



Social Mobility &
Child Poverty
Commission

How the key players outside central government can tackle child poverty and promote social mobility

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Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission
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About the Commission

The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission is an advisory non-departmental public body established under the Child Poverty Act 2010 (as amended by the Welfare Reform Act 2012) with a remit to monitor the progress of the Government and others on child poverty and social mobility. It is made up of 10 commissioners and is supported by a small secretariat.

The Commission board comprises:

- The Rt Hon Alan Milburn (Chair).
- The Rt Hon Baroness Gillian Shephard (Deputy Chair).
- Tom Attwood, Chairman of HG Capital Group and Chairman of Attwood Academies Trust.
- Anne Marie Carrie, Chief Executive of Kensington and Chelsea Education Ltd.
- Paul Cleal, Africa Business Group Leader at Pricewaterhouse Coopers.
- Paul Gregg, Professor of Economic and Social Policy, University of Bath.
- Christian Guy, Director of the Centre for Social Justice.
- Douglas Hamilton, Director of the RS Macdonald Charitable Trust.
- David Johnston, Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation.
- Catriona Williams OBE, Chief Executive of Children in Wales.

The functions of the Commission include:

- Monitoring progress on tackling child poverty and improving social mobility, including implementation of the UK's child poverty strategy and the 2020 child poverty targets, and describing implementation of the Scottish and Welsh strategies.
- Providing published advice to ministers on matters relating to social mobility and child poverty.
- Undertaking social mobility advocacy.

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How the key players outside central government, including business, can play a bigger role in tackling child poverty and promoting social mobility

Ministers requested that the Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission report on what key players beyond central government can do to reduce child poverty and increase social mobility. This note:

- Sets out the Commission's recommendations for key players beyond government;
- Provides supporting evidence, with reference to the Commission's 2014 State of the Nation report and the research projects that it has published since it was established in January 2013.¹
- Is intended as a short summary of issues which are discussed at greater length in other documents published by the Commission. The other policy papers and research reports are fully referenced throughout this document.

The key players we report on in this advice are:

- Parents and early years providers;
- Schools;
- Further education providers;
- Universities;
- Employers;
- Local Government.

We find that despite progress on a number of fronts it would be wrong to overstate what has been achieved. There are clear signs that the economic recovery is not being matched by a social recovery. We believe the solutions of the past will not be good enough answers for the future. If worrying trends are to be reversed – and gaps are to be narrowed between those from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds - all actors will need to commit to principles of social mobility. The renewal of aspiration and commitment must be ambitious. But despite the potential for improvements led by front-line service providers, government holds a crucial role. Retaining social mobility and child poverty reduction as the overarching goal of UK social policy, removing roadblocks to reform and innovation and acting as a convener are all areas where real value can be added.

¹ Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, *State of the Nation 2014: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain*, 2014. All publications by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission are available on our website: <http://www.gov.uk/smcpc>

The role of different parts of society at each life stage

The early years

UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments set the overall strategic framework for the early years, and must ensure there is ambition and clarity on the overall goals. Governments need to ensure that funding, incentives, regulation and accountability allow the system to deliver.

Local authorities should ensure that childcare provision in their local areas is of high-quality and sufficient to meet the needs of parents. Parents must be well-informed about their options and entitlements.

Providers should ensure that childcare and early education is of high quality and accessible.

Charities should provide advice, guidance and support, fulfilling the role of intermediary to the families that need support.

Parents can help their children flourish by reading, active involvement in their education and providing the right home learning environment.

School

Government must create a school system where every child fulfils their potential, no matter what their background or family circumstances and where attainment of disadvantaged children rises and the attainment gap narrows.

Schools and teachers must create outstanding learning environments where teaching is excellent, expectations for all pupils are high and every child reaches their potential with an emphasis on the most disadvantaged. This success could be measured through the number of schools, and schools where teaching, is judged to be outstanding.

Local Government must continue to drive school improvement, be responsive in stepping in when schools are failing and provide enough high quality school places for every child. This success could be measured through the number of schools judged to be outstanding in their area and available school places against demand.

Parents must play their part in ensuring their children can be successful in schools. This includes ensuring healthy eating, providing emotional support, making sure they do homework, having high aspirations, supporting their behaviour and ensuring a strong attendance at school.

Employers, universities and others must help children from disadvantaged backgrounds convert potential into a good career as adults. Business must partner with schools to support careers advice, provide mentoring opportunities and encourage senior staff to be on local school governing bodies.

Transition from school to work

Government must create a system for moves from education to employment that ensures chances for all young people, regardless of their background.

Employers must provide opportunities through apprenticeships and jobs. Firms must ensure that young people are aware of opportunities to progress once they are appointed.

Local and regional authorities must deliver their on their duties to track young people and ensure under-18s are in quality education or work with training. It is incumbent on local governmental bodies, local enterprise partnerships and others to work together to unify and streamline services.

Schools must provide careers advice for children up to 16 to help them decide what options will lead to good jobs and careers, working with employers to make this relevant to local jobs markets.

Further education providers must focus on quality of provision in general FE and in the training of apprenticeships, ensuring young people have access to good work experience and job-finding advice.

Civic society has a role to play in communicating lessons learned from front line charities and voluntary organisations to government.

Moving up the income ladder in work

Government can directly influence labour market participation through welfare reform and active labour market policies. It has a direct influence on incomes via its tax and benefits policies and an indirect influence through its work with employers to ensure all parents can access work and increase their pay.

Parents have a responsibility to move into employment where they can reasonably be expected to and take steps to increase their earnings to protect living standards during the recovery.

Employers can make sure they have progression policies in place, including training to enable employees to increase their skills and productivity to facilitate higher pay and a living wage.

Local authorities increasingly have a role to play in supporting family living standards and mitigating a fall in incomes, including providing an emergency safety net, as well as promoting local employment growth.

Charities can play a helpful role getting people into work as well as shaping the broader debate on child poverty and social mobility.

Schools, further education providers and universities help break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by increasing the skills of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and older people taking up a “second chance” to improve their skills to help exit low pay.

Moving into the top: universities and professions

Government should aim to close attainment gaps in schools, improve careers advice and guidance, to remove financial obstacles to university attendance and to encourage fair access and to put in place sustainable regional infrastructure to support widening access.

Universities must broaden the search for talent as far as possible, ensuring they recruit on the basis of potential rather than exam results alone including by using contextual admissions and supporting schools in raising attainment and aspirations. Universities also need to ensure students complete their courses and are able to progress to good jobs after graduation.

Employers and the professions should ensure their recruitment procedures are not inadvertently blocking entry of able young people from less well-off backgrounds. We have previously identified key steps including strategic engagement with schools, paying internships, reforming selection procedures, building non-graduate routes at scale, monitoring and publishing data on the social backgrounds of their staff.

Schools need to encourage aspiration and attainment and narrow the gap in results and opportunity for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

How key players outside government can play a bigger role

Parents and early years providers

What role do early years providers have in reducing child poverty and increasing social mobility?

Parents and early years providers have an important role in ensuring children are school ready. This is to ensure a foundation for learning, later educational outcomes and success in the labour market as well-rounded adults.

But at the moment outcomes in the early years reveal a divided Britain. By the age of four a development gap of more than year and a half has opened up between the most disadvantaged children and the most advantaged children.² More than half of children eligible for free school meals in England do not achieve a good level of development in the early years and so are not school ready at age 5.

The current entitlement of free childcare for three- and four-year olds, and for the most deprived two year olds, has been successfully implemented, with many families having accessed their entitlement to free childcare. However, large gaps in disadvantage remain with a shortage of places for eligible two year olds in some local authorities.

What more can be done?

The Commission believes there are several actions that parents and early years providers can take to close the gap between those from disadvantaged and other backgrounds, and improve school readiness in all children:

- Early years providers should seek to form closer relationships with schools to agree what school readiness looks like for their children. For instance they might base discussions around some of the behaviours Frank Field identified as important for school starters. This includes being able to talk in sentences, sit still and listen and understand the word no and the borders it sets for behaviour.³
- Qualified teachers should lead classes which contain the most disadvantaged children. This would ensure that the government's offer of free early years provision for children from poor households achieves maximum impact.
- Early years providers should also engage with parents to build relationships of trust and an understanding of the needs of each family.
- Finally, over the next five years parenting groups, early years providers and the government should have launched a national parenting

² The Sutton Trust, *Poorer Toddlers need Well Educated Nursery teachers*, 2012

³ Field, F., *the foundation years: preventing Poor Children Becoming Poor Adults*, 2010

programme, including a drive for increased access to information services amongst parents. Parents and other primary carers should be supported in developing the necessary skills to provide a positive home/classroom based learning environment where a child's emotional, mental and physical development is promoted. Lack of universal access to parenting advice and guidance means some children will lose out to the detriment of their performance at schools and long term potential in the jobs market.

Schools

What role do schools have in reducing child poverty and increasing social mobility?

Children from poorer backgrounds, defined by eligibility for free school meals, suffer a 'triple whammy' of educational disadvantage that schools must overcome. They arrive at primary school less ready to learn than their peers, they leave primary school with a less secure grasp of the basics, and they make less progress in secondary school so gaps increase.

The outcome is that by 16 almost two thirds of FSM-eligible children do not achieve five good GCSEs including English and maths, compared to around a third of other children. Their risk of ending up in poverty or not progressing in the labour market is therefore increased.

The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission has, as part of its research programme, published reports which support the case for schools doing more to improve social mobility:

- *Lessons from London Schools*⁴ explored the drivers behind big improvements in state schools in London. It found that over three quarters of the effect is *not* explained by pupil characteristics (e.g. ethnicity). In fact, higher achievement at the end of secondary school can mostly be explained by differences in prior attainment at the end of primary school. The implications for schools are first, potentially, the need for an increased focus on primary level and overcoming disadvantage here. For example this could be via effective literacy and numeracy teaching. Second, due to the length of time it takes for improvements in primary school to be observed in secondary school we may today be seeing the effect of policies from over a decade ago playing out in GCSE results. Schools and policy makers need to bear this lag in mind when deciding which policies to retain and which to alter.
- *High-Attaining Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds*⁵ – complemented the findings of the London Schools research. Whereas the former identified the importance of primary school, this report underscored the importance of secondary schools in ensuring those

⁴ Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, *Lessons from London Schools for Attainment Gaps and Social Mobility*, 2014

⁵ Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, *Progress Made by High-Attaining Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds*, 2014

with potential but lacking material resources do not fall behind, as is observed at present. 2,000 more disadvantaged young people might go to an elite university each year if they followed the trajectory of children from better-off families. At the moment high-potential but disadvantaged school children too often follow a downward trajectory in their attainment in the years up to their GCSEs.

What more can be done?

In our recent report, *Cracking the Code*⁶, we concluded that if schools closed half the gap in performance to the top 20 per cent of schools with similar concentrations of disadvantage, 23 per cent more disadvantaged children⁷ - an additional 14,000 every year - would achieve five good GCSEs including English and maths. We recommended five actions schools and teachers could take to close the attainment gap and improve social mobility, based on what high-performing schools on raising the attainment of disadvantaged children were already doing:

- *Using the Pupil Premium strategically to improve social mobility* – which means using data to identify which poor children are falling behind and why, and intervene using evidence of what works.
- *Building a high expectations and inclusive culture* – which means school leadership and governors being clear that the mind-set that disadvantaged children cannot do any better is unacceptable.
- *Incessant focus on quality of teaching* – including ensuring disadvantaged students have at least their fair share of the best teachers' time.
- *Tailored strategies to engage parents* – expectations of pupils and teachers should be high; so should they be of parents. This requires active engagement of parents by schools.
- *Preparing students for all aspects of life, not just exams* – this means supporting development of character and other non-cognitive aspects of personality that underpin learning. It also requires excellent careers advice, work experiences and other opportunities to make sure pupils are ready for life beyond school.
- In addition to these five points the commission also believes it vital that schools *walk the walk on fair admissions*. This requires governors and heads to recognise the educational value of a diverse student body, complying with discrimination law, and for academies and free schools, using their freedom to prioritise pupil-premium eligible children in selection criteria.

⁶ Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, *Cracking the Code: how schools can improve social mobility*, 2014

⁷ Children eligible for free school meals in the last six years

Further Education providers

What role do Further Education providers have in reducing child poverty and increasing social mobility?

Further Education providers have opportunities to improve the long-term outcomes of students in several ways:

- With the participation age now raised to 18, FE providers (including apprenticeship training) will be the final stage of education, whether academic or vocational, for the majority of young people.
- Young people who received free school meals at secondary school are more likely to enter general FE colleges than counterparts who did not receive free school meals. Half of children from disadvantaged backgrounds who continue in education post-16 do so in FE colleges, compared to around a third of other children.⁸ This means that ensuring the opportunities in general FE colleges are high quality is crucial for social mobility. Despite improvements, a quarter of FE colleges have been rated by Ofsted as 'requiring improvement' or 'inadequate'.
- Fewer young people now combine study and work. So further education retains an important role in providing good careers advice, work experience and ensuring vocational courses have on-the-job elements. Increased job-readiness will help ease young people from further education to work.
- Finally, for people returning to study as adults the FE system has a chance to help older people attain skills that lead to good jobs and better pay. Adult FE has an important 'second chances' function, allowing people to achieve their potential. It can boost individual skills and productivity, which can lead to career progression and a route out low pay. Quality of provision and good management of institutions is crucial here.

What more can be done?

There is a need to improve on current Ofsted outcomes. A quarter of general FE providers and nearly half (46 per cent) of apprenticeship training providers were assessed as requiring improvement or inadequate. The Commission recommends that the proportion of providers with these low ratings should be halved in five years. The FE Commissioner should continue to make use of his powers to recommend merger or closure of college departments that do not improve between inspections. The Government's ambition of apprenticeships becoming the 'new normal' alongside university will stand or fall on whether training quality can be radically improved.

⁸ Calculated from DFE, *Destinations of key stage 4 and key stage 5 pupils*, 2014

The Government has set out an ambitious programme of FE reform in response to the Wolf review of Vocational Education. This includes introduction of study programmes which combine a substantial qualification, Level 2 English and maths (if learner is not already at this level) plus work experience or other work preparation. Ofsted has found early implementation to be patchy – there is a need for colleges to step up and implement all elements of study programmes in full.

The FE Commissioner has also highlighted inadequate management skills and governance in some colleges. There is a need for college management and governors to ensure the right people are running their institutions so limited resources are put to best use.

Universities

What role do universities have in reducing child poverty and increasing social mobility?

Universities are the gateways to the best jobs and a route to significant social mobility. Even so, the proportion of graduates in graduate-level jobs has been persistently higher for students from more advantaged backgrounds (by on average around 4.5 percentage points over the last decade).

More young people are entering higher education. Universities therefore have a responsibility to ensure more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds go to the most selective institutions. It matters because these universities lead to the best jobs, and the potential for substantial social mobility.

What more can be done?

The removal of the student numbers cap is an opportunity to significantly close the access gap. The Commission recommends that universities should be aiming to use these new freedoms to admit 5,000 more students from a free school meals background by 2020. We also recommend that Russell Group universities use the opportunity to end the fair access gap and admit 3,000 more state school students and 1,400 more working-class students every year who have the grades but miss out on places.

Universities should improve the employability skills of their students including scaling up existing employer and university partnership working.

Widening Participation funding should be focused on building partnerships with schools. By 2020 a quarter of access funding should be dedicated to outreach.

These points are explored in detail in the Commission's report *The Fair Access Challenge*⁹ which sets out a number of practical steps universities can take. This included:

⁹ Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, *Higher Education: The Fair Access Challenge*, 2013

- Building links between universities and schools;
- Settings fair access targets;
- Using contextual data for admissions.

Employers

What role do employers have in reducing child poverty and increasing social mobility?

Access to good jobs, training and chances for progression makes for social mobility and in some cases, an escape route from poverty. The number of people in low pay increased between 2012 and 2013 to more than a fifth of the workforce or over 5 million individuals. The economic recovery is yet to catalyse the productivity growth needed to increase pay and specifically to lift wages of those at the bottom end of the labour market.

The small number of workplaces offering apprenticeships, 15 per cent on latest measures, is less than half the level of some European countries with well-established apprenticeship systems. There is a long way to go before the demand of young people can be met with roughly 11 applications submitted for each vacancy posted on the national Apprenticeship Service's online system.

The Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission's report '*Elitist Britain?*' highlighted the dominance of private school, Oxbridge and Russell Group University alumni in the professions, Westminster, Whitehall and beyond.¹⁰ The school and university a young person attends continue to have a disproportionate role in access to the best career opportunities.

What more can be done?

The Commission believes there are several important actions that employers need to take to improve pay and play their part in reducing working poverty.

- The Commission believes there needs to be a shared vision for the UK to become a Living Wage country by 2025. To this end employers should seek to pay the Living Wage where practical and affordable. Over the next decade employers should aim to put in place measures to help their staff progress in work, build their skills and improve productivity to enable increased remuneration. In the long term employers need to play a greater part in ensuring employees have enough to get by on rather than assuming government will pick up the tab for low pay through working tax credits or, in the future, Universal Credit.
- With the shift to Universal Credit and the drive for individuals to increase their hours of work, employers should consider how they can enable this through changes to shift patterns, for example. The

¹⁰ Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, *Elitist Britain?*, 2014

commission understands some employers currently structure shifts around the minimum hours required to qualify for tax credits.

- For low-paid workers, firms should consider what they can do to improve pay progression through employees. This could include improved HR and training practices and other activity to increase productivity which in turn can lead to better pay.
- The Commission recently published *Escape Plan* which explores the challenges individuals face in escaping from low pay.¹¹ It found that of those in low pay in 2001 only a quarter escaped in the subsequent decade. More than a tenth of those stuck remained in low pay throughout. Of those stuck, over two thirds may have moved out of low pay at some point but had not consistently for the whole period. The research found that increased responsibility associated with progression was not always accompanied with a pay rise that encouraged employees to seek promotion. It recommends that employers and government review their policies and approaches to pay progression to increase opportunities and enable people to move up.

Employers should consider how they can change practices to improve pay and progression but there are also straightforward actions that employers can take to provide chances for young people and ensure all have a fair shot at the best jobs, regardless of background. These include:

- Providing work experience for young people and improving long-term links between firms and schools. This could include business representation on governing bodies, providing high quality work experience, or involvement in careers advice and mentoring.
- Ending unpaid internships so access to experience and entry-level jobs in some occupations is not the preserve of the better off. For instance, three-quarters of recent entrants to journalism started work after having completed unpaid internships.
- Offering apprenticeships – at present only 15 per cent of workplaces offer apprenticeships. The Commission recommends that half of establishments with more than ten employees should offer apprenticeships by 2020 and those that currently offer apprenticeships should expand numbers. In addition, the proportion of apprenticeships at the 'Higher' level should be expanded from the two per cent of total at present to increase routes into top jobs.
- Employers in the professions (Law, accountancy, medicine, the Civil Service etc) should have implemented the Champion tier principles from the Social Mobility Business Compact by 2020. These are in relation to active outreach, offering work placements in disadvantaged places, social-mobility friendly recruitment (including expanding the pool of universities from which the best employers recruit), monitoring intake by socio-economic background and championing best practice.

¹¹ Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission/Resolution Foundation, *Escape Plan*, 2014

Local Government

What role does Local Government have in reducing child poverty and increasing social mobility?

At present Local Government is responsible for a number of policy areas through which social mobility could be improved and child poverty reduced. With the roll-out of devolution arrangements such as City Deals the opportunity for Local Government to make a difference is expanding. At present Local Government make an impact via:

- Ensuring early years provision is of high quality, sufficient places are available, and that disadvantaged families take up of the offer of free places.
- Ensuring that implementation of the raised participation age leads to more young people in education and training that leads to better job outcomes.
- Putting in place plans with business for local growth.

What more can be done?

Local authorities should work closely with their Local Economic Partnerships to focus on jobs growth for young people and improving transitions from school to work. This might mean helping employers work more closely with schools, improving careers advice, and putting early interventions in place for young people least likely to secure good qualifications and make positive transitions to work.

Local government must continue to provide support to improve schools. This could include evaluations of schemes to close gaps in attainment and ensuring schools within their locality are aware of best practice from across the country.

Local authorities have a duty to track all young people up to 18 to ensure they are engaged in suitable education or training. At present a number of authorities fall short, with a small proportion failing to track a tenth or more of young people. Local authorities should, by 2020, aim to be tracking 100 per cent of young people. This will enable better targeting of schemes to re-engage those who do not continue in study, or in work with training, after the age of 16.

There is a wide gap between the number of unemployed young people recorded in the labour force survey and the number young benefit claimants. This implies an unmet demand for service to support young people back into work. We therefore propose that local authorities look to implement 'Day One' interventions for jobless young people to speed entry into work. Some Local

Authorities already have schemes of this sort in place.¹²

Above, we described the need for early years providers to make better links with schools and ensure qualified teachers are working with children with most disadvantage. Local Government can play a useful role in helping education providers make links with each other and provide advice.

Local welfare assistance schemes provide emergency funding for low-income families and Discretionary Housing Budgets can be used to prevent homelessness. Local Government must consider how these can be maintained to provide support for those with greatest need.

¹² For example, as part of the Greater Ipswich City Deal: “MyGo, a new youth employment centre in Ipswich for 16 to 24 year olds ... will open next month (December 2014). The centre will help at least 3,500 young people move into work by offering free training, as well as career and employment support” <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/greater-ipswich-city-deal-multi-million-pound-investment-in-skills-secured>

Conclusion

There is significant potential for wider society beyond government to do more to drive progress in increasing social mobility and reducing poverty. In some areas improvements can already been seen. Better GCSE results, fewer low quality FE colleges and more apprenticeship places are all good signs. But successes in some areas are overshadowed by the problems still with us. The persistent gap between those who endure childhood disadvantage and those who do not, across a range of indicators, is the starkest sign that more needs to be done.

The best intentions and the will for reform is not enough: the means need to be prioritised too. Opportunity can be unlocked and the risk of poverty reduced. Demography – fate of birth – need not mean destiny. But this means greater determination and effort from all. With the worst effects of the recession fading now is the time for new strategies to be articulated and for all actors to commit to making a difference.

Over the coming months the Commission will continue in its formal role as an advocate for social mobility in several ways:

- Publishing research projects agreed by Ministers, including a joint project with the Early Intervention Foundation and Cabinet Office into 'character' or social and emotional skills;
- Jointly sponsoring a conference, organised by Bath University and Commissioner Professor Paul Gregg.
- Ensuring recommendations from the 2014 report remain at the forefront of public policy and developing our thinking on them, including through holding roundtable sessions with key stakeholders.

We expect the Government to respond to recommendations made and to put in place arrangements so momentum on key policies is not lost following the election.

Annex A: The role of government

The 12 key recommendations for Government in our 2014 annual report are:

- Supplement the existing **child poverty targets** with new measures to give a more rounded picture of poverty and publish a new timescale for achieving them;
- Ensure that welfare reforms and fiscal policies **protect the working poor from the impact of austerity**, including by empowering the OBR to report on each Budget's impact on poverty and mobility;
- Britain to become a **Living Wage country** by 2025 at the latest, underpinned by a new national pay progression strategy and an expanded role for the Low Pay Commission;
- More shared ownership options for young people to get on the **housing** ladder and longer-term tenancies to become the norm for families with children in the private rented sector;
- New focus in the early years on ensuring children are **school ready at age five**, with 85 per cent of children school ready by 2020 and all by 2025;
- A **national parenting campaign** to be launched to help more parents become excellent parents, funded by removing childcare tax breaks from families where at least one parent earns over £100,000 per year;
- **Higher pay to get the best teachers into the worst schools** in deprived areas of the county through a new Teachers' Pay Premium and new pay grades commissioned from the Teachers Pay Review Body;
- **Ending illiteracy and innumeracy** among primary school leavers by 2025 and a new focus on quality careers advice, character development and extra-curricular activity in secondary schools;
- **Closing the attainment gap between poorer and better-off children** to be a priority for all schools so that by 2020 more than half of children entitled to free school meals are achieving five good GCSEs rising to two-thirds by 2025;
- **Long-term youth unemployment to be ended by 2020** through a package of measures including half of all larger workplaces providing apprenticeships and a new Day One support service to help unemployed young people straight back into work or education;
- Universities to use the removal of the student numbers cap to significantly **close the access gap** so that by 2020 they are aiming to admit 5,000 more students from a free schools meals background, with Russell Group universities aiming to admit 3,000 more state school students who have the grades but currently do not get the places;
- **Unpaid internships to be ended** – through legislation if necessary.

Annex B: Summary recommendations for key players outside central government from 2014 State of the Nation report

Early years providers:

- Form closer partnerships with schools to agree what school readiness means for their children.
- Engage with parents to build relationships and an understanding of each family's needs.
- Qualified teachers to lead classes containing the most disadvantaged pupils.

Schools:

- Use the Pupil Premium strategically to improve social mobility – this means schools using evidence on the Pupil Premium more systematically to narrow attainment gaps between disadvantaged children and their peers. The best schools use data-driven analysis of why, how and where poor children are falling behind. They then seek to deploy that funding to address those barriers, using the school's freedom to innovate and informed by the evidence on what works.
- Build high-expectations, inclusive cultures – this means being ambitious and 'sharp-elbowed' for all children, with the school leadership team and governors sending a clear message from the top that they have high expectations of all staff and all students and not tolerating lower standards because of a mind-set that disadvantaged children cannot do any better.
- Incessant focus on the quality of teaching – this is the single most important way schools can influence social mobility, at the centre of the school's approach. It includes prioritising recruitment and development of staff, partnering with other schools to help teachers develop, and ensuring disadvantaged students have at least their fair share of the best teachers' time.
- Tailored strategies to engage parents – this means having high expectations of parents and building engagement. This could be by meeting parents on neutral ground outside the school, engaging and helping parents to be effective in supporting their children's learning – not passively accepting lack of involvement.
- Preparing students for all aspects of life, not just for exams – this means supporting children's social and emotional development and the character skills that underpin learning. It also means working with students to identify career goals early and providing excellent careers advice. Schools should also enable local businesses and universities to get involved in providing career advice, mentoring opportunities and

inspirational work experience.

- We also highlighted the importance of ‘walking the walk on fair admissions’ – not, as in some schools, covertly enabling disadvantaged students to be selected out. This means governors and heads recognising that securing a socially diverse student body can enhance the education experience of all students.
- Schools should have an employer representative on every school governing body tasked with providing young people with greater exposure to the world of work and careers pathways, thereby ensuring that the many employers who want to get involved in helping young people can do so.

Further education providers:

- Providers need to focus on quality of provision, especially for apprenticeship training, so that by 2020 the number of apprenticeship providers and FE providers rated inadequate or requires improvement is halved – to 25 per cent and 12.5 per cent respectively.
- From 2015 the FE Commissioner should make active use of his remit and where necessary consider advising that funding is stopped for college departments that do not improve between inspections and are assessed in the lower Ofsted categories and. This is especially necessary for apprenticeship training where too much provision has been found to be of low quality.
- FE providers must implement reforms of study programmes as a matter of urgency. Should Ofsted find progress has been limited over the year the government should consider additional action to speed up change.
- For all providers, especially those who need to improve; governors and principals need to be confident that the right management skills exist in both the senior leadership and in the governing body.

Universities:

- Universities need to increase links to local schools and provide more detailed guidance for pupils, schools and colleges on courses and career choices.
- Universities should use the opportunity of the removal of the student numbers cap to significantly close the access gap so that by 2020 they are aiming to admit 5,000 more students from a free schools meals background and by Russell Group universities aiming to admit 3,000 more state school students who have the grades but currently do not get the places.
- Increase the proportion of widening participation funding going to building partnerships with schools. A quarter of access funding should be dedicated to outreach activity by 2020 to support strategic engagement with schools.
- Improve the employability skills of their students including scaling up existing employer and university partnership working.
- HEFCE should support universities to establish sustainable regional access networks to enable strategic engagement between schools and universities.

Employers:

- Employers should increase their links to local schools. This means employers ensuring staff can actively support the delivery of inspirational work experience, mentoring opportunities and careers guidance and offering talks in schools.
- Employers already engaged in designing new apprenticeship frameworks should advocate apprenticeships to other businesses.
- Consider what arrangements to put in place to improve the skill and pay progression of young workers. This could include mentoring, careers advice, or targeted training.
- Become more involved with provision of careers advice in secondary school. Brokerage schemes as advocated by the CBI should be considered where relationships between firms and education providers do not exist.
- Employers and government should work together to set a joint goal of half of workplaces with ten or more employees offering high quality apprenticeships or work experience by 2020.
- Aim to Pay the Living Wage where practical and affordable.
- Support progression opportunities for staff.

- Ensure that shift patterns reflect new benefit rules and allow parents to maximise earnings.
- Open up training and career opportunities to employees of contractors within their supply chain.
- The Living Wage Foundation should work to acknowledge employers' broader benefits packages.
- The Living Wage Foundation and employers should further promote the Living Wage as a public-facing brand that employers are motivated to display to potential employees and consumers.
- By 2020 all leading employers in the professions (including law, media, accounting, civil service, banking and science and engineering) should have implemented the Champion tier principles from the Social Mobility Compact.
- Develop longer-term relationships with schools which include formalised and openly advertised work placements.
- End the practice of unpaid internships.
- In relation to professional firms, report next year on what they have done to expand the pool of universities from which they recruit.
- More professional employers should put in place non-graduate entry routes into high-skilled roles – by 2020 at least 10 per cent of apprentices are Higher Apprentices.
- All NHS employers should adopt the new work experience programme and focus on providing students from lower socioeconomic groups with high quality work experience.
- Collect and publish socioeconomic data about their employees and about applicants and new entrants to their graduate recruitment schemes.

Local Government:

- Ensure that all children are school ready through the coverage and quality of services it provides and oversees: healthcare, childcare, parenting classes, centres etc.
- Ensure that children eligible for free childcare are identified, notified and provided with a high-quality place so that parents have access to high-quality, affordable and flexible childcare that meets their needs.
- Support children centres by helping them diversify to meet the changing needs of parents and children.
- Local authorities found by Ofsted to be consistently underperforming in supporting improvements in schools should be tackled more effectively. It is unacceptable that local authorities are allowed to consistently underperform. More support should be shared between weaker local authorities and those that have had greater success.
- Where local authorities continue to struggle, more area-based approaches should be introduced to improve the quality of local schools and promote collaboration between schools, local authorities, central government, schools and other agencies to raise standards and close attainment gaps.
- Local education authorities should embrace their change in responsibilities around school improvement and end hostility to structural reforms.
- Local areas that are starting programmes that are focused on closing attainment gaps such as Schools Challenge Cymru, the Somerset Challenge, and North East, should initiate robust evaluations so any gains can be understood, shared and replicated elsewhere.
- Take the lead in implementing improved transitions from school to work. This means close working with local enterprise partnerships to enable a strong focus on skills, growth and pointing young people towards jobs with prospects.
- Local authorities are also best placed to commission early intervention and re-engagement services. This should draw on the European Social Fund investment available to build on the lessons learned from programmes that ran between 2010 and 2015, not least the NEET element of the Youth Contract, the Innovation Fund, and coaching and mentoring schemes such as Think Forward.
- All local authorities should be tracking 100 per cent of young people that remain in their area by 2020. Some authorities are close to achieving this already so it is a stretching but achievable objective.
- Collaborate with the UK Government to develop a new 'Day One' intervention and re-engagement service to get unemployed young

people straight back into jobs, education or training.

- Maintain local welfare assistance schemes to ensure that low-income families can access emergency funds and maximise use of available Discretionary Housing Budgets to prevent homelessness and provide assistance with housing costs.
- Develop proposals to align how central government budgets could be better delivered locally to aid improved earnings and employment for local people.