a far more profound sense of frustration about aspects of life in Britain and the way in which politics and politicians have failed to respond to their concerns.

Some voted for the first time in more than 30 years. Some for the first time ever. And they were inspired to do so because they saw a chance to reject the politics of 'business as usual' and to demand real, profound change.

Fed up with being ignored or told that their priorities were somehow invalid, based on ignorance and misunderstanding, or even on occasion that they were simply wrong to voice the concerns that they did, they took their opportunity to send a very clear message: they will not be ignored anymore.

They want to take back control of the things that matter in their lives. They want a government that listens, understands and is on their side. They want change. And this government is going to deliver it.

Everything we do will be driven, not by the interests of the privileged few. Not by those with the loudest voices, the special interests, the greatest wealth or the access to influence. This government's priorities are those of ordinary, working class people. People for whom life sometimes can be a struggle, but who get on with things without complaint.

They get on with their jobs – sometimes 2 or even 3 of them – because they have families to feed and support, bills to pay and because to work for a fair reward is the right thing to do.

They get on with their lives quietly, going about their business, going out to work, raising families, helping neighbours, making their communities what they are.

They don't ask for much, but they want to know that the people that make the big decisions are on their side, working for them. They want to believe that everyone plays by the same rules and things are fair.

And above all they want to believe that if they uphold their end of the deal – they do the right thing, they work hard, they pay their taxes –

then tomorrow will be better than today and their children will have a fair chance in life, the chance to go as far as their talents will take them.

These are not outrageous demands or ridiculous desires, but for too many of these people today life does not seem fair. They are the people who made real sacrifices after the financial crash in 2008, though they were in no way responsible.

They wonder if others – some of whom really do bear responsibility for the crash – did the same.

More than anything else, they worry – truly worry – that the changing world around them means that their children and grandchildren won't have the same opportunities they have enjoyed in life.

They deserve a better deal.

And to give them that, we should take this opportunity to step back and pose a fundamental question: what kind of country – what kind of society - do we want to be?

I am clear about the answer.

I want Britain to be the world's great meritocracy – a country where everyone has a fair chance to go as far as their talent and their hard work will allow.

I want us to be a country where everyone plays by the same rules; where ordinary, working class people have more control over their lives and the chance to share fairly in the prosperity of the nation.

And I want Britain to be a place where advantage is based on merit not privilege; where it's your talent and hard work that matter, not where you were born, who your parents are or what your accent sounds like.

Let us not underestimate what it will take to create that great meritocracy. It means taking on some big challenges, tackling some vested interests. Overcoming barriers that have been constructed over many years.

It means not being afraid to think differently about what disadvantage means, who we want to help and how we can help them. Because where once we reached for simple ways of labelling people disadvantaged and were quick to pose simple – and often fairly blunt – solutions, in these modern times disadvantage is much more complex.

It's often hidden and less easy to identify. It's caused by factors that are more indirect and tougher to tackle than ever before.

But tackle it we must if we are to give ordinary, working class people the better deal they deserve.

It means marking a significant shift in the way that government works in Britain too. Because government and politicians have for years talked the language of social justice – where we help the very poorest – and social mobility – where we help the brightest among the poor.

But to make Britain a great meritocracy, we must move beyond this agenda and deliver real [social reform](#) across every layer of society so

that those whom the system would currently miss – those just above the threshold for help today yet those who are by no means rich or well off – are given the help they need.

It means putting government firmly on the side of not only the poorest in our society, important though that is and will remain, but also of those in Britain who are working hard but just about managing. It means helping to make their lives a little easier; giving them greater control over the issues they care about the most.

This is the change we need. It will mean changing some of the philosophy underpinning how government thinks and acts. It will mean recalibrating how we approach policy development to ensure that everything we do as government helps to give a fair chance to those who are just getting by – while still helping those who are even more disadvantaged.

I don't pretend this change will be easy – change rarely is – but this is the change we need if we are to make Britain the great meritocracy I want it to be.

Over the coming weeks and months the government will set out an ambitious programme of economic and social reform that will help us make this change and build a true meritocracy in our country.

But there is no more important place to start than education. Because if the central concern ordinary working class people have is that their children will not enjoy the same opportunities they have had in life, we need to ensure that there is a good school place for every child, and education provision that caters to the individual needs and abilities of every pupil.

### **Schools that work for everyone**

We start from a position of strength. This government has a proud record of school reform. We have opened up the system, introducing a real diversity of provision. We have schools where teachers and headteachers are free to make the decisions that are best for them.

And through successful policies such as a renewed focus on learning the basics of reading in primary schools, and initiatives to help young people pursue a strong academic core of subjects at secondary level, we are ensuring that every child has the opportunity to develop the core knowledge that underpins everything else.

We have put control in the hands of parents and headteachers, and encouraged people from all walks of life who are passionate about education to bring their best ideas and innovations to our school system.

The [Academies and Free Schools movement](#) overseen by pioneers such as Andrew Adonis and Michael Gove has been a huge success and begun to build an education system fit for the future.

As a result, there are more good or outstanding schools today than ever before in our country. And there are now [more than 1.4 million more pupils in schools rated good or outstanding than in 2010](#).

Our curriculum reforms mean that the proportion of pupils taking core academic subjects at GCSE is up by almost 4-fifths. We are driving up school standards to match the best international comparisons, with a record number of pupils securing a place at one of our world-class universities this summer. We can be proud of these achievements but there is still a long way to go.

Because for too many children, a good school remains out of reach. There are still 1.25 million attending primary and secondary schools in England which are rated by Ofsted as requiring improvement or inadequate. If schools across the north and Midlands had the same average standards as those in the south, nearly 200,000 more children would be attending good schools.

Let's be honest about what these statistics mean.

They mean that for far too many children in Britain, the chance they have in life is determined by where they live or how much money their parents have.

And they mean that for far too many ordinary working class people, no matter how hard they work, how many hours they put in or how many sacrifices they make, they cannot be confident that their children will get the chances they deserve.

For when you are working 2 jobs and struggling to make ends meet, it is no good being told that you can choose a better school for your children if you move to a different area or pay to go private. Those aren't choices that you can make. And they are not choices that you should have to make.

So we need to go further, building on and extending our reforms so that we can truly say that there will be a good school place for every child, and one that caters to their individual needs.

But as we do it, we also need to change our philosophy and approach, because at the moment the school system works if you're well off and can buy your way into the school you want, and it provides extra help and support if you're from a disadvantaged family.

If you're eligible for free school meals, and your parents earn less than £16,000 a year, then there is extra help on offer. That is good and right – and as long as I am Prime Minister, the [pupil premium](#) for the poorest children will remain.

But the free school meals measure only captures a relatively small number of pupils, whose parents are on income-related benefits.

If we are going to make the change we need and build a great meritocracy in Britain, we need to broaden our perspective and do more for the hidden disadvantaged: children whose parents are on modest incomes, who do not qualify for such benefits but who are, nevertheless, still only just getting by.

If you're earning 19, 20, 21 thousand pounds a year, you're not rich. You're not well off. And you should know you have our support too.

At the moment there is no way to differentiate between the school experience of children from these families and those from the wealthiest 10%.

Policy has been skewed by the focus only on those in receipt of free school meals, when the reality is that there are thousands of children from ordinary working class families who are being let down by the lack of available good school places.

Putting this right means finding a way to identify these children and measuring their attainment and progress within the school system. That work is underway and is central to my vision of a school system that truly works for everyone.

But we must also deliver a radical increase in the capacity of the school system so that these families can be sure of their children getting good school places.

And this is really important. Because I don't just want to see more school places but more good school places. And I don't just want to see more new schools, but more good new schools that each in their way contribute to a diversity of provision that caters to the needs and abilities of each individual child, whoever they are and wherever they are from.

Every child should be given the opportunity to develop the crucial academic core. And thanks to our reforms that is increasingly the case. But people understand that every child is different too, with different talents, different interests, different dreams. To help them realise their potential and achieve those dreams we need a school system with the capacity and capability to respond to what they need.

### **School capacity**

So as we radically expand the number of good school places available to all families – not just those who can afford to buy an expensive house, pay for an expensive private school, or fund the extra tuition their child needs to succeed – I want to encourage more people, schools and institutions with something to offer to come forward and help.

In the last 6 years, we have seen individuals and communities put staggering amounts of time and effort into setting up good new schools. Some of the best state schools, charities, universities, private schools, and businesses have stepped forward to get involved.

And, increasingly, the best state schools are sponsoring the least good. This has been a revolution in our schools system.

But with 1.25 million children still attending schools that are struggling, we need to do much more to increase the capacity of the system so every child can get the education they deserve.

So let's now build on the success of school reform, let's encourage others to play their part, and let's remove the barriers they face so we can do more.

Let's sweep away those barriers and encourage more people to join us in the task of delivering a good school place for every child.

Let's build a truly dynamic school system where schools and institutions learn from one another, support one another and help one another.

Let's offer a diverse range of good schools that ensure the individual talents and abilities of every child are catered for.

That is my ambition.

And there are 4 specific proposals I want to talk about today that I believe will help.

### **Universities**

Firstly, I want to build on the success we have already experienced when some of our great universities have stepped in to help by sponsoring or supporting a local school.

Universities have a huge amount to offer England's schools. They have been part of the fabric of our education system since the 13th century and have had a profound impact on our schools over generations.

Recently we have seen The University of Cambridge establish The University of Cambridge Primary School and The University of Birmingham open an impressive new free school for secondary school pupils and sixth formers.

The new specialist Sixth Form, King's College London Mathematics School, is already performing impressively and the University of Brighton is involved in sponsoring more than a dozen different primary and secondary schools.

These are the kinds of innovation I want to encourage. This kind of active engagement in building the capacity of our school system is in my view far more effective than spending huge sums on bursaries and other financial support that tackle the symptoms but not the cause.

The right for a university to charge the higher level of tuition fee has always been dependent on their ability to fulfil specified access requirements. And this year, in fulfilling these requirements, they are expected to spend over £400 million on bursaries and other forms of financial support for students.

Yet the evidence is clear: it is the attainment of pupils at school that is the over-riding factor in predicting access to university.

I am not saying there is no place for bursaries. But overall, I do think the balance has tilted too far. We need to go to the root of the problem, which is that there are not enough students from disadvantaged backgrounds and from ordinary families fulfilling their potential with the grades to get into the best universities.

So I want our universities to do more to help us to improve the quality of schools so that more students of all backgrounds have the grades, the subjects, and the confidence, to apply to top universities and to be successful in their exams in the first place.

So the government will reform university fair access requirements and say that universities should actively strengthen state school attainment – by sponsoring a state school or setting up a new free school. And over time we will extend this to the sponsorship or establishment of more than one school, so that in the future we see our universities sponsoring thriving school chains in every town and city in the country.

### **Faith schools**

Second, I want to remove the obstacles that stop more good faith schools from opening.

Britain has a long history of faith schools delivering outstanding education. They already account for around a third of all mainstream schools in England. They are popular with parents and significantly more likely than other schools to be rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding.

I believe we should confidently promote them and the role they play in a diverse school system.

Yet for Catholic schools in particular there are barriers in their way. When a faith-designated free school is oversubscribed, it must limit the number of pupils it selects on the basis of faith to 50%.

The intention is to improve the diversity of the school's intake but in practice it has little impact on many Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu schools because they tend not to appeal to parents of other faiths.

So despite the best intentions, the rule is failing in its objective to promote integration. But it does prevent new Catholic schools opening, because the Catholic Church believes it contravenes its own rules for a Catholic bishop not to prioritise the admission of Catholic pupils.

This is especially frustrating because existing Catholic schools are more ethnically diverse than other faith schools, more likely to be located in deprived communities, more likely to be rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, and there is growing demand for them.

So we will remove this 50% rule to allow the growth in capacity that Catholic schools can offer. Instead we will consult on a new set of much more effective requirements to ensure that faith schools are properly inclusive and make sure their pupils mix with children of other faiths and backgrounds.

Of course, there must be strict and properly enforced rules to ensure that every new faith school operates in a way that supports British values. And we should explore new ways of using the school system to promote greater integration within our society generally.

We will encourage the grouping together of mono-racial and mono-religious schools within wider multi-racial and multi-religious trusts. This will make it easier for children from different backgrounds in more divided communities to mix between schools, while respecting religious differences.

We will explore ways in which schools can enter into twinning arrangements with other schools not of their faith, through sharing

lessons or joint extra-curricular activities to bring young people from different schools together.

And we will consult on the idea of placing an independent member or director who is of a different faith or no faith at all on the governing body of new faith schools.

We will also explore new requirements for new faith schools to prove that parents of other faiths would be happy to send their children to the school through a proper process of consultation.

But fundamentally I believe it is wrong to deny families the opportunity to send their children to a school that reflects their religious values if that's what they choose. And it's right to encourage faith communities – especially those with a proven record of success, like the Catholics – to play their full part in building the capacity of our schools.

### **Independent schools**

Third, I want to encourage some of our biggest independent schools to bring their knowledge, expertise and resources to bear to help improve the quality and capacity of schools for those who cannot afford to pay.

This is entirely in keeping with the ethos that lies at the heart of many of these institutions. Most of the major public schools started out as the route by which poor boys could reach the professions. The nature of their intake may have changed today – indeed these schools have become more and more divorced from normal life.

Between 2010 and 2015 their fees rose 4 times faster than average earnings growth, while the percentage of their pupils who come from overseas has gone up by 33% since 2008. But I know that their commitment to giving something back to the wider community remains.

These are great schools with a lot to offer and I certainly don't believe you solve the divide between the rich and the rest by abolishing or demolishing them. You do it by extending their reach and asking them to do more as a condition of their privileged position to help all children.

Through their charitable status, private schools collectively reduce their tax bills by millions every year. And I want to consult on how we can amend [Charity Commission guidance for independent schools](#) to enact a tougher test on the amount of public benefit required to maintain charitable status.

It's important to state that this will be proportionate to the size and scale of the school in question. Not every school is an Eton or a Harrow. Many public schools are nowhere near that size.

Smaller independent schools who do not have the capacity to take on full sponsorship of a local state school will be asked to provide more limited help such as direct school-to-school support where appropriate. This could include supporting teaching in minority subjects such as further maths or classics, which state schools often struggle to make viable. It could include ensuring their senior leaders become directors of multi-academy trusts; providing greater access to their facilities and

providing sixth-form scholarships to a proportion of pupils in year 11 at each local school.

But for those with the capacity and capability, we will ask them to go further and actually sponsor or set up a new government-funded school in the state sector and take responsibility for running it and ensuring its success.

Alternatively, we will ask them to fund a number of places at their own school themselves for those from modest backgrounds who cannot afford to pay the fees.

We know this can work. For example, Westminster School is the key partner in sponsoring Harris Westminster Sixth Form, where students at the free school share the facilities and teaching expertise of Westminster School.

In my own constituency, Eton College sponsors Holyport College, offering Holyport pupils access to its sports facilities and the chance to join its educational activities.

And before it became a state-funded academy, Belvedere School in Liverpool worked with the Sutton Trust to create an Open Access Scheme where places were awarded purely on the basis of academic merit, and parents were then asked to pay on a sliding scale of fees fairly tailored according to their means.

I want all independent schools with the appropriate capacity and capability to take these kinds of steps.

I want them to play a major role in creating more good school places for children from ordinary working families; because this government is about a Britain that works for everyone – not just a privileged few.

### **Selective schools**

There is one final area where we have placed obstacles in the way of good new schools – obstacles that I believe we need to take away.

The debate over selective schools has raged for years. But the only place it has got us to is a place where selection exists if you're wealthy – if you can afford to go private – but doesn't exist if you're not. We are effectively saying to poorer and some of the most disadvantaged children in our country that they can't have the kind of education their richer counterparts can enjoy.

What is 'just' about that? Where is the meritocracy in a system that advantages the privileged few over the many? How can a meritocratic Britain let this situation stand?

Politicians – many of whom benefited from the very kind of education they now seek to deny to others – have for years put their own dogma and ideology before the interests and concerns of ordinary people. For we know that grammar schools are hugely popular with parents. We know they are good for the pupils that attend them. Indeed, the attainment gap between rich and poor pupils is reduced to almost zero

for children in selective schools. And we know that they want to expand.

They provide a stretching education for the most academically able, regardless of their background, and they deliver outstanding results.

In fact, 99% of existing selective schools are rated good or outstanding – and 80% are outstanding, compared with just 20% of state schools overall.

So we help no one – not least those who can't afford to move house or pay for a private education – by saying to parents who want a selective education for their child that we won't let them have it.

There is nothing meritocratic about standing in the way of giving our most academically gifted children the specialist and tailored support that can enable them to fulfil their potential. In a true meritocracy, we should not be apologetic about stretching the most academically able to the very highest standards of excellence.

We already have selection to help achieve this in specialist disciplines like music and sport, giving exceptionally talented young people access to the facilities and training that can help them become world class. I think we should have more of this. But we should also take the same approach to support the most academically gifted too.

Frankly, it is completely illogical to make it illegal to open good new schools. So I want to relax the restrictions that stop selective schools from expanding, that deny parents the right to have a new selective school opened where they want one, and that stop existing non-selective schools to become selective in the right circumstances and where there is demand.

In return, we will ensure that these schools contribute meaningfully to raising outcomes for all pupils in every part of the system.

In practice this could mean taking a proportion of pupils from lower income households, so that selective education is not reserved for those with the means to move into a catchment area or pay for tuition to pass the test.

They could, as a condition of opening a new selective school, be asked to establish a good, new non-selective school. Others may be asked to establish a primary feeder school in an area with a high density of lower income households to widen access. They might even partner with an existing non-selective school within a multi-academy trust or sponsor a currently underperforming non-selective academy.

But the principle is clear: selective schools have a part to play in helping to expand the capacity of our school system and they have the ability to cater to the individual needs of every child. So the government will make up to £50 million a year available to support the expansion of good or outstanding existing grammars.

Now I know this will be the source of much debate in the consultation over the coming months, so I want to address very directly some of the

key arguments made by those who oppose the expansion of grammar schools.

First, there are those who fear this could lead to the return of a binary system, as we had in the past with secondary moderns. But this fear is unfounded: there will be no return to secondary moderns.

As I have set out today, far from a binary system we are supporting the most diverse school system we have ever had in our country.

From free schools sponsored by universities and independent schools, to faith schools and selective schools, the diversity of high quality school provision means we will be able to cater properly for the different needs of all pupils and give parents real control over the kind of school they want for their children.

We do not want to see whole new parts of the country where the choice of schools is binary. So we will use the approvals process to prevent that from happening.

Second, there are those who argue that selective schools tend to recruit children from more affluent backgrounds. The problem here is not selective schools per se but rather the way that wealthier families can already dominate access to the schools of their choice through selection by house price. I want to stop that and new grammars can help.

We are going to ask new grammars to demonstrate that they will attract pupils from different backgrounds, for example as I said, by taking a proportion of children from lower income households. And existing grammars will be expected to do more too – by working with local primary schools to help children from more disadvantaged backgrounds to apply.

Third, there are those who argue that grammars don't actually select on ability because wealthy families can pay tutors to help their children get through the tests. This might have been the case in the past with the old 11-plus. But it does not have to be the case today.

While there is no such thing as a tutor-proof test, many selective schools are already employing much smarter tests that assess the true potential of every child. So new grammars will be able to select in a fair and meritocratic way, not on the ability of parents to pay.

Fourth, there are those who worry about the cliff-edge of selection at 11. Some fear it is too early, some fear it is too late. The truth is that it doesn't have to be a cliff-edge at all. This is back in the old mindset of the grammar schools of the past. A modern, meritocratic education system needs to be much more flexible and agile to respond to the needs of every child. So we will demand that new grammars make the most of their freedom to be flexible over how students move between schools, encouraging this to happen at different ages such as 14 and 16 as well as 11.

This means that children who are at a non-selective school sponsored by a grammar might join the grammar for specific subjects or specialisms where they themselves are outstanding – or they might move to the

grammar full-time later than aged 11, based on their performance at their current school.

Finally, people get lost in the argument about whether the grammars schools of the 1950s and 60s improved social mobility or not. But I want to focus on the new grammars of the future: those that will be just one element of a truly diverse system which taken as a whole can give every child the support they need to go as far as their talents can take them. And give every parent access to a good school place for their child.

This is the true test of schools that work for everyone. And the true test of a meritocratic society.

### **The great meritocracy**

There has been a lot of speculation in the last few weeks, but as you now know this is not a proposal to go back to a binary model of grammars and secondary moderns but to build on our increasingly diverse schools system. It is not a proposal to go back to the 1950s but to look to the future, and that future I believe is an exciting one.

It is a future in which every child should have access to a good school place. And a future in which Britain's education system shifts decisively to support ordinary working class families.

These families are not asking for the world. They just want to know that their children and grandchildren will enjoy the opportunities they have enjoyed and be given the chance to go as far as their talents will take them. Unhindered by background or circumstance. And by the artificial barriers some want to put in their way.

In a country that works for everyone it doesn't matter where you were born, or how much your parents earn. If you work hard and do the right thing, you will be able to go as far as you can.

I want this country to be a great meritocracy. I want to see more houses built, better productivity so we can have more well-paid jobs, more economic growth not just in the south-east of England but across the whole country to help more people get on.

But more than anything else, I want to see children from ordinary, working class families given the chances their richer contemporaries take for granted. That means we need more great schools.

This is the plan to deliver them and to set Britain on the path to being the great meritocracy of the world.

### **[New research uncovers 'class pay gap' in Britain's professions](#)**

Social Mobility Commission

26 January 2017

Professional people from working class backgrounds are paid £6,800 less than their colleagues from more affluent backgrounds.

People from working class backgrounds who get a professional job are paid an average of £6,800 (17%) less each year than colleagues from

more affluent backgrounds, new research by the Social Mobility Commission reveals today (26 January 2017).

Researchers have unearthed a previously unrecognised 'class pay gap' in a ground-breaking [new report](#). Academics from the London School of Economics (LSE) and University College London (UCL) used extensive data from the [UK Labour Force Survey](#) (LFS) - the largest survey of employment in the UK with over 90,000 respondents - to examine access to the professions and the impact of socio-economic background on earnings.

The report finds that access to Britain's professions remain dominated by those from more privileged backgrounds. But even when people from working class backgrounds manage to break into a professional career they face an earnings penalty compared to colleagues who come from better-off backgrounds.

Even when they have the same education attainment, role and experience as their more privileged colleagues, the report finds that those from poorer backgrounds are still paid an average of £2,242 (7%) less. Women and ethnic minorities face a 'double' disadvantage in earnings.

The report finds that Britain's traditional professions such as medicine, law, journalism and academia remain dominated by those from advantaged backgrounds - nearly three quarters (73%) of doctors are from professional and managerial backgrounds with less than 6% from working class backgrounds.

Although technical professions such as engineering and many public sector professions like nursing have far more working class entrants, overall the odds of those from a professional or managerial family ending up in a professional or managerial job are 2.5 times higher than the odds for those from less advantaged backgrounds moving to the top.

Even if they get into the professions working class entrants find it harder to get on. The research finds that they do not go on to achieve the same earnings or levels of success. The report found the biggest class pay gaps exist in finance (£13,713), medicine (£10,218) and IT (£4,736).

The report says those from poorer backgrounds may be less likely to ask for pay rises, have less access to networks and work opportunities or, in some cases, exclude themselves from promotion for fear of not 'fitting in'. Other explanations for the 'class pay gap' could include conscious or unconscious discrimination or more subtle employment processes which lead to 'cultural matching' in the workplace.

The Rt Hon Alan Milburn, chair of the Social Mobility Commission, said:

This unprecedented research provides powerful new evidence that Britain remains a deeply elitist society.

Too many people from working class backgrounds not only face barriers getting into the professions, but also barriers to getting on. It cannot be right that they face an annual class pay gap of £6,800.

Many professional firms are doing excellent work to open their doors to people from all backgrounds, but this research suggests much more needs to be done to ensure that Britain is a place where everyone has an equal chance of success regardless of where they have come from.

How much you are paid should be determined by your ability not your background. Employers need to take action to end the shocking class earnings penalty. The commission will be sending major employers details of this research and asking them how they intend to close the class pay gap.

Dr Sam Friedman, from the LSE said:

While social mobility represents the norm, not the exception, in contemporary Britain, there is no doubt that strong barriers to opportunity still persist. By capitalising on new socio-economic background questions in the UK Labour Force Survey, we have been able to shine a light on some of the most pressing, but largely unexplored issues in British society today.

In particular, we have found evidence of a powerful and largely unacknowledged pay gap within the professions. There are a number of reasons for such higher educational attainment among the privileged. But even when these factors are taken into account, this gap remains significant.

As well as examining social mobility in the top echelons of British society, the report also looks at rates of intergenerational worklessness. It concludes that there is no evidence of generations of families never working. But it finds that those from workless households are 15% to 18% less likely to work.

Dr Lindsey Macmillan, from the UCL added:

While it is important to look at the experience of those in the professions, it is also important to understand wider issues with access into the workplace. We examined the experience of households with low levels of work and have found that there is no evidence of generations of families never working. The biggest risk to ending up workless as an adult is living in a high-unemployment area and poor health.

The report also calls for more questions on background to be included in the LFS to enrich understanding of social mobility in the UK.

### **[Education Secretary announces 6 new opportunity areas](#)**

Department for Education and The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP

18 January 2017

Opportunity areas will create local partnerships with early years providers, schools, colleges, universities, businesses, charities and LAs.

Today (Wednesday 18 January), speaking at the offices of PwC at an event jointly hosted with the Sutton Trust, Education Secretary Justine Greening set out the role of education in removing obstacles to social mobility, and the importance, as Britain prepares for its future outside the European Union, of ensuring that all young people can fulfil their potential.

Justine Greening said:

As the Prime Minister has set out, we are facing a moment of great change as a nation. With our departure from the European Union, we will need to define an ambitious new role for ourselves in the world. For Britain to succeed we must be a country where everyone has a fair chance to go as far as their talent and their hard work will allow. Education is at the heart of that ambition, and is central to breaking down the barriers to social mobility that too many face in our country today.

I want to see more disadvantaged young people attending the very best universities, winning places on apprenticeships, entering the top professions, and progressing through the most rewarding careers – and I want employers to do more to draw out the potential and talents of all.

The Education Secretary announced the expansion of the opportunity areas programme to a further 6 areas across England, along with a new £3.5 million programme that will see the Education Endowment Foundation establish a research school for each of the 12 opportunity areas.

Opportunity areas will help local children get the best start in life, no matter what their background. Ensuring all children can access high-quality education at every stage is critical. We will focus not just on what we can do to help inside schools, but also create the opportunities outside school that will raise sights and broaden horizons for young people.

In October, the Education Secretary [announced that 6 social mobility 'coldspots'](#) (Blackpool, Derby, Norwich, Oldham, Scarborough, and West Somerset) would become opportunity areas, which will see local partnerships formed with early years providers, schools, colleges, universities, businesses, charities and local authorities to ensure all children and young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

A key aim of opportunity areas is to build young people's knowledge and skills and provide them with the best advice and opportunities, including working with organisations such as the Careers and Enterprise Company, the Confederation of British Industry, the Federation of Small Businesses, and the National Citizen Service. The Department for Education (DfE) will target its programmes to ensure children get the best start in the early years, to build teaching and leadership capacity in schools, to increase access to university, to strengthen technical pathways for young people, and work with employers to improve young people's access to the right advice and experiences. DfE will work with each opportunity area to respond to local priorities and needs - because each area will have its own challenges.

Justine Greening today announced that the programme will now be expanded to 12 opportunity areas, adding Bradford, Doncaster, Fenland & East Cambridgeshire, Hastings, Ipswich and Stoke-on-Trent.

Increased DfE opportunity area funding of £72 million will support local education providers and communities to address the biggest challenges in the 12 areas, and opportunity areas will have priority access to other DfE support including the Teaching and Leadership Innovation

Fund worth £75 million, focused on supporting teachers and school leaders in challenging areas to develop.

A new £3.5 million programme, with £1.5 million coming from DfE and £2 million from the Education Endowment Foundation, will support the creation of a research school for each opportunity area. These schools will lead the development and dissemination of evidence-led practice in local schools.

Opportunity areas have been selected from areas identified in the [social mobility index](#) published by the Social Mobility Commission.

Responding to the expansion of opportunity areas, Sir Peter Lampl, Chairman of the Sutton Trust and of the Education Endowment Foundation, said:

The Education Secretary is right to recognise that a young person's chance of getting on in life is affected by where they live.

Overall social mobility in Britain is low. Also there are certain areas where it is extremely low - so-called opportunity black spots. So I welcome the Education Secretary's plans for 'opportunity areas'. They will bring extra focus and resources to areas where disadvantaged young people find it a struggle to get on.

Laura Hinton, Head of People at PwC, said:

No one school, university or employer can improve social mobility on their own and it's vital we work together on this. We're proud of the steps we've taken to widen access to our profession and are now focusing on improving students' awareness of the opportunities available and raising their aspirations. We support the government's focus on opportunity areas and will use our UK footprint to work with more schools and students across the country.

The Rt Hon Alan Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility Commission, said:

Britain has a deep social mobility problem which is getting worse for a whole generation of young people and has left whole communities feeling left behind and socially hollowed out. One of the biggest barriers to social mobility in Britain today is an unfair education system, which is why the Commission has repeatedly called on the government to tackle the issues that prevent children from fulfilling their true potential.

We therefore welcome the Education Secretary's commitment to addressing disadvantage in some of the nation's social mobility coldspots. For opportunity areas to be a success, we need local communities, employers, schools and universities to work together with government to ensure that the chances of a child doing well in life no longer depend on where they have come from. We can no longer tolerate the quiet new assumption in many parts of the country that those from weaker economic areas have to move out to get on.

Sir Kevan Collins, Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation, said:

Improving educational standards in 'coldspots' is one of the biggest challenges we face in our drive to improve social mobility. While evidence of 'what works' is one of our most useful tools to

do this, we know that research on its own is not enough to make a difference in the classroom.

Our new research schools will use their own expertise and experiences to provide strong leadership and guidance to schools in each opportunity area, supporting their colleagues to use research to improve pupil outcomes. No-one is better placed to support schools in doing this than teachers themselves.

Brett Wigdortz OBE, Founder and CEO of Teach First said:

Every child, wherever they are born, deserves a brilliant education and fair start in life. We're delighted the Department for Education is expanding their opportunity areas, by investing in a further 6 communities that have for too long been left behind.

This is a welcome step in helping to transform young people's lives. We know from experience it's only when schools, businesses, local communities and government work together that a real and lasting change can be made.

I'm proud that Teach First already works in schools in many of these communities and we look forward to working closely with the government to increase the attainment and unlock the aspirations of pupils from all backgrounds.

Andrew Warren, Chair of Teaching Schools Council, said:

The Teaching Schools Council welcomes the expansion of opportunity areas and the positive impact that we believe these programmes can and will have, both in the short and longer term. This initiative is completely in keeping with our vision that every child goes to a great school: every child, whatever their background, whatever their postcode. We look forward to working with schools, RSCs, MATs, LAs and other partners to play our part in this exciting opportunity.

Dave Hill, President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services said:

Additional support and investment for disadvantaged areas is a positive thing and we welcome the Department for Education working together with local authorities and others to achieve change. We must maintain a relentless focus on improving outcomes for children and young people at all times to ensure that this initiative helps them to achieve their full potential.

### **Social mobility in the Northern Powerhouse**

Social Mobility Commission

15 December 2016

Northern businesses have a crucial role in boosting social mobility says the Rt Hon Alan Milburn.

Big businesses in the Northern Powerhouse have a crucial role to play in boosting social mobility in the north of England, Social Mobility Commission Chair Alan Milburn will say today (Thursday 16 December). He will warn that there is a new geography of disadvantage in many

parts of the UK which has seen whole communities socially-hollowed out and millions of 'treadmill' families feeling left behind.

Mr Milburn will say that low levels of social mobility in many areas means it has never been more important for employers, universities, colleges, schools, councils and communities in the north to work together to create a more level playing field of opportunity.

During his visit, Mr Milburn will meet Salford Mayor Paul Dennett and host a roundtable of senior business, education and political leaders at Media City to share experiences and discuss ways to improve social mobility in the area.

He will say that there is a pressing need to look at new ways of rebalancing economic growth by creating jobs and devolving power in the UK's towns, cities and counties.

The Social Mobility Commission's social mobility index, which was published earlier this year, found that old industrial towns and coal mining areas that have struggled as England has moved from a manufacturing to a services-based economy now dominate the areas identified as social mobility coldspots. These are spread around the country but include many areas in the north – including the areas of Blackpool, Tameside and Oldham.

The Commission has uncovered large differences in life chances between similar areas that are only a few miles apart – Trafford performs in the top 10% of local authorities in England whilst Oldham and Tameside are in the worst 10%. The high-performing areas have common features, including good transport links and diverse populations.

Addressing local employers at the roundtable, Mr Milburn will say:

There is a new geography of disadvantage in Britain today. Many regions have fallen further and further behind London and the South East. Limited education and employment opportunities in many urban and rural communities – not just those in the north – are forcing aspirational youngsters to move out in order to get on. These 'left behind' parts of Britain are becoming socially hollowed out.

It is no surprise that populism of right and of left is on the march when a growing number of people feel like they are losing out unfairly. That is why addressing social mobility should be the holy grail of public policy and the cause which unites government, business and communities to action.

I am pleased to be in Salford today to hear directly from local businesses and political leaders about their experiences and to examine ways in which the Northern Powerhouse can build a new coalition of employers, universities, colleges, schools, councils and communities working together with one core purpose: a more level playing field of opportunity in Britain.

## **Social inequalities and post-16 choices**

Social Mobility Commission

5 December 2016

A Social Mobility Commission report shows a wide progression gap between post-16 choices made by bright poor kids and their affluent peers.

Bright children from poorer backgrounds are far less likely to go to university or study A levels that could get them into top universities than their wealthier counterparts - even if they live in the same neighbourhood and achieve similar results at GCSE.

New research by the Social Mobility Commission has uncovered a progression gap between choices made by children on [free school meals](#) and their more affluent peers which cannot be explained by their results at school or where they live.

It found that just 24% of children eligible for free school meals attend higher education compared to 42% of children from more privileged backgrounds. Poorer children are also twice as likely to drop out of education at 16 and are more than half as likely to study A levels that could get them into a top university.

The [research, carried out for the commission by Education Datalab, investigates the post-16 choices of children by social and geographical background, gender and ethnicity](#). The study explores all educational choices by all students who took GCSEs in the summer of 2010 by linking 3 national databases for the first time.

By taking into account factors such as where a child lives and their attainment at school, the research provides a unique analysis of how educational choices made at the age of 16 can have a deep impact on a child's future career and earnings.

The report finds that GCSE attainment and geographical access to post-16 courses explains some of the gap in choices made by children from different backgrounds. But it also uncovers significant differences between poorer children and wealthier children living in the same neighbourhood with the same GCSEs results.

Overall, the research finds that around a quarter of the progression gap - the different choices made by children after leaving school - is purely down to social background.

Previous research has suggested that children from poorer backgrounds are less likely to have access to the knowledge and networks to help them make optimal education and career choices after leaving school.

In its recent [State of the Nation report](#), the Social Mobility Commission called for more careers advice in schools, and better destinations data to hold schools to account for the guidance they give young people.

The report concluded that Britain has a deep social mobility problem which is getting worse for an entire generation of young people. It

found that for every young person who gets into university from a treadmill or just managing family background, 7 do not.

This new research also reveals stark geographical inequalities in the choices of institutions available to young people. It finds that there are 20 areas of the country with little, or no, school sixth form provision within a commutable distance. In these areas, there are significantly lower percentages of pupils studying academic qualifications at 16, attending a top university or studying for a science or maths degree compared to similar areas.

It also identifies the North East and the South West as having the fewest institutions for young people to choose from, which may be a significant factor in why post-16 and destinations outcomes are so poor in these regions. Whilst young people growing up on London have, on average, 12 post-16 institutions to choose from, those in the North East and the South West only have an average of 7 colleges or sixth forms they could commute to.

### **Other key findings**

White British students are far less likely to go to university than ethnic minority students - Indian (72%), Pakistani/Bangladeshi (53%), Black (57%) and White British (36%). Participation differences between White British and other ethnic groups who live in the same neighbourhood and with the same GCSE attainment are even more pronounced.

White British students are more likely to drop out of post-16 education than ethnic minority students - Indian (3%), Pakistani/Bangladeshi (8%), Black (7%) and White British (10%).

Female pupils are 8% more likely to attend university than males (44% versus 36%). However, although female participation rates at top selective universities are slightly higher (10% versus 9% for boys), they are less likely to attend these universities than a boy from the same neighbourhood with the same GCSEs.

Alan Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility Commission, said:

When low income young people from the same area with the same school results are progressing less than their better-off classmates, that is not about lack of ability. It is about lack of opportunity. The progression gap has many causes but it suggests something is going badly wrong in our education system.

The lack of proper careers advice in schools and the sheer complexity of the post-16 education and training system make it particularly difficult for lower income young people to translate their attainment at school into qualifications that are well rewarded in the labour market.

That has significant consequences for social mobility and leads to many young people becoming trapped in low skilled, low paid jobs. Government and schools should be working to create more of a level playing field of opportunity for young people to progress.

Dr Rebecca Allen, Director of Education Datalab, said:

The age of 16 marks the first point in most individual's educational lives where opportunities and choice can become markedly diverse.

Our research reminds policy makers that they should pay attention both to geographical disparities in access to high-quality post-16 provision and to understanding the reasons why students with identical opportunities make different choices.

### **Top firms to be ranked on social mobility**

Social Mobility Commission

24 October 2016

New index showcases companies which access talent from all backgrounds.

Britain's top businesses will be ranked for the first time on how open they are to accessing talent from all backgrounds, under a joint initiative announced today (24 October 2016) by the Social Mobility Foundation and Social Mobility Commission.

The [Social Mobility Employers' Index](#) gives firms the opportunity to showcase real progress they are making towards improving social mobility by ensuring they recruit the best people for the job - regardless of their social background.

Research has consistently shown that people from more affluent backgrounds, who attend private schools and elite universities, take a disproportionate number of the best jobs.

Many major companies have taken positive action to tackle this and remove hurdles for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds who have the talent, but lack the network of guidance, support and connections to get ahead.

The index is an important benchmarking initiative targeted at 'elite' sectors which, traditionally, have low rates of social mobility - such as law, accountancy, media, banking and finance and the sciences.

The aim is to encourage firms to compete to remove hurdles to find the best and brightest candidates - whatever their background - and to reveal which sectors and companies are taking the issue of social mobility most seriously.

To take part, firms will answer a range of questions about their practices and procedures in areas such as recruitment, selection and progression. They will be ranked by a respected panel of experts and receive recommendations for areas for improvement.

The stand-out 'winner' in each category and firm that has most improved its approach will be announced in spring next year - along with the final rankings.

David Johnston, Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation, said:

Having competed to make progress in other areas of diversity such as gender, race and LGBT, businesses have been turning

their minds to how to make their organisations open to top talent from lower socio-economic groups.

This index is a direct response to their requests to know how to benchmark the actions they take against what the leading firms are doing, and learn how they can ensure they recruit and promote those with the greatest potential, rather than those with the greatest connections or polish.

The Rt Hon Alan Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility Commission, added:

Many top firms are doing excellent work in opening their doors to people from all social backgrounds. We want the index to herald a step change towards improving social mobility by encouraging many more employers to compete to recruit, and keep, the best and brightest candidates.

The index is not designed to be a 'name and shame' exercise. All firms will be entitled to remain anonymous and firms which fail to make the final rankings will not be named.

Firms will be able to enter different categories to recognise the vast range of practices and approaches that many are adopting to tackle social mobility issues. There will be a range of supplementary materials to help firms, including describing what best practice looks like.

The index questionnaire has been developed in consultation with, and following feedback from social mobility experts and major employers. Categories include:

- working with young people - well-evaluated programmes that reach beyond the doorstep of the office to all of the country's talent, and which provide routes into the employer/profession for those that have the interest and aptitude
- routes into work - well-structured non-graduate routes that provide genuine parity of esteem and comparable progression to graduate ones
- attraction - innovative ways of reaching beyond graduates of the usual 5 to 10 universities many top employers focus their efforts on
- recruitment and selection - evidence that the employer:
  - removes hurdles that will disproportionately affect those from lower socio-economic groups
  - is moving to a system that judges potential rather than past academic performance or polish
- data collection - rigorous analysis of the profile of the workforce and of measures taken to improve its diversity
- progression - effective strategies that help those from lower socio-economic groups get on rather than just get in
- internal/external advocacy - action to get more of their staff involved in efforts to improve social mobility and to get suppliers/peer firms to also take action

## 5. Parliamentary material

### 5.1 Written questions

[Department for Education: Grammar Schools: Social Mobility: Written question - 907950](#)

**Asked by Patricia Gibson (North Ayrshire and Arran)**

**Asked on 13 December 2016**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential effect on social mobility of proposed changes to the Government's policy on selective schools.

**Answered by Nick Gibb**

**Answered on 19 December 2016**

This government wants a school system that works for everyone. Grammar schools provide a good or outstanding education for the children attending them, regardless of background. We need to do more to increase the number of pupils from disadvantaged background that are attending grammar schools. That is why we have consulted on new conditions to ensure that selective schools contribute to driving up standards for all pupils, in both selective and non-selective schools.

[Department for Education: Social Mobility: Written question - HL3322](#)

**Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark**

**Asked on 17 November 2016**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment have they made of the recently published *State of the nation 2016* report by the Social Mobility Commission.

**Answered by Lord Nash**

**Answered on 24 November 2016**

We welcome the Commission's report, published last week. It is a wide ranging, valuable piece of work that draws out some important findings.

The Commission's approach to social mobility is in line with work going on in the Department: looking at the opportunities of a group beyond the most disadvantaged; solidly focusing on areas of the country which are falling behind; and addressing wider obstacles to opportunity, like the need for high quality advice. Officials are engaging with the Commission's findings as part of this wider work programme.

Opportunity Areas, launched last month, will be the vanguard of our approach to social mobility in areas where there are the greatest challenges and the fewest opportunities and will benefit from our energy, ideas and resources to address the barriers to social mobility.

These areas are all social mobility coldspots identified by the Commission.

The Commission points out that the barriers to social mobility will not be fixed overnight. It will require long term effort from the Government, business, civil society and communities to ensure that talent and hard work leads to success, wherever you live or whatever your background.

## 5.2 Oral questions

### [Social Mobility: School/University Students](#)

**HC Deb 20 Mar 2017, c 364**

**Danny Kinahan (South Antrim) (UUP):** What steps she is taking to enhance social mobility for school and university students. [909328]

**The Secretary of State for Education (Justine Greening):** I put social mobility at the heart of everything my Department does. Through our plans to create more good school places and transform teaching, combined with new legislation to support greater access to university and investment in technical education, we aim to ensure that where a student comes from does not determine where they get to in life.

**Danny Kinahan:** At the all-party group on universities the other day, we had an excellent presentation from Sunderland University on all aspects of helping to improve social mobility. Can we ensure that that stretches down to all types of schools—academies, grammars and secondary—and that we learn from each other, particularly in the devolved institutions?

**Justine Greening:** Indeed; I fully agree. The Higher Education and Research Bill will enable us to do more to widen access and increase the participation of these sorts of students. Of course, the “Schools that work for everyone” consultation document is all about making sure that universities, alongside grammars, faith schools and independent schools, can play a stronger role in lifting attainment for all.

### [Social Mobility](#)

**HL Deb 20 Feb 2017, c 2-4**

**Baroness Tyler of Enfield:** To ask Her Majesty’s Government what is their response to the findings of the report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility *The Class Ceiling: Increasing access to the leading professions*, published on 17 January, that talented young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are facing significant barriers to accessing jobs in the top professions.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education (Lord Nash):** My Lords, we welcome this excellent report highlighting that, all too often, family background determines success in later life. The Secretary of State recently set out how education should be central to transforming social mobility by ensuring that all young people have access to the right knowledge and skills, high-quality advice

and opportunities for challenging, life-shaping experiences to prepare them for career success. Employers also need to do more to attract and draw out the talents of employees from all backgrounds.

**Baroness Tyler of Enfield (LD):** I thank the Minister for his helpful Answer. The report of the All-Party Group on Social Mobility—I declare an interest as co-chair—vividly demonstrated that students from disadvantaged backgrounds were not gaining access to either the elite universities or the top professions, with the gulf between London and the rest of the country being particularly stark. The report contains important and wide-ranging recommendations to tackle this. Can the Minister say when the Government will be able to respond in writing to these recommendations, and will he agree to meet with me to discuss them?

**Lord Nash:** We will be responding in due course on the recommendations and will, of course, focus very much on opportunity areas—to take the noble Baroness’s point about the situation outside London. I agree entirely with the conclusions. The Sutton Trust tells us that the 7% of the population educated privately gets nearly 60% of the top jobs in this country. We have to do better than that. I will be delighted to meet with the noble Baroness.

**Lord Lexden (Con):** Will my noble friend agree that a useful contribution to assisting low-income families could be made through the provision of large numbers of free places at independent schools under partnership arrangements between the Government and schools themselves?

**Lord Nash:** As my noble friend knows, we are very keen to encourage partnership arrangements between independent schools and the state sector, and we are in active discussions with them about that. We are considering all the proposals we have had—some 7,000—as a result of our consultation document, and we will react to those shortly.

**Lord Bird (CB):** Are the Government aware that not only are the professions out of kilter with regard to the socially immobile but that social immobility was a very large factor in the Brexit referendum last year?

**Lord Nash:** There is no question but that many of the social issues had a big influence on the vote last year.

**Baroness Royall of Blaisdon (Lab):** My Lords, does the noble Lord agree that the social mobility strategy recommended by the APPG should be developed as a matter of urgency so that the country can make use of all the talents available? Will he further agree that mentoring of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially those from black and ethnic minorities, is absolutely invaluable, and will he welcome the new initiative, entitled One Million Mentors, which was launched last week?

**Lord Nash:** As I said, we will respond to the report shortly, but I entirely agree with the noble Baroness about the importance of mentoring. I know that Chance UK has an active programme in that, and the system

she refers to is definitely to be encouraged. At the Bridge Academy in Hackney, which is sponsored by UBS, over 1,000 UBS employees mentor individual pupils every year. When you talk to pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, many of whom have often not met people who work in white-collar jobs before at all, you understand that mixing with people like this and going to their place of work clearly has a transformational impact.

**Baroness Manzoor (Con):** My Lords, as well as the fact that there are not as many disaffected and disadvantaged young people getting into Russell group universities as there should be, there is a real problem in that, once they are in key roles, they do not progress as quickly as they should, particularly in areas such as the Civil Service and the NHS.

**Lord Nash:** My noble friend makes a very good point. I think that she is talking about what the Sutton Trust has termed “essential life skills”. It recently pointed out that Harvard University has said that the people who have been successful in recent years and are likely to be successful over the next 20 years are those with essential life skills. It is very important that all schools develop these, and I know that many of them do. Certainly, the Civil Service has a talent programme for bringing on people from a wide range of backgrounds.

**Baroness Garden of Frognal (LD):** My Lords, building on the question from the noble Baroness, Lady Royall, the Careers & Enterprise Company launched a mentoring community and fund. What resources are the Government providing to ensure that this mentoring, particularly in soft skills and confidence-building, is available for children from disadvantaged backgrounds?

**Lord Nash:** The noble Baroness is quite right to point to the Careers & Enterprise Company, which seems to have got off to a great start. It is very ably run by a bright young woman called Claudia Harris, formerly of McKinsey. We have made £90 million available over this Parliament for the Careers & Enterprise Company and for programmes that use the mentoring approach. The CEC has already appointed 1,300 advisers across the country to help improve links between employers and schools.

**Lord Laming (CB):** My Lords—

**Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws (Lab):** My Lords—

**Baroness Farrington of Ribbleton (Lab):** My Lords—

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Earl Howe) (Con):** My Lords, it is the turn of the Cross Benches and then, if we have time, we can hear from the Labour Benches.

**Lord Laming:** My Lords, does the noble Lord agree that it is a real challenge to help these young people to recognise the talents that they have, to give them a sense of ambition and to nurture those ambitions through these important years in their development?

**Lord Nash:** I agree entirely with the noble Lord on that. Increasingly we are seeing schools develop what is sometimes called a “raising

ambitions” programme to raise their pupils’ horizons and ambitions. All too often in the past schools have not been ambitious enough for their pupils. I recently attended a very inspiring event run by Ormiston Academies Trust, which is developing a raising aspirations programme, and we are seeing many more of these kinds of programmes being developed.

**Baroness Farrington of Ribbleton:** My Lords—

**Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws:** My Lords, perhaps I may raise the issue of the new universities and the large numbers of young people from working-class backgrounds who choose to do law and invest in their futures by going on to qualify as solicitors but do not get training contracts. There is an absolute dearth of these contracts for students from modern universities—the former polytechnics and all these new universities that the Government are so keen to create. Ordinary working-class families encourage their children to go into areas where they assume there will be jobs, but there are no training contracts because they all go to the privileged.

**Lord Nash:** The noble Baroness makes a good point. We are very keen to see access widened to all professions. I know that the Sutton Trust has a very active programme for those wishing to go into law, and it is certainly something that we will be looking at further.

## [Social Mobility](#)

**HC Deb 6 Feb 2017 c 10-11**

**Volume 621**

**Michelle Donelan (Chippenham) (Con):** What steps her Department is taking to improve social mobility through education. [908592]

**Ben Howlett (Bath) (Con):** 11. What steps her Department is taking to improve social mobility through education. [908596]

**The Secretary of State for Education (Justine Greening):** We want to see an education system that works for everyone and that drives social mobility by breaking the link between a person’s background and where they get to in life. We are delivering more good school places; strengthening the teaching profession; investing in and improving careers education; transforming technical education and apprenticeships; opening up access to universities; and focusing effort on areas of the country with the greatest challenges and the fewest opportunities, through opportunity areas.

**Michelle Donelan:** Currently, the pupil premium is a very limited measure—for instance, children who are young carers are not recognised. In addition, it stops at 16, despite some form of education being compulsory until 18. Will the Minister therefore consider a review of the pupil premium to achieve true social mobility?

**Justine Greening:** The pupil premium is worth £2.5 billion this year, and it is helping to level the playing field for 2 million disadvantaged

children, including many young carers and children with mental health problems. We are also looking at the Children's Commissioner's recent report and, indeed, our own DFE research on the lives of young carers in England, as part of the cross-Government carers strategy that is being reviewed and developed. On the point about age, the national funding formula for 16 to 19-year-olds provides extra funding for disadvantaged students—around £540 million this year.

**Ben Howlett:** I welcomed the Government's "Schools that work for everyone" Green Paper—probably as much as the Secretary of State enjoyed reading my lengthy response to it. It showed the Government's commitment to ensuring that all pupils have the best chance of accessing a good education. When will the draft be published?

**Justine Greening:** I very much appreciated my hon. Friend's submission to that consultation. We received several thousand submissions, which we are now going through. We will respond in the spring.

**Lucy Powell (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op):** I noticed that the Secretary of State did not mention grammar schools in her answers to the previous questions about social mobility. Is that perhaps because in seven out of 10 grammar schools, all the free-school-meals children could fit in one classroom? Sir William Borlase's grammar school, which I understand is set to be the first to open a new school, has just three children on free school meals. Does she think that reflects true social mobility? Are those numbers acceptable, and if not, what is she doing about it?

**Justine Greening:** We have been clear that we want to see existing grammars take more free-school-meal and disadvantaged children. The right way to go about getting no progress is to have no consultation and no policy development in this area, which is apparently the Labour party's position.

**Rosie Cooper (West Lancashire) (Lab):** If the Department for Education is as committed to social mobility through education as it claims, will the Secretary of State explain why cuts to the early years funding formula and to local authorities have actually weakened outstanding early years education, which is the foundation of social mobility?

Justine Greening: Record levels of funding are going into early years. We are now extending the 15 hours of free childcare to 30. It is simply wrong to characterise this Government as doing anything other than pumping record amounts of money into both early years and indeed the school system.

#### [HC Deb 16 Nov 2016, c 236](#)

**Lucy Powell (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op):** In its state of the nation report, the Government's Social Mobility Commission today issued a damning verdict on progress: things are getting worse. The

commission concluded that the key drivers of social mobility—quality in early education, narrowing the educational attainment gap, and access to work and housing—are all going backwards on the Prime Minister’s watch. When will she come forward with a real strategy for opportunity for all, instead of fixating on creating an even more elite education for those who are already elite? [907162]

**The Prime Minister:** I note that the Social Mobility Commission has recorded today that more working class youngsters are benefiting from higher education than at any point in our history. The Government have invested record amounts in childcare and the early years, and the attainment gap, as the report acknowledges, has actually narrowed. The hon. Lady refers to the education system and the reintroduction of grammar schools, so I refer her to the report commissioned by a Labour council in Knowsley to look at how it could improve educational achievement there. That report said:

“Re-introducing grammar schools is potentially a transformative idea for working class areas”.

## 5.3 Debates

### [Intergenerational Fairness](#)

HC Deb 28 Feb 2017 c 230-266

### [Social Mobility](#)

HL Deb 20 Feb 2017 c 3-4

### [School Funding](#)

HC Deb 25 Jan 2017 c 357-405

### [Northern England: Opportunity and Productivity](#)

HL Deb 12 Jan 2017, c 2070-2108

### [Social Mobility Committee Report](#)

HL Deb 20 Dec 2016, c 1579-1623

### [Child Poverty](#)

HC Deb 20 Dec 2016, 483WH-504WH

### [Education and Social Mobility](#)

HC Deb 22 Nov 2016, c 757-820

## 5.4 Reports

[The class ceiling: increasing access to the leading professions](#), All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility, January 2017

[Overlooked and left behind: improving the transition from school to work for the majority of young people](#), House of Lords Social Mobility Committee, April 2016.

[Government response to House of Lords Social Mobility committee](#), July 2016

## 5.5 Library briefings

[Recent policy developments: Grammar schools in England](#), House of Commons Library, 9 March 2017

[Participation in higher education: Social Indicators page](#), House of Commons Library, 8 February 2017

[Social Mobility Committee Report](#), House of Lords Library, 12 December 2016

[Education and social mobility](#), House of Commons Library, 21 November 2016

[Government Plans to Promote Social Mobility](#), House of Lords Library, 21 October 2016

[Oxbridge elitism](#), House of Commons Library, 5 September 2016

[Early intervention](#), House of Commons Library, 7 July 2016

[Children: introduction of 30 hours of free childcare \(England\)](#), House of Commons Library, 22 June 2016

[Support for disadvantaged children in education in England](#), House of Commons Library, 6 July 2015

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