



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2016-0221, 21 November 2016

Education and social mobility

Summary

There will be a Labour Opposition Day Debate on Education and Social Mobility on Tuesday 22 November. This briefing provides background information, and recent press and parliamentary coverage of this issue.

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

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1. Background

Summary

- The Government has a number of policies it says will tackle educational disadvantage and ensure social mobility at all stages of education. These include the creation of **new grammar schools**, alongside support for non-selective schools; support for **character education** in schools; and various programmes and policies to support **widening participation in further and higher education**.
- The grammar school proposals are highly controversial. The Government says grammars can be engines of social mobility and can also drive up standards in neighbouring non-selective schools, but opponents argue that increased selection will further disadvantage poorer children.
- The **Social Mobility Commission's annual *State of the Nation* report** was published on 16 November 2016. This concluded that Britain had a "deep social mobility problem which is getting worse". **It describes an "unfair education system" as one of the "fundamental barriers" to social mobility.**¹
- The *State of the Nation* report called for (among other things), a **rethinking of the government's plan for more grammars and academy schools; more support for disadvantaged children in the early years**; and the publication of **social mobility league tables for universities**.

1.1 Social Mobility Commission's *State of the Nation* report, November 2016

The Social Mobility Commission is currently chaired by ex-Labour MP, Alan Milburn. It published its annual [*State of the Nation*](#) report for 2016 on 16 November 2016.²

On education, the Commission concluded that there was an:

Entrenched and unbroken correlation between social class and educational success. Repeated attempts to reform the education system have not produced a big enough social mobility dividend.³

Key findings included:

- In the last decade 500,000 poorer children were not school-ready by age five [...]
- Poorer children, who stand to gain most from high-quality childcare, are least likely to receive it [...]
- Just 5 per cent of children eligible for free school meals gain 5 A grades at GCSE [...]
- A child living in one of England's most disadvantaged areas is 27 times more likely to go to an inadequate school than a child living in one of the least disadvantaged. [...]
- Funding is being diverted from second chance education in further education (FE) colleges to apprenticeships, which are often of low quality, in low-skill sectors and not linked to the country's skill gaps. [...]

¹ Social Mobility Commission, [*State of the Nation 2016*](#), 16 November 2016, p. iii

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. iv

- Despite recent progress, for every child who goes to university from a family in the bottom two income quintiles, seven do not. [...]
- Youngsters cannot access higher education (HE) locally in many parts of the country [...].⁴

The report's recommendations on education include:

In the early years

- Introduction of new parental support package to support children falling behind.
- A new target for every child to be 'school ready' by age 5, by 2025.
- Double funding for the early years pupil premium (currently this is worth around £300 per annum).⁵

At school level:

- Rethink the plans for more grammar schools and academies.
- Set as the core mission reducing the attainment gap at GCSE by two thirds, within the next decade.
- Mandate the ten lowest-performing local authorities to participate in improvement programmes.
- Reform systems of teacher training and teacher distribution, and offer new incentives and better starting pay.
- Require independent schools and universities to provide careers advice and other support.
- "re-purpose" the National Citizen Service to offer work experience or extra-curricular activity.⁶

In further and higher education:

- The development of a single UCAS-style portal over the next 4 years to help young people with choices about life after school.
- Making schools more accountable for the destinations of their pupils.
- Extending school sixth form provision, with schools given a role in supporting FE colleges to deliver the Government's Skills Plan. The number of 16- to 18-year-old NEETs should be zero by 2022.
- Scrapping 'low-quality' apprenticeships.
- The publication of a new social mobility league table to encourage universities to widen access.
- The extension of HE to parts of Britain that have little or no provision over the coming decade.⁷

⁴ Social Mobility Commission, [State of the Nation 2016](#), 16 November 2016, pp. xiv, xv,

⁵ Adapted from *State of the Nation 2016*, p. vii

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. vii-ix.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. ix-x.

1.2 Conservative Government policy in key areas

Early Years

The Government is currently reforming provision of free early education and care for children of pre-school age. The intention is to extend the current universal 15 hour term-time offer to 30 hours for qualifying working parents with three- and four- year olds. While the intention behind this has been welcomed by many, concerns have been raised about whether Government funding will be adequate and whether there is sufficient capacity in the system to deliver the extended offer.

In April 2015, an *Early Years Pupil Premium* was introduced. This is additional funding for disadvantaged three and four year olds in early education settings. Its current value for a child accessing their full 570 hour per year entitlement is around £300. This is considerably less than the school Pupil Premium, which is around £1300 for qualifying primary-aged pupils.

Further detail about government policy on early intervention and the 30 hours offer can be found in two other Library papers:

- [House of Commons Library briefing paper, *Early intervention*](#).
- [House of Commons Library briefing paper, *Children: introduction of 30 hours of free childcare \(England\)*](#).

Grammar schools

The Government is currently consulting on removing the existing ban on the setting up of new grammar (selective) schools in England.⁸ It is also proposing that existing grammar schools should be able to expand more easily, and that non-selective schools should be permitted to become selective in some circumstances. There may be conditions attached to funding extra selective places, which the Government is also consulting on.

In explaining the rationale for the proposals, the Government stressed the need to move toward a more meritocratic system:

We are going to build a country that works for everyone, not just the privileged few. A fundamental part of that is having schools that give every child the best start in life, regardless of their background.⁹

In September 2016, Education Secretary Justine Greening told the Education Committee that grammar schools were good for the disadvantaged children who attended them, and helped close attainment gaps:

For the children in grammars, particularly children on free school meals, their progress comes on in leaps and bounds. The grammars are closing the attainment gap that we have between disadvantaged children who are on free school meals and other children and doing a great job of that. They absolutely have

⁸ Department for Education, [Schools that work for everyone: Government consultation](#), September 2016

⁹ *Ibid.*, p22.

something to offer in helping us make sure that children do not get left behind, but if they have been left behind, catch up. The real prize is making sure that they do that, but at the same time play a role bettering other schools around them as well.¹⁰

The proposals have been extremely controversial. A common argument made in favour is that grammars can offer a 'leg up' out of poverty for bright, disadvantaged children and respond to what parents want.

Opponents dispute the social mobility claims, often pointing to the small proportion of pupils on free school meals who attend grammar schools. Shadow Education Secretary Angela Rayner MP has [written](#) in opposition to grammar schools, citing the low numbers of poorer children attending grammar schools, and stating that the nationwide grammar school system ended by Labour in the 1960s "sowed division in our society, left too many young children feeling second best, and put a cap on aspiration, ambition and opportunity for millions."¹¹

A discussion of these and other arguments – and other party positions – can be found in Section 2 of:

- [House of Commons Library briefing paper, *Recent policy developments: Grammar schools in England*](#).

Further and higher education

An earlier report for the Social Mobility Commission on FE and Skills' contribution to social mobility was published in October 2015. This concluded that there was:

[E]vidence that FE and skills have a positive effect on seven of the social mobility indicators, six directly and one indirectly. Notably, it did not have a negative effect on any of the social mobility indicators.¹²

Further Education Funding 2010-11 to 2015-16

The initial teaching and learning funding allocations for adult further education (FE) and skills in England fell from a 2010-11 baseline of £3.18 billion to £2.94 billion in 2015-16, a reduction of 8% in cash terms or 14% in real terms.¹³ The allocation for 2015-16 fell further as a result of the 2015 Summer Budget, which reduced the non-apprenticeship part of the Adult Skills Budget (ASB) by an additional 3.9%.¹⁴

¹⁰ Education Committee, [Role and Responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Education, HC 196, 14 September 2016](#), Q 260. See Q260-271 for fuller discussion of grammar schools.

¹¹ "[The Tories are harking back to a mythical 'golden age' of grammar schools](#)", Labour Uncut, 26 July 2016; see also "[Theresa May must ignore the Tory grammar school pleas if she wants to be truly One Nation](#)", *Telegraph*, 8 August 2016

¹² Institute for Employment Studies/BIS, [Research paper number 254, October 2015](#), Pp 15, 17.

BIS, Further Education - [New Horizon: Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth](#), November 2010; BIS, [Skills Investment Statement 2011 – 2014: Investing in a World Class Skills System](#), 1 December 2011; [BIS, Skills Funding Statement 2012-2015](#), December 2012; BIS, [Skills Funding Statement 2013-2016](#), February 2014; and BIS, [Skills funding letter: April 2015 to March 2016](#), February 2015.

¹⁴ [Letter from Skills Funding Agency](#), 20 July 2015

While funding for community learning and offender learning stayed fairly constant over the period, ASB funding declined by 29% in cash terms between 2010-11 and 2015-16 – this in part connected to the replacement of grant funding with loan funding for some learners from 2013-14 onwards. The minimum annual funding allocated to adult apprenticeships increased by 113% between 2010-11 and 2015-16, meaning that non-apprenticeship funding comprised a smaller proportion of the reduced ASB.¹⁵

Actual expenditure on adult FE by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) shows a similar pattern, with expenditure on community learning and offender learning staying constant but ASB spending falling by 32% in cash terms between 2010-11 and 2015-16, from £3.63 billion to £2.48 billion.¹⁶

Within the ASB, expenditure on adult apprenticeships increased from £0.45 billion to £0.71 billion over the period (an increase of 58%), while non-apprenticeship ASB spending fell by 54%, from £2.50 billion to £1.14 billion. These figures do not include spending on Advanced Learner Loans, which have replaced grant funding for many adult learners in further education. In the 2013-14 academic year, the Student Loans Company paid out £116 million in loans; in 2014-15 it paid out £145 million.¹⁷

2016-17 onwards

Under the Spending Review 2015 settlement the newly created Adult Education Budget (comprising the ASB plus community learning and discretionary learner support) is set to be held constant in cash terms at £1.5 billion up to 2019-20. Funding for apprenticeships and loans is set to increase by 92% and 140% respectively between the 2015-16 baseline and 2019-20. From 2017-18 onwards, apprenticeship funding will, in part, be provided via the apprenticeship levy.¹⁸

Further background on funding for adult further education funding in England can be found in:

- [House of Commons Library, *Adult further education funding in England from 2010*](#)

The [Technical and Further Education Bill](#) is currently before parliament. It aims to improve the quality of technical education, address skill shortages and support the Government's social mobility agenda.

¹⁵ BIS, Further Education - [New Horizon: Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth](#), November 2010; BIS, [Skills Investment Statement 2011 – 2014: Investing in a World Class Skills System](#), 1 December 2011; [BIS, Skills Funding Statement 2012-2015](#), December 2012; BIS, [Skills Funding Statement 2013-2016](#), February 2014; and BIS, [Skills funding letter: April 2015 to March 2016](#), February 2015.

¹⁶ SFA, *Annual Report and Accounts*, various years.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; Student Loans Company, [Advanced Learner Loans paid in England](#), various years.

¹⁸ BIS, Skills Funding Letter 2016-17, December 2015

The Bill implements measures set out in the Government's [Post – 16 Skills Plan](#) which was published in July 2016; these proposals were developed in response to recommendations in the [Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education](#) chaired by Lord Sainsbury.

Further information about the Bill can be found in a Library briefing paper:

- House of Commons Library briefing paper, [Technical and Further Education Bill \[Bill No 82 of 2016-17\]](#)

Higher education

Widening participation refers to increasing participation and success in higher education (HE) by disadvantaged or under-represented groups. It is currently delivered:

- By institutions through their widening participation activities and strategies;
- Through the work of the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) which approves and monitors HEIs' access agreements and disseminates best practice across the sector; and
- Through HEFCE's allocation of the Student Opportunity Fund which in 2014-15 distributed £41million to HEIs.

The following documents give further information and statistics on WP:

- Paul Bolton, one-page summary briefing on participation in higher education, [Participation in higher education: Social Indicators page](#) and [Oxbridge elitism](#).
- HE Green Paper, [Fulfilling Our Potential Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice](#), November 2015 pages 36-39
- The Department for Education annual statistics, the most recent release, is available on the Gov.uk website at: [Widening participation in higher education: 2016](#).

The *Higher Education and Research Bill (HERB) 2016*, which is currently going through its parliamentary stages, will make a number of changes to the HE system, many of these changes aim to improve WP in HE. If passed, the Bill will:

- Establish a new body, the **Office for Students (OFS)**.
- Require all higher education institutions (HEIs) wanting to charge higher fees to agree new **access and participation plans**.
- Make it easier for **new HE providers** to enter the system.
- Facilitate the introduction of the **Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)**. This aims to improve the standard of teaching in HEIs. The Government has proposed that eligibility for the TEF should be contingent on having measures in place to facilitate the access and success of disadvantaged groups. It also proposed that the metrics in the TEF would be broken down and reported by disadvantaged backgrounds and under-represented groups.¹⁹
- Extend the amount of **information** available to students.

¹⁹ BIS, [Fulfilling Our Potential Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice](#), November 2015, Cm9141, p22

The former Prime Minister, David Cameron, set a target to double the proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education from 13.6% in 2009, to 28% by 2020 and to increase the number of BME students going into higher education by 20% by 2020. Jo Johnson the Universities Minister said at the Conservative Party conference on 6 October 2015 that 'widening participation and access will be intimately linked to the TEF'.²⁰

²⁰ Quoted in "[Cameron's access goals 'key factor' in Green Paper](#)", *Times Higher Education*, 15 October 2015.

2. Press articles

Social Mobility Report

Guardian, 17 November 2016

[Equality looks further away than ever in a Brexit, Donald Trump world](#)

Guardian, 17 November 2016

[Love or hate it, Brexit offers civil society the chance to tackle social injustice](#)

Guardian, 16 November 2016

[UK's social mobility problem holding back Thatcher generation, says report](#)

BBC NEWS, 16 November 2016

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

Independent, 16 November 2016

[Government watchdog warns UK's 'corrosive' social mobility problem](#)

Independent, 16 November 2016

[Middle-income families, young and poor being 'left behind economically', government warned](#)

Financial Times, 16 November 2016

[The right questions to ask about social mobility](#)

Sky News, 16 November 2016

[Britain's towns and cities 'hollowed-out' by social divide](#)

Independent, 14 November 2016

[Theresa May under pressure to scrap David Cameron's 'Big Society' and support young jobseekers](#)

Financial Times, 16 November 2016

[Working class pushed to prioritise jobs at expense of education](#)

Economist, 22 October 2016

[Social mobility: A class apart](#)

Early Years

Nursery World, 16 November 2016

[Call for EYPP to be doubled to improve social mobility](#)

Children and Young People Now, 19 October 2016

Home News

[Free childcare expansion at risk from 'recruitment crisis'](#)

Children & Young People Now, 16 November 2016

[Boost early years support to improve social mobility, commission says](#)

Times Educational Supplement (TES), 18 November 2016

[Early intervention shouldn't be just a fairy tale](#)

Children and Young People Now, 10 November 2016

[Unions urge Greening to rethink nursery school funding changes](#)

Schools

Schools Week, 16 November 2016

[Social mobility commission: Force schools in worst local authorities into improvement programmes](#)

Times Educational Supplement (TES), 16 November 2016

[Grammars will make social mobility problem 'worse', says social mobility report](#)

Financial Times, 16 November 2016

[Social divisions more entrenched than ever](#)

Grammar schools will make situation worse, says government commission

Guardian, 08 November 2016

[Tutor-proof 11-plus test is 'holy grail', says schools minister](#)

Experts tell Commons education select committee that poorer pupils are less likely to get into grammar schools

Guardian, 25 October 2016

[Grammar schools cannot help 90% of children](#)

Times Educational Supplement (TES), 21 October 2016

[Leave 'social mobility' outside the school gate](#)

Independent, 22 September 2016

[Theresa May's grammar schools plan based on 'no evidence', warns biggest study of existing schools](#)

Guardian, 22 September 2016

[Theresa May's grammar school claims disproved by new study](#)

Financial Times, 16 September 2016

[Academies wary of grammar schools revival](#)

Times Educational Supplement (TES), 16 September 2016

[Dear Ms May, how can you talk about social justice?](#)

Financial Times, 15 September 2016

[UK grammar school plan criticised by OECD education chief](#)

Guardian, 12 September 2016

[The myth of grammar schools and social mobility](#)

Guardian, 12 September 2016

[Grammar row: education system should focus on social mobility, says Willetts](#)

Telegraph, 10 September 2016

[Two cheers for Theresa May putting grammar schools back on the agenda - the real work starts now](#)

Guardian, 9 September 2016

[Disadvantaged children under-represented in grammar schools](#)

Financial Times, 8 September 2016

[Number of youngsters in private tuition up by a third](#)

Guardian, 8 September 2016

[More grammar schools would be a disaster, says social mobility tsar](#)

Independent, 8 September 2016

[Grammar schools 'very socially selective', warns charity cited by Education Secretary to justify them](#)

Further and higher education

Times Educational Supplement (TES), 18 November 2016

[We can be a skills nation](#)

FE Week, 16 November 2016

[Social Mobility Commission calls for school sixth form extension](#)

Times Educational Supplement (TES), 11 November 2016

[Justine's flagship is holed below the waterline](#)

Times Educational Supplement (TES), 28 October 2016

[A nation riven by aspiration](#)

Telegraph, 10 October 2016

[Allow students into universities with lower grades if they have been 'held back by poverty', says official review](#)

3. Press releases

Social Mobility Commission, 16 November 2016 **[State of the Nation report on social mobility in Great Britain](#)**

Britain's social mobility problem is getting worse for young people.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The rungs on the social mobility ladder are growing further apart. It is becoming harder for this generation of struggling families to move up.

The social divisions we face in Britain today impact many more people and places than the very poorest in society or the few thousands youngsters who miss out on a top university. Whole sections of society and whole tracts of Britain feel left behind.

The growing sense that we have become an 'us and them' society - where a few unfairly entrench power and wealth to themselves - is deeply corrosive of our cohesion as a nation.

As the EU referendum result showed, the public mood is sour and decision-makers have been far too slow to respond.

We applaud the Prime Minister's determination to heal social division and foster social progress. That is a big ambition. It will require big action. Fundamental reforms are needed in our country's education system, labour market and local economies to address Britain's social mobility problem. That should be the holy grail of public policy, the priority for government and the cause which unites the nation to action.

Key findings include:

- Britain has a deep social mobility problem - the poorest find it hardest to progress but so do families with an annual income of around £22,500
- people born in the 1980s are the first post-war cohort not to start their working years with higher incomes than their immediate predecessors
- millions of workers - particularly women - are trapped in low pay with only 1 in 10 escaping
- only 1 in 8 children from low-income backgrounds is likely to become a high-income earner as an adult
- from the early years through to universities and the workplace, there is an entrenched and unbroken correlation between social class and success
- in the last decade, 500,000 poorer children were not school-ready by age 5
- children in deprived areas are twice as likely to be in childcare provision that is not good enough, compared with the most prosperous areas
- families where both parents are highly educated now spend on average around 110 minutes a day on educational activities with their young children compared to 71 minutes a day for those with low education. This compares with around 20 to 30 minutes a day in the 1970s when there was no significant difference between the groups of parents
- over the last 5 years 1.2 million 16-year-olds - disproportionately from low-income homes - have left school without 5 good GCSEs. At present, just 5% of children eligible for free school meals gain 5 A grades at GCSE
- a child living in one of England's most disadvantaged areas is 27 times more likely to go to an inadequate school than a child in the most advantaged
- young people from low-income homes with similar GCSEs to their better-off classmates are one third more likely to drop out of education at 16 and 30% less likely to study A-levels that could get them into a top university
- young people are 6 times less likely to go to Oxbridge if they grow up in poor household. In the North East, not one child on free school meals went to Oxbridge after leaving school in 2010

- in the North East and the South West, young people on free school meals are half as likely to start a higher-level apprenticeship
- in London, the number of top-end occupational jobs has increased by 700,000 in the last 10 years compared to just under 56,000 in the North East
- despite some efforts to change the social make-up of the professions, only 4% of doctors, 6% of barristers and 11% of journalists are from working-class backgrounds
- home ownership is in sharp decline - particularly among the young. Rates among the under-44s have fallen by 17% in the last decade
- people who own their homes have average non-pension wealth of £307,000, compared to less than £20,000 for social and private tenant households
- there is a new geography of disadvantage, with many towns and rural areas - not just in the North - being left behind affluent London and the South East. In 40 local authority areas, one third of all employee jobs are paid below the living wage
- more than half the adults in Wales, the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber, the West Midlands and Northern Ireland have less than £100 in savings

Key recommendations

Early years - the government should:

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

Schools - the government should:

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

Post 16-education and training - the government should:

- develop a single UCAS-style portal over the next 4 years so that youngsters can make better choices about their post-school futures
- make schools more accountable for the destinations of their pupils and the courses they take post-16
- school sixth form provision should be extended and schools given a role in supporting FE colleges to deliver the Skills Plan. The number of 16- to 18-year-old NEETs should be zero by 2022
- low-quality apprenticeships should be scrapped
- a new social mobility league table should be published to encourage universities to widen access
- over the next 10 years, higher education should be extended to those parts of Britain that have no or low provision

Jobs, careers and earnings - the government should:

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

Housing - the government should:

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

For further information, please contact Kirsty Walker, Social Mobility Commission, on 020 7227 5371 or 07768 446167 or kirsty.walker@education.gov.uk.

Notes for editors

The Social Mobility Commission is an advisory, non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the United Kingdom and to promote social

mobility in England. It currently consists of 4 commissioners and is supported by a small secretariat.

The commission board currently comprises:

- Alan Milburn (chair)
- Baroness Gillian Shephard (deputy chair)
- Paul Gregg, Professor of Economic and Social Policy, University of Bath
- David Johnston, Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation

The functions of the commission include:

- monitoring progress on improving social mobility
- providing published advice to ministers on matters relating to social mobility
- undertaking social mobility advocacy

[Today's report](#) is the fourth annual assessment by the commission of the government's progress on social mobility.

Association of Colleges, 16 November 2016

[Social Mobility Commission report 'State of the Nation'](#)

Russell Group, 16 November 2016

[Social Mobility Commission - State of the Nation 2016](#)

Teach First, 16 November 2016

[Teach First statement on Social Mobility Commission state of the nation report](#)

Association of Teachers and Lecturers, 16 November 2016

[ATL comment on The Social Mobility Commission's State of the Nation Report 2016](#)

4. Parliamentary material

PQs

[House Of Commons Tabled Parliamentary Question 2016-17 53625](#)

Tabled by: Hunt, Tristram

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the £60 million social mobility funding announced by her Department on 4 October 2016 to will be spent on (a) early years funding, (b) the Government's 30 hours free childcare policy and on (c) frontline education.

Department: Department for Education

17 Nov 2016 | Written questions | Tabled | 53625

[House Of Commons Tabled Parliamentary Question 2016-17 53592](#)

Tabled by: Tomlinson, Justin

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to increase the value of the Early Years Pupil Premium in line with the recommendations of the Social Mobility Commission.

Department: Department for Education

17 Nov 2016 | Written questions | Tabled | 53592

Date tabled: 17 Nov 2016 | **Date for answer:** 21 Nov 2016

[House Of Commons Tabled Parliamentary Question 2016-17 53569](#)

Tabled by: Hunt, Tristram

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 3 November 2016 to Question 50295, how her Department plans to assess the effectiveness of opportunity areas in improving social mobility; and what performance measures such an assessment will include.

Department: Department for Education

17 Nov 2016 | Written questions | Tabled | House of Commons | 53569

[Engagements](#)

Asked by: Lucy Powell

Q5. In its state of the nation report, the Government's Social Mobility Commission today issued a damning verdict on progress: things are getting worse. The commission concluded that the key drivers of social mobility—quality in early education, narrowing the educational attainment gap, and access to work and housing—are all going backwards on the Prime Minister's watch. When will she come forward with a real strategy for opportunity for all, instead of fixating on creating an even more elite education for those who are already elite? [907162]

Answered by: Theresa May

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

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

16 Nov 2016 | PMQs | 617 cc235-6
[Nursery Schools/Children's Centres](#)

Asked by: Chi Onwurah

Yesterday's British Chambers of Commerce survey concluded that childcare should be considered part of our national infrastructure for keeping people in work. Nursery schools provide that service in some of our most deprived areas, while promoting social mobility, so why on earth are the Government stripping their resources away at this critical time? In two years' time, we will still face the same challenges in terms of social mobility and education, and we will need nursery schools to be properly funded.

Answered by: Caroline Dinenage | **Department:** Education

I challenge all the things the hon. Lady said. We are not stripping funding from nursery schools; the supplementary funding of £55 million a year is part of the record investment in childcare of £6 billion a year by 2020. That is more than any Government have ever spent.

14 Nov 2016 | Oral questions - 1st Supplementary | 617 c6

[Social Mobility](#)

Asked by: Mrs Flick Drummond

One of the social mobility issues is about encouraging teachers to get pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to apply to Russell Group universities. What are the Government doing to encourage young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to apply to the top universities?

Answering member: Justine Greening | **Department:** Education

I met the vice-chancellor of Exeter University only last week to talk about some of the work that he and, indeed, the broader Russell Group are doing. It is important that we push this even more in the future than we have in the past. Alongside the proposals on selective education, some of the work we are doing in specific areas, such as on areas of opportunity, will make a massive difference over time.

14 Nov 2016 | Oral answers to questions | 617 c9

[Social Mobility](#)

Asked by: Mr Jim Cunningham

What steps she is taking to improve the social mobility of children and young people.

Oral questions - Lead

Answering member: The Secretary of State for Education (Justine Greening) | **Department:** Education

We are driving up social mobility by levelling up opportunity. That is why it is so vital to drive up standards in education, in terms of both academic routes and technical education. Opportunity areas are also in the vanguard of our approach.

14 Nov 2016 | Oral answers to questions | 617 c8

[Pre-school Education: Finance](#)

Asked by: Stephenson, Andrew

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has considered funding maintained nursery schools under the School National Funding Formula instead of the Early Years National Funding Formula.

Answering member: Caroline Dinenage | **Department:** Department for Education

Maintained nursery schools make a very important contribution to social mobility. That is why, as we introduce new funding arrangements in the early years, we are providing local authorities with supplementary funding of £55m a year for maintained nursery schools for at least two years. This will provide stability by maintaining their current funding, and is part of our record investment in childcare – £6 billion per year by 2020.

We will say more about the funding of maintained nursery schools later in the autumn in our response to the consultation on an Early Years National Funding Formula. And we will consult the sector on the future of maintained nursery schools in further detail, including on what happens after this two year period, in due course.

08 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 50976

[Social Mobility](#)

Asked by: Hunt, Tristram

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what criteria were used to select the first six social mobility opportunity areas; and if she will publish the evidence that that decision was based on.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | **Department:** Department for Education

The first six Opportunity Areas were selected from two different published data sets: the Social Mobility Commission's Social Mobility Index and the data used to rank local authority districts on school performance and capacity in the March White Paper.

The Social Mobility Commission's Index ranks 324 local authority districts based on a range of measures grouped under four headings: early years, school, youth and adulthood. We cross-referenced the lowest performing districts according to that index with our school performance and capacity data. This provided a shortlist from which we chose the first six areas.

We want to learn from what works in these areas, capturing which challenges all areas share and what is unique to a particular place. Therefore, the selection of these initial six areas was not based on ranking but a range of factors including regional spread and the type of area.

Social Mobility Index:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-index>

Analysis

Education white paper, Educational excellence everywhere:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/educational-excellence-everywhere>

Achieving Excellence Area Composite Indicator:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defining-achieving-excellence-areas-methodology>

03 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 50295

[Grammar Schools](#)

Asked by: Phillips, Jess

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what evidence her Department holds on the merits of grammar schools for social mobility.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | **Department:** Department for Education

Grammar schools' stretching education levels the playing field between disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers. For example, one study [1] found that in areas where at least 10 per cent of places are selective, pupils eligible for free school meals in grammar schools gain around 7 to 8 GCSE grades more than they would have achieved if they had not gone to a selective school. Across all pupils in grammar schools the average gain was 3.5 grades. Furthermore, disadvantaged pupils who attended grammar schools are more than three times as likely to go to Russell Group universities after finishing sixth form than those who attend comprehensive schools [2].

It is important to remember, however, the evidence we have is based on the existing selective school system, not the model we are proposing for the future system. We recognise that selective schools currently admit too few disadvantaged pupils and we want to look at how we can improve this. We are consulting on options for a new schools system, which will also make sure selective schools support non-selective education in their area to further support increased social mobility.

[1] Atkinson, Gregg and McConnell (2004) The results of 11 Plus selection: an investigation into equity and efficiency of outcomes for pupils in selective LEAs, by Bristol University.

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/destinations-of-ks4-and-ks5-pupils-2015-provisional>

02 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 50029

[Pre-school Education: Standards](#)

Asked by: Phillips, Jess

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what evidence her Department has gathered on the effect of good quality pre-school education on social mobility in the last five years.

Answering member: Caroline Dinéage | **Department:** Department for Education

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards for the provision of learning, development and care for children from birth to age five, supporting early years providers to prepare young children for school and improve their life chances by delivering high-quality early education.

The latest EYFS Profile results show that the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers has narrowed – 51% of children eligible for free school meals (FSM) achieved a good level of development (GLD) in 2015, compared to 45% in 2014. This is the equivalent of an extra 5,800 children eligible for FSM achieving a GLD. The results for 2015-16 are due to be published in November this year at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-early-years-foundation-stage-profile>

We want all children, regardless of their starting point, to have access to high-quality early education and childcare, as we know this is what makes the difference to outcomes. To help close the gap between disadvantaged children and their better-off peers we introduced the early learning programme for two-year-olds in September 2013. Around 160,000 of the most disadvantaged two-year-olds are already benefiting. We have also introduced the Early Years Pupil Premium, worth £50 million a year, which helps providers close the gap in school readiness between disadvantaged children and their peers.

Research shows high-quality early education has long lasting benefits for children. Analysis of the evidence from the Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education Project has shown that pre-school is of particular importance to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Department has commissioned a major piece of longitudinal research – the Study of Early Education and Development – to understand more about how high-quality early education affects attainment and social and behavioural development up to age seven. Findings are forthcoming and will be published at: <http://www.seed.natcen.ac.uk/reports.aspx>

02 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 49952

[Departmental Allocations](#)

Asked by: Sammy Wilson

Is the Secretary of State encouraged by the fact that two thirds of those canvassed on this issue support the Prime Minister's policy of increasing social mobility among those from poorer backgrounds through the increased provision of grammar schools? Will she assure us that she will not be deterred by siren voices or the barrage of criticism of this policy from those who are ideologically opposed to it even though they had the benefit of a grammar school education themselves?

Answered by: Justine Greening | **Department:** Education

The hon. Gentleman sets out the situation very clearly. He points out that, for children on free school meals in particular, grammars are able to close the attainment gap because the progress that those children make is double that of their better-off classmates. Labour wants to close that opportunity down and we want to level it up—that is the difference.

10 Oct 2016 | Oral questions - Supplementary | 615 c5

[Children's Centres](#)

Asked by: Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they still intend to publish the consultation on the future of Sure Start, which they promised to initiate in July 2015, and if so when.

Answering member: Lord Nash | **Department:** Department for Education

This Government is committed to improving social mobility and extending opportunity so that everyone has the chance to realise their full potential.

Our approach to improving life chances will focus on tackling the root causes of poverty such as worklessness, educational attainment and family stability and we will consider future policy on children's centres as part of this. We will make it clear how stakeholders and members of the public can contribute in due course.

01 Aug 2016 | Written questions | HL1311

Debates

[Child Poverty](#)

HL Debate | 17 November 2016 | 776 cc1578-1593

[Grammar and Faith Schools](#)

HC Debate | 08 Nov 2016 | 616 cc1410-1448

[Social Mobility](#)

HL Debate | 27 Oct 2016 | 776 cc377-406

[Grammar Schools](#)

HL Debate | 13 Oct 2016 | 774 cc2011-2049

[Schools that work for Everyone](#)

HC Debate | 12 Sep 2016 | 614 cc601-633

[Grammar Schools](#)

HL Debate | 08 Sep 2016 | 774 cc1176-1180

[New Grammar Schools](#)

HC Debate | 08 Sep 2016 | 614 cc467-484

[Children's Early Years Development and School Readiness](#)

HC Debate | 12 July 2016 | 613 cc 27 – 53WH

5. Further reading

Social Mobility Commission, [*State of the Nation 2016: social mobility in Great Britain*](#), 16 November 2016

[*The Bridge Group: Inspiring Policy: Graduate Outcomes and Social Mobility*](#), February 2016

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

House of Commons Library briefing paper, [*Early intervention*](#).

House of Commons Library briefing paper, [*Children: introduction of 30 hours of free childcare \(England\)*](#).

House of Commons Library briefing paper, [*Recent policy developments: Grammar schools in England*](#).

House of Commons Library briefing paper, [*Support for disadvantaged children in education in England*](#).

Paul Bolton, one-page summary briefing on participation in higher education, [*Participation in higher education: Social Indicators page and Oxbridge elitism*](#).

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