

Poor students three times more likely to attend a university close to home

POOR students are more than three times as likely to live at home working for a degree than their wealthier peers, according to a report.

Moving long distances is largely the preserve of "white, middle class, privately educated young people", the study found. It argues that "student mobility" – whether a young person leaves home to go to university or not – is a major issue of inequality in higher education.

Published by the Sutton Trust, it uses official data to examine whether students who went to university were "commuters" or "movers".

It found that overall in 2014/15, more than half (55.8 per cent) of young people stayed local for university, attending institutions that were less than around 55 miles away from their home address.

"Only one in 10 students attend a university over 150 miles from home, and those that do are socially, ethnically and geographically distinct groups," the study says. More than three times more students from the lowest social class group commute from home, compared with the highest social class (44.9 compared with 13.1 per cent).

"In contrast, leaving home and attending a distant university is too often the preserve of white, middle

class, privately educated young people," the research concludes.

It also finds that taking into account factors such as class, location and attainment, state school students are 2.6 times more likely to stay at the family home and study locally than those who were privately educated.

In a foreword to the report, published the week after the UK government announced a major review of higher education, Sir Peter Lampl, chairman of the Sutton Trust, said: "In the modern economy it is often those who are most mobile who are most likely to find success.

"Moving away to university can be an important first step. Moving to London, or other large cities in the UK, can be an 'escalator' for social mobility. But too often, the opportunity to move away to attend university is restricted to those from better off homes."