

Social Mobility Commission Report:

‘Time for Change: An Assessment of Government Policies on Social Mobility 1997-2017’

10 April 2018

Overview and Scrutiny Management
Commission

Following the publication of the annual Social Mobility Commissioning Report in June 2017, the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Cllr Lynne Doherty, asked what lessons might be learned to improve outcomes for disadvantaged CYP in West Berkshire

Background

The Social Mobility Commission, until recently chaired by the Rt Hon Alan Milburn, is an independent statutory body created in 2010. It has a duty to assess progress towards improving social mobility in the UK and to promote social mobility in England. The Commission produces an annual report assessing improvements in social mobility, providing advice to ministers and undertaking social mobility advocacy.

The Commission is an independent advisory body.

What does the report say?

The Report is divided into four life stages, which are scored on a traffic light scale of green, amber and red.

1. Early Years – Amber
2. Schools – Amber
3. Young People – Red
4. Working Lives – Red

The report acknowledges that successive governments have put social mobility high on the public policy agenda since 1997, with some success, but much more to do.

- It cites:
- reduced unemployment
 - more working class youngsters entering higher education
 - fewer children in workless households
 - expansion of Early Years services
 - improved schools and rising standards

Early Years (Amber)

Investment since 1997 to improve poorer children's education and remove barriers around poverty and health inequalities.

Creation of Sure Start centres from 1999

Free entitlement for four-year-olds (2000)

Free education for disadvantaged two-year-olds (2006)

Increase in funded early education provision from 12 to 15 to 30 hours per week

Number of children reaching a 'good level of development' (GLD) has increased, but a gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged remains.

Early Years – Lessons/Recommendations

1. A targeted approach (e.g. Family Hubs)
2. Greater focus and funding for parenting programmes, including online support
3. Shifting regulatory and funding from qualifications to CPD
4. A doubling of the Early Years Pupil Premium
5. Set ambitious targets to reduce the attainment gap between poorer five year olds and their peers

Schools (Amber)

Notwithstanding almost twenty years of public policy focus and reforms, children from different backgrounds still have very different chances of success.

While educational standards have risen and gaps have reduced between poorer pupils and their better off classmates at primary (Key Stages 1 and 2) the gap between Free School Meal (FSM) and non FSM children at secondary (GCSE) remains too large.

There are also substantial regional inequalities.

Governments have focused on increasing diversity, competition, parental choice, more autonomy for schools, and tougher inspection and accountability regimes.

Introduction of Pupil Premium in 2011 (now £1320 primary and £935 secondary)

Schools – Lessons/Recommendations

- ❑ Set ambitious targets for closing the attainment gap
- ❑ Align inspection regimes to closing the gap
- ❑ Align resources to closing the gap
- ❑ Attract and retain good quality teachers
- ❑ Focus on collaborative approaches between schools
- ❑ Develop a more balanced curriculum, incorporating social and emotional learning

Young People (Red)

Number of young people who are NEET (not in employment, education or training) has barely fallen, with disadvantaged young people twice as likely to be NEET after 18.

Disadvantaged young people with lower qualifications suffer most.

Deterioration in careers education and work experience.

Increase in participation age to 18 in 2015 did help poorer students achieve better results.

16-17 year olds NEET fell, but 18-24 year old NEET remains high at around 13%.

Range of new initiatives include: New Deal, Youth Contract, Skills Plan, Apprenticeships.

2013 Ofsted survey found 75% of secondary schools not fulfilling their careers advice duty.

Young People – Lessons/Recommendations

- ❑ Government commitment – genuine career path via apprenticeship, vocational course at university
- ❑ Aim to halve attainment gap at level 3 qualifications in next ten years
- ❑ Focus on high quality apprenticeships
- ❑ Ensure quality careers advice and support is available
- ❑ Greater accountability around destination measures
- ❑ More access to HE via FE
- ❑ Universities to continue to focus on recruiting students from poorer backgrounds and measure graduate outcomes, including offering careers advice and work experience

Working Lives (Red)

Governments have reduced low pay by introducing a minimum wage.

But gap between highest and lowest paid has increased from 47x to 128x

Labour market polarised: high skill/pay vs. low skill/pay

Introduction of Universal Credit to encourage work

More people in work, but more 'in-work' poverty

More low skilled job with lack of opportunity to progress in employment

Various skills strategies and focus on apprenticeships

Professional/managerial vs. routine/manual jobs skills reflect social background

Potential remains unrealised

Working Lives – Lessons / Recommendations

- ❑ More to ensure good jobs and career opportunities are available to everyone, regardless of background or where they live
- ❑ Increase high-skilled jobs in social mobility cold spot areas
- ❑ Develop local skills strategies
- ❑ Work with employers to improve career progression
- ❑ Increase socio-economic diversity in professional employment

Department for Education Response(1)

‘Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential
A Plan for Improving Social Mobility through
Education’

December 2017

DfE Response (2)

A mission to 'level up' across the country

1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools since 2010

Talent is spread evenly across the country but opportunity isn't.

These issues cannot be tackled quickly – there is no simple solution

It is about relentless focus and the application of energy and resources where they can impact most.

No community left behind

DfE Response (3)

Four Ambitions:

- i) Close the 'word gap' in early years
- ii) Close the attainment gap in school while continuing to raise standards
- iii) High quality post-16 education choices for all young people
- iv) Everyone achieving their full potential in rewarding careers

DfE Response (4)

Ways of working

Proposed key shifts in DfE approach and ways of working

- i) Identifying and spreading what works
- ii) Building lasting success through partnership

West Berkshire Position

In terms of Social Mobility the Commission report ranked districts nationally.

West Berkshire ranked 265th of 324 districts, placing us in the bottom 20% in England.

West Berkshire – Position/Lessons/Action

Officers and school representatives will address each of the four areas:

Early Years	Avril Allenby, Service Manager, Early Years
Schools	Tessa Ford, School Improvement Adviser, Pupil Premium
Young People	Mark Browne, Post 16 Adviser and Community Learning
Working Lives	Mark Browne, Post 16 Adviser and Community Learning
Headteachers	Barbara Hunter, Executive Headteacher, Westwood Farm Federation Nikki McVeigh, Headteacher, St Joseph's Primary School