



Social Mobility Commission

Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Wednesday 29 April

Dear Prime Minister,

I am delighted to see that you have recovered from what must have been a truly terrible and frightening time. It is good to have you back.

It is with deep regret, and after several sleepless nights, that I am resigning as Chairman of the Social Mobility Commission. These are, as many commentators have said, unprecedented times and I cannot any longer commit the time that chairing such an important body takes. My day job as Group Chief Executive of The Prince's Trust, is now commanding my full attention.

We have grown to become an international organisation and my responsibilities as Group CEO now cover a number of Commonwealth countries – from New Zealand and Australia through to Canada, the Caribbean and West Africa. All are facing hardships due to covid-19 and requiring additional support.

I am extremely proud of what has been achieved at the Commission in the last two years - appointing the 12 very diverse commissioners, re-establishing the secretariat and commissioning a variety of reports from the State of the Nation to an employers' toolkit. Currently, we have 16 reports in the pipeline, have conducted a popular series of webinars for employers and have begun to form partnerships with bodies such as the metro-mayors and with other important commissions. We have also brought the social mobility charities together and appointed a range of social mobility ambassadors.

However, it is not nearly enough and given the strong links between social mobility and poverty I fear this current crisis will only serve to make social mobility harder than ever.

My reflections from my time in office are that appointing a Chairman on three days per month, as I was, has proved a real challenge. To make an impact, what the secretariat needs is an executive chairman on at least three days per week or a different structure – perhaps something more akin to that of the Children's Commissioner?

These are perhaps thoughts for another time but I would be very happy to discuss my views with one of your team, at some point in the future.

I have appointed two very able deputy Chairmen, either of whom could take over from me if they have the time and would you so wish. I also have some work to clear up before I go, so I would be happy to discuss a short transition period and a leaving date.

I would like to thank you for the chance to take on this important role and remain extremely sorry that I was not able to see out my full term.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martina". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter 'M' being particularly large and stylized.

Dame Martina Milburn DCVO CBE
Chairman

C.c The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP, Secretary of State for Education
Sasha Morgan, Director, Social Mobility Commission