



DEBATE PACK

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Social Mobility in Wales

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Summary

This debate pack has been prepared ahead of the debate on Social Mobility in Wales, to be held in Westminster Hall on Tuesday 19 December at 2.30PM. This debate will be led by [Chris Elmore](#) MP.

The Social Mobility Commission (SMC) published the [State of the Nation Report 2017](#) on 28 November 2017. In the section on Social Mobility in Wales the Commission concluded that:

Every local authority area in Wales has relative strengths and weaknesses across the life stages. But it is disadvantaged youngsters, particularly in areas with high levels of deprivation, who appear to be losing out most in the crucial early years of their lives and in their school years. In Torfaen, as few as 18 per cent of young people eligible for free school meals achieve the equivalent of grades A* to C GCSE in the Core Subject Indicator. But affluent areas are also failing their disadvantaged pupils, with attainment gaps as large as 41 percentage points in Monmouthshire where seven in ten more advantaged youngsters achieve good grades.

Further analysis on the transition from school into post-16 institutions is required to understand the current destinations for people between ages 16 and 19. Better data would help to identify the barriers in place for young people in Wales, and to pinpoint any coldspot areas where young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are falling behind particularly badly. As parts of the economy in Wales seek to grow, it is paramount that barriers that prevent less advantaged young people from flourishing are understood and acted upon.

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.¹

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 2017 was published on 28 November 2017.

- [State of the Nation Report 2017](#)
- [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](#). On 28 June 2017 it published [Time for Change: an assessment of government policies on social mobility 1997 to 2017](#).

At the beginning of December 2017, the four members of the Commission: Rt. Hon Alan Milburn (Chair), Baroness Gillian Shephard (Deputy Chair) David Johnson and Paul Gregg all stood down².

The Government has suggested that the appointment of a new commission will begin “in due course”³.

1.2 State of the Nation Report 2017

The [2017 State of the Nation Report](#) (page iii) warned that:

Britain is a deeply divided nation. Those divisions take many forms. Class, income, gender, race. In recent years, each has been the subject of much scrutiny. But one form of division that has received far less attention is that based on geography. In this, our Fifth Annual Report, we focus on this neglected place-based divide. [...]

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

² [HC Deb 4 December 2017 c691](#) Urgent Question on the Social Mobility Commission

³ HC WPQ [117490](#) 11 December 2017

In our previous annual reports we have focused on our country's lamentable social mobility track record. It has become obvious that the scale of the problem extends well beyond the bottom decile in society or the few thousand youngsters who miss out on a top university. There is a fracture line running deep through our labour and housing markets and our education system. Those on the wrong side of this divide are losing out and falling behind.

Although the report itself is over 175 pages long, a [press release](#) distilled the key findings:

- London accounts for nearly two-thirds of all social mobility hotspots
- The Midlands is the worst region of the country for social mobility for those from disadvantaged backgrounds - half of the local authority areas in the East Midlands and more than a third in the West Midlands are social mobility coldspots
- Some of the worst performing areas such as Weymouth and Portland, and Allerdale, are rural, not urban
- Coastal and older industrial towns - places such as Scarborough, Hastings, Derby and Nottingham - are becoming entrenched social mobility coldspots
- Some of the richest places in England, such as West Berkshire, Cotswold and Crawley, deliver worse outcomes for their disadvantaged children than places that are much poorer such as Sunderland and Tower Hamlets
- Apart from London, English cities are punching below their weight on social mobility outcomes. No other city makes it into the top 20%
- Early years - disadvantaged children are 14 percentage points less likely to be school ready at age 5 in coldspots than in hotspots: in 94 areas, under half of disadvantaged children reach a good level of development at age 5
- Schools - 51% of London children on free school meals achieve A* to C in English and maths GCSE compared to an average of 36% of children on free school meals in all other English regions: in the best place (Westminster), 63% get good English and maths GCSEs whereas in the worst (Isle of Wight), only 27% do
- A critical factor in the performance of top local authorities is the number and quality of teachers available. A secondary teacher in the most deprived area is 70% more likely to leave
- Schools in rural and coastal areas are isolated and lack partnerships with other schools. In Lancashire and West Yorkshire only 19% of all schools are either in a multi-academy trust or an equivalent trust compared to 35% in north east London and the East of England

- Youth – In Kensington and Chelsea, 50% of disadvantaged young people make it to university, whereas in Hastings, Barnsley and Eastbourne, the university participation rate for this group falls to just 10%
- One quarter of young people are NEET (not in education, employment or training) in the worst local authority area a year after GCSEs (South Ribble), compared to 1% in North Hertfordshire
- Working lives - In 71, largely rural areas, more than 30% of people earn below the voluntary living wage: average wages in the worst performing area, West Somerset, are £312 a week, less than half of the best performing areas of London such as Wandsworth, Richmond upon Thames and Westminster
- In Bolsover, just 17% of residents are in jobs that are professional and managerial positions, compared to 51% in Oxford
- City residents face barriers in their working lives with high housing costs and high rates of low paid work compared to commuter belt residents who benefit from higher rates of the top jobs and with more families owning their homes
- In Blaby, Rochford and Harborough, 80% of residents own their homes whereas in Tower Hamlets it is just 18%

The report sets out various recommendations for local and central government. The [press release](#) again brings together the key recommendations:

- Every local authority should develop an integrated strategy for improving disadvantaged children's outcomes and Pupil Premium funds should be invested in evidence-based practice
- Local authorities should support collaboration between isolated schools, subsidise transport for disadvantaged young people in isolated areas and encourage Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) to follow the North East LEP's approach to improving careers support for young people
- Local authorities should all become accredited Living Wage employers and encourage others in their communities to do likewise
- Central government should launch a fund to enable schools in rural and coastal areas to partner with other schools to boost attainment
- Regional School Commissioners should be given responsibility to work with universities, schools and Teach First to ensure that there is a good supply of teachers in all parts of their regions

- The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy should match the Department for Education's £72 million for the opportunity areas to ensure there is a collaborative effort across local education systems and labour markets
- Central government should rebalance the national transport budget to deliver a more equal share of investment per person and contribute towards a more regionally balanced economy

1.3 Time for change

Time for Change: An assessment of government policies on social mobility 1997 to 2017

This [report](#) notes how, over two decades, successive governments have made higher levels of social mobility public policy. It questions "how far those worthy political sentiments have been translated into positive social outcomes," examines the various policies pursued and assesses their impact. It also addresses what future policy agendas should include, and makes a series of recommendations to government.

The report is 85 pages long, but the [press release announcing it](#) gives this summary:

- government policies to improve social mobility have failed to deliver enough progress
- calls on current and future governments to learn lessons from mistakes and successes over the last 20 years
- warns that without major reform social and economic divisions within Britain's society are set to widen
- assigns rag ratings to government policies depending on how successful government has translated policy into social outcomes
- makes recommendations to government

The Commission's analysis looks at where progress has been made across the various life stages, from the early years, through schools, into training or further / higher education and then into work. The report gives each public policy pursued a rating – red, amber or green – based on its assessment of how successful it has been across the two decades as a whole.

No life stage gets a green rating; two are amber – Early Years and Schools – and two are red – Young People and Working Lives. Within each life stage there are individual policies rated successful, such as the focus on widening participation at university and on creating jobs, for example. But overall, only seven policies score a green while 14 score amber and 16 red.

In questioning why more has not been achieved, the report observes five key lessons and makes corresponding recommendations:

First, government efforts have been inconsistent and piecemeal, with effort varying by individual Minister, and the social mobility agenda has focused on children and education rather than young adults and the labour market. The Commission recommends future Prime Ministers ensures a single cross-departmental plan to deliver it.

Secondly, long-term progress has too often been sacrificed to short-term change, with almost continual structural reforms to all parts of the education system. The Commission recommends that in future each policy area there are ten-year targets to chart progress.

Third, dual-purpose policies (for example the extension of early years provision both enabling parents to return to work and raising pre-school attainment levels) are insufficiently focused on securing higher levels of social mobility. The Commission recommends that a social mobility test be applied to all new relevant public policy.

Fourth, governments have not been sufficiently committed to funding social mobility policies, with spending on older people given greater priority, and quantity prioritized over quality in provision of services. The Commission recommends redistribution of resources to address geographical, wealth and generational divisions, identified in future Budgets.

Fifth, governments have overly limited their scope of action, for example by absenting themselves from addressing progression in employment and elitism in the professions. They have additionally been too tentative in addressing market failures in local and regional economies. The Commission recommends that in future governments pursue a more activist agenda, working with councils, communities, employers and professions behind a shared national effort to improve social mobility.

The Commission's assessment concludes:

Our country has reached an inflection point. If we go on as we have been, the divisions that have opened up in British society are likely to widen not narrow. There is a growing sense in the nation that these divisions are not sustainable, socially, economically or politically. There is a hunger for change. The policies of the past have brought some progress, but many are no longer fit for purpose in our changing world. The old agenda has not delivered enough social progress. New approaches are needed if Britain is to become a fairer and more equal country. It is time for a change.

2. Social Mobility in Wales

State of the Nation 2017 report

The [State of the Nation 2017](#) report covers England but also contains some commentary on social mobility across the 22 Welsh local authority areas (pp139-153). The report looks at the following life stage indicators:

- Early years indicators: non-maintained nursery rating, pupils on free school meals achieving outcome 5+ in the Foundation Phase Indicator
- Schools indicators: key stage 2 and key stage 3 outcomes for pupils on free school meals
- Youth indicators: destinations of Year 11
- Working lives indicators: salary, house price ratio, professional jobs and voluntary living wage

The report then ranks the local authority areas based on a sum of the weighted standardised scores for each of these life stage indicators:

Table 7.6: Welsh local authority areas: sum of life stage indicators

Overall rank*	Local authority area
1	The Vale of Glamorgan
2	Ceredigion
3	Monmouthshire
4	Merthyr Tydfil
5	Bridgend
6	Gwynedd
7	Newport
8	Caerphilly
9	Powys
10	Denbighshire
11	Carmarthenshire
12	Isle of Anglesey
13	Cardiff
14	Swansea
15	Torfaen
16	Rhondda Cynon Taf
17	Flintshire
18	Pembrokeshire
19	Wrexham
20	Blaenau Gwent
21	Conwy
22	Neath Port Talbot

Sources: Welsh Government (2016) Achievement and entitlement to free school meals, 2015 data. Statistical requests. <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/academic-achievement-free-school-meals/ad-hoc-statistical-requests/?lang=en>. Careers Wales (April 2017) Pupil Destinations from Schools in Wales. <http://destinations.careerswales.com/>. ONS (2016) *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings* - Number and percentage of employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage, by parliamentary constituency and local authority, UK, April 2015 and 2016. Table: Work Geography 1a LWO1. ONS (2016) *Housing Affordability in England and Wales 1996 to 2016*. ONS (2016) *Annual Population Survey - Resident Analysis*. ONS (2016) *Estimates of employee jobs paid less than the living wage in London and other parts of the UK*. Notes: This analysis uses fewer indicators than the English analysis and the youth section uses data on all young people (not just disadvantaged young people). This is not comparable with the English data.

*Rank score is based on a sum of the weighted standardised scores for each of the life stage indicators (see tables below).

An overview summarises the SMC's findings:

Overview

The overarching results of the indicators across the four life stages – early years, schools, youth and working lives – show that there is no clear north/south divide in Wales. The social mobility outcomes experienced can vary within a geographically small area. As an example, the north of Wales contains the second worst performer, Conwy, bordering with Gwynedd, a relatively strong performer, and Denbighshire, a middling performer.

Cities are not social mobility engines for their residents in Wales, with Newport scoring the highest out of the main cities while Wrexham scores very badly. A number of the more urban areas in the south also score badly across all the life stages, particularly Neath Port Talbot and Blaenau Gwent. However, it is not the case that rural areas correlate with good performance, as the bottom scorers also include areas such as Conwy and Pembrokeshire. This demonstrates that there is a range of factors in play for individuals in their early years through to their working lives. Living in an area with proximity to an urban centre does allow access to higher rates of better-paid jobs and better wages, but it does not necessarily mean better access to services and facilities. It also does not mean that young people are more likely to achieve a positive destination after school. There are higher proportions of young people not in education, employment or training after Year 11 in Cardiff, compared with rural areas, despite better outcomes in working lives and the presence of a number of higher education institutions.

In working lives, the south of Wales pulls away from the rest of the country, having the majority of jobs and higher wages. The City Deals for the Cardiff Capital Region and the Swansea Bay City Region promise these areas long-term funds of £1.2 billion each. This is projected to deliver around 35,000 new jobs in the next 15–20 years, which should have a significant impact on the Welsh economy.⁴

But high levels of poverty in Wales have an impact on every life stage. Currently, nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of all individuals in Wales live in poverty – higher than in all regions in England and Great Britain, except London and the West Midlands.⁵ People growing up poor in Wales have a significant disadvantage in attainment at key stage 4 where there is a 30 percentage point difference between those pupils on free school meals and others, with the more affluent areas also failing their disadvantaged pupils. This affects disadvantaged youngsters through to post-16 choices and in getting good jobs. The lack of good jobs in an area can affect aspiration from an early age. Rural areas can be very isolated in terms of poor provision of both public transport and roads.

Press articles

[Welsh representation removed from key social mobility body](#)

Mark Isherwood, AM for N Wales, 2016

[The worst places in Wales to grow up poor \(and the best\): How much people achieve in life can be affected by factors beyond their control](#)

David Williamson, Wales Online, 28 November 2017

[Disadvantaged young people losing out in social mobility](#)

David Williamson, Western Mail, 29 November 2017

Welsh Assembly debate

Debate: [The Children's Commissioner for Wales's Annual Report 2016-17](#), 14 November 2017

Further reading

[Wales' poorest children already falling behind with language by the time they start school](#) (September 2015)

- Research using longitudinal data finds Wales's poorest children are starting primary school already struggling with language skills.
- (WISERD analysis of data from the Millennium Cohort Study)

[The Dynamics of Low Income](#) (April 2014)

- Report by The Welsh Government, The Dynamics of Low Income, found that level of pay, number of hours and staying in work may be the most important factors in reducing the overall amount of persistent poverty in Wales.
- (Research carried out by the New Policy Institute using Understanding Society)

[Welsh Government's Early Years and Childcare Plan draws on evidence from the British birth cohort studies](#) (July 2013)

- Evidence from the 1958, 1970 and Millennium Cohort Studies cited, e.g. factors such as mother's health during pregnancy, child's birthweight, parents' education and employment, family's housing and socio-economic circumstances can have a lasting effect on children's cognitive, social and behavioural development.

3. Background reading on social mobility

3.1 General reading

- The [*Declining social mobility? Evidence from five linked censuses in England and Wales 1971–2011*](#) (18 September 2017) paper looks at recent trends in inter-generational social mobility in England and Wales using data from the ONS Longitudinal Study, which links individual records from the censuses between 1971 and 2011. The report finds evidence of “a small but significant increase in social fluidity between 1950s and the 1980s for both men and women”.
- [CLOSER Learning Hub: Britain’s mobility problem](#) Children born into working class families are significantly less likely to move up the ladder than their peers from middle class homes. These inequalities have persisted for generations.
- Gov.uk, [2010 to 2015 government policy: social mobility](#) (May 2015) gives an overview of policy under the coalition government. See also the Government’s [Social Mobility Indicators](#).
- An [article by FullFact](#) (5 September 2014) summarises the different concepts of social mobility but notes some of the conflicting research findings.
- 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](#).)

3.2 Other recent analysis from the SMC

The [Social Mobility Index](#) (November 2017) provides some information on social mobility at the level of local authorities:

Using 16 indicators, the index assesses the education, employability and housing prospects of people living in each of England's 324 local authority areas. The index highlights where people from disadvantaged backgrounds are most and least likely to make social progress. A similar approach is taken in Wales, although we have had to use some different data so the index there is not comparable with that in England. The same is true of Scotland, where there is still less data available, and it is especially limited in measuring the prospects of those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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

- [Low pay and labour progression: the 'Great Escape'](#) October 2017
- [Social mobility challenges faced by young Muslims](#), September 2017
- [Low-cost home ownership schemes](#), July 2017
- [Social mobility barometer poll](#), June 2017
- [Home ownership access to first-time buyers in the UK](#), March 2017
- [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

4. Press Articles

[Rich school leavers twice as likely to go to university](#)

Gurpreet Narwan, The Times, 11 December 2017

[The new Harrison Centre for Social Mobility has given seven local charities a share of a £30,000 donation](#)

Katie Collings, North East Chronicle, 11 December 2017

[Figures show children worst hit by library cuts](#)

Alison Flood, The Guardian, 11 December 2017

[The real scandal about 'Marxist' Milburn](#)

Peter Hitchens, The Mail on Sunday, 10 December 2017

[Elevator malfunction: Britain ignores social mobility at its peril](#)

Bagehot, The Economist, 9 December 2017

['Older people have pulled up the ladder': inside England's oldest and youngest towns](#)

Stephen Moss, The Guardian, 9 December 2017

[Four in 10 right-to-buy homes are now owned by private landlords](#)

Patrick Collinson, The Guardian, 8 December 2017

[Tory policies are making social mobility and child poverty even worse](#)

Frances Ryan, The Guardian, 7 December 2017

[Eton leading the way on social mobility](#)

Peter Stanford, The Telegraph, 7 December 2017

[Once our society cared about poor people. Now we damn them, Polly Toynbee](#)

The Guardian, 5 December 2017

[Scotland's lowest-paid public sector workers set for highest pay rise](#)

Severin Carrell, The Guardian, 5 December 2017

[Here's how Theresa May can show she is still serious about social mobility](#)

James Kirkup, Spectator blog, 4 December 2017

[Fifth of UK population now in poverty amid worst decline for children and pensioners in decades, major report reveals](#)

May Bulman, The Independent, 4 December 2017

[Theresa May faces new crisis after mass walkout over social policy: Alan Milburn and entire social mobility team quit citing 'lack of political leadership'](#)

Michael Savage, The Observer, 3 December 2017

[Theresa May 'betrays' families that voted for Brexit, says Alan Milburn: Social mobility chiefs quit in protest at neglect of poor](#)

Tim Shipman, Sunday Times, 3 December 2017

[Social mobility board quits as ministers say Government firm against inequality](#)

Press Association, Daily Mail, 3 December 2017

[Alan Milburn's resignation letter in full: 'I have little hope of the current government making the progress I believe is necessary to bring about a fairer Britain'](#),

Henry Austin, The Independent, 2 December 2017

[Is social mobility in England still all about the North/South divide?](#)

Claire Milne, Full Fact, 1 December 2017

[If the poor are to rise, the rich have to fall](#)

Philip Collins, The Times, 1 December 2017

[Response to Social Mobility Commission State of the Nation 2017 report](#)

University Alliance Chief Executive Maddalaine Ansell, 28 November 2017

[Social mobility tsar warns aspiration gap between UK's rich and poor 'will take 80 years to close'](#)

Jack Maidment, The Telegraph, 28 June 2017

[How can companies cut the UK's class pay gap? Professionals from poorer families earn almost £7,000 less per year than those from wealthier ones, despite businesses claiming to act on social mobility](#)

Martin Williams, The Guardian, 27 April 2017

[Poorer children half as likely to get into best schools, research shows: Teach First charity says findings demonstrate that 'social mobility remains a serious issue in our country'](#)

Richard Adams, The Guardian, 17 April 2017

[Don't believe the hype – grammar schools won't increase social mobility](#)

Fiona Millar, The Guardian, 11 April 2017

5. Press releases and speeches

[Peter Lamp: Social Mobility Action Plan Response](#)

Sutton Trust, 14 December 2017

[Dr Lee Elliot Major: Response to Milburn Resignation](#)

Sutton Trust, 3 December 2017

[Anne Milton: Good careers advice helps you to a rewarding career](#)

Department for Education, 7 November 2017

[Justine Greening: We can challenge the impossible](#)

Department for Education, 24 October 2017

[Education Secretary puts teachers at the heart of social mobility](#)

Department for Education, 24 October 2017

[Unpaid internships are damaging to social mobility](#)

Social Mobility Commission, 23 October 2017

[Low pay and progression in the labour market](#)

Social Mobility Commission, 19 October 2017

[Nick Gibb: The importance of vibrant and open debate in education](#)

Department for Education, 11 September 2017

[Young Muslims in the UK face enormous social mobility barriers](#)

Social Mobility Commission, 7 September 2017

[Justine Greening: we should not accept Britain as it has been:](#) Sutton

Trust Social Mobility Summit 2017

Department for Education, 12 July 2017

[An analysis of 2 decades of efforts to improve social mobility](#)

Social Mobility Commission, 28 June 2017

[Social Mobility Employer Index announces top 50 UK employers who have taken the most action to improve social mobility within the workplace](#)

Social Mobility Commission, 21 June 2017

[Justine Greening speaks at Social Mobility Employer Index launch](#)

Department for Education, 21 June 2017

[Poll: half of Brits believe background determines success](#)

Social Mobility Commission, 15 June 2017

[Sir Peter Lampl responds to the Social Mobility Commission's Social Mobility Barometer](#)

Sutton Trust, 15 June 2017

[Government housing schemes have little impact on social mobility](#)

Social Mobility Commission, 3 June 2017

[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

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

Social Mobility Commission, 26 January 2017

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

Department for Education and The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, 18 January 2017

[Social mobility in the Northern Powerhouse](#)

Social Mobility Commission, 15 December 2016

[Social inequalities and post-16 choices](#)

Social Mobility Commission, 5 December 2016

[Top firms to be ranked on social mobility](#)

Social Mobility Commission, 24 October 2016

6. Parliamentary material

6.1 Written statement

[Department for Education: Social Mobility Action Plan: Delivering Equality of Opportunity through Education, Written Statement HCWS347](#)

Made on: 14 December 2017

Made by: Justine Greening (The Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities)

Today, 14 December 2017, I am publishing *Unlocking Talent; Fulfilling Potential: A plan for improving social mobility through education*.

This is an ambitious plan to put social mobility at the heart of education policy, helping to make Britain fit for the future. It sits alongside the work of other Departments, and brings together a coherent, concerted approach to begin to level up opportunity right across the education system.

Our education reforms are raising standards in schools: compared to 2010 there are now 1.9 million more pupils in good and outstanding schools. Our introduction of a central focus on phonics is transforming literacy rates for young children. There are record numbers of young people in education or training and more disadvantaged young people going to university.

But, in our country today, where you start still all too often determines where you finish. And while talent is spread evenly across the country, opportunity is not. If we are to make this a country which truly works for everyone, there is much more to be done to deliver equality of opportunity for every child, regardless of who they are or where they live.

We are under no illusion that this will be easy. Nor that education can do it alone. But it does play a vital role – equality of opportunity starts with education.

This plan will deliver action targeted towards the people and the places where it is needed most through five key ambitions. Firstly, there is an overarching ambition to provide additional support to parts of the country that need it to ensure no community is “left behind”. Then there are four life stage ambitions:

Ambition 1: Close the word gap in the early years: children with strong foundations start school in a position to progress, but too many children fall behind early. We need to tackle development gaps, especially key early language and literacy skills, including by boosting

investment in English hubs and professional development for early years professionals.

Ambition 2: Close the attainment gap in school while continuing to raise standards for all: the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers is closing. But these pupils still remain behind their peers. We will build on recent reforms, and raise standards in the areas that need it most. This will include more support for teachers early in their careers, providing clear pathways to progression, and getting more great teachers in areas where there remain significant challenges.

Ambition 3: High quality post-16 education choices for all young people: we have more people going to university than ever before, including more disadvantaged young people, but we need to expand access further to the best universities. We are delivering a skills revolution including working with business to make technical education world class, backed by an extra £500 million pounds investment at the March 2017 Budget.

Ambition 4: Everyone achieving their full potential in rewarding careers: employment has grown, but we need to improve access for young people from lower income backgrounds to networks of advice, information and experiences of work through a new type of partnership with businesses and employers. We will also support adults to retrain/upskill.

To achieve these ambitions, we are shifting the way we work. We are focusing on what works: putting evidence and the heart of our approach, embedding and extending successful reforms, and spreading best practice.

We are also shifting focus on building lasting success through partnership: asking employers, education professionals, voluntary groups and many others to step up and join a united effort across the country to put social mobility at the heart of their work too.

Improving opportunity for the next generation of young people is one of the great challenges of our time; everyone must play their part. But the prize is huge: a country in which talent and potential are what matters more. A country where everyone can be at their best.

The plan will be published on the Department for Education's website and copies will also be placed in the House Libraries.

6.2 Written questions

[Department for Education: Social Mobility: Written question - 117570](#)

Asked by Jo Platt (Leigh) 05 December 2017

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the role of school education in improving social mobility; and if she will make a statement.

Answered by: Mr Robert Goodwill 13 December 2017

Tackling social mobility is the department's priority. There is a substantial body of evidence showing a strong association between family income and a child's educational attainment. Qualifications predict economic and social outcomes later in life.

We will drive social mobility through the whole education system. There are 1.9 million more pupils in good or outstanding schools than in 2010. In December 2016, 91% of schools were rated 'good' or 'outstanding' for their leadership and management in their most recent Ofsted inspection.

Teachers are one of the key drivers of social mobility in our country. Over a single school year, a strong teacher can help disadvantaged young people gain as much as an extra years' worth of learning, compared to those taught by a weaker one.

We have more teachers in our schools than ever before and the number of teachers has kept pace with changing numbers of pupils.

[Department for Education Social Mobility Commission: Written question - 117490](#)

Asked by Angela Rayner_(Ashton-under-Lyne) 05 December 2017

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the timetable is for (a) new Commissioners, (b) a new Chair and (c) a new Vice-Chair to be appointed to the Social Mobility Commission.

Answered by: Mr Robert Goodwill 11 December 2017

The Department for Education is fully committed to the work of the Social Mobility Commission. We plan to begin the public appointments process for a new chair and commissioners in due course. This is a public appointment, and the process will be completed following the procedures set out in the Public Appointments guidance.

[Department for Education Social Mobility Commission: Written question - 117489](#)

Asked by Angela Rayner (Ashton-under-Lyne) 05 December 2017

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which recommendations the Government adopted from the Social Mobility Commission's State of the Nation Report (a) 2015, (b) 2016 and (c) 2017.

Answered by: Mr Robert Goodwill 11 December 2017

We welcome the Social Mobility Commission's State of the Nation annual reports. They are wide-ranging, valuable pieces of work that support this government's commitment to social mobility.

The Commission's analysis has been an important input to the department's work on social mobility.

We are investing £72 million in 12 Opportunity Areas in order to focus effort on areas of the country with the greatest challenges and fewest opportunities. All 12 of these were social mobility coldspots identified by the Commission in its Social Mobility Index published in 2016.

Social mobility is the department's priority and we are making good progress across a range of areas. We will be spending around £6 billion per year on childcare and early education support by 2019-20. The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has narrowed since we introduced the Pupil Premium – now worth around £2.5 billion per year - in 2011. Young pupils from disadvantaged areas are now also entering universities at record rates.

[Department for Education Social Mobility Commission: Finance: Written question - 117488](#)

Asked by Angela Rayner (Ashton-under-Lyne) 05 December 2017

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding was allocated to the Social Mobility Commission from the public purse in (a) 2015-16, (b) 2016-17, (c) 2017-18; and how much such funding is planned to be allocated in (i) 2018-19, (ii) 2019-20 and (iii) 2020-21.

Answered by: Mr Robert Goodwill 11 December 2017

The Department for Education is fully committed to the work of the Social Mobility Commission. We value the wide-ranging work carried out by the Commission, including its research programme, its State of the Nation annual reports, and both the Social Mobility Index and the Social Mobility Employer Index.

The government has previously allocated the following funding to the Commission:

£600,000 in 2015-6.

£589,000 in 2016-7.

£610,000 in 2017-8.

Future funding allocations have not yet been agreed and will be decided by the Department for Education, in consultation with the Commission, at the appropriate time. This is in accordance with normal procedures for non-departmental public bodies.

[Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Libraries: Social Mobility: Written question - 111383](#)

Asked by Kevin Brennan (Cardiff West) 03 November 2017

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the importance of libraries to social mobility.

Answered by: John Glen 13 November 2017

Libraries play an important role in giving everyone opportunities to improve their life chances and achieve their full potential.

In recognition of this, the Government funds the Libraries Taskforce to deliver its 2016 strategy Libraries Deliver. DCMS is also investing £3.9 million in the Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone fund to support innovative library service activity in 2017/18 to benefit disadvantaged people and places in England.

[Department for Education: Professions: Social Mobility: Written question - HL2829](#)

Asked by Lord Storey 01 November 2017

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to increase access to positions in elite professional sectors by young people who attend maintained schools.

Answered by: Lord Agnew of Oulton 15 November 2017

This Government wants to increase social mobility to ensure all young people have the opportunity to access positions in elite professional sectors. To achieve this, we are encouraging social mobility throughout the entire education system.

The Government is improving standards for all schools, including maintained schools. In 2016, we introduced reforms to primary assessment to help pupils achieve the basics in English reading, English writing and maths. In 2017, based on provisional data, 61% of pupils achieved the new more rigorous standard in English reading, English writing and maths. This is an increase of 8% on the 2016 results.

At secondary schools, we are reforming GCSEs to ensure pupils sit qualifications that will enable them to successfully go onto further study or employment. Our new GCSEs will be introduced over the next few years and will provide a more challenging assessment for students. As a part of this new assessment, pupils in 2017 sat GCSEs that were graded 1-9 in English language, English literature and maths for the first time.

The Government wants to identify and support schools that are not meeting our expectations, either by way of the floor standard or coasting definition. Regional School Commissioners work closely with schools to ensure they receive the support they need to help their pupils achieve.

We have seen the highest number of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds entering the most selective universities and higher education institutions. The Government though is keen to improve the prospects for

young people even further. The Director for Fair Access has agreed access agreements for 2018/19, with plans for universities to spend more than £860 million on measures to improve access and success for students from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds. This is an increase from £404 million in 2009. In addition, the Higher Education and Research Act includes a transparency duty requiring all universities to publish applications, offers, acceptance and retention rates broken down by gender, ethnicity and social economic background. This will provide greater accountability for judging the success of universities in offering access to students from all backgrounds.

Higher and Degree Apprenticeships are also widening access to professions, giving young people an alternative to attending university.

Ultimately, it is essential that young people in all schools are offered quality careers advice and guidance. The Government is taking steps to improve access for young people by investing over £70m this year. The Government will be publishing a careers strategy shortly that will build on the best international evidence to improve the quality and coverage of careers guidance.

[Department for Education: Social Mobility: Written question - 6882](#)

Asked by Lyn Brown (West Ham) 04 September 2017

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to page 77 of the Social Mobility Commission's report, Time for Change: an assessment of government policies on social mobility 1997-2017, published on 28 June 2017, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the increase in the reliance on formal qualifications in some professions on the accessibility of those professions to people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Answered by: Mr Robert Goodwill 12 September 2017

The government is committed to supporting all young people to access good careers.

We are improving access to, and the quality of, formal qualifications and training routes. We are investing over half a billion pounds a year of new funding for technical education, centred around T-levels, a set of 15 high-quality technical routes based on employer-designed standards. We are increasing the quality and quantity of apprenticeships to reach our commitment of 3 million apprenticeships by 2020 and making available around £60million to support take-up by individuals from disadvantaged areas. We are also increasing numbers of traineeships to support young people, including those from areas of disadvantage, into apprenticeships and work.

We know that education alone cannot transform social mobility. We support the Social Mobility Employer Index, which celebrates those employers leading the way in opening up access and progression. These employers are already taking important steps to engage young people, introduce fairer recruitment practices, and manage talent.

[Department for Work and Pensions: Social Mobility: Written question - 6884](#)

Asked by Lyn Brown (West Ham) 04 September 2017

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 71 of the Social Mobility Commission's report, Time for Change: an assessment of government policies on social mobility 1997-2017, published on 28 June 2017, what assessment he has made of the effect of welfare reforms and policies encouraging labour market flexibility on (a) rates of labour force participation, (b) job quality, (c) productivity and (d) worker progression.

Answered by: Damian Hinds 11 September 2017

The Department has made no formal assessment of Labour Market Impacts in direct relation to the Social Mobility Report.

We do publish Impact assessments of welfare policies which include an assessment of their labour market impact. These can be found on the link below.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?keywords=&publication_filter_option=impact-assessments&topics%5B%5D=all&departments%5B%5D=department-for-work-pensions&official_document_status=all&world_locations%5B%5D=all&from_date=&to_date=

[Department for Education Social Mobility: Written question - 7216](#)

Asked by Lyn Brown (West Ham) 04 September 2017

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to page 38 of the Social Mobility Commission Report, Time for Change: an assessment of government policies on social mobility 1997-2017, what assessment she has made of the effect of (a) economic and (b) geographic isolation on social mobility.

Answered by: Mr Robert Goodwill 09 September 2017

Tackling social mobility is at the heart of the government's ambition to make Britain a country that works for everyone.

We recognise that where you are born, and the circumstances into which you are born, can still too often determine where you get to in life. In some parts of the country, there is entrenched disadvantage, with less access to good school places or employment opportunities. This can act as barriers to social mobility.

But we are not prepared to accept Britain as it has been. That is why last year we launched our £72 million Opportunity Areas programme, which brings together local businesses, schools and councils in 12 social mobility 'coldspots' across the country to create better opportunities for the children, young people and adults who live there, and to learn lessons about what works in these areas.

[Department for Education: Social Mobility: Written question - 4493](#)

Asked by Angela Rayner (Ashton-under-Lyne) 12 July 2017

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make a statement in response to the report of the Social Mobility Commission, Social mobility between 1997 and 2017: time for change, published on 28 June 2017.

Answered by: Mr Robert Goodwill 17 July 2017

We welcome the Commission's report, published on 28 June, which considers efforts to improve social mobility over the last twenty years. The Commission rightly concludes that too often life chances can be determined not by effort and talents but where you come from, your parents' situation and what school you attend. The Department will set out further details on policy to tackle this social injustice in due course.

Thanks to the Government's reforms, there are 1.8 million more pupils in good or outstanding schools than in 2010, and we are delivering three million apprenticeship places, opening up access to our higher education system and investing £500 million a year into technical education.

Improving social mobility requires support from all parts of society: government, employers and civic organisations. Last year, we launched our £72 million Opportunity Area programme. In these 12 social mobility 'coldspots' we are working with a range of local partners to break the link between background and destination. We know these areas face some of the most entrenched challenges, as described by the Social Mobility Commission's Index last year. Our approach here goes beyond what the Department and central government can do – extending to local authorities, schools, academy sponsors, local and national businesses, Local Enterprise Partnerships, FE colleges, universities, the voluntary sector, and more.

I spoke at a Westminster Hall Debate about government policies on social mobility and the Commission's 'Time for Change' report on 11 July. The debate and my speech are available in Hansard at this weblink: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-07-11/debates/D9AB2665-13E3-4AE4-90CD-528E30853ED0/SocialMobility>

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

Asked by Patricia Gibson (North Ayrshire and Arran) 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 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.

6.3 Oral questions

[Social Mobility](#)

HC Deb 11 Dec 2017, c 3-4

James Cartlidge (South Suffolk) (Con): 1. What steps her Department is taking to enhance social mobility. [902843]

Nigel Huddleston (Mid Worcestershire) (Con): 22. What steps her Department is taking to enhance social mobility. [902865]

The Secretary of State for Education (Justine Greening): We have made significant and ambitious reforms to the education system since 2010. We have expanded childcare provision, raised school standards, transformed apprenticeships and increased university access. We will continue to drive social mobility through the whole education system and beyond into careers. Equality of opportunity is essential to make our country one that works for everyone, not just the privileged few.

James Cartlidge: In light of the excellent news that we have seen the best improvement in reading standards in our schools for 15 years, not least due to the excellent work of the Minister for School Standards, my right hon. Friend the Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (Nick Gibb), does my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State agree that no single measure can boost social mobility more than this kind of dramatic improvement in education standards?

Justine Greening: Absolutely, I do. In fact, it was put forward in the teeth of opposition from many Opposition Members. Last week's international reading results showed not only that reading in England has improved for pupils from all backgrounds, but crucially that low-performing pupils are gaining the most rapidly. Just 58% of pupils reached expected reading standards in the first national phonic screening check in 2012. That figure is now 81%. There has been no welcome from the Opposition for this progress.

Nigel Huddleston: Does the Secretary of State agree that the recent Social Mobility Commission report showed that social mobility is an issue not just for inner cities but for our shire counties, including Worcestershire? Is that not further justification for a fairer funding formula to redress some of the relative underfunding of so many of our rural schools?

Justine Greening: My hon. Friend is right. This was an important funding reform to ensure that all children are invested in properly. On

opportunity areas, we are focusing our effort on areas of the country with the greatest challenges and the fewest opportunities. We have invested £72 million in opportunity areas, some in rural areas. My hon. Friend is absolutely right to flag up the fact that talent is spread evenly, but opportunity is not. We are determined to change that.

Mr Speaker: One Member of the House is so keen to demonstrate her commitment to equality that she is wearing what I will call a rainbow pullover, with the rainbow symbol of equality. I am referring to the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mary Creagh), to whose contribution we look forward with eager anticipation.

Nic Dakin (Scunthorpe) (Lab): Sixth form colleges are well recognised for their role in delivering social mobility, yet that is now at risk with an underfunding of £1,200 per student, compared with 11 to 16 funding. Will the Secretary of State act to address this before it is too late?

Justine Greening: As the hon. Gentleman will know, we are putting more money into making sure that post-16 education is consistently gold standard, regardless of whether young people follow academic or technical education routes. I am sure he will have welcomed the announcement in the Budget a couple of weeks ago, of extra premiums for maths students.

Sir Vince Cable (Twickenham) (LD): Since the Secretary of State was the only member of the Cabinet to get a pass mark from the Social Mobility Commission, will she now cement her reputation by intervening to stop the catastrophic decline in apprenticeship starts?

Justine Greening: I will set out a social mobility action plan later this week. On the right hon. Gentleman's claims about apprenticeships, starts remain on track to reach 3 million by 2020. There have already been 1.1 million since May 2015. Rather than talking them down, it would be better if he talked our education system up.

Robert Halfon (Harlow) (Con): I congratulate the Minister for School Standards on the incredible work done on young children's reading. On social justice, will my right hon. Friend consider providing 30 hours of free childcare for foster children, in line with those of working parents, by dropping the eligibility earnings cap for free childcare to £65,000 from the existing £100,000 mark?

Justine Greening: The 30 hours free childcare policy has been incredibly popular with parents. Nine out of 10 say they very much like it and welcome it. We are actively looking at the issue my hon. Friend mentions in relation to foster children.

Justin Madders (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab): As chair of the all-party group on social mobility, I am very concerned to read the Social Mobility Commission's report and the subsequent comments from the outgoing chair. Will the Secretary of State, or one of her ministerial team, agree to meet the all-party group to discuss where we go from here?

Justine Greening: I hope the hon. Gentleman will be able to welcome the plan I will set out later this week. I think the time has come for us all to move on from talking about the problem, which we have done a lot for many, many years, to deciding that we have it within us to work together up and down the country to now tackle it.

Tracy Brabin (Batley and Spen) (Lab/Co-op): I agree with the right hon. Member for Harlow (Robert Halfon). Last week the Minister for Children and Families used the 30 hours of free childcare as an example of the Government's commitment to social mobility. He knows that foster children are some of the most vulnerable, often starting school having already fallen behind their peers, and that many would benefit from access to high-quality early years education. Why have they been excluded from the 30-hours offer, and will the Secretary of State tell us when this discrimination will end?

Justine Greening: I am pleased that the hon. Lady implicitly recognises that the 30-hours policy is a good thing, which, ideally, would be extended to more children. As I just said to my right hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Robert Halfon), we will be looking at that.

[Business of the House](#)

HC Deb 7 December 2017, c1218-1220

Valerie Vaz (showing related extracts, full text includes more questions): Even as we acknowledge the 75th anniversary of the publication of the Beveridge report, the board of the Government's Social Mobility Commission resigns en masse, including a highly respected Conservative former Secretary of State for Education, who is now in the other place. The board has said that

"the government seems unable to devote the necessary energy and focus to the social mobility agenda".

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's "UK Poverty 2017" report, published a few days later, nearly one in three disabled people are living in poverty, while 30% of children and 16% of pensioners live in relative poverty; that figure has risen by 3% in recent years. When will we have an urgent debate on the state of poverty in the UK, and when will there be new appointments to the board of the Social Mobility Commission?

Andrea Leadsom (showing related extracts, full text includes more questions): The hon. Lady talked about the Social Mobility Commission. She is right to point out that Alan Milburn made a great show and dance of resigning from a job and role that was actually coming to an end. I point out to the hon. Lady the amazing achievement just this week on children's literacy in our schools in England: England is joint eighth in the world for reading as a result of this Government's changes to phonics and the amazing dedication of teachers across the country.

As shown by our Green Paper on mental health, we on this side of the House are determined to ensure that there is parity of esteem between mental and physical health. Six hundred thousand more disabled people are in work now than in 2010. That is a record of achievement that we on this side of the House are proud of. Of course there are 600,000 fewer children in workless households than in 2010. Those are all things designed to support young people. They are measures that we on this side of the House have put in place and have been determined to make progress on.

[Rural Poverty](#)

HL Deb 5 Dec 2017, c 954

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: To ask Her Majesty's Government what actions they plan to take to tackle rural poverty.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Lord Gardiner of Kimble) (Con): My Lords, government policy is based on economic prosperity and helping people out of poverty. The Government are again increasing the national living wage and tax thresholds, investing more than £9 billion in affordable housing, introducing the warm home discount, reforming the energy company obligation and providing 30 hours of free childcare. All these are intended to help people and families with low incomes across the country.

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch (Lab): I thank the Minister for that reply, but he will have seen the latest figures showing that UK poverty levels are increasing, with a 30% increase for children just in the past year. This is particularly damaging in rural areas, which are already being left behind economically in comparison to growth in the cities. This is a direct result of the Government's policies. We know that rural employment is too low, low skilled and insecure. The abolition of the Agricultural Wages Board is making matters worse for those who work on the land. Further, young people in rural areas do not have easy access to decent schools, training opportunities or post-16 education. When are the Government going to accept their responsibility to tackle rural poverty and the lack of social mobility in these areas, which is holding their prosperity back?

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Lords, I entirely agree that we need to advance on these subjects. That is why I am pleased to say that since 2010 we have 600,000 fewer people in absolute poverty—a record level—200,000 fewer children in absolute poverty, 300,000 fewer working-age adults in absolute poverty, 3 million more people in work and 954,000 fewer workless homes. That is the way in which we will ensure prosperity across the country and, in fact, it is why rural areas have lower unemployment. We are working extremely hard on a range

of issues to ensure rural prosperity; the Government are doing all they can on that.

Baroness Eaton (Con): My Lords, can my noble friend update your Lordships' House on childcare policies and their impact on rural communities?

A noble Lord: I bet he's got an answer to that.

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Well, of course I have got an answer to that, my Lords. I have good hearing. Childcare is a hugely important part of the beginning of anyone's journey, and that applies both to working families and to children. Two of the areas trialled on the childcare provision were in rural counties, to ensure rural proofing. In fact, there are 15,500 more teachers working in state-funded schools in England than there were in 2010. I am sure that all noble Lords agree that that is a very good thing.

The Duke of Somerset (CB): Does the Minister agree that the speedy rollout of truly fast broadband in the countryside, not the phantom speeds bandied about by Openreach, would lead to a much greater supply of jobs and thus an increase in prosperity?

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Lords, this morning I had a meeting about rural enterprise with many of the interested parties. A leader of one local enterprise partnership said, "If we can crack connectivity, we will have cracked almost everything". I entirely agree. This is a challenge in rural communities and for business. We are on track, with 95% of UK homes and businesses scheduled to have access to superfast broadband by the end of this year, and are seeking to increase that to 97% over the next few years. However, the universal service obligation is important as a safety net and we are looking at all sorts of innovative ways of getting to hard-to-reach areas.

The Lord Bishop of Winchester: My Lords, housing is a key factor in evaluating poverty. In the county of Hampshire alone, over 20,000 people are on council-house waiting lists, with over 4,000 of them in the New Forest. Given that the Government have recently announced significant new funding for new housebuilding and new affordable homes, can the Minister give us a clear indication of the expected spending on homes for social rent in rural areas?

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The right reverend Prelate raises another important issue, that of affordable housing in the countryside. Between 2010 and 2017, 119,000 affordable homes were delivered in rural local authorities in England. We want to do better, which is why the Government have increased funding for the 2016 to 2021 affordable homes programme in England to more than £9 billion. Clearly, I—and other Ministers—want to ensure that rural housing associations bid for this programme, because it is important to ensure it for multigenerational situations in villages.

Lord Watts (Lab): My Lords, the Government set out a whole batch of measures that they are proposing to deal with poverty, yet poverty is increasing. What is going wrong with the Government's policy?

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The answer to all these issues is a growing economy. Last year, we were the fastest-growing G7 economy. That is a very strong point. After all, it is through a growing and successful economy that we will do all the things that we want and need to do. That is why £70 billion is being devoted to low-income families and why we have record low unemployment. That is a very good thing.

Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville (LD): My Lords, with ever-increasing house prices in rural areas, local working families are priced out of the market. The right-to-buy scheme has not led to new housing replacing those sold. There are now large numbers of essential workers unable to afford to live in rural areas. Do the Government agree that it is time for them to provide homes for essential workers, such as care workers, teachers, nurses, firefighters and front-line police officers?

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Lords, that is why I mentioned the £9 billion in the affordable homes programme scheme. We did this precisely because we want people working in the countryside to be able to ensure that communities tick and that they have affordable homes. Last week I was at a very interesting rural affordable housing development in Warwickshire—another fine example of the many sensitively built and small-scale schemes doing exactly what we need to do to keep villages vibrant.

Lord Elystan-Morgan (CB): My Lords, while rural poverty is of course of immense importance, does the Minister not agree that as far as rural areas are concerned there is a comprehensive disadvantage? In almost any heading of amenity they come a long way down in the list. It is a question of not just poverty but a whole range of amenities.

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Lords, as a Government we want to ensure that disadvantage is eradicated, but I am very proud of coming from a rural background. Rural areas are wonderful places to live, work and play. They are beacons of excellence in looking after our natural environment. In truth, unemployment, poverty and homelessness are lower in rural areas. I very much want us to ensure that all these indices are reduced wherever we are in the United Kingdom.

[Business of the House](#)

HC Deb 30 Nov 2017, c 493

Stephanie Peacock (Barnsley East) (Lab): Only 10% of children on free school meals in Barnsley go on to university. Can we have a debate in Government time about social mobility in Britain, as our future economic success depends on all children having the opportunities to succeed?

Andrea Leadsom: The hon. Lady is absolutely right that children are the future and that we need to do everything we can to support them.

Making their lives better than those of the generation before is our aspiration. I am sure that she welcomes the fact, as we all do, that there are now 1.8 million more children in good and outstanding schools than there were in 2010, and that there are more than 3.4 million apprenticeships for young people since 2010. It is absolutely vital that we do everything we can to support their future as we move into this enormous industrial change that gives us the opportunity to build the industries of the future.

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

HC Deb 20 Mar 2017, c 634

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.

6.4 Debates

[Inequalities debate](#)

HL Deb 30 Nov 2017

[Social Mobility](#)

HC Deb 11 Jul 2017 c 35-62WH

[Social Inequality \(Children’s Centres\)](#)

HC Deb 11 Jul 2017 cc27-35WH

[Education and Local Services](#)

HC Deb 27 Jun 2017 c 477-564

[School Funding: North-east of England](#)

HC Deb 26 Apr 2017 c 503-527WH

[Technical and Further Education Bill](#)

HC Deb 19 Apr 2017 c713-731

[Higher Education: Loans](#)

HL Deb 5 Apr 2017 c1101-1118

[Educational Attainment: Boys](#)

HL Deb 30 Mar 2017 c65-81GC

[Social Mobility Commission: State of the Nation Report](#)

HC Deb 23 Mar 2017 c 1000-1031

[Intergenerational Fairness](#)

HC Deb 28 Feb 2017 c 230-266

[Social Mobility](#)

HL Deb 20 Feb 2017 c 3-4

[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

7. Further reading

7.1 Reports

[Improving social mobility through education \(policy paper\)](#), Department for Education, 14 December 2017

[Inequalities in later life](#), Centre for Aging Better, 6 December 2017

[UK Poverty 2017](#), Helen Barnard, The JRF Analysis Unit, 4 December 2017

[Better Apprenticeships](#), Alison Fuller, Chiara Cavaglia, Guglielmo Ventura, Lorna Unwin, Sandra McNally, Sutton Trust, 30 November 2017

[The class ceiling: Increasing access to the leading professions](#), APPG on Social Mobility, 2017

[Chain Effects 2017](#), Becky Francis and Merryn Hutchings, The Sutton Trust, 30 June 2017

[Time for change: an assessment of government policies on social mobility 1997 to 2017](#), Social Mobility Commission, 28 June 2017

[Social Mobility and University Careers Services](#), A report by the Bridge Group funded by the UPP Foundation, May 2017

[Apprenticeship participation reaches a record high – but wider adult education and training continues to decline](#), Resolution Foundation, 26 June 2017

[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

7.2 Library briefings

[Recent policy developments: Grammar schools in England](#), House of Commons Library, 5 July 2017

[Early Intervention](#), House of Commons Library, 26 June 2017

[Oxbridge 'elitism'](#), House of Commons Library, 19 June 2017

[Part-time undergraduate students in England](#), House of Commons Library, CBP-7966, 13 June 2017

[Millennials](#), House of Commons Library, 11 April 2017

[Grammar school statistics](#), House of Commons Library, 10 March 2017

[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

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

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