



Social Mobility Commission

Social Mobility Commission Meeting Minutes 12.00-4.30pm

Thursday 31 January 2019

DLA Piper UK, 160 Aldersgate Street, London, EC1A 4HT

Attendees: Commissioners

Dame Martina Milburn (Chair)
Saeed Atcha
Alastair da Costa
Steven Cooper
Pippa Dunn
Sam Friedman
Harvey Matthewson
Farrah Storr
Jessica Oghenegweke
Jody Walker
Sandra Wallace
Liz Williams
Sammy Wright
Members of the Secretariat

Guest presenters:

Giles Edwards – Producer - BBC Radio 4
Byron Vincent - Presenter - BBC Radio 4

Introductions

1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and introduced Giles Edwards and Byron Vincent, from BBC4, who were invited to talk about their recently broadcasted programme - “The trouble with social mobility”.

Item 1. Discussion: The trouble with social mobility – Giles Edward and Byron Vincent, BBC 4.

2. Byron set out his own social mobility story and highlighted the key points from the programme. He was particularly interested in what hindered people progressing and the reasons some people felt that they had to leave their communities, families, and

support systems to succeed. He also suggested that the Commission look at the obstacles that prevent people from progressing, for example, adverse childhood experiences, early childhood trauma, stress, homelessness, addiction etc. He considered the Commission's definition of social mobility to be helpful but suggested standard of living should also be included.

3. Commissioners agreed that there was a social mobility journey which was not as meteoric where people made somewhat less absolute progress but were able to stay within their environment, attain stability and increase personal capacity and networks.

Commissioners were in agreement with Byron's view that current measures struggled measure the progress of someone who wasn't gaining in income but had a more comfortable and fulfilling life. He suggested that social mobility focus on the mobilisation and improvement of communities rather than individuals. This he thought could be achieved through improving communities: housing; economic isolation and the huge impact this had on individuals.

Some Commissioners cautioned against simply making the local environment better and telling people to stay where they were. Other's observed that society valued different occupations differently on lots of different axes – including status and income. The Commission should consider a narrative that linked social mobility and inequality more closely.

4. The Chair highlighted that the programme raised some of the issues that the Commission were already considering and outlined the Commission's plan to have a social mobility strategy in place by the summer; revisiting the Commission's measures for social mobility and its definition of social mobility. She thanked Byron and Giles for their contribution to the debate and for attending the meeting.

Item 2: Annual Report 2018 – Board Paper A

5. Secretariat outlined the Annual Report emerging headlines; potential controversial options in each chapter and possible recommendations and sought a steer from Commissioners on which recommendations they wanted explored further. Following a broad discussion, Commissioners agreed the recommendations to be included within the Annual Report and those which required further exploration.

Actions:

Secretariat to circulate the agreed recommendations and draft Foreword.

Secretariat to arrange media training for Commissioners.

6. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 27 February