



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-2019-0142, 10 June 2019

Social Mobility and Treasury reform

Summary

This debate pack has been prepared ahead of the debate on Social mobility and Treasury reform, to be held in Westminster Hall on Tuesday 11 June at 9.30AM. This debate will be led by [Justine Greening](#) MP.

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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.

1. Social Mobility

1.1 Introduction

There are several important distinctions to be made in the study of social mobility, notably between:

- **intra-generational mobility** - the extent to which a person's 'social positioning' can change within their lifetime – and **inter-generational mobility** – the extent to which a person's 'social positioning' is determined by that of their parents
- **absolute social mobility**—the percentage of the population who make it from one class into another—and **relative social mobility**—the likelihood that anyone from a given social class will make it to the top.
- **Individual mobility** - when there is a finite number of places in each social class, so that for one person to move up, another must move down - and **structural mobility** – as society changes, job opportunities change, so, for example, as an industrial society becomes a consumer society the number of white-collar jobs increases, creating 'room at the top' for non-traditional applicants.
- **Occupational class** – the social and cultural focus of sociologists such as John Goldthorpe & Erzsébet Bukodi at the University of Oxford - and **income** – the economic focus of economists such as Jo Blanden and Steve Machin at the London School of Economics.

Measurement of social mobility is frequently based on changes such as social class, educational attainment, income and poverty between generations (absolute mobility). In a 2007 report for the Sutton Trust¹, Jo Blanden and Steve Machin observed a decline in intergenerational mobility between the cohort born in 1958 and the one born in 1970, with no improvement in the generations following it. Opportunity to get on in life was greater for the 'baby boomers' than for any subsequent cohort.

Within generational differences (relative mobility) are differences by ethnicity, gender and geographical location etc:

- Different generations have seen different mobility opportunities for women compared to men as their participation in education and the workplace has changed.
- Likewise different ethnic groups have over time experienced differing life chances.
- Opportunities for social mobility have varied across the country over time with changes in business and industry.

These topics have been covered both by the [Intergenerational Commission](#) and the Social Mobility Commission, notably in its 2016 report [Ethnicity, Gender and Social Mobility](#) and [The State of the Nation report 2017](#) which focuses on geography.

As a result of concern about falling social mobility in more recent years, social mobility has become a prominent social policy objective for a succession of governments.

¹ [Recent Changes in Intergenerational Mobility in Britain](#), Blanden and Machin, 2007

The Labour Governments 1997 – 2010

The Labour government of 1997 had an explicit focus on education from the start, and the eradication of child poverty was launched as a poverty goal by Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1999.² The pursuit of social mobility as a policy aim first arose at the end of his government's second term. Ahead of the 2005 General Election, in a [speech to the IPPR on 11 October 2004](#), Tony Blair spoke of his "vision of a true opportunity society replacing the traditional welfare state". He continued:

We have made real progress in Britain in the past 7 ½ year. But the truth about the country is that for almost 30 years, social mobility has stayed relatively constant. I want to see social mobility, as it did for the decades after the war, rising once again, a dominant feature of British life.

In the Labour government's third term social mobility became a prominent policy, supported by initiatives such as the [Leitch Review on Skills](#) (2006). Gordon Brown extended social mobility as a policy goal, calling it a 'national crusade' and a 'great moral endeavour'.³ Following the financial crisis of 2008 his government published the White Paper [New Opportunities: Fair chances for the future](#) (January 2009). In the foreword the Prime Minister wrote:

With the measures in this White Paper we will not just manage the downturn fairly, but make of it the beginning of a new era for our nation – with an historic commitment to the greatest possible achievement of modern progressive politics as we lay the foundations of true social mobility and social justice in modern Britain.

With policy initiatives in infrastructure and industry as well as families, early years, education and skills it aimed to enable an 'upwardly mobile society'.

In 2010 Parliament passed the [Equalities Act](#) containing ten protected characteristics, [Part one](#) of the Act set out the "Public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities". With the change in government following the general election of that year this duty was not brought into force, though it has subsequently been in Scotland.⁴

The [Child Poverty Act 2010](#), which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2010, fulfilled Tony Blair's commitment of 1999, reiterated by Gordon Brown in 2008, to enshrine in legislation the target of 'eradicating' child poverty by 2020, and initiated a [Child Poverty Commission](#) (A forerunner of the SMC) . The bill received cross-party support, but the Conservatives argued that the child poverty targets should focus on the underlying causes of poverty.

The Coalition Government 2010 - 2015

The new Conservative – Liberal Democrat Coalition government led by David Cameron amended the Act to expand the remit of the Commission to also provide advice on, and monitor progress towards improving, social mobility. This became the responsibility of Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, who in a speech on 18 August 2010 explained that "our long-term social policy goal is social mobility" because "fairness means social mobility".⁵

² [Beveridge lecture](#), 18 March 1999, Toynbee Hall

³ [Brown's social mobility 'crusade'](#), BBC News, 23 June 2008

⁴ Scottish Government, [Fairer Scotland Action Plan](#), 5 October 2017

⁵ Cabinet Office, [Deputy Prime Minister's speech on social mobility](#), 18 August 2010

On 5 April 2011 he launched the government's [Social Mobility Strategy](#). Its policy paper, [Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers](#), proposed a 'life cycle approach' which would "tackle the causes of poverty rather than just the symptoms", supported by the new commission:

As part of this agenda, a new Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission has been established, strengthening the role of the Child Poverty Commission in holding the Government to account. The Commission will report to Parliament and monitor and drive progress towards ending child poverty, improving life chances and increasing social mobility.

[Schedule 13](#) of the [Welfare Reform and Work Act 2012](#) amended the [Child Poverty Act 2010](#) and set out the provisions for a new Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission [SMCPC].

Former Labour minister Alan Milburn was appointed chairman (or 'tsar', as the role was popularly known), and the Commission produced [a series of reports](#) from 2013 to 2016, when, following the [Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016](#) it was renamed the Social Mobility Commission (SMC) by the new Conservative majority government.

1.2 The Social Mobility 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.⁶

Under Schedule 1 of the [Child Poverty Act 2010](#) (now amended by [Section 6](#) of the [Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016](#)) the SMC is "appointed by a Minister of the Crown" and is an advisory non-departmental public body under the Department of Education.

Under the Chairmanship of Alan Milburn, the SMC published the first annual report under the amended Act on 28 November 2017: [State of the Nation Report 2017](#). By the time of publication, Alan Milburn had been told (on 22 November 2017) that: "although the post [of chair] would be readvertised, he would not be expected to apply".⁷

At the beginning of December 2017, the four remaining members of the Commission: Rt. Hon Alan Milburn (Chair), Baroness Gillian Shephard (Deputy Chair) David Johnson and Paul Gregg all stood down.⁸ In his [resignation letter](#), Alan Milburn stated:

I have little hope of the current government making the progress I believe is necessary to bring about a fairer Britain. It seems unable to commit to the future of the Commission as an independent body or to give due priority to the social mobility challenge facing our nation.

[...] it has become obvious that the government as a whole is unable to commit the same level of support. It is understandably focused on Brexit and does not seem to have the necessary bandwidth to ensure that the rhetoric of healing social division is matched with the reality.

⁶ More information on the responsibilities of the Commission is provided on the [gov.uk website](#).

⁷ [HC Deb 4 December 2017 c696](#) Urgent Question on the Social Mobility Commission

⁸ [HC Deb 4 December 2017 c691](#) Urgent Question on the Social Mobility Commission

1.3 A new Social Mobility Commission

Following an endorsement of her appointment by the Education Select Committee, a new chair of the SMC, Dame Martina Milburn was [appointed on 13 July 2018](#), followed by [12 new commissioners](#) as the SMC was “[relaunched](#)” (11 December 2018). The [minutes from the first meeting of the new board](#) outlined the SMC’s future position and the [responsibilities of the Social Mobility Commission](#) can be found on the SMC website:

We are responsible for:

- publishing an annual report setting out our views on the progress made towards improving social mobility in the United Kingdom
- promoting social mobility in England, for example, by challenging employers, the professions, universities and schools to play their part in promoting social mobility
- carrying out and publishing research in relation to social mobility
- providing advice to ministers (at their request) on how to improve social mobility in England - this advice must then be published

The first annual report following the appointment of the new board: [Social mobility in Great Britain - state of the nation 2018 to 2019](#) was published on 30 April 2019. The press release announcing the publication of the report provides a summary of the SMC’s findings:

Extensive analysis of new Office for National Statistics (ONS) data shows the wide gap in school attainment and income between the rich and the poor has barely shifted. Being born privileged still means you usually remain privileged.

The better off are nearly 80% more likely to end up in professional jobs than those from a working-class background. Even when people from disadvantaged backgrounds land a professional job, they earn 17% less than their privileged colleagues.⁹

1.4 Analysis from the SMC

The then Social and Mobility Child Poverty Commission published its first State of the Nation report in 2013. Prior to the release of the 2018 to 2019 report the annual reports can be found on the SMC website:

[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:

[Social Mobility Barometer 2018 report](#)

This report looks at the UK public’s attitude to social mobility in 2018. In the foreword to the report Dame Martina Milburn states: “we are relaunching the Social Mobility Commission with a renewed focus on improving social mobility and driving real action across sectors”. Amongst the main findings the poll shows:

⁹ SMC, [Class privilege remains entrenched as social mobility stagnates](#), 30 April 2019

- Nearly half of people (46%) say that where you end up in society is largely determined by who your parents are
- It is typically younger generations who feel more acutely that background determines where you end up, with almost half (48%) of 25-49 year olds agreeing with this statement compared with 38% of those aged 65 and over.
- Three quarters of people (75%) say poorer people are less likely to go to a top university and 64% say they have less opportunity to get into a professional career.

[State of the nation 2017](#)

The fifth annual 'State of the nation' report from the Social Mobility Commission assessed the progress that has made towards improving social mobility. It introduced the [social mobility index](#) which ranks all English local authorities into hotspots and coldspots, using a range of 16 indicators for every life stage from the early years through to working lives. It found that there is a social mobility geographical divide.

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.

[Social mobility policies between 1997 and 2017: time for change](#)

This report looks at various public policies over the last 20 years and assesses the impact they have had on social mobility in Britain finding that:¹⁰

Two decades of government efforts to improve social mobility have failed to deliver enough progress in reducing the gap between Britain's 'haves and have nots' [...] It says that over 20 years new divides have opened up in Britain, across geographies, income groups and generations - and that many policies of the past are no longer 'fit for purpose'.

A list of all recent publications is provided on [its website](#).

1.5 Social Mobility Index by Constituency (SMIC)

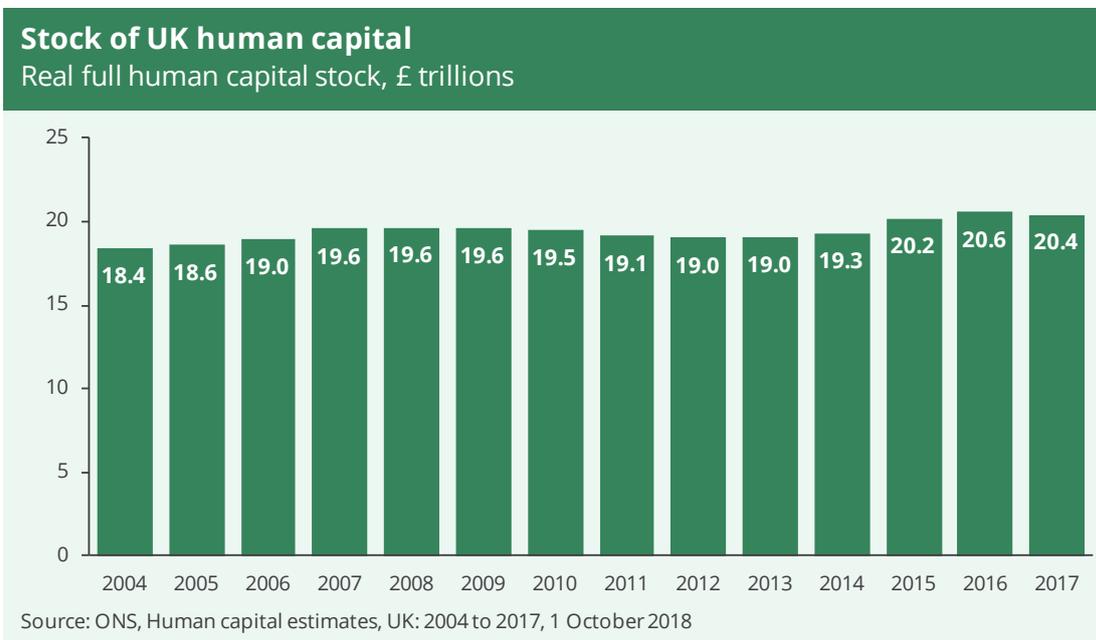
The HC Library Briefing Paper [Social Mobility Index by Constituency \(SMIC\)](#) provides local level estimates for Westminster Parliamentary constituencies in England (constituency data is not available for Wales and Scotland). The SMIC provides an indication of how likely a person from a disadvantaged background in each constituency is to progress to a higher social status later in life. There are also two dashboards presenting relevant SMIC data for a constituency of choice.

¹⁰ SMC, [An analysis of 2 decades of efforts to improve social mobility](#), 28 June 2017

2. Human Capital and HM Treasury

In 2001, the OECD produced a report called [The Well-being of Nations: The role of human and social capital](#). This report argued that changes in global economic and social structures mean that people’s skills and knowledge should be valued as a contribution towards economic development, alongside the other factors in economic growth (such as physical capital and natural resources).

As a result, the concept of **human capital** – as the OECD defines it, the “knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being” – has gained traction in recent years. The ONS produces regular estimates of the stock of human capital in the UK. Their most recent release, in October 2018, indicated that the total stock of human capital in the UK (in real terms) was worth £20.4 trillion in 2017, slightly down from £20.6 trillion the year before:¹¹



Although human capital is tracked by the ONS, it does not appear within Government accounts as an asset. This is because the accounting systems used by the Government, in line with international standards, have a fairly narrow definition of capital assets – for example, only 2% of the public sector balance sheet as reported by the Whole of Government Accounts is attributed to intangible or knowledge assets.¹²

The Government has started making some moves towards changing this. In March 2019, Chief Secretary to the Treasury Elizabeth Truss said in a speech that the Government is “working with the Office of National Statistics on valuing Human Capital” and will be “using [it] as a lens for the Spending Review” to “help direct resources to improve people’s opportunities while keeping taxes low”.¹³

The ONS has also been working on a review on human capital; Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond confirmed in May that “the ONS has in fact delivered its

¹¹ ONS, [Human capital estimates, UK: 2004 to 2017](#), 1 October 2018

¹² HM Treasury, [Whole of Government Accounts, 2017 to 2018](#), paragraph 1.35, 23 May 2019

¹³ HM Treasury, [‘What should the Spending Review focus on?’: speech by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury](#), 19 March 2019

draft report, and the question of how we measure and value human capital will be at the centre of the spending review process.”¹⁴ Elizabeth Truss mentioned the review again in her evidence before the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee in June, and explained its purpose in some more detail:

For the first time, in this spending review we are looking at human capital: to what extent does spending in a government department contribute to human capital? I define that roughly as people being able to live a good life. It is difficult; there are various proxy measures for it, but that is fundamentally what it is about. For the first time, the ONS has produced a report on human capital, looking at some of the technicalities of exactly how you measure it.

We have asked departments to look at how all their programmes perform, whether that is the troubled families programme, primary school education or health visitors. We want to know how much that is contributing to helping people to live a better life. The fact is that Governments carry out numerous programmes over the years, and some are more effective than others. A good Government should look at which ones do not work, what we should stop and where we should put the extra money. I am currently receiving analysis of the outcomes of the troubled families programme, the impact of which looks pretty good. Early years is another area that we are looking at. Where do we put the incremental pound in to improve people’s human capital? We are looking at it from that perspective.¹⁵

The ONS has also published a [Human capital workplan](#) setting out the actions it plans to take, including carrying out research into how best to incorporate measures of human capital into the National Accounts framework.

¹⁴ HC Deb [21 May 2019 c616](#)

¹⁵ House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs, [Oral evidence: The spending review](#), 4 June 2019, Q7

3. Press Articles

[Corbyn to drop social mobility as Labour goal in favour of opportunity for all](#)

Heather Stewart, *The Guardian*, 8 June 2019

[Social justice, not merely social mobility, is Labour's priority.](#)

Angela Rayner, *New Statesman*, 8 June 2019

[Proposals to reform UK student finance would reverse social mobility,](#)

Justine Greening, *FT*, 2 June 2019

[Oxford University must become more diverse. But we're already on the right path](#)

Alan Rusbridger, 21 May 2019

["Only a mutually supportive nation is a socially mobile nation"](#)

David Lammy, *New Statesman*, 15 May 2019

[Tackling inequality means addressing divisions that go way beyond income](#)

Gaby Hinsliff, *Guardian*, 14 May 2019

[Millennials are some of the worst hit by social mobility decline in the UK](#)

Jo Blande, Stephen Machin and Sumaiya Rahman, *LSE Blogs*, 8 May 2019

[Working class professionals feel forced to hide "embarrassing" background says Alan Milburn](#)

Rachel Wearmouth, *Huffington Post*, 7 May 2019

[Brexit overshadows UK mobility crisis](#)

Alan Milburn, *FT*, 4 May 2019

[Commission: 'Double disadvantage' faced by working-class disabled people](#)

John Pring, *Disability News Service*, 2 May 2019

[Increase 16-19 funding by 'significant amount', Social mobility Commission urges](#)

Billy Camden, *FE Weekly*, 30 April 2019

[Nurture diversity to boost social mobility](#)

Justine Greening, *Big Issue*, 26 April 2019

[Finance workers three times as likely to have parents in the same sector](#)

Jasper Jolly, *Guardian*, 22 April 2019

[Wanted: newsrooms that truly reflect modern Britain,](#)

Jane Martinson, *Guardian*, 21 April 2019

[Universities are about social mobility. This needs to be recognised](#)

Justine Greening, *Guardian*, 17 April 2019

[The school's appeal system in cementing inequalities](#)

Emily Hunt, *Schools Week*, 11 April 2019

[An EU tax credit to preserve incentives for investment in human capital in the context of intra-EU migration](#)

Debora Revoltella, Philipp-Bastian Brutscher, Patricia Wruuck, *VOX CEPR policy portal*, 5 April 2019

[Social mobility remains a myth for our working-class children](#)

Sathnam Sanghera, *Times*, 8 March 2019

[Poorer young workers face 'class ceiling'](#)

Jessica Elgot, *Guardian*, 1 February 2019

[Cutting tuition fees won't help poorer students](#)

David Blunkett, *Guardian*, 18 January 2019

[Is it time to trim the UK Treasury?](#)

Larry Elliot, *Guardian*, 13 January 2019

[Britain's social mobility problem has been misunderstood- education is not the great leveller](#)

Erzsebet Bukodi, *The Conversation*, 8 January 2019

[The Conservatives' mission must be to give control back to the people from the state](#)

Liz Truss, *Telegraph*, 5 January 2019

[David Cameron, David Beckham, and the UK's social mobility problem](#)

Lee Elliot Major and Stephen Macin, *LSE Blogs*, 3 January 2019

[Young most highly sceptical of social mobility](#)

Seam Coughlan, *BBC*, 11 December 2018

[Social mobility Tsar warns cuts to tuition fees may not help poorest students](#)

Michael Savage, *Observer*, 9 December 2018

[Business schools boost UK social mobility, sector claims](#)

Jonathan Moules, *FT*, 16 November 2018

[Do schools help or hinder social mobility?](#)

Sean Coughlan, *BBC*, 31 October 2018

[The Budget must address the social mobility crisis gripping Britain](#)

Justine Greening, *Huffington Post*, 29 October 2018

[Human capital should not be taken for granted](#)

Philip Aldrick, *Times*, 23 October 2018

['Parents' social mobility cuts likelihood of children turning to violent crime'](#)

Robert Booth, *Guardian*, 9 October 2018

[Social mobility requires far more than a good education](#)

Lee Elliot Major and Stephen Machin, *Guardian*, 27 September 2018

[The social mobility Tsar should aim to get decent life chances for everyone](#)

Lyn Brown, *Huffington Post*, 7 August 2018

4. Press releases and speeches

[Prime Minister: Augar review launch](#)

Prime Minister, 30 May 2019

[Damian Hinds: 'Character, resilience, and social mobility'](#)

Department for Education, 27 May 2019

[Elizabeth Trust, 'What should the spending review focus on?'](#)

HM Treasury, 19 March 2019

[Government drive to boost attainment in North East schools](#)

Department for Education, 14 March 2019

[Adult Education Budget \(AEB\) low-wage trial](#)

Education and Skills Funding Agency, 7 March 2019

[Social Mobility Commission relaunch](#)

Social Mobility Commission, 11 December 2018

[Rishi Sunak: Social mobility and county councils](#)

20 November 2018

[New Social Mobility Commissioners appointed](#)

Department for Education, 31 October 2018

[Human capital workplan](#)

ONS, 29 October 2018

[Human capital project](#)

World Bank, October 2018

[Beyond GDP: How ONS is developing measures of the UK economy](#)

ONS, 1 October 2018

[Damian Hinds: Vision for boosting social mobility](#)

Department for Education, 31 July 2018

[Elizabeth Truss: Opportunities for the next generation](#)

HM Treasury, 17 May 2018

[Ministry of Justice: Social mobility action plan](#)

Ministry of Justice, 21 February 2018

[Anne Milton: Social mobility and post-16 education](#)

Department for Education, 17 January 2018

5. Parliamentary material

5.1 Written questions

[Higher Education: Finance: Written question - 257746](#)

Asked by [Seema Malhotra](#) (Feltham and Heston) 23 May 2019

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the Philip Augur report on funding and post-18 education is planned for publication.

Answered by: [Chris Skidmore](#) 04 June 2019

The independent panel, chaired by Philip Augur, has published its independent advice to the government. The government will consider the panel's recommendations carefully and will conclude the review at the spending review. The government has not yet taken decisions with regards to the recommendations put forward. The full report can be accessed via GOV.UK, and as a command paper here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805127/Review_of_post_18_education_and_funding.pdf.

[Higher Education: Wales: Written question - 237746](#)

Asked by [Ben Lake](#) (Ceredigion) 27 March 2019

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the effect of the Augur Review of Post-18 Education and Funding on the higher education sector in Wales.

Answered by: [Chris Skidmore](#) 03 April 2019

The government's Review of Post-18 education and funding is making good progress and the independent panel will report shortly, before the government concludes the overall review later this year. Higher and further education are devolved matters and as such the review is considering the English system only. However, we recognise that students make choices across borders, and changes to the post-18 education system funding in England may have a direct impact on the Devolved Administrations. We are therefore engaging with the relevant governments as appropriate.

[Students: Loans: Written question - 235743](#)

Asked by [Gordon Marsden](#) (Blackpool South) 22 March 2019

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with Philip Augur and the Post-18 review panel on Shariah compliant loans.

Answered by: [Chris Skidmore](#) 27 March 2019

The government is committed to introducing an Alternative Student Finance product which complies with Sharia law and we continue to make progress with the review so the government can deliver a post-18 education system that is accessible to all, delivers the skills that the country needs and is value for money for both the taxpayer and students.

[Social Mobility Commission: Finance: Written question - 169105](#)

Asked by [Sir David Evennett](#) (Bexleyheath and Crayford) 03 September 2018

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the planned budget for 2018-19 is for the Social Mobility Commission.

Answered by: [Nadhim Zahawi](#) 11 September 2018

The Social Mobility Commission's current budget for 2018 to 2019 is £548,000. The department is planning to increase this and the precise figure will be agreed once new Commissioners are in place and the board has a proposed work plan.

[Treasury: Social Mobility: Written question - 120466](#)

Asked by [Chris Ruane](#) (Vale of Clwyd) 19 December 2017

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department has taken to improve social mobility in each of the last seven years.

Answered by: [Elizabeth Truss](#) 22 December 2017

Improving social mobility is at the heart of the government's ambition to make Britain a country that works for everyone. A strong economy means there are more job opportunities and that wages are higher, both of which are vital to improve social mobility. The Autumn Budget committed to tackling poverty, improving skills, and ensuring that every generation can look forward to a better standard of living than the one before.

Since 2010 there are 600,000 fewer people, including 200,000 fewer children, in absolute poverty (before housing costs), and employment has risen to near record levels in the UK, accounting for the bulk of GDP growth over the last seven years. The Autumn Budget announced further action to raise living standards by increasing the National Living Wage and to make progress on delivering the manifesto commitment to raise the personal allowance to £12,500. Furthermore, the Budget announced £406m of investment in skills, with a focus of mathematics and digital skills, thereby helping people obtain the abilities they need to secure better paid and highly skilled jobs.

[Education: Admissions: Written question - 131545](#)

Asked by Ms Marie Rimmer (St Helens South and Whiston) 07 March 2018

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to improve participation of students from under-represented areas in further or higher education.

Answered by: Mr Sam Gyimah 16 March 2018

Widening participation in further and higher education is a priority for this government and we want to continue to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from it, regardless of background or where they grew up. 'Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential' published in December 2017 set out our plan for improving social mobility through education.

Whilst more disadvantaged 18 year olds are going to university than ever before we have, through our first guidance to the Office for Students (OfS), asked the OfS to encourage higher education (HE) providers to undertake outreach work with schools, and to focus particularly in those parts of the country with the greatest challenges, including in opportunity areas. These areas have been identified as those weakest in both the 2016 Social Mobility Commission's index and the Department for Education's data on school standards and capacity to improve.

In addition, the National Collaborative Outreach Programme run by the Higher Education Funding Council for England is supporting 29 consortia (including HE providers, further education (FE) colleges, schools, employers and others) to undertake outreach activities in geographical areas where the HE participation of young people is both low and much lower than expected based on GCSE-level attainment.

FE providers already fulfil a crucial role in driving social mobility by equipping or reskilling individuals with relevant labour market skills, providing routes into further study and often acting as a second chance at a basic education.

FE providers will play a key role in our reforms to technical education, leading to more and better opportunities for young people, whatever their background and ensuring that they are on a high quality route to employment.

A thriving careers system, that is accessible to everyone, is at the heart of our focus on social mobility. Our recently published careers strategy will support everyone, whatever their background, to go as far as their talents will take them and have a rewarding career.

Apprentices: Written question - 129657

Asked by Bambos Charalambous (Enfield, Southgate) 26 February 2018

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to monitor access to apprenticeships by young people of all socio-economic backgrounds as part of its social mobility strategy.

Answered by: Anne Milton 06 March 2018

The department has set an ambitious targets to increase the proportion of apprenticeships started by people of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by 20 per cent by 2020 (from a baseline average of 10 per cent during 2010-15 Parliament). We also want to increase the proportion of higher value apprenticeship starts for disadvantaged apprentices which includes young people.

We have set out how we will measure and report progress against these ambitions in our Apprenticeship Reform Programme Benefits Realisation document (March 2017) published at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/604401/Apprenticeship_Reform_Programme_-_Benefits_Realisation_Strategy.pdf. This includes statistical data including the apprenticeship level, age group, sector subject area, region and diversity characteristics.

In addition, we are currently undertaking the FE Learner and Apprentices survey, including approximately 6,500 apprentices, to collect detailed demographic and social mobility data along with information on barriers to learning.

5.2 Oral questions

Post-18 Education and Funding Review

HC Deb 11 March 2019 c10

Ben Bradley (Mansfield) (Con)

5. What progress his Department has made on its review of post-18 education and funding. [909679]

The Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (Chris Skidmore)

The Government's post-18 review is making good progress. As part of the review, the independent panel chaired by Philip Augar has undertaken an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement and evidence-gathering with students, graduates, providers and employers, including a call for evidence that received more than 400 responses. They are producing a report that will form part of the wider post-18 review and this will be published shortly.

Ben Bradley

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2019-03-11/debates/FE6296E7-FE97-461F-8858-F5E62BB6B498/Post-18EducationAndFundingReview-contribution-E20AAF5B-BC8F-433F-8F41-914FCB3E301B> I thank the Minister for that answer. There have been rumours in this place about the possibility of reduced or variable tuition fees forming part of the proposals from the Augar review. In my opinion that misses the point; it is actually the cost of living and maintenance rather than tuition that causes accessibility problems at universities. Can my hon. Friend assure me that the Government will properly consult the sector on any recommendations and seek to follow the evidence, rather than offering quick fixes and good headlines?

Chris Skidmore

I agree that we want to maintain the financial stability of our world-class higher education and research sector. I congratulate many universities on their appearance in the QS World University Rankings last week. That is why, when the Government concludes the review, we will ensure that people from every background can progress and succeed in post-18 education to contribute to a strong knowledge economy and deliver the skills that we need.

Tuition Fees: Social Mobility

HC Deb 12 November 2018 c11

Andrew Bridgen (North West Leicestershire) (Con)

The latest report by the Education Committee suggests that some students are not getting value for money from their university courses. Does the Minister agree that only degrees that enhance employability and earning potential by more than the cost of the course can possibly improve social mobility, and what more can the Government do to make sure that young people make the right decisions about which course to go on?

Mr Gyimah

I take slight issue with the point my hon. Friend makes in the sense that there are degrees that do not lead to higher earnings but are of incredible value—for example, for people who go into social work or nursing—but we need to ensure that every degree is of the right quality and gives students the best opportunity. That is why the new regulator, the Office for Students, which has the interests of students at its heart, is looking at value for money for students, and it is why we have introduced the teaching and excellence framework to focus on the quality of teaching. We are also backing the launch of new information to empower students to make the right choices.

Justine Greening (Putney) (Con)

An independent review of higher education funding is under way. Does the Secretary of State agree that any proposals in that review that are regressive in nature, that would reintroduce a student number cap or that would act in effect as a brake on social mobility are not recommendations that this Government should accept?

Damian Hinds

It goes without saying that my right hon. Friend has very considerable expertise in this area and I take what she says extremely seriously. The review that she mentions is informed by an independent panel. That independent panel has not yet completed its work and the Government have not yet considered what recommendations may come forward, but, of course, social mobility must be at the heart.

Stamp Duty Land Tax

HC Deb 9 April 2019 c167

Greg Hands (Chelsea and Fulham) (Con)

Whether he plans to reform stamp duty land tax. [910304]

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mel Stride)

The Government have made substantial progress in reforming the stamp duty regime. At autumn statement 2014, SDLT was cut for 98% of those people due to pay it.

Greg Hands

Since we last spoke about this, the spring statement showed a further decline in receipts of an additional £2.7 billion over the scorecard. That was not due to changes in Wales and the welcome first-time buyer reforms, which were already in the October Budget numbers. What are the Government going to do to reform the system, protect revenue, grow social mobility, allow the elderly to downsize and get Britain moving again?

Mel Stride

The year-on-year changes to the level of receipts from SDLT have reduced recently, but that is due largely to the fact that we have put a great deal of relief into first-time buyers' relief, which is already helping 240,000 first-time buyers get on to the housing ladder.

Alison McGovern (Wirral South) (Lab)

However, the Minister dresses it up on stamp duty land tax and other issues where the wealthy have seen their taxes cut, the impact on our economy is clear. Will he explain why stamp duty land tax reform is a priority rather than addressing the fact that in our country today one third of all families with a child under five are in poverty?

Mel Stride

It is most certainly not our priority to reduce SDLT for the very wealthy. In fact, the current levels—12% plus 3% if it is an additional dwelling—are high. I can also inform the hon. Lady that the amount we raised through stamp duty land tax in 2017-18 was twice the amount raised back in 2010-11.

Social Mobility

HC Deb 19 March 2018 cc5-8

Mr Marcus Jones (Nuneaton) (Con):

3. What steps he is taking to improve social mobility. [904426]

Michelle Donelan (Chippenham) (Con):

8. What steps he is taking to improve social mobility. [904433]

Mr Simon Clarke (Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland) (Con)

16. What steps he is taking to improve social mobility. [904443]

The Secretary of State for Education (Damian Hinds): Since 2010, there are 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools and more disadvantaged children are going on to university. Our plans to make further progress include £72 million for 12 opportunity areas and £50 million on improving early language and literacy.

Mr Jones: Youth unemployment in my constituency has fallen by 72% since 2010. If we are to build on that progress, will my right hon. Friend set out how we can support the schools that are underperforming, so that young people, wherever they live, have the best opportunity to make the most out of their lives?

Damian Hinds: My hon. Friend is right to highlight the dramatic falls in unemployment and youth unemployment. In his constituency, there have been over 7,000 apprenticeship starts since 2010. He is absolutely right that it is very important that all schools are able to share in the improvements in education outcomes, and it is very important that the support is there to do that.

Michelle Donelan: Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and I strongly welcome the £26 million to support breakfast clubs. Wiltshire is not a deprived county, but it has pockets of deprivation, with some of my schools having two thirds of pupils on pupil premium. Would the Minister please clarify to the House how exactly deprivation areas will be determined?

Damian Hinds: The definition of areas of deprivation will include the opportunity areas that I mentioned a little earlier, as well as other areas according to the IDACI— income deprivation affecting children index—methodology. I cannot say off the top of my head exactly what the implication of that is for Chippenham, but I will be very happy to stay in touch with my hon. Friend.

Mr Clarke: Literacy underpins social mobility, and since 2013, the National Literacy Trust has run a fantastic hub in Middlesbrough. Will the Minister join me in paying tribute to the hub's work and in particular my constituent Allison Potter? It has contributed to narrowing the early years development gap in the schools that it works with from 24.8% in 2013 to just 8.5% last year.

Damian Hinds: Indeed. Improving literacy is vital to improving social mobility, and our plans for a centre of excellence and a national network of English hubs will help with that. I am happy, of course, to pay tribute to the fantastic work done by the National Literacy Trust in its Middlesbrough hub and to my hon. Friend's constituent.

Stephen Twigg (Liverpool, West Derby) (Lab/Co-op): Three years ago, I launched the Liverpool to Oxbridge Collaborative to support the most academic students in schools in my constituency to give them the option of applying to either Oxford or Cambridge. What are the Government doing to support areas, particularly with high social and economic need such as Liverpool, to aim high for all their young people?

Damian Hinds: This goes to the heart of the Office for Fair Access and what the Office for Students will do, but it is also really important that universities—particularly selective universities—continue to redouble their efforts to make sure that they are reaching out directly, so that they are tapping into the full range of talents that are on offer throughout our country.

Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon) (LD): If the Secretary of State is serious about improving access to top universities for students from poorer backgrounds, why is he not doing more to enact the findings on the National Audit Office report on higher education, which urged the Government to do more to provide high-quality, independent careers advice to 13 and 14-year-olds?

Damian Hinds: The hon. Lady is entirely right to identify the importance of independent careers advice. That goes for applications to university, for subject choice and for considering technical and vocational—as well as academic—routes, and that is why we are putting so much focus on it.

Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods (City of Durham) (Lab): The Secretary of State must understand that if we are to achieve social mobility, our schools have to be adequately funded. Because of funding cuts, Durham County Council is closing a school—the only school—in a disadvantaged village in my constituency. The young people there will feel undervalued, as will the community, so what will the Secretary of State do to ensure that that school stays open and that those children are given a real chance in life?

Damian Hinds: I totally acknowledge that it can be very unsettling and upsetting when a school closes like that. Of course, I am happy to discuss the particular case with her, but it remains the case that across the system we are holding the core schools budget constant in real per pupil terms.

Alan Mak (Havant) (Con): Having worked with Magic Breakfast for over five years, I share the welcome from my hon. Friend the Member for Chippenham (Michelle Donelan) for today's Magic Breakfast and school breakfast club funding. In addition to the money, will my right hon. Friend encourage partner schools to collaborate and share best practice to tackle social mobility challenges?

Damian Hinds: I pay tribute to my hon. Friend and constituency neighbour for all he has done on breakfast over an extended period, particularly with his Magic Breakfast connection, and I share his desire to make sure that best practice is shared across borders.

Carol Monaghan (Glasgow North West) (SNP): Scottish students from the most-deprived backgrounds are supported by a comprehensive financial package, including free tuition and bursaries, resulting in Scotland having the lowest university drop-out rate in the entire UK. Will the Secretary of State give serious consideration to mirroring

the support given to Scottish students, including by abolishing the extortionate student fees, here in England?

Damian Hinds: The important things to note are that with our university financing system more young people, including from disadvantaged backgrounds, than ever are able to go to university, that universities are properly funded and that there is no cap on ambition.

Tracy Brabin (Batley and Spen) (Lab/Co-op): Social mobility is improved when families have access to Sure Start and children's centres, yet, in a damning report, the National Audit Office has revealed that the Government have cut spending on Sure Start by 50% in real terms since 2010, and we are still waiting for the long-overdue consultation on the future of children's centres. Will the Secretary of State tell us whether he believes that these cuts are good for social mobility and on what date he will publish the consultation?

Damian Hinds: The hon. Lady is entirely correct in identifying the importance of early years for children's development, social mobility and narrowing the gap, which is one reason we are putting so much more effort and money into early years and childcare, including through the extensions of eligibility for the two-year-old offer, which I think, bizarrely, she voted against last week.

5.3 Debates

[Equality of Opportunity for Young People](#)

HL Deb 16 May 2019 cc1708-1746

[Social Mobility: North-West](#)

HC Deb 09 Jan 2019 cc179-186WH

[Children: Welfare, Life Chances and Social Mobility](#)

HL Deb 01 Nov 2018 cc1434-1468

[Careers Education for Students](#)

HL Deb 06 Sep 2018 cc1959-1998

[National Funding Formula: Social Mobility](#)

HC Deb 22 May 2018 cc310-330WH

[Social Mobility and the Economy](#)

HC Deb 28 Mar 2018 cc344-368WH

[Rail Connectivity](#)

HC Deb 19 Jan 2018 cc1250-8

[Social Mobility \(Wales\)](#)

HC Deb 19 Dec 2017 cc320-344WH

[Education and Society](#)

HL Deb 08 Dec 2017 cc1283-1366

6. Further Reading

6.1 Reports

[Social mobility in Great Britain - state of the nation 2018 to 2019](#)

Social Mobility Commission, Sixth annual report. 30 April 2019

[Social Mobility Barometer 2018 report](#)

The public's attitude to social mobility in 2018.

Social Mobility Commission, 20 December 2018

[The APPG on Social Mobility hosted Dame Martina Milburn, the Chair of the Social Mobility Commission to discuss the findings from its State of the Nation 2019 report.](#)

APPG on Social Mobility, 10 May 2019

[The future of the Social Mobility Commission](#)

House of Commons Education Committee, Second Report of Session 2017–19, HC 866, 22 March 2018

[Closing the regional attainment gap](#)

APPG on Social Mobility, 21 February 2019

Social Mobility Commission Publications

[Adult skills gap and the falling investment in adults with low qualifications](#), 29 Jan 2019

[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

6.2 Background reading on social mobility

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](#).)

6.3 Library briefings

[The Post-18 Education Review \(the Augar Review\) recommendations](#) House of Commons Library, 31 May 2019

[Postgraduate loans in England](#) House of Commons Library, 26 April 2019

[Adult further education funding in England since 2010](#) House of Commons Library, 20 March 2019

[The forthcoming review of post-18 education and funding](#) House of Commons Library, 25 February 2019

[Review of Post-18 Education and Funding](#) House of Commons Library, 8 February 2019

[Higher education student numbers](#) House of Commons Library, 8 February 2019

[Oxbridge 'elitism'](#), House of Commons Library, 7 January 2019

[School meals and nutritional standards \(England\)](#) House of Commons Library, 3 January 2019

[Recent policy developments: Grammar schools in England](#), House of Commons Library, 3 October 2018

[Higher education tuition fees in England](#) House of Commons Library, 25 June 2018

[Widening participation strategy in higher education in England](#) House of Commons Library, 24 January 2018

[Social Mobility in Wales](#), House of Commons Library, 14 December 2017

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

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