



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

BIS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Access to the Professions - % of
16-65 year olds who are in
managerial or professional
positions by social background
using father's occupational
group

JUNE 2014

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Why is this indicator important?

There is evidence that a large number of the professions remain dominated by a small section of society and that in recent decades many professions have become less socially representative.

Indicator definition

Proportion of working age population employed in higher-level occupations by social background (defined using father's occupational group).

Social background is measured by the social class of an individual's father when he or she was 14 years old. Social class is described using the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC). NS-SEC is an occupationally based classification that can provide coverage of the whole adult population. Groups 1 and 2 cover higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations. Father's occupation is used as a measure in the indicator as males tend to have a more stable career path than females.

The British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) was used for data shown from 1991-2008 and was superseded by Understanding Society, the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS), for 2009-12 data.

How are we performing?

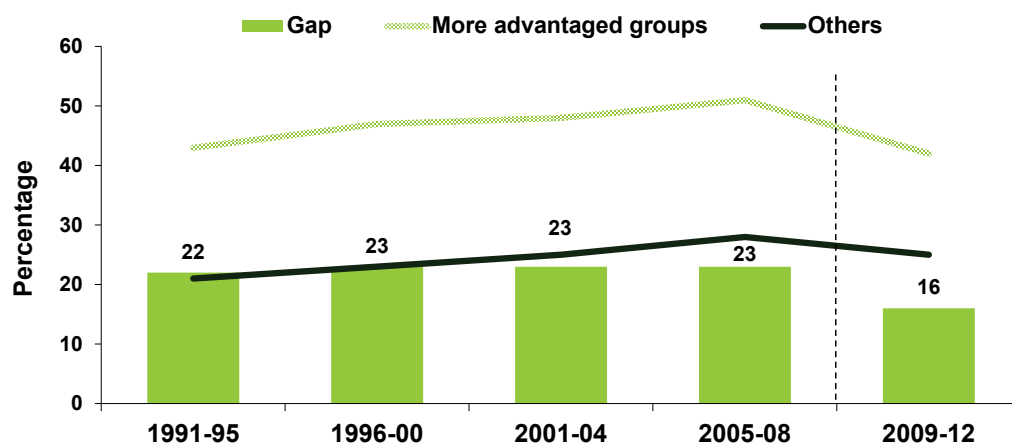
Table 1: Proportion of 16-65 year olds in paid employment in managerial or professional positions by father's occupational group, England

Employed in managerial or professional occupations (BHPS and UKHLS series)	1991-95	1996-00	2001-04	2005-08	2009-12*
More advantaged groups (NS-SEC 1-2)	43%	47%	48%	51%	42%
Others	21%	23%	25%	28%	25%
<i>Gap (percentage points)</i>	22	23	23	23	16

* Figures for 2009-2012 use the UKHLS measure and are not directly comparable to figures for earlier years, which use the BHPS measure.

Latest data covering 2009-12 show that 42 per cent of adults aged 16-65 from more advantaged social backgrounds were employed in managerial or professional occupations whilst 25 per cent of adults from less advantaged backgrounds were employed in managerial or professional occupations.

Chart 1: Proportion of 16-65 year olds in paid employment in managerial or professional positions by father's occupational group, 1991-95 – 2009-12, England



The above chart shows trends over time. Latest UKHLS data¹ show a narrowing in the gap between more advantaged groups and others, although the two sources are not directly comparable.

What will influence this indicator?

Key drivers include:

- attainment of relevant higher education and professional qualifications
- recruitment practices of the professions (e.g. availability of non-graduate entry routes, access to internships and graduate entry programmes)

What is BIS's role?

Key policies include:

- work with the professions as part of the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum to ensure practices that support social mobility are shared and promoted (e.g. best practice code for high quality internships)

¹ Weights are applied to the UKHLS data so it should more accurately represent the population than the unweighted BHPS data.

- working to open up access to internships (e.g. new guidance on internships and the national minimum wage)
- raising awareness among the professions (e.g. encourage them to collect information on the social background of employees to inform their policies)

Further information

BIS is undertaking more work to improve the data availability for this measure. Questions on social mobility have been tested for inclusion in the 2014 LFS² to enable BIS to develop a gap measure.

Related indicators

Status

This update: June 2014

² Social mobility questions will be introduced to the Labour Force Survey from July-September 2014 (Q3).

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This publication available from www.gov.uk/bis

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