

Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility

April 2011

 HM Government

The Government aims to improve social mobility across the United Kingdom as set out in this document. However, we recognise that many of the policy levers needed to help create greater social mobility are in the hands of the devolved administrations and that, as such, these administrations are responsible for their own devolved policies and are therefore not bound by this strategy. Similarly, many of the actions outlined in this strategy can only apply to England. The Government will, however, work closely with the devolved administrations to promote improved social mobility across all parts of the United Kingdom.

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Nick Clegg MP
Deputy Prime Minister

Foreword by the Deputy Prime Minister

Fairness is a fundamental value of the Coalition Government. A fair society is an open society. A society in which everyone is free to flourish and rise. Where birth is never destiny.

In Britain today, life chances are narrowed for too many by the circumstances of their birth: the home they're born into, the neighbourhood they grow up in or the jobs their parents do. Patterns of inequality are imprinted from one generation to the next.

The true test of fairness is the distribution of opportunities. That is why improving social mobility is the principal goal of the Coalition Government's social policy.

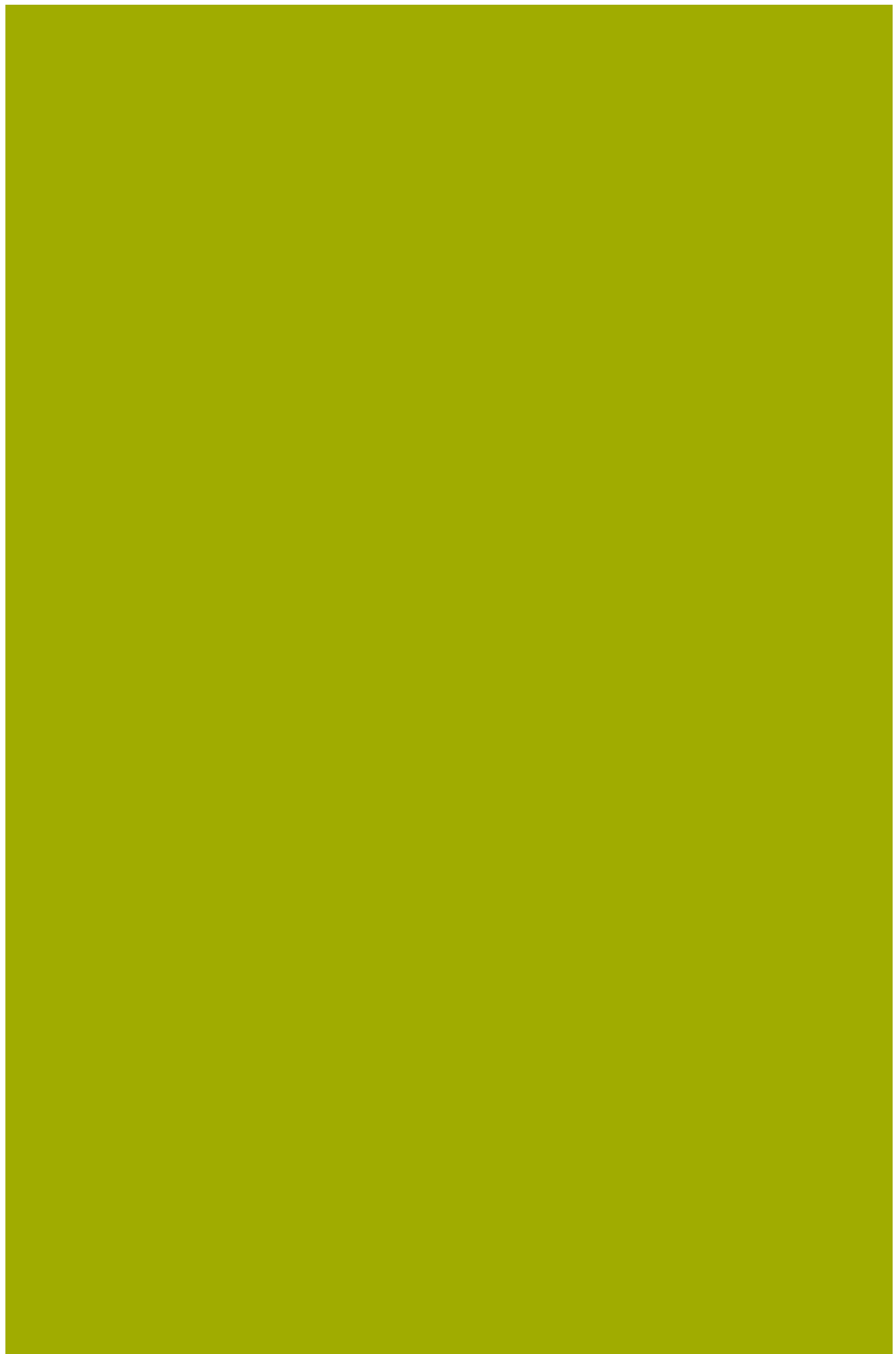
By definition this is a long-term undertaking. There is no magic wand we can wave to see immediate effects.

Nor is there a single moment, or particular age, when the cycles of disadvantage can be broken for everyone. The opportunity gap has to be addressed at every stage in the life cycle, from the Foundation Years through to the world of work. And Government cannot do it alone. Employers, parents, communities and voluntary organisations all have a part to play.

Tackling the financial deficit is the Coalition's most immediate task. But tackling the opportunity deficit – creating an open, socially mobile society – is our guiding purpose.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Clegg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Nick Clegg MP
Deputy Prime Minister



Executive summary

A fair society is an open society, one in which every individual is free to succeed. That is why improving social mobility is the principal goal of the Government's social policy.

No one should be prevented from fulfilling their potential by the circumstances of their birth. What ought to count is how hard you work and the skills and talents you possess, not the school you went to or the jobs your parents did. **This strategy sets out our vision of a socially mobile country, and how it can become a reality.**

There is a **long way to go**. The income and social class of parents continue to have a huge bearing on a child's chances.

- Only one in five young people from the poorest families achieve five good GCSEs, including English and maths, compared with three-quarters from the richest families.¹
- 25% of children from poor backgrounds fail to meet the expected attainment level at the end of primary school, compared to 3% from affluent backgrounds.²
- Almost one in five children receive free school meals, yet this group accounts for fewer than one in a hundred Oxbridge students.³
- Only a quarter of boys from working-class backgrounds get middle-class (professional or managerial) jobs.⁴
- Just one in nine of those with parents from low income backgrounds reach the top income

quartile, whereas almost half of those with parents in the top income quartile stay there.⁵

- Only 7% of the population attend independent schools, but the privately educated account for more than half of the top level of most professions, including 70% of high court judges, 54% of top journalists and 54% of chief executive officers of FTSE 100 companies.⁶
- The influence of parental income on the income of children in Britain is among the strongest in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries. Parental income has over one and a half times the impact on male incomes in Britain compared with Canada, Germany and Sweden.⁷

The lack of social mobility is damaging for individuals. It also leaves the country's economic potential unfulfilled.

This strategy sets out our approach. We are taking a long-term view, and focusing on evidence-

based policies. We also recognise that this is not just a task for government. Our whole society has a part to play.

A life cycle approach

Lives are not determined by the age of five, 15 or 30. We know that to make the most of our interventions in the early years, we need to follow through in later life. There should be help and support at every stage to narrow the gaps and provide second chances. That is why our strategy is based on a life cycle framework. Our goal is to make life chances more equal at the critical points for social mobility such as: the early years of development; school readiness at age five; GCSE attainment; the choice of options at 16; gaining a place at university or on an Apprenticeship; and getting into and on in the labour market. These are the crucial moments, where we can make the most difference.

Foundation Years

There are already wide variations in ability between children from different backgrounds when they start school. Children at the age of five living in poverty are the equivalent of around eight months behind their peers in terms of cognitive development.⁸ That is why the Foundation Years are such a focus for the Government.

Our Foundation Years approach moves away from a narrow focus on income measures. We have invested in new provision of 15 hours a week of free pre-school education for all disadvantaged two-year-olds, on top of existing provision for all three- and four-year-olds. We are maintaining Sure Start Children's Centres, expanding Family Nurse Partnerships and recruiting thousands more health visitors.

Parents and families have to be centre stage. This strategy sets out plans to support a culture where the key aspects of good parenting are widely understood and where all parents can benefit from advice and support.

School years

Between the ages of five and 16, children develop skills and aspirations that strongly influence their

success in further or higher education, and ultimately in the labour market. Children eligible for free school meals are still only half as likely as other children to achieve five good GCSEs, including English and maths,⁹ and fewer than 4% achieve the English Baccalaureate.¹⁰ The gaps in achievement between rich and poor actually widen during the school years.¹¹

Every child in our country deserves a world-class education. The education system should challenge low aspirations and expectations, dispelling the myth that those from poorer backgrounds cannot aim for top universities and professional careers. Our schools reforms are intended to raise standards across the system, narrow the gaps in attainment and raise aspirations. The Pupil Premium will provide an extra £2.5 billion a year for the most disadvantaged pupils to radically improve their educational outcomes.

This is not just about schools or about government. We can all make a difference to raising aspirations and helping people to make informed choices about jobs and careers. That is why we are launching, with the Education and Employers Taskforce, a drive to get 100,000 people going into schools and colleges to talk about the jobs they do. Every member of the Cabinet has already signed up to speak in schools, and we are encouraging civil servants to use special paid leave to do the same.

Transition years

From 16 onwards, young people's paths diverge sharply. There are many different routes from GCSEs to a job. Choices made during this period of life can have a profound, long-lasting impact.

Too many young people fall out of education and fail to move into employment or training. Over 70,000 16–17-year-olds in England, and almost one in five of those aged between 18 and 24, are not in education, employment or training.¹²

And there is sometimes unfairness for those who do remain in education or training. Our vocational system is simply not up to scratch. Access to the most selective universities is too restricted to those from the most privileged backgrounds.¹³

We are improving opportunities for young people in education and training and making the system fairer. The participation age will be raised to 18 by the end of the Parliament, providing over 60,000 extra learning places. Funding for disadvantaged 16–19-year-olds in learning will increase by more than a third to £770 million in 2011/12. We are also providing funding to create more than 360,000 new Apprenticeships at all ages in 2011/12.

Our reforms to higher education funding put new obligations on universities to improve access. In particular, those universities charging over £6,000 will have to attract more students from less affluent backgrounds.

Too many young people also struggle to get a foothold in the labour market. This is not a new phenomenon – but we are determined to do better. Later this year we will be publishing a strategy setting out how we will improve the participation of young people in education and employment.

Adulthood

Getting on in work should be about merit not background. Too many struggle to get on in the labour market, held back by low qualifications or a welfare system that does not sufficiently incentivise work. Too many do not get the vital second chances they deserve.

Our welfare reforms will improve work incentives. The Work Programme will tackle the blight of worklessness. We are improving access to education in later life. And for the first time, part-time university students will be entitled to a loan for tuition on the same basis as full-time students.

We need to ensure that the jobs market is fair all the way up to the very top. Success should be based on what you do, not who you know. A large number of the professions remain dominated by a small section of society.¹⁴ Moreover, the independence and security wealth brings is limited to too few.

Employers, and in particular the professions, must play their part in opening up opportunities. Many are already doing so, for example by signing up to a new business compact for fairer, more open internship and work experience programmes.

The Government will lead by example, reforming the civil service, with a new fair and transparent internship scheme. From 2012 there will be no informal internships in Whitehall.

From strategy to action

We have set ambitious goals for social mobility. Achieving them requires robust mechanisms to underpin the commitments in this strategy. So we are taking steps to ensure: external scrutiny; a new set of leading indicators to help us track progress; and ministerial activity to ensure social mobility is and remains at the heart of our policy agenda.

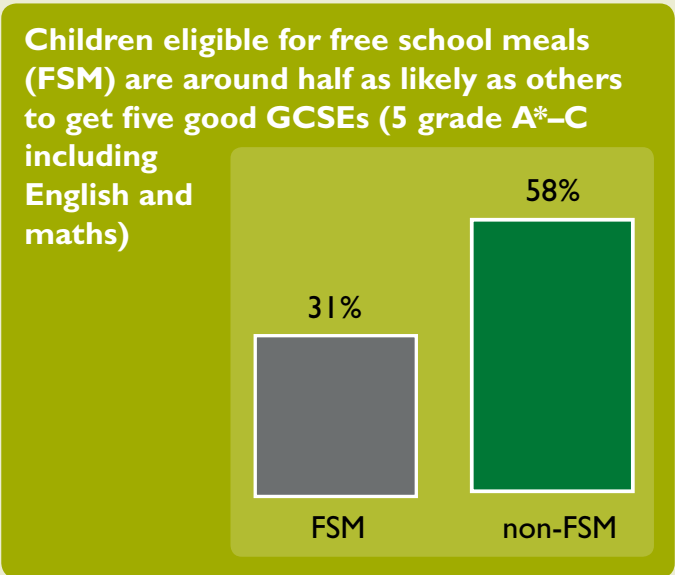
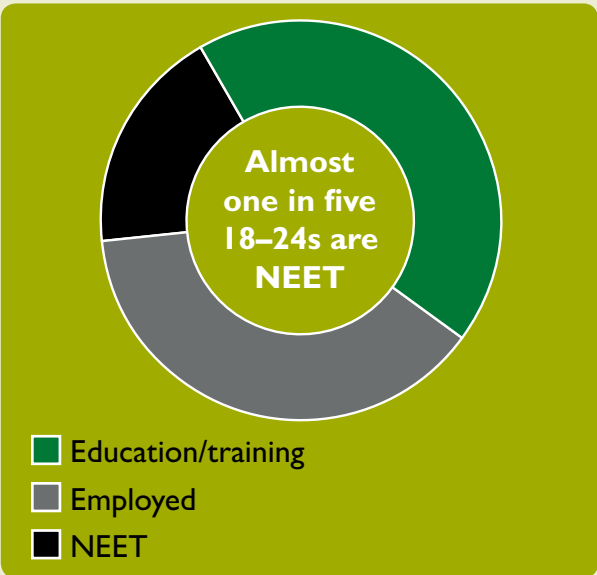
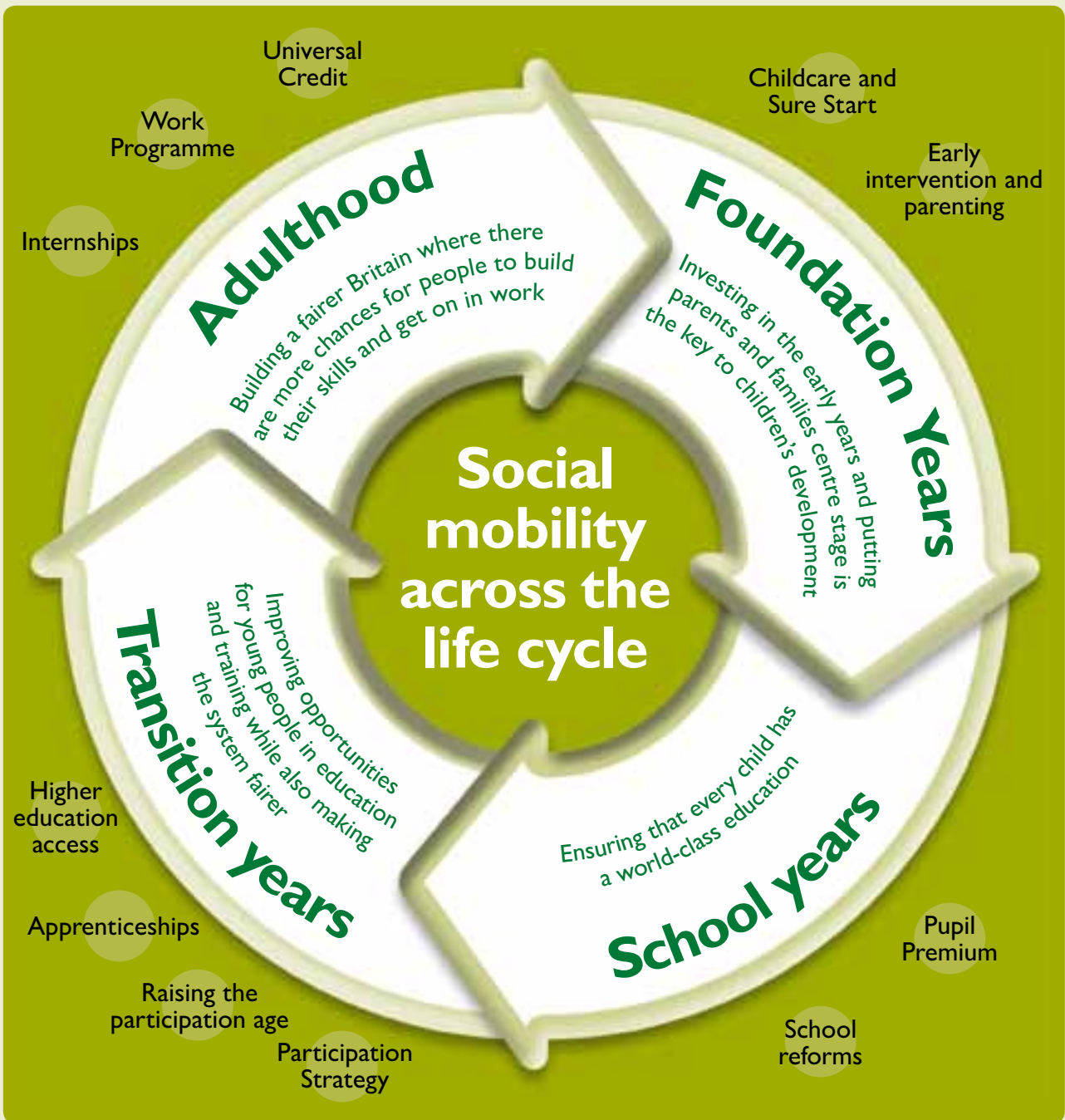
First, we are creating a new statutory Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. The Commission will assess progress on both social mobility and child poverty, holding the Government and others to account and acting as an advocate for change.

Second, we are publishing indicators of progress. Social mobility is by definition a long-term objective. For example, we will only be able to observe the full impact of our Foundation Years policies on social mobility in the 2040s, when the under-threes of today begin to reach their full potential in the labour market. However, there are indicators that we can use to estimate progress over a shorter time frame. This strategy identifies seven key indicators that we will use to track progress. And, for the first time, as departments develop new policies, they will need to consider their impact on social mobility.

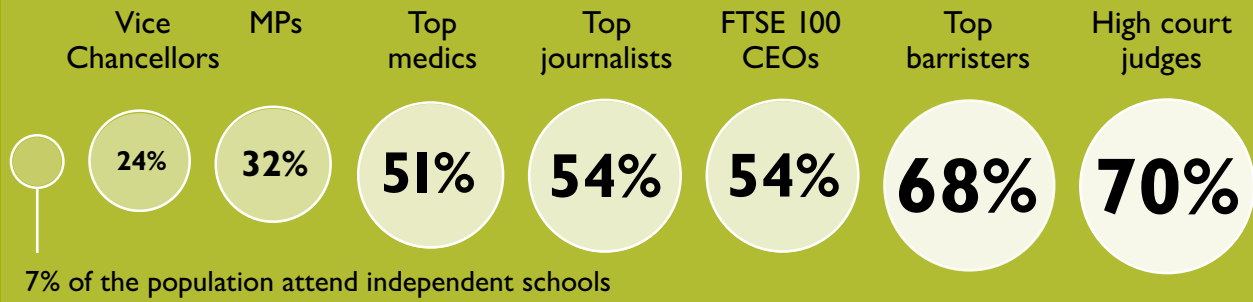
These indicators will be included in departmental Business Plans, ensuring they are at the centre of the work of departments.

Third, the Deputy Prime Minister will continue to chair a group of key Ministers to maintain the momentum for change.

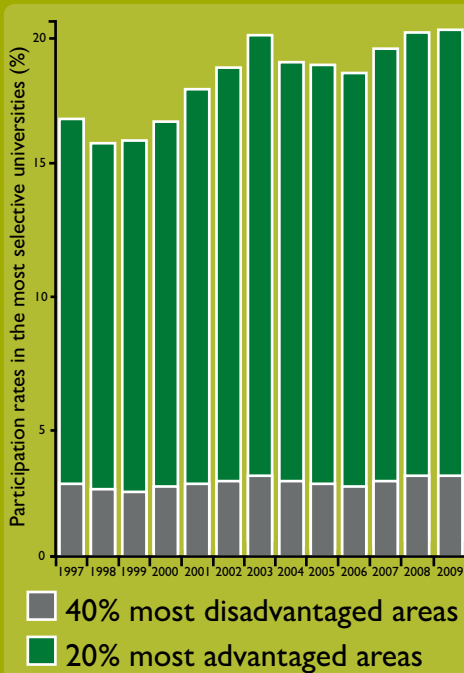
This social mobility strategy is just the beginning. It sets out a clear commitment to improving social mobility, identifies and explains the key decisions we have already taken and announces some further steps. But we do not pretend we have all the answers. Creating an open, fair society will be the work of many parliaments, and the work of the whole nation. But this Government is determined to play its part.



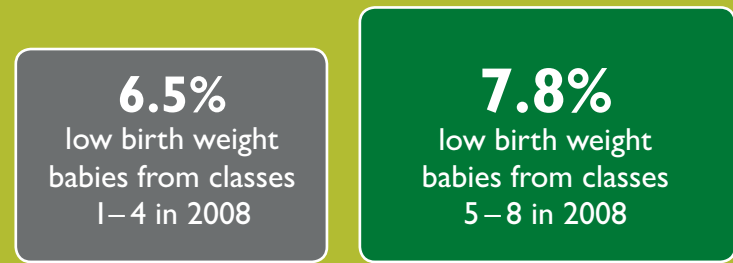
Professional occupations are dominated by the privately educated



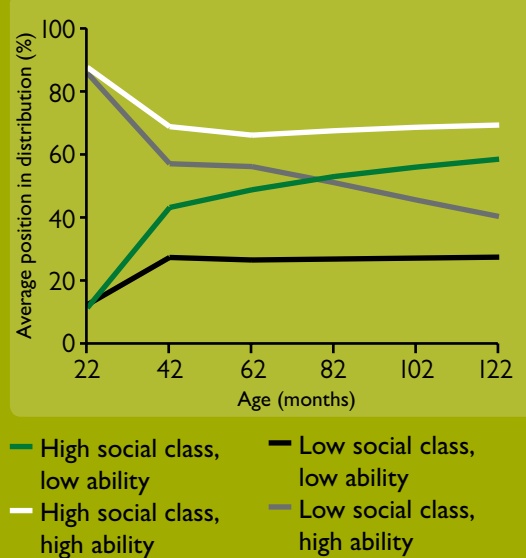
Young people from the most advantaged areas are consistently more likely to go to the most selective universities than those from the most disadvantaged areas



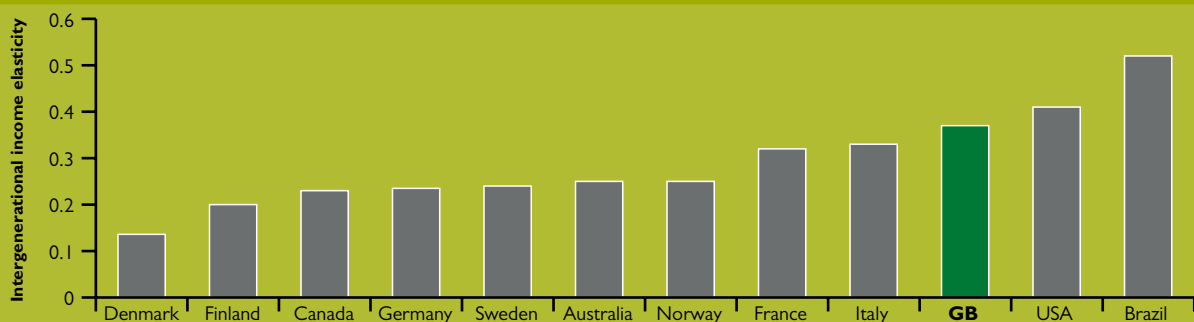
Babies born into lower social classes are more likely to have a low birth weight



Bright children from poorer families tend to fall back relative to more advantaged peers who have not performed as well



The relationship between incomes of parents and children is stronger in Great Britain than in many other countries





Introduction

Fairness as social mobility

Fairness

Fairness is one of the values of the Coalition Government, along with freedom and responsibility.¹ There are many ways to think about and define fairness. For us, fairness means everyone having the chance to do well, irrespective of their beginnings.

In a fair society what counts is not the school you went to or the jobs your parents did, but your ability and your ambition. In other words, fairness is about social mobility – **the degree to which the patterns of advantage and disadvantage in one generation are passed onto the next**. An unfair society is one in which the circumstances of a person's birth determine the life they go on to lead.

There is a strong ethical imperative to improve social mobility. But there is an economic dimension too. In our increasingly globalised economy, new opportunities for wealth and income are emerging. A fair society ensures that those opportunities are open to everyone.

If talented people are held back, it is not only their life chances that are damaged, but the prosperity of the nation and the dynamism of the economy. Increasing social mobility can drive growth by creating a more highly skilled workforce and putting people in the right jobs for their talents.

One study has estimated the economic benefits of creating a more highly skilled workforce at up to £140 billion a year by 2050 – an additional 4% of Gross Domestic Product – along with significant improvement to the underlying rate of growth.²

There is also evidence that the demand for skilled workers is currently outstripping supply, which suggests there is 'room at the top' for highly qualified graduates from all backgrounds.³

A new approach: our principles

The Coalition Government has made a clear commitment to social mobility as the principal goal of our social policy. This is in itself an important change.

Our work to increase social mobility complements the Government's ambitious agenda for social justice. We have a group of people in our society who have become detached, unable to play a productive role in the workplace, in their families or in their communities. They are often trapped by addiction, debt, educational failure, family breakdown or welfare dependency. Our social mobility strategy is about enabling people to move up the ladder of life. Our strategy for social justice is about helping these people get their foot onto the first rung. The two are inseparable components in our fight against poverty and disadvantage.

Five broad principles underpin our approach.

- We take a **long-term view**. Social mobility is, by definition, a long-term challenge. Our investments and policy decisions will reflect that. There are no quick fixes.
- We will take a **progressive approach**, focusing most resources on those from disadvantaged backgrounds, but narrowing gaps in opportunity all the way up the income scale.

- We recognise that **Government does not have all the answers** and that improving social mobility requires the whole of society to play its part. We will challenge ourselves and others to do better, supported by greater accountability and transparency.
- We will adopt a ruthlessly **evidence-based approach**, channelling effort and finance in the ways most likely to impact positively on social mobility.
- Our plans to boost social mobility **impact across the life cycle** from the Foundation Years through school life, and the key transitions from education into the working world.

We cannot get away from the intense fiscal pressures we face as a country. Failing to reduce the deficit would saddle future generations with enduring public debt and slower growth, threatening social mobility. That creates challenges. We must do more with less. Above all, we must do more to promote a fairer society.

This strategy sets out the steps we have taken so far, and our plans for the future.



Chapter 1

Social mobility – evidence and trends

What is social mobility?

1.1 Social mobility is a measure of how free people are to improve their position in society. There are two key distinctions that shape the Government's approach to social mobility.

Intergenerational versus intragenerational social mobility

1.2 The first is the distinction between inter- and intragenerational social mobility:

- **Intergenerational social mobility** is the extent to which people's success in life is determined by who their parents are.
- **Intragenerational social mobility** is the extent to which individuals improve their position during their working lives, irrespective of where they started off.

1.3 We are **primarily concerned with intergenerational social mobility** – breaking the transmission of disadvantage from one generation to the next. Children must be free to succeed whatever circumstances they are born into.

1.4 However, if children are to improve their position relative to that of their parents, they must also have genuine opportunities to progress during their working lives. Improving **intragenerational social mobility** is therefore a means of improving intergenerational social mobility, as well as an important end in itself.

Relative versus absolute social mobility

1.5 The second key distinction is between relative and absolute social mobility:

- **Relative social mobility** refers to the comparative chances of people with different backgrounds ending up in certain social or income groups.
- **Absolute social mobility** refers to the extent to which people are able to do better than their parents.

1.6 Absolute social mobility is important – and our wider economic policies will do much to create more and better jobs to allow people to move upwards.

1.7 However, high levels of absolute social mobility can go hand in hand with a society in which background has an unfair influence on life chances.

1.8 The Government's focus is on relative social mobility. For any given level of skill and ambition, regardless of an individual's background, everyone should have an equal chance of getting the job they want or reaching a higher income bracket.

Our priorities are:

- intergenerational social mobility
- relative social mobility

How is the UK doing?

1.9 The evidence on social mobility is complex and sometimes contradictory. But the broad picture is fairly clear. We currently have relatively low levels of social mobility, both by international standards and compared with the 'baby boomer' generation born in the immediate post-war period.¹

Overall social mobility

1.10 **Income mobility** measures look at the influence of parental income on children's income as adults.

1.11 Men from high income backgrounds are almost three and a half times more likely than those from low income backgrounds to have high income as adults (figure 1.1).

1.12 **Occupational mobility** measures look at the influence that the occupation of fathers has on where their children end up as adults.

1.13 Men and women with parents in professional and managerial occupations are twice as likely as those with parents in part-skilled and unskilled

occupations to end up in professional and managerial occupations themselves (figure 1.2).

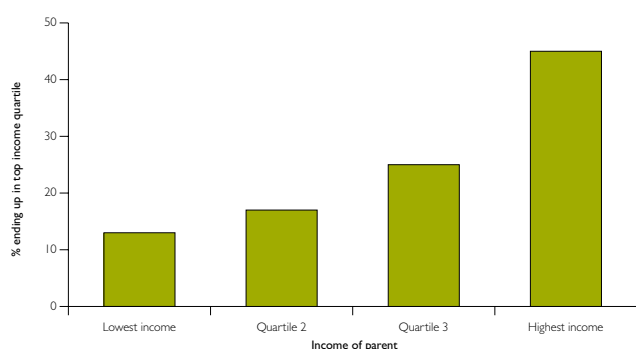
International comparisons

1.14 International differences are difficult to track because of the quality of comparative data.² But the available evidence suggests that we are less socially mobile than other countries.

1.15 The relationship between the incomes of parents and their children is stronger in Great Britain than in many other countries, according to data collected by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The impact of parental income is over one and a half times higher in Great Britain than in Canada, Germany, Sweden or Australia (figure 1.3).

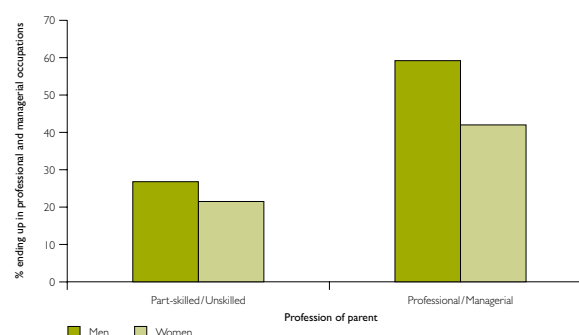
1.16 Rates of absolute occupational social mobility are lower than the international average for men and are at the bottom of the range internationally for women (figure 1.4), although this is influenced by labour market trends as well as the relative importance of social background.

Figure 1.1: Men from high income backgrounds are more likely than those from low income backgrounds to have high income as adults



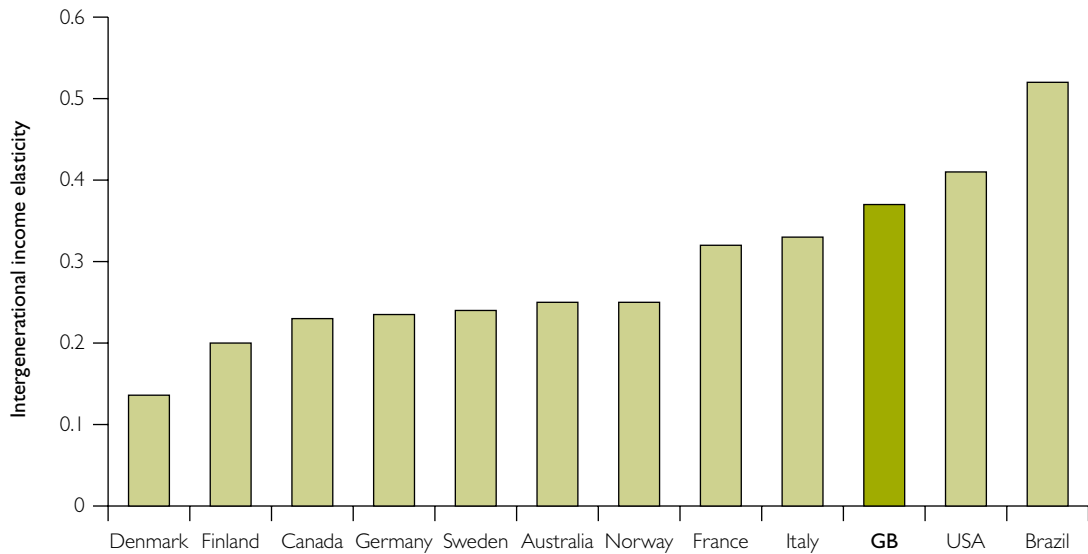
Source: Blanden J and Machin S, *Recent Changes in Intergenerational Mobility in Britain*. Sutton Trust (2007).

Figure 1.2: Men and women with parents in professional and managerial occupations are more likely to end up in professional and managerial occupations



Source: Buxton J et al, *The Long Shadow of Childhood: associations between parental social class and own social class, educational attainment and timing of first birth*; results from the Office for National Statistics Longitudinal Study, *Population Trends* 2005 121:17-26 (2005). Chart is based on children with two parents in 1971 and their social class position in 2001.

Figure I.3: The relationship between the incomes of parents and their children is stronger in Great Britain than in many other countries



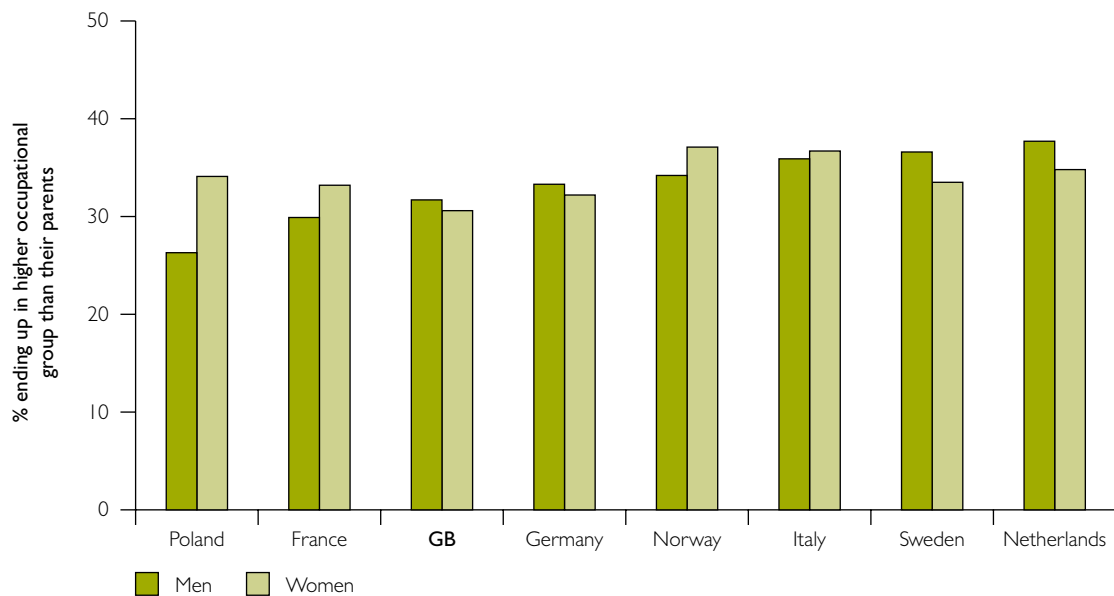
Source:

Blanden J, *How Much Can We Learn from International Comparisons of Intergenerational Mobility?*
Centre for the Economics of Education Discussion Paper III (2009).

Note:

Cross-country differences in intergenerational income elasticity – higher values mean less mobility

Figure I.4: Rates of occupational mobility are lower than the international average for men and are at the bottom of the range internationally for women



Source:

National Equality Panel, *An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK*. Government Equalities Office (2010).

Social mobility across the life cycle

Figure 1.5: A life cycle approach to social mobility



1.17 Social mobility has to be considered across the life cycle (figure 1.5). Improving social mobility requires us to narrow the gaps at every stage in life. So, for example, while the Foundation Years are clearly critical, the benefits of early intervention are likely to be lost without action across the life cycle.³

Foundation Years (pregnancy to age five)

1.18 The Foundation Years are a period of rapid development. Gaps emerge early. Children from poorer families who have shown early signs of high ability tend to fall back relative to more advantaged peers who have not performed so well.⁴

1.19 Also, children from higher income backgrounds do significantly better on a range of early years outcomes (figure 1.6).

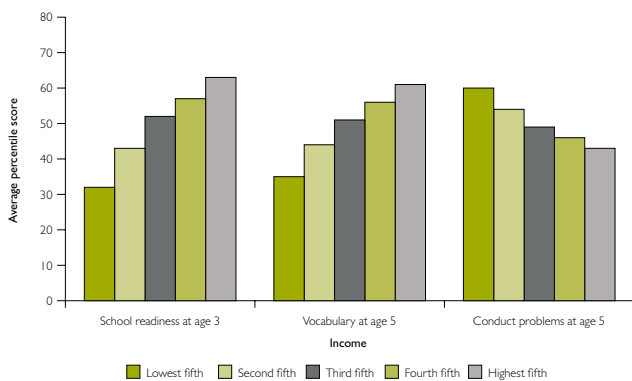
School years (age five to age 16)

1.20 During the school years, children develop the skills, qualifications and aspirations that are crucial in determining their future life paths. There are large gaps in the attainment of rich and poor children at every point during this period, which widen as children get older.

1.21 For example, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely than their better-off peers to reach the expected level of attainment throughout their school career (figure 1.7).

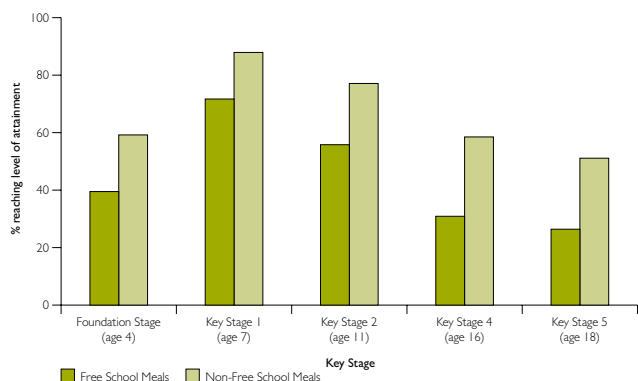
1.22 Children from poorer backgrounds on average make less progress than their peers during each stage of school, even once differences in attainment are allowed for.⁵

Figure 1.6: Children from higher income backgrounds do significantly better on a range of early years outcomes



Source: Waldfogel J and Washbrook E, *Early Years Policy*, Sutton Trust (2008).

Figure 1.7: Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely than their better-off peers to reach the expected level of attainment throughout their school career



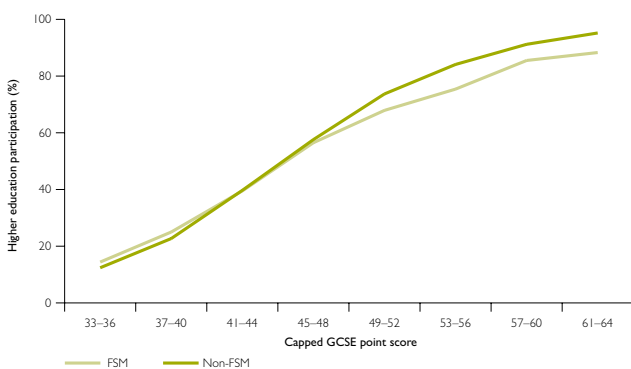
Source: Department for Education, various Statistical First Releases: Foundation Stage Profile Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England 2009/10 (2011) (% reaching a good level of development); Key Stage 1 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England 2009/10 (2011) (% reaching expected level in reading); Key Stage 2 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England 2009/10 (provisional) (2011) (% reaching expected level in English and maths); GCSE and Equivalent Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England 2009/10 (2010) (% achieving 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and maths); and Level 2 and 3 Attainment by Young People in England Measured Using Matched Administrative Data: Attainment by Age 19 in 2009 (provisional) (2010) (% achieving a Level 3 qualification by age 19).

Transition years (age 16 to age 24)

1.23 The paths that individuals follow begin to diverge sharply after the age of 16. Most choose to remain in full-time academic education or enter vocational and work-based training. But too many young people are still failing to achieve their potential, with some falling out of education, employment and training altogether. Around 6% of young adults aged 16–17 and 18% of those aged 18–24 are not in education, employment or training (NEET).⁶

1.24 Children from the most disadvantaged areas are only a third as likely to enter higher education as children from the most advantaged areas,⁷ and are less likely to attend the most selective higher education institutions.⁸ While prior attainment explains most of these gaps, some remain even once this is allowed for.⁹ For example, high performers at GCSE level who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) are less likely to attend university than their peers (figure 1.8). However, when people from state schools do reach university, they often outperform pupils from independent schools with similar prior attainment.

Figure 1.8: High performers at GCSE level eligible for free school meals (FSM) are less likely to attend university than their peers



Source: National Equality Panel, *An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK*. Government Equalities Office (2010).

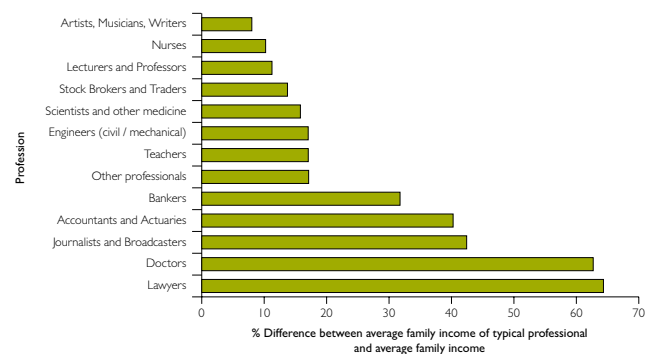
Adulthood (age 24 and over)

1.25 Once in work, people tend to progress to better jobs as they gain more experience. However, some young adults, particularly the lower skilled, have little chance to progress and are given few second chances to succeed through learning new skills.

1.26 Those with fewer skills – particularly women – are less likely to be in work, and experience slower wage progression over their working life.¹⁰

1.27 There are also vast differences in terms of access to professional jobs. Those from less well-off backgrounds are less likely to enter the professions or to reach high levels within them if they do. People who attended independent schools are over-represented at the very top level of the professions.¹¹ And generally those entering many of the professions grew up in households with significantly higher incomes than average. For example, lawyers or doctors born in 1970 grew up in households with over 60% higher income than the average family (figure 1.9).

Figure 1.9: Those entering many of the professions grew up in households with significantly higher incomes than average



Source: National Equality Panel, *An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK*. Government Equalities Office (2010).

Trends in social mobility: worse or better?

1.28 There is a healthy academic debate about recent trends in social mobility.

1.29 Looking at the influence of **parental income** on the income of their children, there is some evidence that social mobility for children born in Great Britain in 1970 got slightly worse than for children born in 1958.¹² For example, there was a decrease in the proportion of men in the lowest parental income quintile moving upwards, from 70% to 62%.

1.30 However, the influence of **parental occupation** on the occupation of their children appears to have remained fairly constant in Great Britain since the 1970s:¹³

- There has been some degree of improvement in the proportion of men and women who were able to get a better quality job than their parents – in other words, a small rise in absolute occupational mobility.

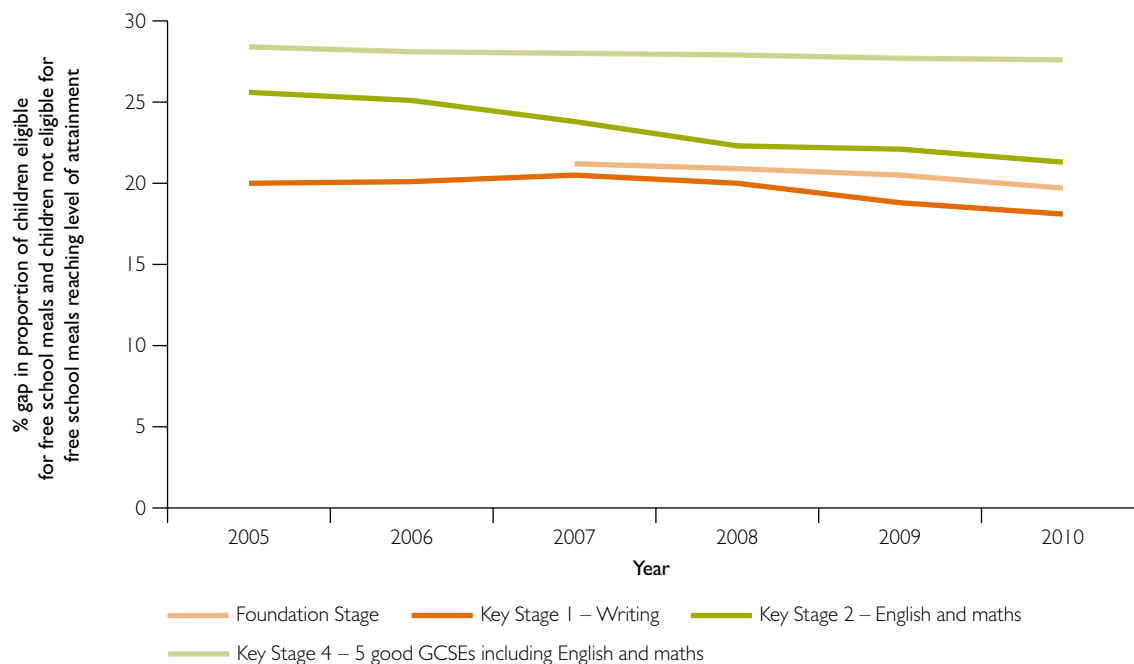
- However, relative occupational mobility – the relative chances of those from working-class backgrounds getting a middle-class job compared with children from middle-class backgrounds – appears to have been largely static.

1.31 These findings are not necessarily inconsistent. We know that income differences within occupational groups have increased over time and this could explain the apparent contradiction between the two measures.¹⁴

1.32 Leading indicators of social mobility suggest that, while some progress has been made, the high levels of public investment seen over the last decade are unlikely to lead to significant improvements in mobility in the near future.

There have been some signs of progress in recent years in terms of the gap between rich and poor in school attainment at the ages of 11 and 16.¹⁵ But, overall, the gaps in educational performance have narrowed only very slightly despite significant investment (figure 1.10).

Figure 1.10: Gaps in educational performance have narrowed only very slightly despite significant investment



Source:

Department for Education, various Statistical First Releases: Foundation Stage Profile Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England 2009/10 (2011) (gap in % reaching a good level of development); Key Stage 1 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England 2009/10 (2011) (gap in % reaching expected level in reading); Key Stage 2 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England 2009/10 (provisional) (2011) (gap in % reaching expected level in English and maths); GCSE and Equivalent Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England 2009/10 (2010) (gap in % achieving 5 GCSEs A*–C including English and maths); and Level 2 and 3 Attainment by Young People in England Measured Using Matched Administrative Data: Attainment by Age 19 in 2009 (provisional) (2010) (gap in % achieving a Level 3 qualification by age 19).

Other factors: the economy, equality and health

1.33 While the Government's primary focus is on addressing the obstacles faced at critical moments across the life cycle, there are wider economic and social trends that may impact on social mobility.

Ensuring that there are more and better jobs

1.34 A dynamic and growing economy generating new employment, growing real wages and more opportunities for people to progress through the labour market – what academics term 'room at the top' – is important for improving social mobility. Without new opportunities arising, be they new jobs or improvements in the quality of existing jobs, then upward mobility will naturally be more difficult. Encouragingly, there is evidence that the demand for skilled workers is currently outstripping supply, which implies that there may be some 'room at the top' for highly qualified graduates from all backgrounds.¹⁶

1.35 But in the recent past, growth has been unbalanced, reliant on too few sectors overly concentrated in specific areas of the country and dependent on unsustainable levels of public expenditure and debt. These imbalances contributed to the relatively large fall in economic output experienced during the recession in the UK compared with that in other countries.¹⁷

1.36 This is why the Government is committed to rebalancing the economy, reducing its dependency on a narrow range of economic sectors, so that it is driven by private sector growth and that new business opportunities will be more evenly balanced across the country and between industries.

1.37 The Office for Budget Responsibility has forecast that there will be 900,000 net additional jobs created in the UK economy between 2010 and 2015.¹⁸ The most recent forecasts from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills are for a continued shift in the labour market towards higher skilled employment.¹⁹ This will help to create new opportunities for social mobility.

Equality

1.38 Gender, race, disability and other characteristics also influence life chances. Some groups – especially disabled people, some ethnic groups and some religious groups – are over-represented among the less well-off.²⁰

1.39 Different groups are affected, for better and for worse, in different ways. This means that our approach to social mobility will need to be sensitive to these other influences. The impact of these characteristics have been documented at length elsewhere.²¹ Some important findings include the following:

- FSM eligibility appears to have little impact on the GCSE performance of children from Chinese origins, but white British and black Caribbean boys eligible for FSM perform poorly.
- Participation in higher education by white British teenagers is lower than for many ethnic minorities, particularly the middle of the attainment range. However, ethnic minority graduates are under-represented in the graduate recruitment of large organisations.
- Women outperform men throughout the education system yet do not do as well in the labour market, with pay not reflecting their qualification levels. There is a persistent labour market penalty associated with becoming a mother.
- Some ethnic groups – particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi women – have relatively low employment rates.
- There are large differences in employment rates and wages between those who are disabled and those who are non-disabled, and the gap appears to have grown in the last 25 years.

1.40 As the Government's Equality Strategy²² set out, equality is an integral part of the Government's commitment to building a stronger economy and fairer society. We are alive to the particular barriers to social mobility that can be faced by different people, and will develop tailored responses to remove these barriers, ensuring that interventions have a positive impact for all.

I.41 There is an active debate about the relationship between income inequality and social mobility. Academic studies comparing levels of social mobility in different countries have found a correlation between high levels of income inequality and low levels of social mobility,²³ although some have criticised the validity of this finding.²⁴ Of course, correlation is not the same as causation. The drivers of social mobility are complex, and income alone does not determine future outcomes.

I.42 There are also a number of countries, such as Australia and Canada, that have relatively high levels of income inequality but also high levels of social mobility. Equally, there are some countries that have relatively low levels of income inequality but low levels of social mobility, such as France.²⁵

I.43 Of course, income equality is an important goal in its own right, but the challenge in terms of social mobility is to understand the key components of a more mobile society which do not appear to be related to simple measures of income equality.

Health and social mobility

I.44 Health shapes life chances. Poor health can be a barrier to social mobility. The Marmot Review on health inequalities – *Fair Society, Healthy Lives* – identified a social gradient in health: the lower the person's social position, the worse his or her health.²⁶ The Field review also emphasised that without good health and support in the earliest years of a child's life, children from poorer backgrounds will continue to do worse than those from more affluent homes.²⁷

I.45 For example, low birth weight is associated with a wide range of poor educational and health outcomes later in life. Disadvantaged parents are significantly more likely to have low birth weight babies.²⁸

- The Government's key priority is improving intergenerational relative social mobility.
- The UK currently has relatively low levels of social mobility, compared both with other countries and with the 'baby boomer' generation.
- There are clear 'opportunity gaps' at every stage in life. Improving social mobility means narrowing them.
- A dynamic and growing economy is crucial to improving social mobility. The decisive action the Government is taking to put public finances back on a sustainable footing and rebalance the economy will support our goals on social mobility.
- Health, gender, race, disability and other characteristics interact with social background in complex ways to affect social mobility – our policies to improve social mobility will be alive to these interactions.
- Income inequality appears to be correlated with low social mobility, but the relationship is complex and income alone does not determine outcomes. This strategy looks at more than just income, and focuses on interventions which we know to have a causal link with future success.



Chapter 2

Foundation Years

Children's life chances are most heavily influenced by their development in the first five years of life. By the time children start at school there are already wide variations in ability between children from different backgrounds – with poorer children doing worse across a wide range of outcomes. For example, children at age five living in poverty are already the equivalent of around eight months behind their peers in terms of cognitive development.

Given the crucial importance of the early years, the Government acted quickly to commission major independent reviews from Frank Field, Graham Allen and Dame Clare Tickell, looking at Child Poverty, Early Intervention and the Early Years Foundation Stage respectively.

This chapter sets out our approach, and provides a high level response to the Field and Allen reviews. Supporting parents and providing affordable, high quality early education and care are centre stage. The key components are:

- building a **coherent strategy from conception to age five**, and promoting an **early intervention** approach across Government, informed by the Field, Allen and Tickell reviews;
- supporting **maternal and child health and well-being**, recruiting 4,200 new health visitors and doubling the capacity of the Family Nurse Partnership programme;
- **helping parents to parent well**, and supporting strong family relationships, especially for those who are most vulnerable;
- supporting high quality **early years services** by retaining but reforming the national network of Sure Start Children's Centres, offering services to all families, but focusing on those in greatest need;
- enabling parents to balance work and home through generous and flexible **parental leave and working arrangements**; and
- providing access to **affordable and high quality early education and care**, with 15 hours of free early education for disadvantaged two-year-olds, and for all three and four-year-olds.

Why the Foundation Years matter

2.1 Children's earliest experiences – from conception to age five – have a profound and long-lasting influence on their life chances.¹ During this period maternal health is particularly important for children's health and well-being. Children experience especially rapid cognitive, emotional and social development.² This time is crucial in preparing children for school, and ultimately lays the foundation for their future success in work and life.

2.2 Too often – and especially for children from poorer families – disadvantages early in life set them on a course of educational failure and frustrated aspirations (figure 2.1).

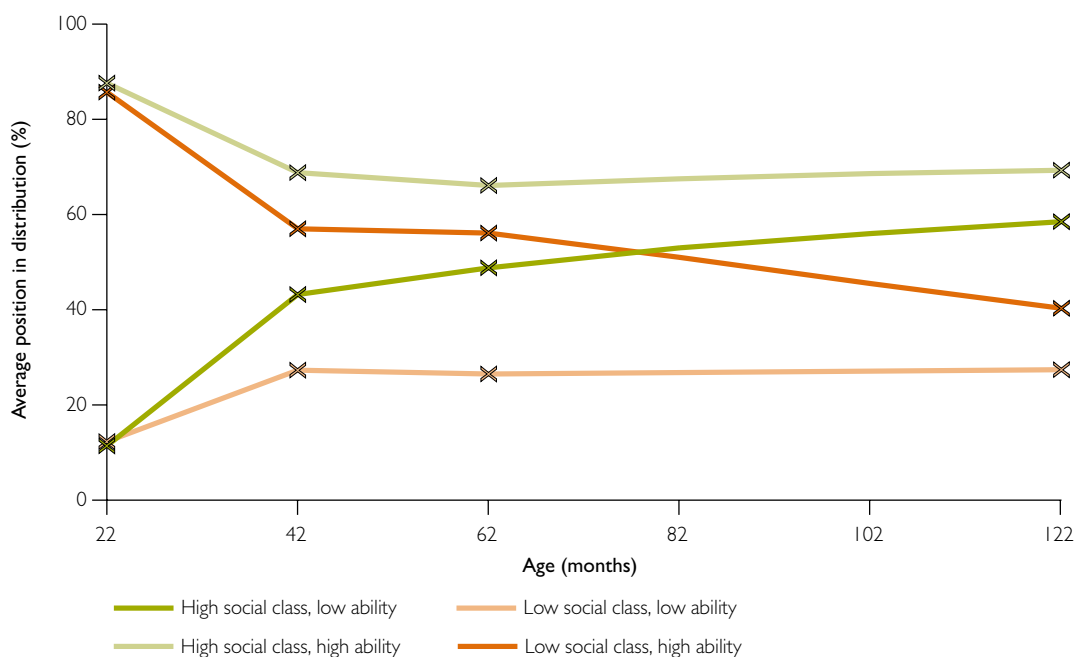
2.3 Gaps in development between children from different backgrounds can be detected even at birth, and widen rapidly during the first few years of life. Worryingly, the inequality trends for those born in 2000 are similar to those born in 1970.³ Throughout these years, poorer children do worse across a range of outcomes: they are more likely

to have lower birth weight, poorer health and behavioural conditions, as well as lower personal, social and emotional development, and worse communication, language and literacy skills than their peers.⁴

2.4 Parents, families and the home environment are key to children's early development. But after parenting, good quality early years provision has the biggest impact on children's development by age five.⁵

2.5 Early years provision has improved in recent years with the creation in England of Sure Start Children's Centres, the Healthy Child Programme, and free early education for three and four-year-olds. Similar steps have been taken in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. But we need to go further to increase the support on offer, particularly for the most disadvantaged. We also need to recognise the central role played by parents and families, and the need to involve communities and the voluntary and private sectors, to an even greater degree, in delivering early years services.

Figure 2.1: Children from poorer families who have shown early signs of high ability tend to fall back relative to more advantaged peers who have not performed as well



Source:

Feinstein L, Inequality in the early cognitive development of British children in the 1970 cohort. *Economica* 70(277) (2003).

2.6 Our Foundation Years approach puts parents and families centre stage. It:

- provides support for maternal health and well-being;
- recognises that all parents benefit from parenting support and advice, and some will benefit from relationship support;
- supports high quality early years services; and
- enables parents to balance work and home through generous and flexible parental leave and working arrangements.

2.7 At the same time, we are committed to ensuring access to affordable, high quality early education and care, especially for the most disadvantaged.

A new approach: the Field, Allen and Tickell reviews

2.8 Improving all children's health and development outcomes from conception to age five is central to this Government's vision of a fair and socially mobile society. Policy must be based on evidence showing what really works to improve children's outcomes. This is why the Coalition Government acted quickly to commission three major independent reviews:

- the Review on Poverty and Life Chances, led by Frank Field, published in December 2010;⁶
- a review of Early Intervention, led by Graham Allen, which published its first report on the evidence base in January 2011,⁷ with a second report on innovative financing of early intervention due this summer; and
- a review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (the things that early education and care providers have to do), led by Dame Clare Tickell, published in March 2011.⁸

2.9 The Government welcomes these reviews, which have reinforced our commitment to improving children's life chances. Boxes 2.1 and 2.2 set out the Government's high level response to Frank Field's and Graham Allen's reports. A more detailed response to Frank Field's recommendations can be found in the Child Poverty Strategy. Further responses to all three reviews will be set out in a policy statement on the Foundation Years this summer.

Box 2.1: The Frank Field Review of Poverty and Life Chances

Frank Field was commissioned to lead an independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances, which reported in December 2010. The review recommended a fundamentally different approach to measuring and preventing poverty, going beyond a narrow focus on incomes and recognising the importance of parenting and family support, health and education in framing life chances. We welcome this report and many of its key recommendations:

- We agree that the period from conception to age five, which Frank Field usefully termed the Foundation Years, is of fundamental importance for improving life chances and accept the need to give these years greater prominence in policy and communications.
- We agree that the Government should target services at the most disadvantaged, and increase the use of evidence-based programmes.
- Through the forthcoming policy statement on the Foundation Years, which will be produced collaboratively with the sector, the Department for Education and the Department of Health are committed to producing a joint vision for the period from pregnancy to age five.
- We agree that focusing on income measures alone has distorted policy making. There has been an over-reliance on policies such as income transfers which aim to tackle the symptoms, rather than the causes, of child poverty. The Government's Child Poverty Strategy, published in April 2011, sets out our approach in more detail.
- We agree that the Government should adopt a broader range of measures than those contained in the Child Poverty Act, focused on life chances and social mobility. We are adopting a series of leading indicators for social mobility (Chapter 6), drawing on the recommendations in the Field review. The Child Poverty Strategy includes detailed consideration of Frank Field's recommendation for new life chances indicators.

Box 2.2: Graham Allen's Review of Early Intervention

We welcome Graham Allen's first report which focused on the way in which interventions in the earliest years of life can support babies, children and young people to build their social and emotional capabilities.

- We agree that getting early intervention right makes moral and financial sense, and is key to breaking the intergenerational transmission of dysfunction and disadvantage. We welcome the acknowledgment of the importance of the early years and of good parenting, and the emphasis on using the best evidence available to inform spending decisions.
- We have already made a range of decisions that will promote early intervention. For example, we are giving local authorities in England greater flexibility to design and deliver services through the Early Intervention Grant, as well as recruiting 4,200 additional health visitors, and doubling the capacity of the Family Nurse Partnership programme.

Graham Allen made three overarching recommendations for driving an early intervention approach across the country. None of these recommendations are primarily for central government to take forward but we will consider further how we can best support these efforts:

- **Identifying effective programmes:** Graham Allen's report undertook a rigorous evaluation of early intervention programmes, identifying 19 'top programmes'. This is a valuable contribution to the evidence on what works, which we hope local commissioners will take into account. We agree that this should be a 'living list', reviewed and expanded in light of the evidence. We will consider how this could be achieved, including the role that local partners can play.
- **Early Intervention Places:** the review recommends support for 15 English local authorities that are willing to pioneer an early intervention approach (Early Intervention Places). We encourage all areas to explore how they can implement effective early interventions. Our wider reforms to public services and local government, including the new Early Intervention Grant, will support areas to design effective early interventions. We will also consider how Early Intervention Places can complement or add to other initiatives, such as Community Budgets, and how we might further support their success.
- **The Early Intervention Foundation:** the review also recommends the creation of an independent Early Intervention Foundation to promote early intervention, improve and disseminate the evidence on what works, help to monitor and implement programmes, and assist with raising money for interventions. We agree that there is a demand for more high quality information about the effectiveness of different services and interventions. This information can be used to design and commission better services and ultimately improve life chances and save public money. While it is not for Government to endorse specific bodies engaged in early intervention, we welcome Graham Allen's continuing focus on helping to improve the interventions and outcomes for children and young people, and look forward to his second report.

Supporting parents

Maternal health and well-being are critically important for children's outcomes

2.10 Mothers' mental and physical health have a deep impact on children's health and well-being during the Foundation Years. A healthy pregnancy and a strong emotional bond between mother and child in the first few months can place children on the road to success.⁹

2.11 We are committed to supporting all parents and children through the universal Healthy Child Programme which emphasises prevention, health promotion and early intervention. This will be led and delivered by health visitors who provide child and family health services through Children's Centres and help families to stay in touch with wider sources of support, including from the community and other parents.

We are recruiting an additional 4,200 health visitors, and doubling the capacity of the Family Nurse Partnership programme

2.12 The Government has launched ambitious plans to expand and rejuvenate the health visiting service. Through the *Health Visitor Implementation Plan 2011-2015: A call to action*,¹⁰ we will recruit an additional 4,200 health visitors in England by 2015.

2.13 For vulnerable young families, we will increase the availability of the Family Nurse Partnership programme, more than doubling the number of families who can be on the programme at any one time, from just over 6,000 at present to 13,000 by 2015.

Good parenting is key to children's development

2.14 Good parenting plays a vital role in children's development, ensuring that they gain the cognitive, emotional and social skills needed to succeed in school and in later life. The evidence is clear that it is *what parents do*, rather than *who they are* (in terms of, for example, occupation, education or income), that matters most.¹¹

2.15 Research has shown that the home learning environment is the most important factor in children's cognitive and social and behavioural outcomes.¹² In the early years, a strong home environment is characterised by activities such as talking and reading to children, singing songs and learning through simple activities and play. As children mature, discussions in the family are important for helping children to learn to make good choices, as is reinforcing the importance of doing homework.

2.16 Parents have an important influence not only on children's cognitive development and health and well-being, but also on 'softer' skills like communication and interpersonal relations. These begin to develop in the early years, and parents play the primary role in developing them in children.¹³ There is evidence that these skills are increasingly important for life chances.¹⁴

2.17 We know that some parenting styles are better for children's outcomes. As Frank Field has noted, positive parenting – setting clear boundaries for children, as well as being warm and responsive to the child – can have a beneficial impact on children's development.¹⁵ We also know that good quality parenting programmes, based on scientific principles and delivered consistently by well trained staff, can improve outcomes for children.¹⁶

2.18 Opinions vary on when and how to offer help to improve parenting skills, but the evidence suggests that interventions to improve parenting are most effective when aimed at parents who can 'apply' their learning.¹⁷ That is why we are focusing our investment on support for new mothers and fathers, including couples who are expecting a child.

2.19 It is also important that young people have the advice and knowledge they need to develop positive parenting skills. Frank Field recommends that parenting and life skills should be reflected in the curriculum from primary school to GCSE level.¹⁸ We are undertaking an internal review of the quality of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, and as part of that review we will consider how schools can most effectively and appropriately promote the importance of positive parenting and the teaching of core life skills.

All parents can benefit from parenting advice and support

2.20 We do not think it is Government's job to tell people how to bring up their children. But we do think there is much more we can do to make sure that parents have access to information and support when they need it.

2.21 What is needed is a much wider culture change towards recognising the importance of parenting, and how society can support mothers and fathers to give their children the best start in life.

2.22 We want parenting advice and support to be considered the norm – just as many new parents choose to access ante-natal education. People do not want Government telling them how to raise and love their children. But we also know that many families (and not just those with young children) would like sensible, practical support from organisations they trust.¹⁹

We welcome Graham Allen's recommendation that people, especially parents, health professionals and newly pregnant women should be aware of the importance of developing social and emotional capability in the first years of life, and understand the best ways of encouraging good later outcomes for their children

We agree that a broad-based alliance of interested groups, charities, employers and foundations would be best placed to take this forward, and the Government will work with such a consortium to support this

2.23 The Government is committed to supporting voluntary and community sector organisations which provide parents with direct assistance when they need it. The Department for Education is currently undertaking a competitive process to award contracts for family services delivered online and through telephone helplines. In recognition of the importance of adult relationships within

families, the Government is increasing its investment in relationship support through the voluntary and community sector.

2.24 While we know that voluntary sector organisations are usually the preferred source of information for parents, Government departments are working together to take a fresh look at the information provided to parents through the public sector, such as *'The Pregnancy Book'*²⁰ and *'Birth to Five'*,²¹ which provide comprehensive information to support a family through pregnancy and up to the child's fifth birthday.

2.25 The Foundation Years Policy Statement, to be published this summer, will consider how we make information more accessible for parents, and our Youth Policy Statement and School Admissions Strategy, due later this year, will also focus on the information needs of parents. We will also work with the voluntary and private sectors to consider what new approaches might work, for example, offering parents a DVD with the latest information on child health, development and care, and using social media in new ways.

Sure Start Children's Centres are at the heart of the support on offer to parents

2.26 Sure Start Children's Centres will continue to play a vital role in supporting parents of young children, providing a range of information and support, from advice on parenting to health services, early education and childcare. Through the Spending Review we have ensured that Sure Start services will be maintained in cash terms, including new investment in Sure Start health visitors.

2.27 The core purpose of Children's Centres is to improve children's outcomes and narrow gaps, focusing on:

- parenting capacity;
- health and well-being; and
- child development and school readiness.

2.28 We are reforming Sure Start Children's Centres. The reforms are aimed at:

- refocusing support on those families in greatest need, while maintaining a core universal offer;
- creating a step change in the level of voluntary and community sector engagement, including proposals in the Localism Bill to introduce a Community Right to Challenge – a new right for communities and local authority employees to challenge local authorities where they believe that they could run services differently or better;
- ensuring much greater use of evidence-based early intervention programmes, taking into account the Graham Allen Review;
- significantly reforming the accountability framework for Children's Centres, with providers paid in part according to their results; and
- identifying the potential for other services – such as relationship support – to be based in Children's Centres, as recommended by Frank Field.

It is important that parents are able to balance work and home

2.29 We will help parents to balance work and home in a way that better suits their circumstances. The current system of statutory maternity and paternity leave – under which mothers are entitled to 52 weeks' leave and fathers just two – is very inflexible and reinforces traditional gender roles that are no longer valid.

2.30 The previous Government put in place legislation to improve the situation by allowing mothers who return to work to transfer some of their outstanding leave to the father. We are going ahead with these Additional Paternity Leave and Pay Regulations from April this year, but we want to go much further.

2.31 We want to enable and encourage fathers to get more involved in raising their children. To this end we will be consulting shortly on developing a new, properly flexible system of parental leave, which we aim to introduce in 2015.

We will be consulting shortly on developing a new, properly flexible system of parental leave, which we aim to introduce in 2015

2.32 We will also be consulting shortly on extending the right to request flexible working to all employees.

Ensuring access to high quality early education and care

High quality early education and care have a major impact on children's development

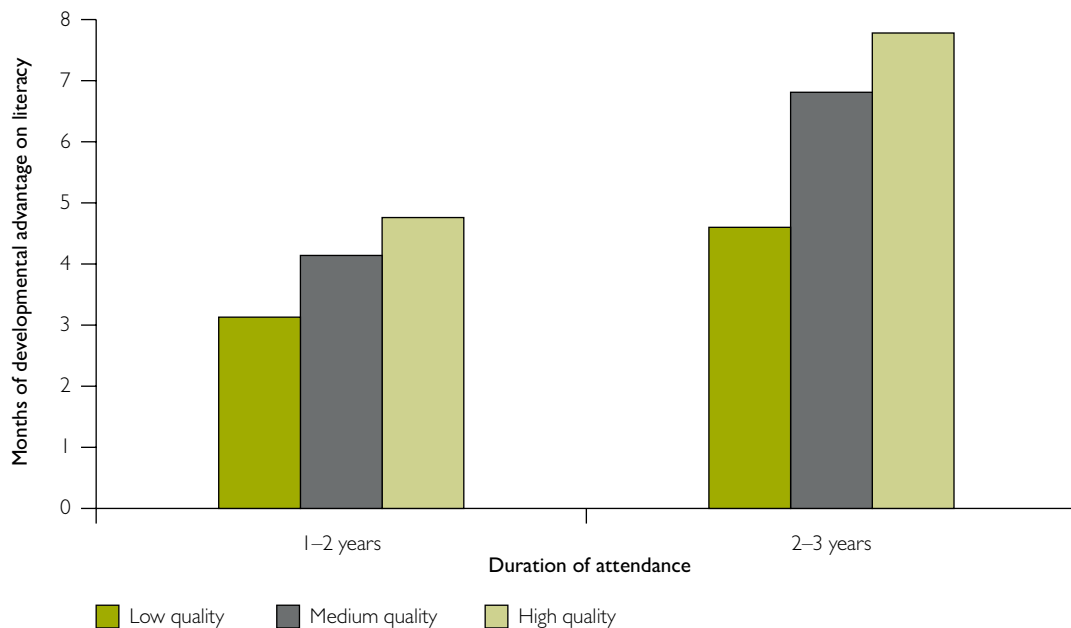
2.33 The quality and duration of early years provision have a significant impact on cognitive development: children who experience good quality early education are on average four to six months ahead in cognitive development at school entry than those who do not (figure 2.2). Quality counts: low quality provision yields significantly smaller benefits, which disappear over time.²²

We are introducing a new entitlement to 15 hours per week of free early education and care for disadvantaged two-year-olds, and maintaining the universal entitlement for all three and four-year-olds

2.34 Through the Education Bill we will make 15 hours of free early education per week a statutory entitlement for all disadvantaged two-year-olds in England by 2013.²³ By investing around £380 million per year by 2014/15, we will increase the number of two-year-old places from 20,000 to around 130,000 (about 20% of the total two-year-old population). We want high quality care to be delivered by a diverse group of providers from the private, voluntary and independent and maintained sectors.

2.35 At the same time, we will ensure that all young children and their families continue to reap the benefits of early education, by maintaining the universal offer of 15 hours of free nursery education per week for all three and four-year-olds.

Figure 2.2: The quality and duration of early years provision have a significant impact on cognitive development



Source:

Derived from Sylva K et al, *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Final Report*. Department for Education and Schools and the Institute of Education, University of London (2004).

2.36 Although take-up of the universal entitlement at three and four years is very high (95%), disadvantaged families are disproportionately represented in the remaining 5%. For this reason, we will work with the voluntary and community sector to promote participation in early education by disadvantaged families and children with disabilities, including funding activities which are focused on engaging disadvantaged families.

2.37 We remain committed to supporting a high quality early education and childcare workforce. Staff characteristics – especially qualifications and training – are the key ingredient of high quality early years provision.²⁴ This is why we asked Dame Clare Tickell to review the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which sets out the things that early education and care providers have to do. We welcome her report and will respond to her recommendations in full this summer when we consult on changes to the EYFS.

This chapter has set out our overarching vision for improving social mobility during the Foundation Years. The Government is committed to ensuring that every child gets the best possible start in life, with help targeted on those in greatest need. Our approach puts supporting parents and providing affordable, high quality early education and care centre stage. We will support parents through parenting advice, high quality early years services and flexible leave and working arrangements. And we will provide 15 hours of free early education for disadvantaged two-year-olds, and for all three and four-year-olds.



Chapter 3

School years

Between the ages of five and 16 children develop the knowledge, skills and aspirations that to a great extent determine their success in further or higher education and, ultimately, in the jobs market. The gaps in attainment between children from different backgrounds which open up in the early years continue to widen throughout school. Only 75% of the poorest children reach the expected level by the time they leave primary school, compared with 97% of the richest children. And just 20% of the poorest children gain five GCSEs at A*–C, including English and maths, compared to 75% of the richest children.

The Government is committed to providing a world-class education for all, while increasing support for those who need it most.

This chapter sets out the three key components of our approach:

- **raising standards in all schools** through system-wide reform: improving the status and quality of teaching, devolving as much power as possible to the frontline, improving accountability and transparency, and setting clear expectations of what all children should achieve;
- **a relentless focus on narrowing gaps in attainment** between children from different backgrounds, with a new Pupil Premium to help raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils; and
- **raising children's aspirations** through access to high quality advice and guidance coupled with a radical change in how we engage with businesses, universities and wider society.

Why the school years matter

3.1 It is during the school years that children gain the knowledge and develop the crucial skills and capabilities that will, to a great extent, determine their future life chances. Doing well at school can open doors to further and higher education, and ultimately to better jobs. And it is not just exams and qualifications that matter – during these years children develop the social and emotional skills that employers are increasingly looking for, and the aspirations and expectations that can drive them to succeed in life.

3.2 We are committed to ensuring that every child has a world-class education. There are high returns to investment in numeracy and literacy and we have to ensure that all can benefit from this.¹ While there is much to celebrate in our education system, the real test of success is how we are doing compared with our international competitors – and the most recent evidence is not encouraging. Between 2000 and 2009, 15-year-olds in the UK have fallen from 4th to 16th in international rankings in science, from 7th to 25th in literacy and from 8th to 28th in maths.²

3.3 It is still far too often the case that deprivation is destiny. Despite record spending on schools, there remains a vast gap between the attainment of children from rich and poor backgrounds (figure 3.1). As the previous chapter highlighted, gaps in attainment are already large at age five and these gaps continue to grow throughout school. By age 16, just 20% of young people from the poorest families achieve five good GCSEs including English and maths, compared with 75% from the richest families.³ Fewer than 4% of children eligible for free school meals (FSM) achieved the English Baccalaureate in 2010.⁴

3.4 Our schools should be engines of social mobility, providing every child with the knowledge, skills and aspirations they need to fulfil their potential. And we are clear that in order to narrow the gap in attainment between rich and poor, disadvantaged pupils will need more targeted support.

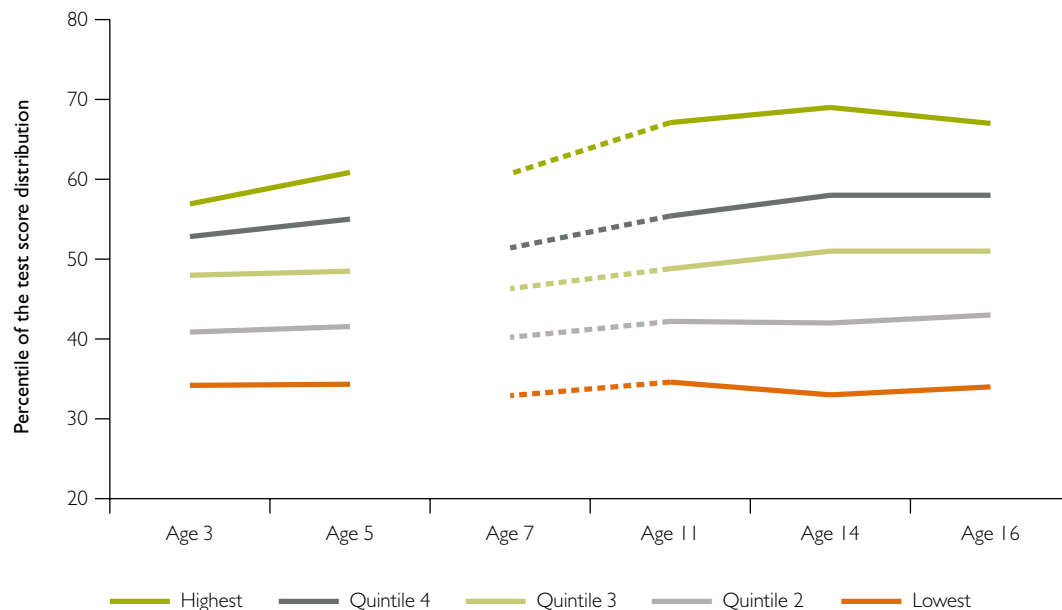
3.5 Through the Spending Review we ensured that school funding would rise in real terms. But we know that money is not enough. We are committed to radical, whole-system reforms, learning from the best performing school systems in the world. These reforms will:

- raise standards in all schools;
- narrow gaps in attainment; and
- raise children's aspirations.

Raising standards in all schools

3.6 The Government is committed to raising standards across the school system in England, ensuring that all children are able to develop their potential. Our reforms, outlined in our White Paper *The Importance of Teaching*,⁵ will transform England's schools system by giving school leaders more power and control, enabling them to drive improvement in their own schools and across the education system.

Figure 3.1 There are big gaps in the attainment of children from different backgrounds



Source:

Goodman A and Gregg P (eds), *Poorer Children's Educational Attainment: How important are attitudes and behaviours?* Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2010).

Note:

These data divide the population of children into fifths, ranked according to a constructed measure of socioeconomic position based on their parents' income, social class, housing tenure and a self-reported measure of financial difficulties. The chart shows average cognitive test scores of these children from the ages of 3 to 16, according to socioeconomic position. The dotted lines in the middle segment of the chart, covering ages 7–11, reflect that this sample is derived from Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPC) data. This is a sample of children from the Avon area rather than a national sample and, as such, is not directly comparable with the other datasets used.

The best schools combine high quality teaching with effective leadership

3.7 The most important factor in determining how well children do is the quality of teachers and teaching. Being taught by a high quality teacher rather than a low quality one adds nearly half a GCSE grade per subject, and students in the most effective classrooms learn four times as quickly as those in the least effective classrooms.⁶

We will raise the status and quality of teaching, recruiting more top graduates and investing in leadership development in schools

3.8 We will achieve this by:

- restricting funding for teacher training to graduates with at least a 2.2 degree;
- expanding the highly successful Teach First scheme, and the national network of Teaching Schools; and
- investing in a range of leadership programmes, focused on disadvantaged schools.

The best school systems in the world devolve as much power to the frontline as possible, while maximising accountability and transparency

3.9 Our school reforms have set a clear direction of travel towards schools as autonomous institutions collaborating with one another on terms set by teachers, not by bureaucrats.

We will increase autonomy for schools, opening up the Academies programme to all schools, including primary schools, and supporting the creation of new Free Schools, especially in the most disadvantaged areas

3.10 At the same time, it is vital that schools are clearly held accountable for how well pupils do, and how taxpayers' money is spent. Existing measures of performance have encouraged over-rehearsing of tests, and pupils taking 'equivalent' subjects that count heavily in performance tables.

3.11 Our new performance tables will set out our high expectations of all children – with every

child aspiring to a broad education, including a core of English Baccalaureate subjects. We will achieve a system-wide focus on progression by defining underperforming schools in terms of threshold and progression data and introducing a school performance indicator to measure the progress of the lowest attaining pupils.

3.12 We will also publish information online about every maintained school's funding and expenditure, including the amount allocated per pupil.

It is important that we set clear expectations of what all children should achieve

3.13 We need to set clear expectations of what children must know and be able to do at each stage in their education, and to ensure that the standards we set match the best in the world. And we need to have the same high expectations of every child – regardless of their background.

We are reviewing the primary and secondary National Curriculum to focus on the essential knowledge that every pupil needs, while giving teachers greater freedom beyond this, and the English Baccalaureate will encourage schools to offer all pupils a core of academic subjects

3.14 The National Curriculum review will develop a new National Curriculum, acting as a benchmark for all schools and providing all young people with the knowledge they need to move confidently and successfully through their education. The English Baccalaureate will reinforce our high aspirations, encouraging all schools to offer children a broad set of academic subjects until they reach age 16.

3.15 There is reason to believe that some of the recent explosion of vocational qualifications taken up to age 16 – from about 15,000 in 2004 to 575,000 in 2010⁷ – was driven more by performance tables (where these courses were seen as 'easy wins') than by pupils' interests. The result has been that many young people, especially the most deprived, have pursued courses and qualifications that are not well regarded by employers or universities.

3.16 We recognise the need for a vocational education system that is a credible and respected

route to success. The current system is failing to provide this. This is why we commissioned Professor Alison Wolf to carry out a review of vocational education.⁸ Her key recommendations are set out in Chapter 4.

Closing the gap between state schools and the independent sector

3.17 International studies show that British independent schools are amongst the best in the world.⁹ This is obviously a cause for celebration. But the gap in attainment between those in independent schools and state schools is a challenge for social mobility. Students educated in independent schools are three times more likely to get three As at A-Level than young people educated at state schools.¹⁰ And 26% of students in the most selective universities were privately educated – as were more than half those in the highest levels of most professions.¹¹

3.18 Our radical school reforms will address this challenge by raising standards in state schools. We need all schools to provide an education which matches the best in the independent sector, and helps pupils acquire softer skills that will help them succeed in later life. Independent schools often achieve this through building networks with employers and bringing in inspirational speakers: we want to encourage maintained schools to provide broader opportunities that will help their pupils succeed at the highest level at university and in the workplace.

3.19 We want all high performing schools – both state and independent – to play their part in promoting social mobility. Many independent schools already make a valuable contribution to wider society through offering bursaries, opening up their facilities to the wider community, and working with state schools. We will continue to encourage all high performing schools to raise the attainment and aspirations of disadvantaged pupils through collaborative arrangements such as the Teaching Schools programme.

Narrowing attainment gaps

3.20 Our school reforms will raise attainment for all, but if we are to bring about a transformation

in the achievement of the most disadvantaged, we need to ensure that schools have additional funding so that disadvantaged pupils do not fall behind their peers.

3.21 Changes to accountability, transparency and admissions will all help to ensure that our schools system is focused on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils as much as on raising average attainment.

We are introducing a Pupil Premium to provide additional funding for the most disadvantaged pupils at both primary and secondary level. By 2014/15 the Premium will be worth £2.5 billion

3.22 The Pupil Premium will improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and therefore raise social mobility in three ways. It will:

- provide headteachers with the money they need to provide an excellent and individually tailored education for these children;
- make it more likely that good schools will want to attract less affluent children; and
- make it more attractive to open Free Schools in disadvantaged areas.

3.23 We are also committed to reforming the complex and unfair school funding system so that all schools are funded transparently, logically and equitably. At present, inequalities in the school funding system mean that one school can receive up to 50% more funding than another school in a similar situation serving a similar pupil body. Just 70% of the money intended for disadvantaged pupils is actually allocated on that basis.¹² Our long-term ambition is a national funding formula which ensures that funding is based on the specific needs of individual schools and pupils, rather than on historical levels of spending. These reforms will have positive implications for social mobility.

3.24 If the Pupil Premium is to radically improve the outcomes of the most disadvantaged children, then schools need reliable and accessible information on what works in order to improve attainment for those who are least well-off.

The Government will make available best practice on what works for improving the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, and schools will decide how to spend the Pupil Premium funding

3.25 There is no single solution to address the underachievement of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Department for Education will ensure that the information it provides reflects the latest research, including findings from an independent longitudinal evaluation into the Pupil Premium.

3.26 We expect schools to spend the Pupil Premium in a variety of ways, although we are clear that it is for schools to decide how to use it, because they are best placed to understand the needs of their pupils. Many of our schools have a wealth of experience in raising the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils via, for example, mentoring, revision programmes and reward schemes. Some of the interventions which have had a positive impact include the following:

- Intensive individual support in English and maths, underpinning success in other subjects. One-to-one tutoring in English by qualified and well-trained teachers has been shown to be particularly successful, especially where the teaching is structured and emphasises systematic phonics.¹³
- Children with more engaged parents are more likely to succeed. Many schools that have successfully raised the attainment of disadvantaged pupils have successfully engaged disadvantaged parents in their children's education. Examples include: the establishment of a School Parent Forum, to advise on key aspects of school life; a Parent Portal on a school website, allowing greater access to pupil information and data; or more intensive interventions – for example running parenting programmes in schools, which have been shown to have a positive impact on conduct disorders.¹⁴

Box 3.1: Case study – The Manor School, North Nottinghamshire

The Manor School is an 11–18 community comprehensive school in Mansfield Woodhouse, North Nottinghamshire – an ex-coal mining community.

The school wanted to raise the attainment of groups of free school meals (FSM) pupils in Years 9 and 11 in English and maths. To do so, two learning assistants, one for English and one for maths, were appointed. They were graduates in the subject and had the inter-personal skills to work with vulnerable and challenging students.

The FSM students, identified as being at risk of underachieving by using the school's tracking data, were supported in class and as groups. Interventions targeted challenging areas of learning, improving coursework and examination practice. In addition, the students were encouraged to attend out-of-school activities.

Outcomes were positive: 34% of the English FSM students and 81% of the maths students achieved their expected grade in 2009, compared to 21% and 62% respectively the previous year.

Schools should be accountable for how they spend the Pupil Premium

3.27 It is vital that there is a strong framework of incentives, transparency and accountability underpinning the Pupil Premium. As well as providing information on what works, we will make sure that schools are incentivised to spend this money effectively.

We will publish measures of the attainment and progress of children in receipt of the Pupil Premium, and we will expect schools to be accountable to parents for how it is used

3.28 Disadvantaged children need the best possible opportunities to get into the best schools. For this reason, we are considering carefully how the admissions process can be improved for these children. This could mean certain schools being able to take on more of such pupils, in order to concentrate resources and specialise in their particular educational and supportive needs.

3.29 We will soon launch a national consultation so that parents and stakeholders can respond to our proposals to cut bureaucracy in the admissions system while underlying structures and accountability are maintained.

We need to encourage innovation in supporting disadvantaged pupils

The £110 million Education Endowment Fund will encourage innovative ways of helping disadvantaged pupils

3.30 We are establishing an Education Endowment Fund to encourage innovative approaches to raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in underperforming schools. The £110 million fund will run for at least ten years.

3.31 This will not only fund projects which could significantly raise attainment, it will expand our understanding of which activities genuinely raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. We expect to see standards of attainment rise in those schools involved in the trials, and ultimately throughout the school system.

Raising aspirations

Schools have an important responsibility to provide students with high quality advice and guidance

3.32 Making sure that young people have access to high quality, aspirational information, advice and guidance is an important part of what schools can do to improve social mobility. The best schools – including independent schools – know how important it is to help young people develop the self-awareness, self-esteem and confidence to take decisions and seize control of their future learning and careers.

We will make schools responsible for securing access to independent, impartial careers guidance for all their pupils

3.33 Through the Education Bill, schools will have a duty to secure access for their pupils to independent, impartial careers guidance. This will include advice or guidance on routes to further education, Apprenticeships and higher education. We expect schools to offer their pupils information and activities to complement and enhance formal careers guidance, for example: ‘taster’ sessions; open evenings and ‘next step’ events; past students coming in to schools to talk about their experiences; employers visiting to talk about their jobs; and mentoring opportunities.

Improving advice and guidance in schools

3.34 We will make sure that schools have the right incentives and information to provide their students with high quality careers advice. For the first time, we will introduce a measure of how well pupils do when they leave school, focusing on how many continue in education, training or employment.

3.35 This ‘destinations measure’ will be in place for young people completing Key Stage 5 by 2012/13. And the planned Key Stage 4 destinations measure will act as a strong incentive for schools to make sure that they are preparing young people for success post-16 and are helping them to make choices that are right for them. Evidence shows that specific and targeted advice can positively influence the decision of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to go into higher education.¹⁵

3.36 Higher education institutions will also be expected to make clear information available across a range of areas to students from disadvantaged backgrounds to help them to go on to university.

Wider society has a role to play in raising aspirations in schools

3.37 There are already a large number of organisations and institutions working in different ways to raise young people’s aspirations and drive social mobility. Most schools have some links with

higher education institutions and with employers, and many run schemes to provide young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with experiences designed to raise aspirations. Much of this activity is good, but the coverage is often patchy and small-scale, and some schools miss out. However, this is crowded territory, and it is unlikely that the Government would be able to add significantly to what is on offer by starting something new. Instead, we believe that the Government's role should be to support and promote this wider activity.

We will work with the Education and Employers Taskforce on 'Inspiring the Future', a new programme to get up to 100,000 people from all sectors and professions into schools and colleges to talk about their jobs and career routes

3.38 The Taskforce is already in discussions with Volunteering England, the Confederation of British Industry and a range of other organisations to develop a national online service to match up schools with individuals willing to volunteer.

3.39 The Government will lead by example in supporting this initiative. We have set out a commitment to encourage all civil servants to volunteer for at least one working day per year, using special paid leave. We will encourage civil servants to take part in this scheme, going into schools around the country to inspire young people.

3.40 At the same time, we strongly support initiatives such as 'Speakers for Schools' – to be launched later this year – which aims to give state schools access to a network of high profile, inspirational speakers who will speak in schools for free.¹⁶ All members of the Cabinet have signed up.

The entire Cabinet has signed up to the 'Speakers for Schools' initiative, to demonstrate our commitment to raising aspirations in schools

Activities outside of school can help children and young people to develop valuable soft skills and social networks

3.41 In order to raise aspirations and build soft skills, children and young people need access to activities outside of school. Too often such opportunities are restricted to the better off instead of being open to all.

We are launching National Citizen Service (NCS) for more than 11,000 16-year-olds in 2011, and 30,000 in 2012. Our long-term ambition is for all 16-year-olds to have the opportunity to participate in NCS

3.42 NCS is a flagship policy to help to build a more responsible and engaged society by bringing 16-year-olds from different backgrounds together in a programme of activity and service. NCS will be available to young people from all backgrounds. NCS providers are selected on the basis of their ability to reach all groups, including disadvantaged young people.

This chapter has set out our overarching vision for improving social mobility during the school years. To ensure that everyone benefits from this crucial period in life, the Government is committed to raising standards across the school system, ensuring that each classroom delivers high quality teaching and provides the same level of opportunity for all students. The proposed school reforms will address the gap in attainment between children from different backgrounds. This chapter also sets out the role for wider society in providing all students with the guidance and inspiration needed to realise their aspirations.



Chapter 4

Transition years

The years between 16 and 24 are a critical transition period from education to adult life. There are many different routes from GCSEs to a job. The choices a person makes during this period can have a lasting impact on their future.

Those who do not undertake further learning or move into work may be limiting their chances of succeeding in the job market now and in the future. This is a real problem, with more than 70,000 16 and 17-year-olds, and almost one in five of those between 18 and 24, not in education, employment or training (NEET).

We want to make the system fairer and more effective so that all young people have the best possible chance to make successful transitions. The key components are:

- **narrowing the gap** in educational access and attainment;
- **reducing the gap between vocational and academic routes**, ensuring that both enable young people to progress;
- ensuring **fairer access to higher education**, so that bright people from poor backgrounds have a good chance of getting to university;
- increasing the **proportion of young people engaged** in education or training; and
- **improving outcomes in the labour market** for those looking for work and reducing the rate of worklessness.

Why the transition to work matters

4.1 Investment in the early and school years is critical to giving people the skills and aspirations to succeed in later life. But the transition between finishing compulsory education and entering the world of work is also vital. The choices that young people make can have a lasting impact on their future, and that of their children.

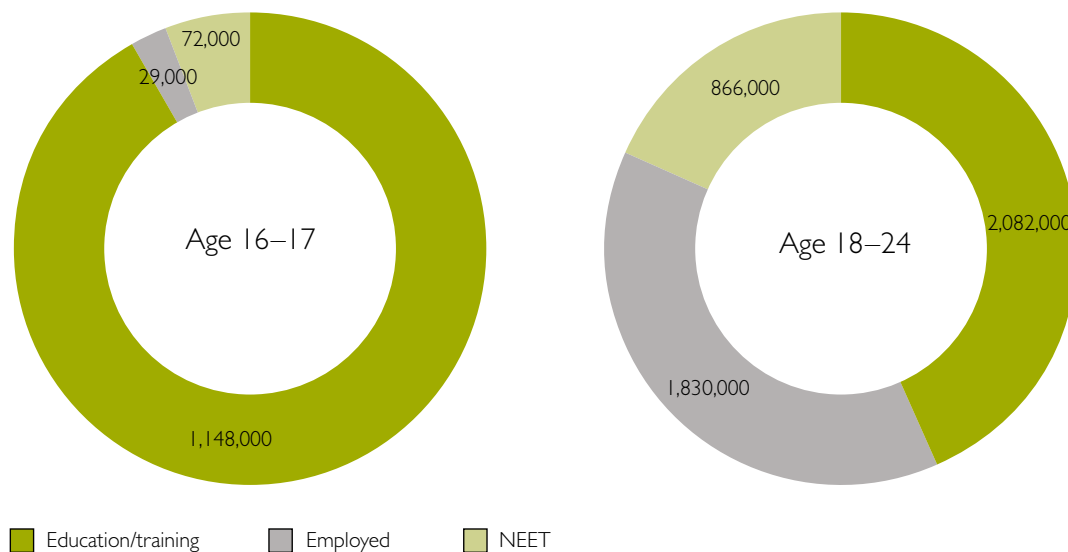
4.2 During this period, there are a lot more options available to young people and their individual paths begin to diverge. The vast majority of 16 and 17-year-olds currently choose to remain

in full-time academic education or enter vocational and work-based training. Some move straight into jobs.

4.3 But too many young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET) after 16, which can have damaging long-term effects (figure 4.1).

4.4 Being NEET for a short period is relatively common when young people are moving between education, employment and training. But significant problems are associated with young people who are NEET for longer periods. Young people who

Figure 4.1: Over 70,000 16 and 17-year-olds, and almost one in five of those between 18 and 24, are not in education, employment or training



Source:

Department for Education, *NEET Statistics – Quarterly Brief Labour Force Survey Q4 2010 (2011)*

are NEET at age 16–18 are more likely by age 21 to be unemployed, earn less, receive no training, have a criminal record and suffer from poor health and depression, compared with their peers who were in education or work between 16 and 18.¹

Supporting further education

Post-16 learning boosts social mobility

4.5 Whether staying in education or pursuing work-based learning routes, better qualified individuals enjoy higher wages and improved employment prospects.²

The most important factor in influencing participation post-16 is good attainment at 16

4.6 Good attainment at 16 is more influential even than young people's attitudes and beliefs or those of their parents.³ That is why our approach must focus first and foremost on raising attainment in schools so that more young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, arrive at 16 in the best possible position to continue their learning and progress to the next level. We are creating a schools system that will put every young person in the best possible position to progress to the next level.

From 2013, all young people will remain in education or training to age 17 and from 2015 to age 18

4.7 This does not mean that all young people will stay in school. They will be able to choose one of the following options:

- full-time education, such as school, college or home education;
- work-based learning, such as an Apprenticeship; or
- part-time education or training, if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week.

4.8 In the White Paper *The Importance of Teaching*, we set out a clear programme of reform that will help to raise standards for all young people, so that by the age of 16 they are well equipped to go on to positive participation in education or training and on into work. This is discussed in some detail in Chapter 3.

4.9 While raising attainment in schools is the best way of securing young people's participation and attainment post-16, our strategy also focuses on early intervention and prevention, to make sure

that those who are most at risk of falling through the gaps are identified and caught, at every stage from the earliest years, as set out in Chapter 2.

We are creating an education system that will put every young person in the best possible position to continue their learning

4.10 Post-16 participation will only have a real impact if all students – regardless of their background and regardless of whether they are following academic or vocational courses – are working towards qualifications that have real, widely recognised value, opening the doors to higher learning and work.

4.11 Widening access does not help if there are doubts about the rigour and suitability of the exams. That is why we are working with Ofqual to give higher education institutions a greater say in the design and development of A-Level exams; and why Ofqual is looking into whether recent changes to A-Levels have had the desired effect in promoting greater subject understanding and depth of study. Placing higher education firmly in the driving seat will ensure that developments are recognised and sustainable, and that A-Levels deliver what universities need.

4.12 We recognise the value of other high quality academic options, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Pre-U. We especially welcome the efforts that have been made by schools and colleges in the maintained sector to ensure that such qualifications are made more broadly available to pupils across the country. The availability of the IB diploma in particular is becoming much more widespread, ensuring that students of all backgrounds are increasingly getting the same choices as their counterparts in the independent sector. If there are any further barriers to this increase in opportunity, we shall work with the sector to reduce them.

The vocational system must be a credible and respected route to success

4.13 Of course, A-Levels and academic qualifications are not the only route to success. Vocational training can enable young people and adults to develop their skills and prepare for work or further learning. There is clear evidence that many vocational qualifications yield a good return,

particularly where they are well recognised in the labour market.⁴

4.14 There are already many excellent vocational training programmes but some courses currently offer little positive value in terms of earnings and career progression. This is particularly important for social mobility because young people who choose vocational routes come disproportionately from low income backgrounds and from areas of multiple disadvantage.⁵ Where young people from low income backgrounds are choosing low value vocational routes, this may serve to undermine future social mobility rather than to improve it. We want to ensure that the vocational system is a credible and respected route to success.

4.15 Professor Alison Wolf of King's College London has carried out an independent review of vocational education.⁶ She was asked to consider how vocational education for 14 to 19-year-olds can be improved in order to promote successful progression into the labour market and into higher level education and training routes. She was also asked to provide practical recommendations to help inform future policy direction, taking into account current financial constraints.

4.16 The report recommends incentivising young people to take the most valuable vocational qualifications pre-16; introducing principles to guide study programmes for young people on vocational routes post-16; evaluating the structure and content of Apprenticeships to ensure they deliver the right skills for the workplace; making sure the regulatory framework moves quickly away from accrediting individual qualifications to regulating awarding organisations; removing the requirement that all qualifications offered to 14 to 19-year-olds fit within the Qualifications and Credit Framework and enabling further education lecturers and professionals to teach in schools, ensuring that young people are being taught by those best suited.

4.17 At the heart of the Government's reforms will be a clear understanding that it is only by ensuring that the vocational education young people receive is of the highest quality and value to the individual student that we can tackle this country's long-standing failure to value vocational education. Our proposals will be particularly

beneficial for social mobility, ensuring that young people on vocational routes, currently disproportionately drawn from disadvantaged backgrounds, are studying courses of real worth, rather than channelled into low impact, low value learning.

The Government will shortly be publishing a formal response to the Wolf review, setting out how it intends to take forward the report's recommendations

4.18 One way in which we are delivering high quality vocational education is through new University Technical Colleges (UTCs), schools for 14 to 19-year-olds offering pupils a full-time technically-oriented course of study. UTCs specialise in technical subjects, such as engineering and construction, that require industry standard equipment; and teach these disciplines alongside business skills and the use of ICT. Pupils learn in a hands-on way, integrating academic study with technical and practical work.

4.19 The Government is committed to setting up at least 24 UTCs by 2014. UTCs teach core GCSEs alongside vocational qualifications, and offer clear progression routes into higher education or further learning in work, including Apprenticeships. They are sponsored in all cases by a university, and in some also by a further education college with strengths in the UTC's specialist curriculum subjects. The ethos and curriculum are heavily influenced by local and national employers who also provide support and work experience for students. The first UTC, the JCB Academy in Staffordshire, opened in 2010 and at least 24 more are planned during this Parliament.

Apprenticeships are central to our new approach to post-16 education

4.20 Apprenticeships offer the opportunity for people of all ages to earn as they learn and gain the skills they need to succeed and progress in their careers. They provide significant gains for individuals. Those with an Intermediate Level Apprenticeship (Level 2) earn on average around £73,000 more over their lifetime than those with other Level 2 (GCSE equivalent) qualifications and those with an Advanced Level Apprenticeship

(Level 3) around £105,000 more (than those with Level 2 qualifications).⁷ They can also provide significant benefits to employers who typically recoup their investment within two to three years.⁸

We are expanding the Apprenticeships programme, increasing funding in financial year 2011/12 to over £1.4 billion, enough to train over 360,000 apprentices in the 2011/12 academic year

4.21 We will work with key partners to increase the diversity of people starting Apprenticeships and encourage men and women to take up atypical courses, such as men studying childcare. The provision of flexible Apprenticeships will be encouraged.

4.22 With the 2011 Budget settlement of an additional £180 million over the life of this Parliament, we will explore links between Apprenticeships and the Department for Work and Pensions' work placement programme for young unemployed people and expand Advanced Level and Higher Apprenticeships further, especially in small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

4.23 We are also committed to increasing the quality of Apprenticeships through new national standards, and will reshape Apprenticeships so that Advanced Level Apprenticeships at Level 3, rather than Intermediate Level Apprenticeships at Level 2, becomes the level to which learners and employers aspire.

Resources need to be well targeted for education and training post-16

4.24 We will target our resources more effectively. The *16–19 Funding Statement*⁹ published in December 2010 confirmed an increase in funding for 16–19 education and training places in 2011/12 of 1.5% over the current year's budget. This means that any young person who wants a place in education or training will be funded for an appropriate place.¹⁰

4.25 The Statement also set out specific measures to help disadvantaged young people participate in education and training. It includes increasing the proportion of funding in the national funding formula which addresses deprivation, as the first

steps towards a more transparent approach to reflecting deprivation in 16–19 funding in the longer term.

4.26 We have increased the amount of funding for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or with particular learning needs by £150 million in 2011/12. We expect that at least half a million 16 to 18-year-olds will benefit from this extra funding.

Just as we have introduced a Pupil Premium at secondary school, we are also increasing funding for disadvantaged learners post-16 by more than a third to £770 million in 2011/12

4.27 We are also simplifying post-16 funding to free up schools and colleges, ensuring that funding more closely follows students' choices. In order to ensure that the best use is made of this investment, local authorities will continue to keep track of which young people have yet to secure an offer of post-16 learning, encouraging and helping them to apply for their place in education or training.

4.28 Many young people still want to learn or improve their prospects as they move into their early twenties. Further education colleges play an important role in providing full and part-time courses for young people. Young adults aged 19 to 24 will be entitled to full fee remission for their first full Level 2 or Level 3 qualification. Full funding will also be available for young adults to undertake Foundation Learning (Entry Level and Level 1) where they need this to be able to take up their entitlement to a Level 2 course, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, helping them to get the qualifications they need to build a career.

Some students face barriers which prevent them from participating in education and training

4.29 However effective the school system is at preparing young people to continue their learning post-16, and however high quality the provision available post-16, there will always be a small number of young people who have more of a problem making a successful transition. We believe that our strategy of early intervention and

increasing attainment at 16 will, over time, reduce this but there will of course be a need to support those who struggle at this point.

4.30 We announced in October 2010 that we would be ending the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), which was a poorly targeted way of supporting disadvantaged young people in education beyond the age of 16. We are investing in a new 16-19 Bursary Fund to help ensure that the costs of travel, food and equipment for poorer students are properly met, so no-one is prevented from participating in post-16 education. The fund will provide schools, colleges and training providers with sufficient resource to support less well off students post-16. Nearly £15 million will be directed towards the most vulnerable young people, such as those in care and those receiving income support, giving them £1,200 a year; more than they would have received under the old system. And because we recognise that this money will be best spent flexibly and locally, we're putting £165 million into discretionary funds that schools and colleges can use in ways that best fit the circumstances and needs of their students, for example, to provide help with books, meals, transport or other course-related costs.

4.31 £180 million will be available for this Bursary Fund. While actual payments will reflect need, the fund will be sufficient to pay bursaries of up to £800 a year to all young people who were eligible for free school meals in year 11 who choose to stay on in post-16 education or training. In 2011/12 we will also make arrangements for transitional support for young people currently in receipt of EMA. Those holding an EMA 'guarantee' from 2009/10 will receive their current level of weekly payments through to the end of the 2011/12 academic year. Young people who started post-16 courses for the first time in 2010/11 and were eligible for £30 a week under EMA will receive £20 a week through to the end of the 2011/12 academic year, and will be eligible for support through the new bursary scheme.

4.32 This Government has committed to raising the participation age. As this takes effect, we will monitor the impact of the 16-19 Bursary Fund to make sure that it continues to reach and support those students with the greatest need.

Opening up higher education

A degree can act as a route to higher-paid and professional careers

4.33 Participating in post-16 education or training can also unlock a young person's potential, by allowing them to go on to higher education. A degree can improve lifetime earnings by, on average, £100,000 compared with the earnings of those with two A-Levels.¹¹

4.34 Many more young people go to university now than they did even a few decades ago. Participation has increased from 30% in the mid-1990s to 36% at the end of the 2000s.¹² Women are now more likely to go on to higher education than men, and more likely to achieve good degrees.¹³

4.35 Further education colleges have played a significant role in widening participation in higher education. With a track record of reaching non-traditional learners, higher education programmes in further education colleges can be an attractive option for part-time and mature learners and

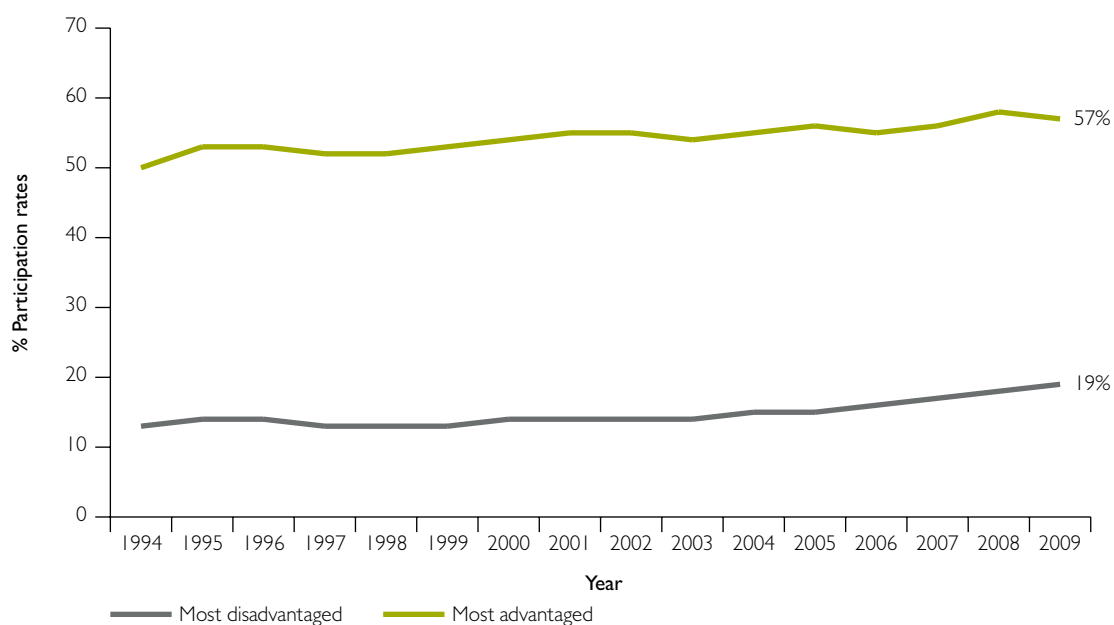
for those following work-related vocational programmes, foundation degree programmes and professional awards.

4.36 However, despite this progress, much more needs to be done. The gap in participation between advantaged and disadvantaged young people remains (figure 4.2).

4.37 Progress in widening participation has also been patchy across the higher education sector. Over the past 15 years, the participation rate of young people from the most disadvantaged areas in the most selective third of universities has remained flat at under 3%.¹⁴ Disadvantaged young people have been much less likely to enter more selective institutions than advantaged young people, in some cases as much as 15 times less likely.¹⁵

4.38 It is essential that we see wider access to all higher education institutions. Our reforms to the funding of higher education, described below, provide the right framework to support this. But achieving our aim also relies on action from universities themselves. To support this ambition,

Figure 4.2: An estimated 57% of those from the most advantaged areas go on to higher education compared with just 19% from the most disadvantaged areas



Source:

Higher Education Funding Council for England, *Trends in Young Participation in Higher Education: Core results for England*. Issues Paper (2010).

Note:

Areas are classified in terms of advantage using measures related to young people's participation in higher education and the education level, occupation and income of their parents.

the funding allocations announced by the Higher Education Funding Council for England this year have prioritised those elements of teaching funding that support widening participation and improved student retention.

Student support arrangements must ensure fair access for all, regardless of background

4.39 This Government believes that access to higher education should be on the basis of ability, not ability to pay. Our reforms to higher education funding in England will mean that no full-time student will need to contribute to their tuition costs up-front and will ensure that lower income students get the support they need.

From 2012/13, new students from families with incomes of £25,000 or less will be entitled to a more generous full maintenance grant of £3,250 a year

4.40 Progress over the last few years in securing fair access to the most selective universities has been inadequate. Much more determined action now needs to be taken. We will ensure that widening participation for students from all backgrounds remains a key strategic objective for all higher education institutions. All universities will produce widening participation strategic assessments and those wanting to charge more than £6,000 annual graduate contribution will also have to agree new Access Agreements.

Universities wanting to charge more than a £6,000 annual graduate contribution will have to demonstrate what more they will do to attract more students from disadvantaged backgrounds

4.41 Ministers at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills wrote to the Director of Fair Access on 10 February this year setting out the Government's expectations about how he should approach the approval and monitoring of new Access Agreements.¹⁶ The guidance sets out significantly increased expectations on institutions to prioritise and improve fair access and widening participation. The Director has issued his own

guidance to institutions who intend to seek approval to charge above £6,000, to support them as they draw up their Access Agreements for 2012/13.

4.42 All universities charging above the £6,000 graduate contribution threshold will also have to participate in the new National Scholarship Programme and provide matched funding, to be agreed with the Director of Fair Access.

We are introducing a new National Scholarship Programme that will provide financial assistance to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Government will contribute £50 million in 2012/13, £100 million in 2013/14 and £150 million from 2014/15

4.43 The programme will target bright potential students from poor backgrounds. We will encourage them to apply by guaranteeing extra support to help meet the costs of going to university. We particularly want to help those young people who have the ability to attend the most selective universities but who might otherwise be deterred by the costs. Each eligible student will receive a benefit of not less than £3,000.

4.44 We have also appointed Simon Hughes MP as Advocate for Access to Education. He will work with the Government to promote the goal of increasing participation in further and higher education by those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. The Independent Reviewer on Social Mobility, Alan Milburn, has announced that access to higher education will be the priority for his first year.

Recognising potential in admissions policies in higher education

4.45 If selective institutions are to make progress in admitting more students with high potential from disadvantaged backgrounds, they may want to admit some such students on the basis of lower entry qualifications than they would normally require.

4.46 To help them identify individuals with the greatest potential, institutions may sometimes want to use contextual data, for example about levels of average attainment in an applicant's school. This is a valid and appropriate way for institutions to broaden access while maintaining excellence, so long as individuals are considered on their merits, and institutions' procedures are fair, transparent and evidence-based.

4.47 The Government is also committed to increasing progression through vocational routes. Accepting a wide range of qualifications, where these demonstrate the potential of a candidate to succeed, is in the interest of universities.

4.48 UCAS operates a tariff mechanism to facilitate comparisons between different kinds of qualifications. During the last decade, the number, diversity and complexity of qualifications offering pathways to higher education expanded substantially. UCAS is currently reviewing the tariff system and the way that it operates. The Government will work closely with UCAS on the review to ensure that vocational qualifications and Apprenticeships are properly considered.

4.49 To ensure that admissions are fair to all, we need much more transparency. We want universities to publish information on the A-Levels successful applicants have chosen, so that it is clear which subjects provide applicants with the best chance of getting a place. We welcome the decision by the Russell Group universities to publish a guide to post-16 subject choices, including advice on the best subject combinations for a wide range of university courses and on the best choices for students who do not know what they want to study after school and need to keep their options open.¹⁷

Box 4.1: University catch-up

More and more people want to go into higher education, and universities have a difficult job to do in deciding which students have the greatest potential. While educational attainment is the single most important indicator of future potential, it is by no means the only one and in isolation it is not the best indicator of future potential. There is a growing body of evidence to support the view that focusing on prior attainment alone may not identify the best students.¹⁸

Two recent academic papers looking at recruitment at Oxford and Bristol universities have shown that students educated at state schools tend to outperform students from independent schools with the same grades at GCSE or A-Level. In the case of Oxford University, the authors claim that 'the same average GCSE grades for a private school and a state school student do not mean the same thing; they do not represent the same potential to achieve a first-class degree.'¹⁹ The evidence suggests a similar picture at Bristol University: students educated at independent schools did better than their state-educated peers at A-Level, but were significantly less likely to get a first-class degree, and more likely to get a 2.2 or below.²⁰

Where education provided by universities is of a high quality, and tailored to students' needs, it can overcome the disadvantages of attending a less academic school. Universities will want to consider this and other evidence, taking a wider range of factors into account as they decide which students have the greatest potential to succeed on their courses.

Supporting employment

Careers guidance can support social mobility

4.50 Not knowing how to achieve your ambitions can be as damaging as not having those ambitions at all. Good careers advice can help young people to increase their confidence, motivation and desire to succeed.

We will establish an all-age careers service by April 2012

4.51 The all-age careers service will provide independent, professional advice on careers, skills and the labour market. It will give people improved access to information on different careers and the qualifications necessary to enter particular jobs, enabling them to make well-informed choices. Evidence shows that tailored advice and guidance can increase the participation of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education, and can therefore increase social mobility too.²¹

Box 4.2: Case study – KPMG

KPMG is working with Durham University and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) to develop a groundbreaking new school leavers' programme for September 2011.

The proposal is for an initial intake of around 75 students, who will start a six-year programme with the firm, leading to both a degree and a professional chartered accountancy qualification. KPMG envisages that in due course school leaver schemes of this type may account for a significant proportion (around 400) of its annual trainee chartered accountant intake.

KPMG will pay the full university and professional tuition fees for each student in addition to a starting salary of around £20,000 (in London). Students will receive a salary throughout the six-year period. During the degree phase, which will last for four years, students will spend part of the time in residence at Durham University, where they will study at Durham Business School, and part of the time working at KPMG.

Students will study for a BSc in Accounting. Some of the modules covered in the degree will also count towards their accountancy qualification. In the future students could also have the option of choosing to study additional modules outside of accountancy and finance. On completion of the programme, students will become fully qualified chartered accountants with the ICAEW ACA qualification. One of KPMG's aims in setting up the scheme, as part of a wider programme, is to broaden participation in the profession by increasing the diversity of its intake. KPMG also intend to extend their school leavers programme to Exeter and Birmingham universities in due course.

Many young unemployed people need help to look for a job

4.52 Young people entering the labour market for the first time need help to look and apply for jobs. Being long-term unemployed can have long-lasting damaging effects.

4.53 We are providing more flexible, personalised help to find work, including a new Work Programme through which young people who have been unemployed for nine months (and even earlier for certain groups) will get help and support. A period of work experience of between two and eight weeks will also be targeted towards harder-to-help young unemployed people. Where this additional experience in the workplace can be linked to an Apprenticeship we will offer employers assistance to make the necessary links with young people.

Young people who are NEET

4.54 The number of young people who are NEET is a serious concern. And disadvantaged young people are more likely to be NEET – at age 18, 29% of young people who had claimed free school meals were NEET, compared with 13% of those who had not.²² That is why we are undertaking a cross-departmental review to identify ways in which we can strengthen our approach.

Box 4.3: A cross-government participation strategy

How to support young people who are not engaging in education or employment is a complex issue. But it goes to the heart of how we prepare young people to make the transition from education and training to higher education and work.

Government departments are working closely together to consider the offer available to young people aged 16–24 and to ensure they are provided with the support they need to make a successful transition into adult life.

The departments for Business, Innovation and Skills, Education and Work and Pensions have commissioned a cross-government participation strategy. The strategy, to be published later in 2011, will set out how we intend to maximise participation of 16–24-year-olds in education, training and work and tackle the long-term consequences of young people being NEET for an extended period.

It will build on the clear reform plans that are already in place across the three departments to increase attainment and transform the benefits system. And it will include a particular focus on 18-year-olds, where all three departments have an important contribution to make. It is essential that these combine effectively to support all young people through this key transition point.

This chapter has set out our overarching vision for improving social mobility during the transition from education to employment. We will consider how best to support those who are currently not in education, employment or training to re-engage with positive activity, as well as ensuring that those coming to the end of their compulsory schooling are able to make the right choices for their future. This chapter also makes clear that participating in learning – be it further or higher education – boosts social mobility and increases future life chances and that more must be done to ensure that everyone, regardless of background, is able to take up these opportunities.



Chapter 5

Adulthood

Our ambition is for a fairer Britain where there are more chances for people to build their skills and get on in work. If someone has not had the opportunity to gain experience in the workplace or realise their potential in education and training the first time round, that should not be the end of the matter. Fairness demands that there are second chances – opportunities to retrain and to try again.

Those who suffer disadvantage in the labour market – including disabled people, ethnic minorities and those with no qualifications – should have equal opportunities to move on and up.

We want to ensure that the jobs market is as fair as it can be up to the very top. Too many professions remain dominated by those educated in the independent schools sector and at a handful of universities. This is not just an issue of social mobility. Improving chances to get on in work will help to ensure that our economy is productive. For professions playing a crucial role in the governance of our country, such as law and journalism, being representative of society underpins their legitimacy.

Our approach has four components:

- **improving fair access** by challenging employers, in particular the professions, to open up opportunities and contribute to improved social mobility;
- **supporting those who missed out on education first time round** or want to develop their skills and qualifications in later life;
- ensuring **no one is left behind** by enhancing support for workless adults through tax and benefit reform and the new Work Programme; and
- **helping those with little wealth** to build up assets so they are better insulated from shocks as well as able to grasp opportunities.

Why social mobility in working life matters

5.1 Too many adults stumble when it comes to embarking on a career and progressing in work. If people are out of work, or trapped in low paid jobs, it not only affects them but also their children, compounding a cycle of disadvantage and social immobility.

Fair access to jobs

Internships can provide valuable opportunities to gain skills and experience

5.2 Work experience such as an internship can provide valuable opportunities for young people to gain skills, increase their understanding of a sector and build up useful experience to strengthen job

applications. Undertaking an internship can often increase a young person's chances of obtaining employment, particularly in the professions.¹

5.3 However, it is a fact that obtaining an internship often depends on who, rather than what, you know.² Many young people miss out on the opportunity because they lack the necessary contacts or face financial barriers if internships are unpaid.

5.4 Internships need to be opened up to all young people. We will continue to encourage employers to open up their employment methods, and we are asking business to offer internships openly and transparently and provide financial support to ensure fair access. This financial support could consist of either payment of at least the appropriate national minimum wage rate, or alternatively payment of reasonable out of pocket expenses in compliance with national minimum wage law.

5.5 We want to improve understanding of the application of national minimum wage legislation to internships and ensure that employers comply with it. Where an individual is entitled to the minimum wage they should receive it and we take failure to do so very seriously. We are updating our guidance on payment of work experience including internships to ensure that employers

and individuals are clear about their rights and responsibilities. We will ensure enforcement of the national minimum wage continues to be effective, and resources are focused where they will have maximum impact. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs are currently considering targeted enforcement in sectors where internships are commonplace, with a view to carrying out enforcement activity in 2011/12. Young people who feel they have had their minimum wage rights abused are encouraged to contact our confidential Pay and Work Rights Helpline on 0800 917 2368.

5.6 But employers stand to gain too. Offering work experience and internships to young people from all walks of life will not just help remove artificial barriers to progression. Businesses will also benefit from having access to a much wider pool of talent.

Improving social mobility depends on increasing fair access to jobs, particularly in the professions

5.7 Parliament is also leading the way through a new internship scheme that will help young people of all backgrounds to get a foot on the ladder. In association with the Social Mobility Foundation, the Speaker's Parliamentary Placements Scheme will

Box 5.1: Leading by example – Whitehall Internship Scheme

To complement the existing graduate level scheme, the civil service is extending its programme of internships. Three complementary internship programmes have been designed:

- at **undergraduate/graduate level**, building on the existing Fast Stream internship structure to attract talented individuals from under-represented groups;
- at **college level**, providing placements to increase professional experience and workplace skills for individuals from under-represented backgrounds; and
- at **secondary school level**, running day-long programmes that aim to broaden horizons and tackle the poverty of aspiration that holds back too many young people from under-represented backgrounds.

The schemes will target three critical stages of development in the education process and are designed to raise aspirations for young people all over the country. They will provide meaningful, professional experiences that develop transferable skills which can be harnessed in future life and employment.

Departments will continue to run their existing professional internship schemes; however, by 2012 **we will bring an end to informal internships in Whitehall**. It is intended that all departments will advertise their schemes on a central Whitehall Internships website and that outreach is undertaken to promote internships and work experience to under-represented groups. There will be a transparent process for all placements, to ensure fair access, creating a more accountable civil service and producing a level playing field.

place paid interns with MPs from all parties, with the first joining after summer 2011.

5.8 New professional opportunities were at the heart of the UK's great wave of social mobility in the post-war decades. But in more recent times society's top jobs have become less socially representative. On current trends, tomorrow's professionals are growing up in today's better off households.³

5.9 In 2009 Alan Milburn conducted an independent review on barriers to accessing the professions. The Panel on Fair Access to the Professions published its final report in summer 2009.⁴ The report was welcomed as a high quality analysis of the barriers to accessing professional careers, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In particular, it noted that:

- the professions have become increasingly the preserve of those with a university degree;
- although only 7% of the population attend independent schools, well over half of top level professionals have done so (figure 5.1); and
- only one in four of The Times Top 100 Employers offer non-graduate entry routes.

5.10 The extent to which progress falls below expectations is apparent through closer examination of three key professions: law, politics and journalism. These professions are

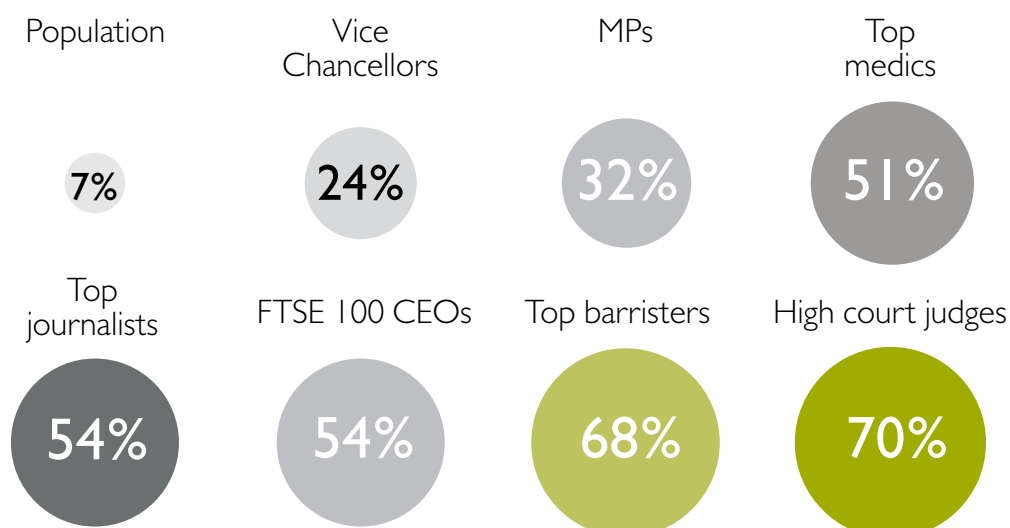
central to the very structure of our constitution, encompassing the judiciary, Parliament and free press. All three are increasingly drawn from a narrow section of society.

- **Law:** top solicitors and barristers are typically drawn from middle-income families that are significantly better off than average.⁵ More than half of solicitors attended independent schools.⁶
- **Journalism:** some 98% of entrants to journalism have a degree or postgraduate qualification and less than 10% of those entering the profession have worked their way up through non-graduate working-class backgrounds.⁷
- **Politics:** a third of MPs were educated at independent schools.⁸

5.11 We are working to promote more equal representation in public and political life. We welcome Lord Davies' recent report on the number of women on the boards of listed companies⁹ and see gender equality as an important factor in improving social mobility.

5.12 Some professional organisations and major employers of professionals are taking considerable steps to widen their access. The Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum, chaired by the Minister for Universities and Science, aims to support and encourage actions by the professions to remove the barriers, especially for people from disadvantaged groups.

Figure 5.1: A high proportion of those in professional occupations have attended independent schools



Source:

The Educational Backgrounds of Leading Lawyers, Journalists, Vice Chancellors, Politicians, Media and Chief Executives. The Sutton Trust (2009).

Box 5.2: Case study – Media Trust

Media Trust is working with media and communications organisations to open access and increase diversity in the industry.

Media Trust's youth initiatives have benefited thousands of young people, enabling them to get a foot on the ladder and gain practical experience and access to progression routes. Their youth mentoring programme recruits from key organisations in the media including the BBC, News International and BAFTA to work with young people on a range of areas from journalism and film-making to public relations and campaigning.

Last year more than 600 disadvantaged young people were supported by the mentoring programme. Many of the young people Media Trust works with go on to further education, employment and training and some go on to gain experience in the media industry.

'Media Trust has given me a platform to build upon. I now know what I want to make out of my life. I described my life as being at point A and I wanted to get to point Z, but I didn't know how to get there. Media Trust has given me directions to my destination.'

Adika Paul-Campbell, young beneficiary

5.13 Later in 2011 the Forum will launch a voluntary code of best practice on internships and develop a set of indicators to measure, challenge and report on performance across the professions.

5.14 **But a great deal more needs to be done.** Given the scale of the challenge, we need a concerted effort from all professional bodies and firms, not just a few pockets of good practice.

5.15 The Government is leading by example. We are taking immediate steps, for example by reforming the Whitehall Internship Scheme, which will open up the civil service for people from poorer backgrounds. We also want to see

politics setting an example rather than being one of the worst offenders. We want this profession in particular to examine its recruitment practices, learning lessons from those organisations that have been successful in becoming more representative.

5.16 We want to work with businesses to remove barriers to success. We are building on Every Business Commits¹⁰ with a business compact on social mobility, asking businesses to do their bit. This is good for us all, stopping talent and potential from being wasted and creating a more productive, more mobile society.

Box 5.3: Call to action: a business compact on social mobility

As part of the compact, businesses commit to:

1. Support communities and local schools

- participate in mentoring schemes for young people, allow staff time off and reward them for getting involved and enable schools and businesses to work together; and
- encourage staff at least once a year to talk about their careers as part of a programme to raise aspiration and build knowledge about the world of work.

2. Improve skills and create jobs by providing opportunities for all young people to get a foot on the ladder

- advertise work experience opportunities in local schools rather than filling them through informal networks; and
- offer internships openly and transparently and provide financial support to ensure fair access.

3. Improve quality of life and well-being by recruiting openly and fairly, ensuring non-discrimination

- including increased use of name-blank and school-blank applications where appropriate.

5.17 This is just a start. We want to see a real drive for change over the next year, led by the professions but working with government and others. To hold all our feet to the fire, we welcome Alan Milburn's commitment to return to the issue of the professions. We hope he finds genuine progress when he does.

Supporting progression in work

Those who want to develop their skills in later life should have the opportunity to do so

5.18 The UK still has a lower skills base than many other countries, with nearly 5 million people of working age without a qualification. An estimated 5.2 million adults are not functionally literate and even more have numeracy problems.¹¹ Those with no qualifications and/or poor skills are much less likely to be in work, and experience much lower wage progression over their working life (figure 5.2).

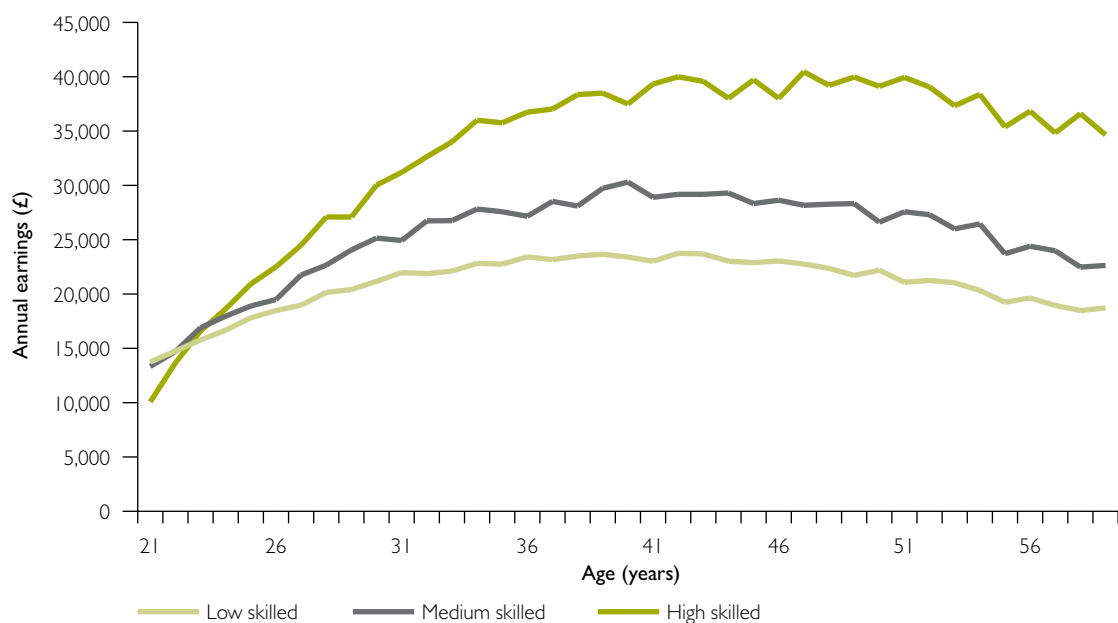
5.19 This is particularly so for women, who experience less favourable occupational outcomes even when they have the same or

similar educational qualifications to their male counterparts, and whose lifetime earnings are worse than men's at all skill levels.¹²

5.20 There is strong evidence that workplace training is economically beneficial to individuals. It has a positive impact on their earnings and their likelihood of employment.¹³ In our strategy *Skills for Sustainable Growth*¹⁴ we set out a fairer approach to the funding of further education and training, supporting those who need additional help to increase their skills levels and progress. This strategy also set out our aim of encouraging the more widespread adoption of professional standards as a route to raising employer ambition on supporting people in work to train and providing clear pathways for individuals to progress in their careers.

We will reform the further education and skills system so that we give learners the funding, support and information they need to make the right choices for their future

Figure 5.2: Those with low skills experience much lower wage progression over their working life than those with higher skills



Source:

Adapted from data used in Disney R et al. *What is a Public Sector Pension Worth?* (IFS Working Papers W07/17) Institute for Fiscal Studies (2007).

5.21 We are reforming Informal Adult and Community Learning to help get the most disadvantaged people into further learning. Informal learning can offer the vital first step for people from the most deprived and excluded sections of society.

5.22 Our higher education reforms will also offer a fairer deal to part-time students. This is a major step in terms of opening up access to higher education, and remedies a long-standing injustice in support for adult learners. Up to around 175,000 students will benefit.

From September 2012 part-time university students will, for the first time, be entitled to a loan for tuition on the same basis as full-time students and will no longer have to pay up-front for their tuition costs

Ensuring that no one is left behind

Supporting workless adults is critical for improving social mobility

5.23 Despite having internationally high employment rates, the UK has one of the highest proportions of children living in workless households in the European Union.¹⁵ In order to improve social mobility we need to better support workless adults. Work, and the improved income that flows from it, can also have beneficial effects in terms of people's health and well-being, the educational achievements of children, and improvements in communities, such as reduced crime and anti-social behaviour.

5.24 Unemployment and inactivity affect different people in different ways. But there are some clear trends which imply that some groups are held back for reasons other than talent or effort. For example, nearly all ethnic minority groups are less likely to be in paid employment than the white British population.¹⁶ And there are large differences in employment rates between those reporting a work-limiting impairment and the general population; less than half of disabled people are currently in work.¹⁷

5.25 It is clear that getting into work is critical to improving the life chances of many adults. The Government will therefore tackle the welfare trap that acts as a barrier to employment, giving people real incentives to move into work. We will radically simplify the welfare system, introducing a single income-related benefit for working-age adults in and out of work.

We are introducing Universal Credit, bringing together the current system of means-tested benefits, tax credits and support for housing, to improve work incentives

5.26 Universal Credit is a key part of our strategy for ensuring that no one is left behind. By improving the benefits system we will make work pay.

5.27 The tax system is also being reformed to encourage people to get on in work. The Government's objective is to support lower and middle income earners by raising the personal allowance to £10,000, with real terms progress towards that goal every year.

We are raising the income tax personal allowance by £1,000 from April 2011 as a step towards our goal to increase it to £10,000

5.28 From April, the personal allowance for under 65s increases by £1,000 to £7,475. In this year's Budget the Government announced a further increase of £630 to £8,015 in 2012/13. Together these increases in the personal allowance will benefit 25 million individuals, taking 1.1 million out of income tax altogether in 2012/13.

5.29 From summer 2011 the Work Programme will replace the confusing array of existing employment programmes. We are bolstering the support Jobcentre Plus advisers provide with a series of Get Britain Working measures.

Box 5.4: Get Britain Working measures

- **Work Clubs** and **Enterprise Clubs** will encourage people who are out of work to exchange skills and share experiences, improving their prospects of finding a job or setting up in self-employment.
- **Work Together** will develop work skills through volunteering.
- A new **Enterprise Allowance** will support unemployed people who wish to move off benefits into self-employment.
- A scheme to provide **work experience placements** and pre-employment training.
- **Work Choice** and **Access to Work** will support disabled people who face the greatest barriers into work.

Wealth and social mobility

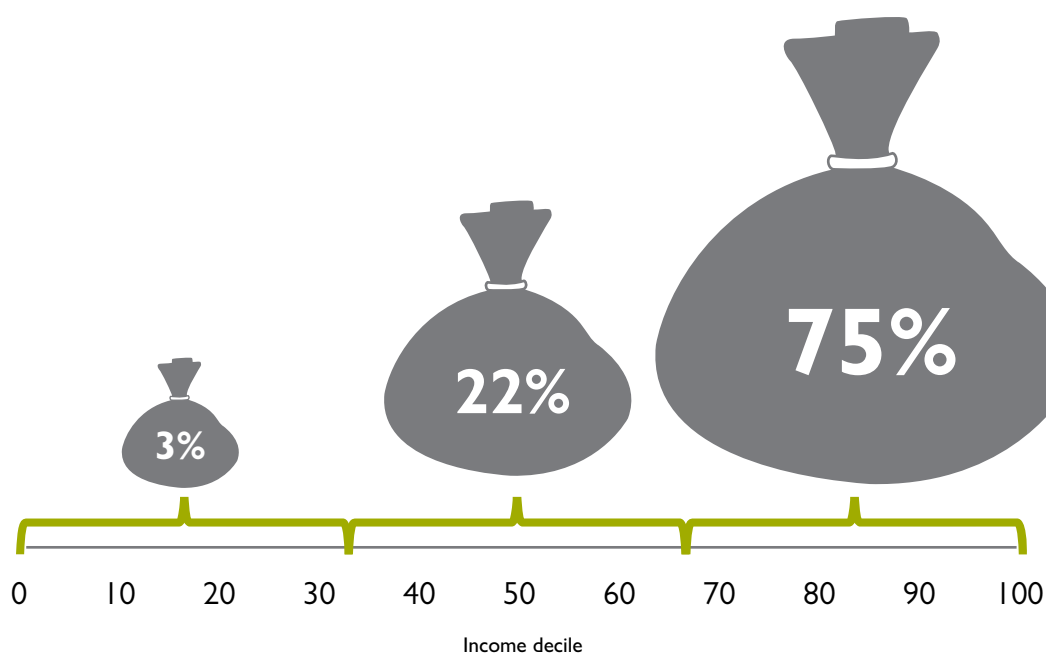
5.30 Wealth helps adults to improve their situation by getting better education, training and jobs.

5.31 In the UK, the least wealthy third of households own just 3% of total wealth. The top third alone own 75% (figure 5.3).¹⁸

5.32 Wealth inequality can act as a barrier to social mobility by opening up opportunities to

some that are unavailable to others. Those who lack assets such as savings have less of a 'personal safety net' to resist shocks caused, for example, by unemployment or accidents. They are more likely to have to take on potentially debilitating high-interest debt. Not having assets is also likely to reduce options when choosing employment, and make it harder to start up a business. It also prevents people from buying or renting the property of their choice.

Figure 5.3: The bottom third of the income distribution own only 3% of the total wealth



Source:

HM Government, *State of the Nation Report: Poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency in the UK*. Cabinet Office (2010).

5.33 It is the intergenerational character of wealth inequality, not simply wealth inequality itself, which impacts on social mobility. Inheritance plays a significant role in transmitting wealth from one generation to the next. Likewise families transmit wealth through generations by bringing advantages to their children and grandchildren during their lifetime, for example through financial contributions for buying a home. The result is that those from wealthy families tend to enjoy greater opportunities.

5.34 We want to increase opportunities for everyone to do well, for more people to save, to build a personal safety net and, where appropriate, own their own home.

5.35 The tax system has a major impact on how wealth is transferred. We want to ensure that we achieve the appropriate balance across taxes on wealth and income as part of a fair and effective tax system.

5.36 In seeking to make the tax system fairer we have made it our priority to expand the opportunities and work incentives of the worst off by raising the income tax personal allowance to £10,000. We also acted to increase fairness by raising capital gains tax on non-business assets for higher-rate taxpayers, bringing capital gains tax closer in line with income tax.

5.37 More broadly, the Government is committed to creating the conditions for ownership of assets for all, particularly those who currently do not own assets. Doing so will increase independence and help foster a culture of personal responsibility. The following sections set out our vision for increasing access to the most widely held assets: savings, pensions and property.

Savings and pensions can protect from shocks and increase opportunity

5.38 Savings and pensions can build independence and resilience by providing resources to meet both anticipated and unanticipated needs, to resist shocks and to grasp opportunities. Yet over a quarter of households have no savings,¹⁹ and around 60% of workers lack a private pension.²⁰

A well-functioning housing market can promote social mobility and increase fairness in the distribution of wealth

5.39 Housing wealth now accounts for around 42% of household wealth, up from 22% in 1971.²¹ Home ownership can help people to take responsibility for meeting their own needs. It can provide the financial security to plan for the future with confidence. But declining affordability has barred a growing group of aspiring first-time buyers from home ownership.

5.40 Average house prices are now nearly eight times average earnings, compared with 3.5 times in the mid-1990s.²² Ownership is increasingly restricted to those with high incomes or high wealth, or who are able to receive financial assistance from parents, friends or family. Many young people are being forced to postpone home ownership until their thirties.²³

5.41 The Government's approach is to improve choice by increasing the supply of suitable housing. This will stabilise the housing market and, over the mid-term, build confidence for buyers, sellers, house builders and lenders, and increase housing affordability.

Box 5.5: Promoting affordability and supporting first-time buyers

The Government is:

- introducing **incentives for new supply** through the £1 billion New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy;
- reviewing the wide range of existing **planning and regulatory restrictions** on new supply;
- removing barriers to entry and investment in **Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs)** to support institutional investment in the private rented sector;
- providing **support for buyers** through stamp duty land tax relief for first-time buyers, which is currently under review by the Government, with the results due to be announced in autumn 2011;
- introducing a **new FirstBuy scheme** offering a 20% equity loan, co-funded with housebuilders, to help over 10,000 first-time buyers in England over the next two years to purchase a new build home;
- giving **home ownership opportunities to social tenants** including Right to Buy and Right to Acquire;
- providing flexibility within the **new affordable housing delivery model** to deliver new build shared ownership and equity loans, and allow Affordable Rent tenants to purchase their home on shared ownership terms at the end of their tenancy; and
- exploring, as part of the **Growth Review**, measures to help to stimulate house building, including planning reforms to support sustainable development, and improving access to the housing market for first-time buyers.

5.42 But the relevance of housing to social mobility is not restricted to home ownership. Rented housing plays an important role, providing good quality homes for those who cannot or do not wish to buy. Renting also provides flexibility, enabling people to move quickly to find employment.

5.43 Currently, 14% of households are in the private rented sector.²⁴ However, the number of single-person households, who find it hardest to buy, is expected to increase by around 5 million by 2031.²⁵ Unless supply increases, the private rented sector will not be able to deliver much needed flexibility for low and middle income individuals, for whom neither home ownership nor social housing will be an option. We are committed to supporting the private rented sector to grow, as part of our overall approach to increasing housing supply.

5.44 The social rented sector is also key. The way in which social housing is allocated too often acts against social mobility. Research suggests that even after adjusting for background factors such as single parent or disability status, social tenants are 20–25% less likely to be in employment than similar individuals in private tenure.²⁶ In some cases, the interaction between the social housing and welfare systems has led to a culture of dependency, where people have more incentive to stay on benefits than find work to improve their situation.

5.45 The Government is committed to addressing these perverse incentives and to increasing social tenants' freedom to move to find employment.

Box 5.6: Increasing opportunities and incentives to work in social housing

The Government is:

- introducing the **National Home Swap scheme**, which will help social tenants to swap homes when they want to move to find employment;
- giving **social landlords freedom to offer more flexible tenancy arrangements** which will open up social housing to more people;
- **investing £4.5 billion in affordable housing** over the next four years, including introducing the Affordable Rent product, to enable landlords to provide more affordable housing. This will deliver up to 150,000 new homes;
- reforming **housing benefit** to make it more financially rewarding to move into work; and
- publishing a **housing strategy** in the summer setting out the overall approach to housing policy, including how we are supporting an increase in the supply and quality of new private and social housing, helping those seeking a home of their own, whether to rent or buy.

This chapter has set out our overarching vision for improving social mobility during working life. As well as ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to move on and up in the workplace, we also need to ensure that access to the top jobs in the professions is genuinely open to all. Improving social mobility in working life will mean that adults have the support and opportunities to enter and progress in work and to fulfil their potential during their career. Promoting social mobility also means ensuring that opportunities for wealth are open to all, and that the housing market helps rather than hinders people's ability to build assets and find employment.



Chapter 6

From strategy to action – next steps

Our ambitious goals for social mobility will only be achieved if robust arrangements are in place to ensure that the commitments we have made are followed through by Government and by wider society.

This chapter outlines the steps we will take to ensure that the commitments in this strategy are implemented:

- We have developed **‘leading indicators’ of success in improving social mobility** for each life stage. These will also be included in departmental Business Plans, ensuring that they are at the centre of the work of departments, increasing transparency over the impact of our policies and helping the public to hold us to account.
- We will provide funding for a **successor to the Millennium Cohort Study**, ensuring that there is a rich source of information on the long-term influence of our policies on social mobility.
- We are establishing, on a statutory basis, a **Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission** to monitor progress on social mobility, as well as towards the measures in the Child Poverty Act 2010.
- The Deputy Prime Minister will continue to chair the **Ministerial Group on Social Mobility** to unite Whitehall departments in improving social mobility.
- We are setting out the **key milestones** in implementing this strategy and identifying who in Government is responsible for them.
- **All departments will consider the impact of new policies on social mobility.**

Indicators of success in improving social mobility

6.1 It is important that we measure the impact of our policies on social mobility for three reasons:

- to increase **transparency**;
- to assess the **success** of our approach; and

- to ensure that we are putting our goal of **improving social mobility at the heart of government activity**.

6.2 It is by definition difficult to measure the ultimate impact of policies on intergenerational social mobility. Improving social mobility is a long-term challenge involving factors across generations and life stages (see figure 6.1).

6.3 Those in the transition years during the current Parliament were in the Foundation Years or just starting school when the last Government came to power in 1997. We will only be able to observe the full impact of our own Foundation Years policies on social mobility in the 2040s, when the under-threes of today begin to reach their full potential in the labour market.

6.4 Academic measures of social mobility compare the income and/or social class of children during mid-adulthood with that of their parents. They are backward looking, telling us about the impact of the policies to improve social mobility of up to forty years ago.

6.5 There are, however, a range of indicators that are likely to predict long-term social mobility and which could allow us to estimate progress over a shorter time-frame.

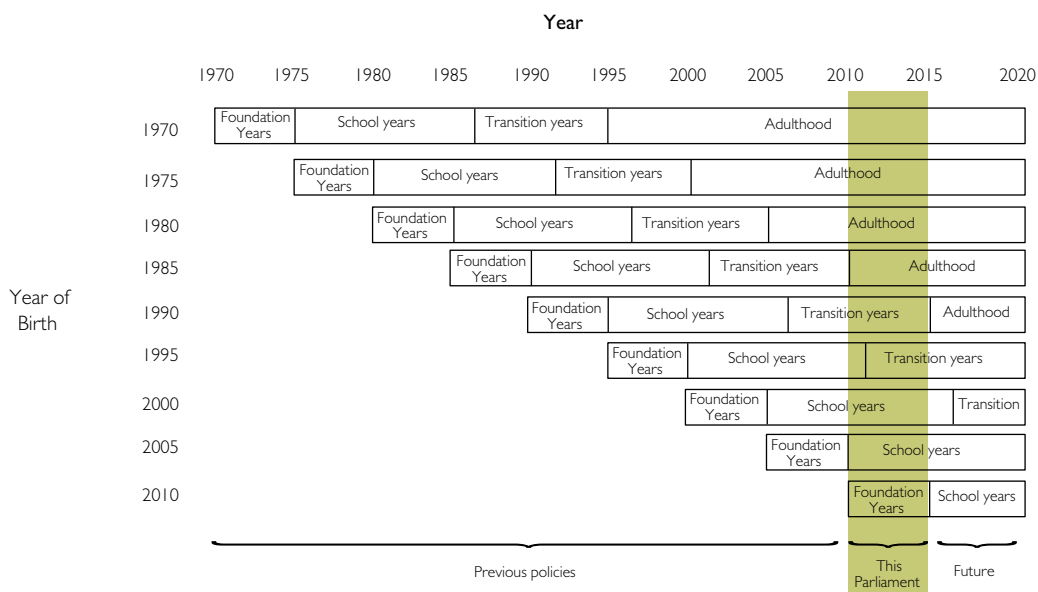
6.6 We have developed a set of proposed leading indicators in this strategy. These are intended to be high level indicators of the direction of travel. They are explicitly not targets – we want to avoid the perverse incentives of ticking boxes rather than improving outcomes that an excessive focus on rigid targets can lead to.

6.7 Rather, we intend to use a basket of measures as broad indicators, supported by rich data and analysis. Whenever possible, the supporting data will be disaggregated by relevant social characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, disability and other equality strands.

6.8 In developing the indicators, we have used four key criteria:

- **Strong indicators of real progress:** improvement in the indicators should be good predictors of improving social mobility in the long-term.
- **Focus on narrowing gaps:** raising social mobility depends on improving the relative performance of less advantaged groups against other groups.
- **Minimise additional burdens:** using indicators that already exist or can exist in the near future enabling real-time monitoring while avoiding additional reporting burdens.
- **Relevant to frontline professionals and the public:** the indicators and their relevance to social mobility should be easily understandable by the public and frontline professionals.

Figure 6.1: Improving social mobility is a long-term challenge



6.9 Proposed leading indicators of the direction of travel in social mobility are presented in figure 6.2. The final versions of these indicators will be included in revised Business Plans that will be published in May 2011. This will ensure that the public have the information necessary to hold the Government to account.

6.10 The indicators for the **Foundation Years** look at gaps in indicators that we know are strongly correlated with future educational attainment. Research shows that both low birth weight¹ and early child development and the level of school readiness² are closely related to future educational performance.

6.11 The indicators for **school years** look at gaps in educational attainment. We know that educational performance is closely related to the earnings potential of people once they enter the labour market.³ Those who have no qualifications earn significantly less than those who do⁴ and strong attainment at GCSE is required if children are to be able to enter higher education and high-skilled employment.⁵

6.12 The indicators for **transition years** look at gaps in educational attainment and the extent to which young people are accessing education, training or employment opportunities. We know that achieving a Level 3 (A-Level equivalent) academic or vocational qualification leads to

significant returns in the labour market,⁶ as does participation in higher education,⁷ with attendance at the most selective institutions associated with still higher returns.⁸ We also know that not being in education, training or employment while young often has significant labour market penalties later on.⁹ We acknowledge there is also more to be done in this life stage to develop a good indicator that can look at gaps in the destinations of graduates from higher education from different family backgrounds.

6.13 Indicators for **adulthood** address success in the labour market. These are presented as part of the Department for Work and Pensions' Business Plan, with impact indicators specifically concerning numbers on out-of-work benefits, children in workless households, disabled employment rates and measures of success for Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme. We acknowledge that more effective measures of social mobility during adulthood need to be developed. These should consider access to professional occupations, wage progression and the establishment of measures to consider the gap between people from different social and economic backgrounds. The Department for Work and Pensions is committed to developing these alongside the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Figure 6.2: Leading indicators of social mobility

Life stage	Indicator	Measures	Lead department
Foundation Years	Indicator 1: Low birth weight	Low birth weight (most advantaged socioeconomic groups, least advantaged socioeconomic groups and the gap between them) ⁱ	Department of Health
	Indicator 2: Child development	We will develop an indicator looking at gaps in school readiness for children aged up to five from different social backgrounds in light of the Tickell review	Department for Education
School years	Indicator 3: School attainment	Percentage achieving Level 4 at Key Stage 2 (eligible for free school meals, not eligible for free school meals and the gap between them)	Department for Education
		Percentage achieving new 'basics' measure at GCSE (eligible for free school meals, not eligible for free school meals and the gap between them) ⁱⁱ	
		Percentage achieving new 'basics' measure at GCSE (most deprived schools and least deprived schools, and the gap between them) ⁱⁱ	
Transition years	Indicator 4: Employment and participation in education of 18-24 year olds ⁱⁱⁱ	Percentage of 18–24 year olds participating in (full or part time) education or training	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
		Percentage of 18–24 year olds not in full-time education or training who are workless	Department for Work and Pensions
	Indicator 5: Further education	Percentage achieving a Level 3 qualification by age 19, broken down into percentage achieving 2+A-Levels and percentage achieving other A-Level equivalent qualification (eligible for free school meals at age 15, not eligible for free school meals at age 15 and the gap between them) ^{iv}	Department for Education
	Indicator 6: Higher education	Progression of pupils aged 15 to higher education at age 19 (free school meal at age 15, non-free school meal at age 15 and gap)	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Percentage of young people who go on to the 33% most selective higher education institutions (gap between students educated at state school and independent school)		Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	

Life stage	Indicator	Measures	Lead department
Adulthood	Indicator 7: Social mobility in adulthood	We are committed to developing new measures of progress in improving social mobility looking at access to the professions, progression in the labour market and the availability of 'second chances' to succeed in the labour market	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Department for Work and Pensions

- i The preferred Department of Health measure of low birth weight, currently being consulted on as part of the Public Health Outcomes Framework, looks at term babies (37 weeks plus) only, as this measure of birth weight is considered to be the most useful one. However, as this cannot currently be segmented by socioeconomic group the indicator used in this strategy looks at all live births. The Department of Health will consider the fit between these indicators as part of the Business Plan process.
- ii The 'basics' measure is currently GCSE A*–C in English and maths. The intention is that this will include science in the future.
- iii Suitable gap measures for these indicators are not currently available. The Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills and Work and Pensions are committed to developing appropriate measures as part of their work to improve the social mobility indicator set.
- iv This indicator will distinguish between A-Levels and other Level 3 qualifications.

6.14 Annex A sets out the key trends in these leading indicators of social mobility. It also describes the further work that will take place to develop these indicators, including:

- improving school readiness indicators in the Foundation Years, including developing a new measure for two to three-year-olds and responding to the Tickell review;
- further developing the indicators during school age to look at more aspirational measures looking at the gap between those in the middle and the most advantaged;
- improving indicators in the transition years, developing the measures of employment and participation in education, and creating effective indicators of gaps in the destinations of students after higher education; and
- developing effective measures during adulthood looking at access to the professions, progression in the labour market and the availability of 'second chances' to succeed.

Measuring long-term social mobility

6.15 The Government is taking a long-term approach to social mobility. So we need long-term

data collection. This will allow academic research into the factors affecting and trends in social mobility.

6.16 The British Birth Cohort Studies (namely the 1946, 1958, 1970, 1990 and 2000 birth cohorts) are a set of studies which track a large sample of people from birth into adulthood, gathering information on their lives as they grow up.

6.17 These studies have, over the years, produced a series of important findings which include for example, the risks of smoking in pregnancy, the origins and consequences of child poverty, the evolution of attainment gaps between rich and poor children during childhood and trends in social mobility over time.

6.18 The Government recently announced £33.5 million of funding for the 2012 Birth Cohort Study and a new programme to help unlock the findings of previous cohort studies and compare different generations. This will build the evidence base about what works and enable our performance in improving social mobility to be judged over the long term.

A Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission

6.19 In August 2010, Alan Milburn was appointed as Independent Reviewer on Social Mobility. He was asked to hold the Government and other institutions to account for improving social mobility, producing an annual report to Parliament.

6.20 We want to strengthen and broaden this role in order to ensure a comprehensive and effective approach, looking right across the life cycle. We are therefore expanding Alan Milburn's current remit to include child poverty and children's life chances.

6.21 Reflecting this more comprehensive approach, we intend to amend legislation to create a new Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. The new Commission will be an independent body supported by a small staff of experts. Amongst other functions it will produce annual reports to Parliament on the progress being made in terms of both social mobility and child poverty. It is envisaged that the Commission's first report to Parliament will be next spring.

6.22 In the interim, Alan Milburn will add child poverty to his remit with immediate effect. His work as Independent Reviewer on Social Mobility and Child Poverty will also involve laying the ground for the new Commission.

6.23 Alan Milburn will be appointed as acting Chair once the Commission is established, providing continuity between his current role and the work of the new Commission. A public appointment process will then be held in line with best practice. We intend to appoint both a Chair and a Vice Chair, providing scope for both the social mobility agenda and the child poverty agenda to have strong representation on the Commission.

Ministerial group on social mobility

6.24 The Deputy Prime Minister will continue to chair the Ministerial Group on Social Mobility. This will keep up the pressure on Whitehall to implement the commitments we have made in this strategy and will also help ensure that the Government's policies are being 'social mobility-proofed'.

Timeline and key milestones

6.25 The most important milestones for the policies announced in this strategy, and within Government responsibility for them, as set out in Annex B. This will help the public to hold us to account for taking the necessary action to follow through on the commitments we have made.



Annex A

Trends in leading indicators and future work to develop them

Trends in leading indicators

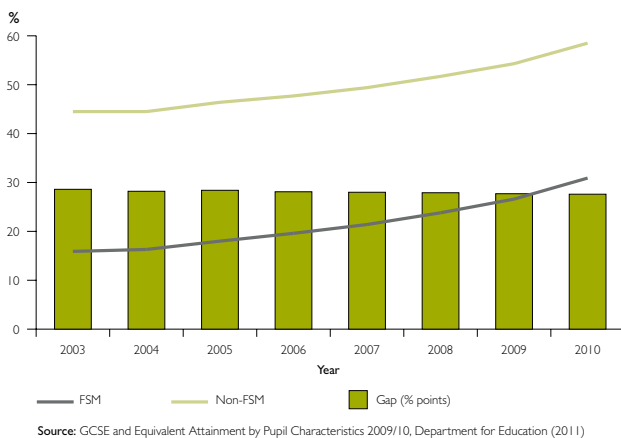
Percentage of live births defined as low birth weight, England and Wales



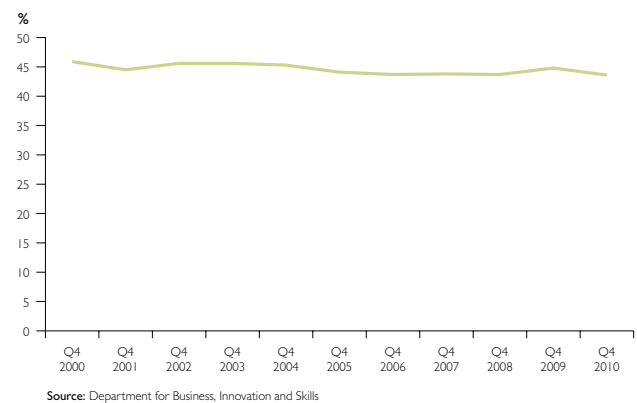
Percentage achieving at least Level 4 at Key Stage 2 in English and maths, England (FSM, Non-FSM and gap)



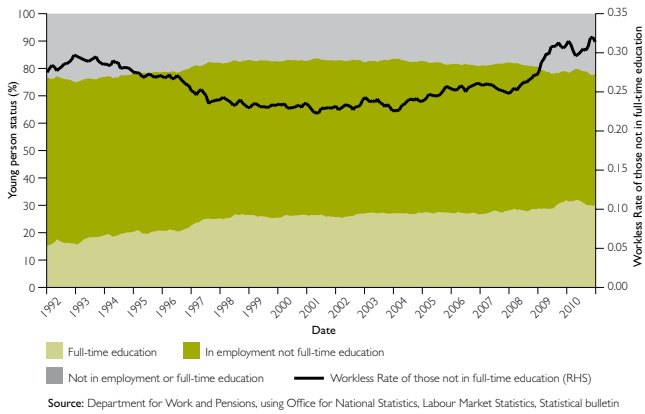
Percentage achieving five GCSEs A*-C including English and maths, England (FSM, Non-FSM and gap)



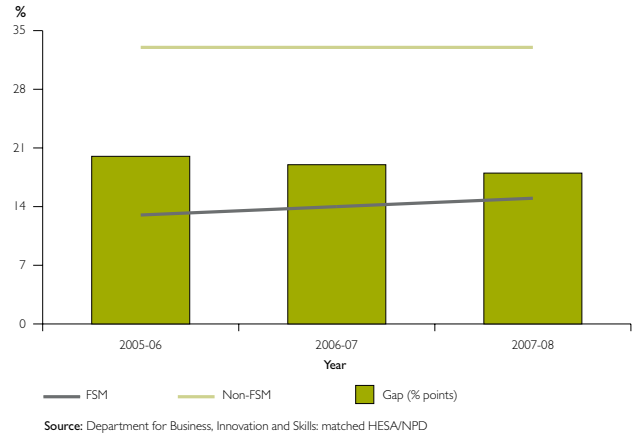
Participation in learning: percentage of 18-24 year olds participating in education or training (full or part time)



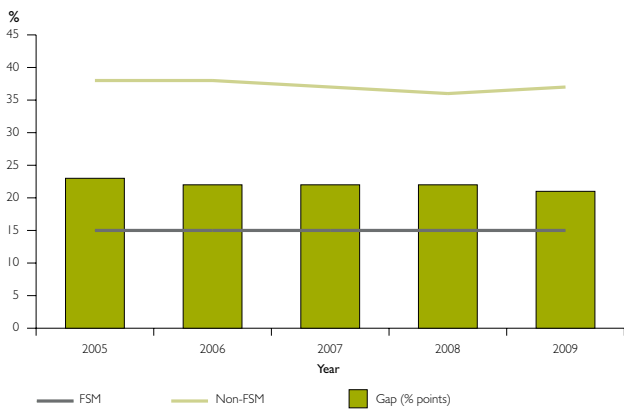
Youth Labour Market Performance: percentage of 18-24 year olds not in full-time education who are workless



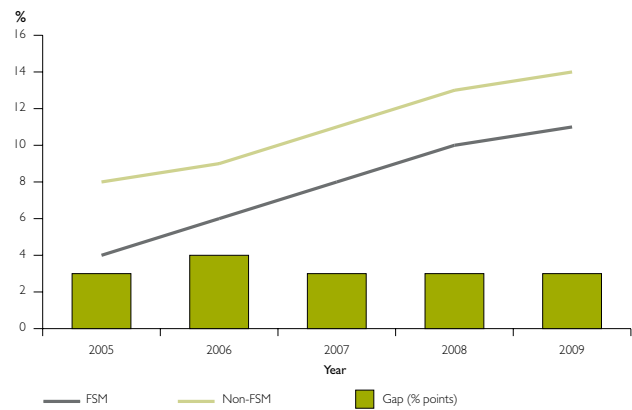
Participation in higher education at age 19, England (FSM at age 15, non-FSM at age 15 and gap)



Percentage achieving A-Level qualifications by age 19, England (FSM, non-FSM and gap)



Percentage achieving other Level 3 qualification by age 19, England (FSM, non-FSM and gap)



Future work to improve indicators

The Government will carry out further work to improve the data available and enhance the indicators highlighted in Chapter 6.

Foundation Years

Child development at age two to three

In the consultation on the Public Health Outcomes Framework,¹ the Government committed to work over the next 12 to 18 months to explore the potential to develop an indicator of young children's health and well-being at age two to three, building on existing measures of children's development. This will reflect the importance of parenting and neurological development during pregnancy and the early years of life. This work will also explore whether the indicator can measure gaps in development between children from different social and income backgrounds.

School readiness at age five

Further to the recommendations of Frank Field's Independent Poverty and Life Chances Review² and Dame Clare Tickell's Review of the Early Years Foundation Stage,³ the Government will be considering its approach to assessment and measurement for the Foundation Years. The Department for Education will develop a measure of gaps in school readiness at age five between children from different social and income backgrounds.

School years

GCSE attainment by school deprivation

The Department for Education will develop an indicator looking at the percentage achieving the new 'basics' measure at GCSE. This indicator will measure attainment at the most deprived schools and the least deprived schools, and the gap between them. Further work is needed to develop a meaningful and statistically robust measure.

Comparing state school performance with the highest attaining independent schools

This strategy aims to narrow the gaps in attainment both between the most disadvantaged and others, and between those at the top and those in the middle. To help indicate our progress in the latter,

the Government is developing a more aspirational indicator that compares the attainment of children in independent school with those in state schools.

We will also keep under review free school meals as a basis for the indicators which measure the gaps in attainment between the most and least disadvantaged.

Transition years

Employment and participation in education

The Government is committed to developing an indicator that looks at the influence of different social and economic backgrounds in determining whether young people are employed or are participating in education or training during their late teenage years or early adulthood. We will do this as we refine the whole indicator set.

Higher education destinations

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will explore the available evidence base and scope out the feasibility of reporting on a graduate destinations indicator in the longer term by family background. Further work is needed to develop a meaningful and statistically robust measure.

At present the annual Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey is used to measure graduate outcomes six months after graduation. This covers 80% of graduates. It is followed up by a less frequent survey of a smaller sample of graduates three and a half years after graduation. The Higher Education Funding Council for England use this to publish Employment Performance Indicators for each institution, looking at the proportion of graduates who progress to further study or employment six months after graduation. However, this cannot be used to segment graduates by their social background. Further work will explore a range of potential measures of social background that could do this.

Access to most selective institutions

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will work with the Higher Education Funding Council for England to produce a measure of the gap between state and independent school students going on to the most selective higher education institutions. Data will be restricted to

young entrants for whom there is information on school attended. Institutions will need to be ranked according to the data on prior qualification of entrants.

Adulthood

There are a number of areas in the adulthood life stage – particularly access to the professions and workplace progression – where the development of indicators is a priority. Further work will be carried out by the Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills and Work and Pensions, along with relevant stakeholders, to develop more effective indicators of social mobility in these areas. This will include the development of gap indicators that look at the experiences of people from different family backgrounds. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will also continue to support the Professions Collaborative Forum in its work on helping professional bodies to embed the social mobility and fair access agenda into their strategic plans and to measure their progress on widening access to the professions.

Annex B

Key milestones

Timing	Action	Owner(s)
April 2011	£1 billion New Homes Bonus introduced	Department for Communities and Local Government
April 2011	Early Intervention Grant formally introduced	Department for Education
April 2011	First Pupil Premium funding payable	Department for Education
April 2011 – April 2012	New approaches to delivering free early education for disadvantaged two-year-olds trialled and roll out begun	Department for Education
May 2011	Revised Business Plans published, including new social mobility indicators	HM Treasury Cabinet Office
May 2011	Open Public Services White Paper published	HM Treasury Cabinet Office
May 2011	Evidence on 'what works' in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils published	Department for Education
May 2011	Government response to Wolf review of vocational education published	Department for Education
Spring 2011	Consultation on Parental Leave and Flexible Working	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Spring 2011	Higher Education White Paper published	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
July 2011	Whitehall Internship Scheme piloted	Cabinet Office
Summer 2011	Foundation Years Policy Statement published	Department for Education
Summer 2011	Housing Strategy Paper published	Department for Communities and Local Government
Summer 2011	Final Report of the Graham Allen Review published	–

Timing	Action	Owner(s)
Summer 2011	Work Programme launched	Department for Work and Pensions
Summer 2011	National Citizen Service piloted	Cabinet Office
Summer 2011	Contracts for online and helpline family services awarded	Department for Education
September 2011	First Free Schools opened	Department for Education
October 2011	First grants through the Education Endowment Fund awarded	Department for Education
Autumn 2011	Education Bill: Royal Assent, subject to Parliamentary approval	Department for Education
Autumn 2011	'Inspiring the Future' launched	Education Employers Taskforce (with the Department for Education)
2011	Participation Strategy published	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Department for Education Department for Work and Pensions
January 2012	New measures in performance tables on achievement of pupils covered by the Pupil Premium published	Department for Education
2011/2012	New affordable housing delivery model introduced	Department for Communities and Local Government
2011–2014	£4.5 billion invested in affordable housing	Department for Communities and Local Government
April 2012	Community Infrastructure Levy reformed	Department for Communities and Local Government
April 2012	Social landlords given freedom to offer more flexible tenancy arrangements	Department for Communities and Local Government
April 2012	National Home Swap scheme introduced	Department for Communities and Local Government
April 2012	All-Age Careers Service rolled out	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
April 2012–September 2013	Free early education for disadvantaged two-year-olds rolled out nationally	Department for Education

Timing	Action	Owner(s)
Spring 2012	First Report of the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission published	–
July 2012	Apprenticeships programme expanded so that funding is available to train over 360,000 apprentices at all ages in 2011/12 academic year	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Department for Education
September 2012	New Higher Education funding regime in place	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
September 2012	Schools to publish first annual online statement about how they have used the Pupil Premium	Department for Education
September 2012	New students from families with incomes of £25,000 or less who are starting courses from September 2012 entitled to a more generous full maintenance grant for higher education of £3,250 a year, in addition to up-front loans for tuition and living costs	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
September 2012	Part-time university students entitled, for the first time, to a loan for tuition on the same basis as full-time students, and no longer have to pay upfront for tuition costs	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
October 2012	Eligible students benefit from National Scholarship Programme	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
2012	New Birth Cohort Study launched	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
April 2013	New 'destination measure' for young people who have left school published	Department for Education
September 2013	Participation age raised to 17	Department for Education
March 2015	Family Nurse Partnership programme doubled in capacity	Department of Health
September 2015	Participation age raised to 18	Department for Education

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