



Mobility Manifesto

2019

Foreword



As we face a Winter election campaign, Britain's exit from the European Union continues to preoccupy both politics and the media. But this general election will be about much more than that. It is essential we do not lose focus on the bigger picture this country faces, and social mobility is one of our greatest challenges, inside or outside Europe. In fact, our volatile political climate is partially a consequence of Britain's educational divide.

Social mobility, the potential for those to achieve success regardless of their background, remains worryingly low across Britain. Over two decades of pioneering programmes and research, the Sutton Trust has put this stubborn social mobility problem on the map. Our next government should put social mobility at the heart of their agenda.

To ensure we make use of our best talents, we need to see our most successful educational institutions open their doors to everyone regardless of background. Our independent schools, which have long been a source of educational excellence, should enable access for all, not just the 7% who can afford them. The Trust's 'Open Access' programme provides the blueprint for achieving this. This would mean that all places at independent schools are based solely on merit not money – so-called need blind admission, as is the case with the best American universities. We have run a highly successful trial, identified 90 schools who are interested, and 10 outstanding schools who have agreed to participate in a trailblazer which is the next step.

At university level, Oxford and Cambridge have this year both announced ambitious schemes to widen access. It is essential that these great universities deliver on that promise.

The Trust itself has played its part, creating opportunities for tens of thousands of young people from low and

moderate income backgrounds over two decades. This year, through our university summer schools and pathways programmes, we have given over 5,000 young people the opportunity to change their lives. The majority of them have grasped the opportunity. Our US programme has now enabled nearly 1,000 students to attend the most prestigious US universities. Overall, this year, for an investment of £4 million, we created £60 million of value for our students. This increases every year as we invest more money.

But to harness the UK's education system to drive social mobility and end the waste of talent, we need change at a national level.

Here, the Sutton Trust launches its ambitious 'Mobility Manifesto', putting educational opportunity and social mobility front and centre. It contains wide-ranging policies covering everything from Open Access, to early education, fair access to university and pathways to the most sought-after jobs.

"In a polarised and divided society, social mobility's power to break down barriers has never been so vital."

We are proud of the Trust's independence and the fact that it was founded over 20 years ago thus providing much needed continuity in the education/social mobility space. Our belief that fairness transcends party lines means there are ideas here that should be attractive, regardless of political hue. Together they form a much-needed manifesto for change. In a polarised and divided society, social mobility's power to break down barriers has never been so vital.



Sir Peter Lampl

Founder and Executive Chairman of the Sutton Trust
Chairman of the Education Endowment Foundation

Mobility manifesto

Top ten: At a glance



1 Early years

The Government should review its **30 hours of free childcare policy** to ensure that childcare entitlements do not exclude the most disadvantaged families. The emphasis on eligibility should be shifted from high income families to those on lower incomes.

2 School admissions

State school admissions should ensure a better social mix across the system, with consideration given to **ballots and priority for disadvantaged students**, particularly to open up high performing comprehensive and grammar schools.

3 Open access

Independent schools should be opened up, on a voluntary basis, to pupils from all backgrounds. Entry to 10 leading independent day schools should be democratised through implementation of the Open Access Scheme, where places are allocated based on academic merit alone, not money.

4 Highly able

The new government should **establish an evidence-led fund to support young people with high academic potential in state schools, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.**

5 Essential life skills

State schools should be **funded and incentivised to develop essential life skills** in students both in and out of the classroom, with time allocated for their development, through the curriculum and extracurricular activities.

6 Higher apprenticeships

There should be a focus on increasing the number of **degree and higher level apprenticeships** as an alternative to university, and on **ensuring young people from low and moderate income backgrounds can access them.**

7 Contextual admissions

Contextual admissions should be used by more highly-selective universities to open up access to students from less privileged backgrounds. Current use of contextual data should be improved by more **transparency and consistency, better quality individual indicators** and **more ambitious grade reductions.**

8 Post Qualification Applications

Post Qualification Applications (PQA) to university should be implemented to allow young people to make an informed choice based on their actual rather than predicted grades.

9 Student finance

Maintenance grants for students should be restored to at least pre-2016 levels to provide support for those who need it most and reduce the debt burden of the least well-off.

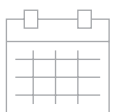
10 Internships

The government should **ban unpaid internships**, ensuring that after 4 weeks, interns are always paid the Minimum Wage, or preferably the Living Wage.



Early years

A child's first years play a significant role in determining their chances later in life. It is a crucial period for social mobility as it is when the gap in outcomes between poorer children and their more affluent peers first takes hold. It is essential that all children have access to high-quality early learning provision in the years before school starts.



11

By the time they start school, the poorest children are already 11 months behind their more advantaged classmates.

— Closing Gaps Early (2017)



33%

One-third of staff working in early years settings do not have either English or maths GCSE, or both.

— Closing Gaps Early (2017)



-30%

Around 1,000 children's centres have closed since 2009.

— Stop Start (2018)

Any incoming government should make early education a key priority, addressing issues with funding, along with geographical and socio-economic inequities in access to the best provision, across nurseries, childcare and children's centres. The ongoing shift in early education and childcare

policy away from quality towards quantity, with less focus on educational development, should also be reversed as it affects disadvantaged children the most. Well-qualified staff are vital in helping to close the gap in development before school starts.

What should be done?



The government should review its **30 hours of free childcare policy** to shift the entitlement to childcare from high income families to those on low incomes. Those on low or no incomes should be entitled to the full 30 hours, while reducing eligibility for the wealthiest families.



Priority should be given to ensuring **more early years teachers gain Qualified Teacher Status**, with the increase in pay, conditions and status this would entail. The aim should be to have a qualified teacher in every setting. The government should also invest in improving qualifications for all practitioners in the sector.



Any incoming government should tackle the **decline in the number of children's centres**. Neighbourhood-based service provision for young families should be reinvigorated, with investment focused on providing universal access to high quality, evidence-based services in the most deprived areas.



School admissions

Social segregation in our schools system is a major barrier to improving social mobility. Who gets into the highest performing schools – including comprehensive, grammar and independent – matters, because their students are more likely to go to a leading university and secure jobs in the most sought-after professions. A fairer system, where access to schools is not linked to family income, would have benefits in terms of overall attainment, teacher recruitment and retention and social cohesion.



The highest performing comprehensives take just half the rate of disadvantaged pupils compared to the average comprehensive.

— *Selective Comprehensives Great Britain (2019)*



Living in the catchment area of a top comprehensive school is associated with a house price 'premium' of around 20%.

— *Selective Comprehensives (2017)*



Less than 3% of grammar school intakes are eligible for free school meals, five times lower than the national average.

— *Gaps in Grammar (2016)*

An incoming government should look at overhauling school admissions, as differences in school intakes lie at the root of many other inequalities. While reform of the school admissions code – to require schools to prioritise poorer students, or implement ballots – is preferred, schools can achieve change themselves under current legislation. One option is that schools, particularly high-performing schools, should prioritise applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds, to reduce social segregation and ensure intakes are more representative of their local area. A more wide-ranging reform would be to introduce admissions

ballots for 50% of a school's intake, with the other 50% allocated based on a small catchment area.

Grammar schools also should review their admissions policies, particularly through giving priority to pupil premium applicants who reach the academic threshold for entry. There should also be a minimum of ten hours test preparation support provided on a free or subsidised basis to all potential grammar school applicants to help level the playing field, and grammar schools should ensure they conduct outreach to primary schools in the local community.

What should be done?



Where responsible for their own admissions, **schools should introduce ballots**, with an inner catchment area based on proximity and the rest of places based on a ballot. Wide eligibility for entry into the ballot is essential for ensuring a better social mix.



All schools should use their current powers under the admissions code to **give priority to pupils entitled to the pupil premium**, to reduce social segregation in state schools.



Grammar schools should give **high priority to applicants eligible for the pupil premium** who meet the minimum entrance criteria.

Open access

Independent schools provide a strong pipeline of students to leading universities and the top professions, but they are largely closed to families who can't afford the fees. More teaching time, extensive extracurricular activities and smaller class sizes also mean independent schools are effective at developing pupils' essential life skills, which are increasingly important in the world of work.

- **Over half the leading people in the most selective and influential professions** were educated in independent schools, which account for 7% of the school population.
- Average independent day school fees are now **over £14,000 a year**.
- **Just 1% of pupils at independent schools received bursaries** which fully cover the fees.

A state-backed Open Access scheme is needed to systematically open up the highest performing independent day schools to pupils of all backgrounds. The Trust trialled this approach at the Belvedere School in Liverpool. Parents paid a sliding scale of fees according to means, with one

third paying full fees, one third partial fees and a final third paying nothing. Academic standards increased and, because of the partnership with parents, the overall cost-per-place was the same as a state school.

- ✓ Ten top independent day schools, such as Westminster, St Paul's and Manchester Grammar have agreed to take part in a 'trailblazer' Open Access programme, benefitting up to 1,000 pupils per year whose parents could not afford fees.
- ✓ Medium term – and learning the lessons from the trailblazer – Open Access could be rolled out more widely to 100 leading independent day schools, benefitting 40,000 young people.



Opportunities in and out of school

What happens during the school years is crucial for determining a young person's chances later in life. Yet poorer pupils are far less likely to attend a school with the best qualified teachers and more likely to be in schools struggling with recruitment. There are also inequalities outside of the classroom, including unequal access to private tuition, and chances to develop non-academic essential life skills.

2x

Disadvantaged students are twice as likely to leave formal education without GCSEs in English and maths than their better-off classmates. Even high achievers from disadvantaged backgrounds at primary school are twenty percentage points less likely to achieve top marks at GCSE.

— *The Attainment Gap (EEF: 2018) & Potential For Success (2018)*

85%

of teachers in the most deprived state schools think that recruitment issues are affecting the quality of education their school provides.

— *The Recruitment Gap (2019)*

27%

of secondary school pupils have [received private tuition outside school](#), with parents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds five times more likely to report that their children had received private tuition.

— *Private Tuition (2019) & Parent Power (2018)*

It is essential that schools are adequately funded to invest in their teaching workforce, as the single most important factor in student outcomes. Addressing funding, as well as teacher recruitment, development and retention, should therefore be the central planks of any government's school

strategy, rather than frequently distracting debates on school structures. To help them fulfil their potential, it is also vital that young people from all backgrounds have access to extracurricular activities, and one-to-one and small group tuition for those who need it.

What should be done?



Schools in disadvantaged communities should be resourced to recruit and retain well-qualified and experienced teachers. Schools should consider **spending pupil premium funds on recruitment and retention** (including wages and investment in teachers' professional development).



The government should extend funding for disadvantaged 16–19 year olds by **introducing a student premium of at least £500 per year**, with the aim of raising the attainment of such students.



One-to-one and small group tuition is a [very cost-effective way to boost attainment](#). Schools should consider **prioritising one-to-one and small group tuition** in their pupil premium spending. The government should also look at ways of funding access to such tuition sustainably, for example through a means-tested voucher scheme.



The new government should **establish a fund to support young people with high academic potential, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds**, who are more likely to fall behind at secondary school. This programme should be informed by evidence on what works for that group.

Essential life skills

Education is about more than just exam results. Adult life requires a range of skills in order for people to flourish, both in the workplace and in their daily lives, from the confidence and motivation to seek challenges and complete tasks, to the interpersonal skills that aid teamwork and other social interactions. Essential life skills (such as motivation, confidence, communication, self-control and coping with stress) are crucial to the life chances of young people. However, more needs to be done to give all young people a chance, in a jobs market where such skills are as important as qualifications, as highlighted in the [Harvard Social Skills report](#). Sutton Trust research has shown a high level of support for developing essential life skills, from young people, teachers and employers.

- 72% of teachers believe **their school should increase its focus on [teaching life skills](#)**.
- **94% of employers say that life skills are at least as important as academic results** for the success of young people, yet many feel that school leavers and university graduates do not have the required skills for the workplace.
- Schools with higher numbers of disadvantaged pupils are less likely to offer enrichment activities like debating and extra-curricular clubs.

Schools should focus on ensuring a wider range of their pupils develop a broad array of non-academic skills, through both classroom strategies and extra-curricular enrichment activities such as debating, cultural visits and volunteering. Life skills education should be embedded in the day to day curriculum, through extra-curricular

activities, and through dedicated programmes such as Social and Emotional Learning. Programmes should receive robust evaluation, and schools should build on evidence of what works from the EEF. It is also crucial that there is a particular focus on increasing take-up by those from disadvantaged backgrounds.



State schools should be **funded and incentivised to develop essential life skills** in their students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, both in and out of the classroom.



The development of life skills should be embedded in day-to-day teaching, with **dedicated time allocated within the curriculum**, classroom strategies such as small-group learning, alongside access to extracurricular activities.



Higher apprenticeships

High-quality apprenticeships have the potential to be powerful vehicles for social mobility – apprentices earn while they learn and develop workplace skills employers want. Yet despite recent growth, only [13,000 young people](#) will start a degree apprenticeship this year compared to 330,000 taking up university degrees. The ability for young people to progress through the levels and the quality of provision are also key concerns. With worries about high levels of student debt, and the usefulness of many degrees in the labour market, a greater focus on alternative routes such as apprenticeships is an imperative.



£50,000

The best apprentices will earn more in their lifetime than many graduates.

— *Levels of Success (2015)*



13%

There are more than twice as many degree apprentices from the most advantaged backgrounds than those from less well-off homes (28% vs. 13%).

— *Office for Students (2019)*



64%

Two-thirds of teachers say they would rarely or never advise a high performing student to opt for an apprenticeship.

— *Apprenticeships Polling (2018)*

Reforms to the apprenticeship landscape have meant that apprenticeship starts have [actually decreased since 2017](#), with degree apprenticeships still making up a small proportion of the total. The new system should be reformed if it is to address the needs of both employers and young

people. While degree apprenticeships are a welcome new arrival on the education scene, many more are needed if they are to be a real option for young people. There also needs to be a focus on widening participation to ensure these opportunities are genuinely open to all.

What should be done?



Universities and employers need to work together to **increase the supply of degree and higher-level apprenticeships for young people**, which currently comprise only a small fraction of provision. Degree apprenticeships should continue to be within the scope of Levy funding, but Masters-level courses (like MBAs) targeted at senior staff should be removed from the scope of the Levy, with a shift in emphasis towards high quality opportunities for young people.



There should be a focus on **improving access for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to the best apprenticeships**. A portion of Levy money should be ringfenced for spending on bursaries, outreach or travel for disadvantaged apprentices. Data that is published on the socioeconomic background of apprentices should be broken down by level.



There should be a **UCAS-style portal where young people can easily find information about, and apply to, apprenticeships**, to address the fragmented applications process and increase parity of esteem with academic routes.



University access

Whilst there have been substantial improvements in university participation among students from disadvantaged backgrounds in recent years, the gap between low income students and their well-off peers remains significant, particularly at the most selective universities. Getting a degree from a leading university remains one of the surest routes to social mobility, so it is vital that access to the very best higher education is open to all. Outreach programmes, such as the Sutton Trust's Summer Schools, are key to ensuring fair access, but it is essential that they are evidence-led.

7x

Independent school applicants are 7 times more likely to gain a place at Oxford or Cambridge compared to those in non-selective state schools, and over twice as likely to take a place at Russell Group universities.

— *Access to Advantage (2018)*

1,000



More than 80% of students' predicted grades prove incorrect, and almost 1,000 disadvantaged, high attaining pupils have their grades under-predicted per year.

— *Rules of the Game (2017)*

Contextual admissions - taking into account an applicant's background in the admissions process - hold the key to fairer access to university. Recent years have seen universities increasing their use of contextual admissions, but to see a step change in access we need to see more widespread, ambitious and transparent use of the practice, so that young people know how they may be able to benefit from a contextual offer. The government should also make individual indicators, such as Free School Meals eligibility, available to universities through UCAS.

Recent attention to the university admissions process overall has been welcome. Currently, young people are required to make potentially life-changing decisions far in advance of university entry. However, many high-attaining disadvantaged students have their grades under-predicted. A move to a system where students apply after they have received their A Level results would allow young people to make an informed choice based on their actual achieved grades – though it is crucial that the detail of this reform is well thought through and appropriate support for students put in place.

What should be done?



Contextual admissions should be used more extensively by highly selective universities to open up access to students from less privileged backgrounds. Current use of contextual data should be improved by more **transparency and consistency**, **better quality individual indicators** and **more ambitious grade reductions**.



Post Qualification Applications (PQA) should be considered in detail by government and implemented to allow young people to make an informed choice based on their achieved rather than predicted grades. Such a system would also eradicate the increasing practice of unconditional offers.



Enabling Access to University: Sutton Trust Programmes

The Trust's programmes, aimed at talented low and moderate income students, support 5,000 young people annually – a total of 35,000 since the Trust's inception. The programmes focus on access to leading universities and professions, building students' confidence, essential life skills and helping them make the education and career decisions best suited to their aspirations and abilities.

- **University Summer Schools**, run in partnership with top UK universities, reach 2,500 young people each year and significantly enhance their chances of accessing the most selective institutions.
- **The US Programme** helps talented state school students to gain entry to leading US universities – nearly 1,000 young people have enrolled in US universities to date, accessing \$110m in financial aid.
- **Pathways programmes** support 800 pupils each year during their sixth form to access highly competitive professions, such as law, banking and finance, and medicine.

The Trust's programmes have been rigorously evaluated: independent analysis by the Boston Consulting Group shows that every £1 invested by the Trust results in £14 of value to the young people in terms of additional life time earnings.

The Trust is looking to expand its programme work further through widening access to degree level apprenticeships and finding new ways to build the essential life skills that are crucially important in determining future chances in life.



Student finance

Average student debt in the UK is [higher than in almost every developed country](#), and the current system means that the poorest students are graduating with the most debt. An incoming government should seek to address the financial barriers to accessing higher education and create a system which fairly reflects ability to pay.



of young people worry about the cost of higher education.

— *University Aspirations (2019)*



£52,000

Students from the lowest 40% of earners take on debts of £52,000 compared to £38,400 in the top 20% of households.

— *Fairer Fees (2017)*



-51%

Between 2010 and 2015, the numbers of part-time undergraduate students decreased by 51% in England, and around 40% of this decline can be attributed to fee increases.

— *The Lost Part Timers (2018)*

There is a growing consensus that the reintroduction of maintenance grants is essential. The next government should implement this recommendation without delay, providing vital support for those who need it most, and reducing the debt burden for the least well-off. The prospects for the tuition fee system have been a matter of intense political debate. Any solution should seek to achieve a fair balance between the contributions of graduates and society as a whole and take into account the debt aversion of those from poorer backgrounds. Targeting fee reductions at the least well-off should be the starting point, through means-tested fees, with the

poorest paying nothing, decreasing the debt burden for those who need it most.

A fair student finance system must also take into account the specific needs of the mature and part-time sector. Mature and part-time study is an important vehicle for social mobility, offering an alternative route for those who have work or family responsibilities, who need to improve their skills, or who may have not followed the traditional route in school. An incoming government should address the dramatic decline in mature and part-time numbers by ensuring that these students have access to flexible finance options.

What should be done?



Any **cuts to tuition fees should be targeted at the least well-off, by introducing means-tested fees**. While addressing the issue of student debt overall is important, targeted fee reductions for those who need it most should be the priority.



Maintenance grants should be restored to at least pre-2016 levels to provide support for those who need it most and to reduce the debt burden of the least well-off.



The government should address the huge drop in part-time and mature study since 2011. There should be **tailored and flexible finance for the mature and part-time sector, with an emphasis on fee subsidies** rather than loans, given that this group is less willing to take on debt.



Access to the workplace

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds still face significant barriers to accessing the most competitive and influential careers, from politics to medicine and the creative industries. It is vital for society that these jobs are open to the most talented people, regardless of background. Education contributes to many of these inequalities, but barriers continue in the workplace. A key obstacle is the prevalence of unpaid internships. Internships are increasingly seen as a necessary step to start a career, yet these are often both unpaid and not openly advertised, disadvantaging those who cannot afford to work for free or without the right connections.

5x

Britain's most influential people are over five times more likely to have been to private school compared to the general population.

— *Elitist Britain* (2019)

27%

Over a quarter of graduates have completed an unpaid internship.

— *Pay As You Go* (2018)

£1,100

A six-month unpaid internship will cost a single person living in London a minimum of £1,100 a month and £885 in Manchester.

— *Internships: Unpaid, Unadvertised, Unfair* (2018)

Any incoming government should take a multi-pronged approach to tackling barriers to accessing the workplace, addressing issues from careers advice in schools to minimum wage legislation. As well as addressing issues within the law, employers should be encouraged to adopt best practice when it comes to improving diversity. Employers should consider using contextual recruitment tools, particularly for graduate and early career hires.

Companies should also consider data on the socio-economic diversity of their intakes, following Cabinet Office guidelines on measuring socio-economic background. In an increasingly complex and competitive landscape, high quality careers advice from a young age is also essential. Careers advice meeting best practice benchmarks should be available to all young people, regardless of background.

What should be done?



The government should **ban unpaid internships**, ensuring that after 4 weeks, interns are always paid the National Minimum Wage, or preferably the National (or London) Living Wage.



Employers should consider adopting **contextual recruitment practices** that place educational attainment and successes achieved in the context of disadvantage, along with collecting data on the socioeconomic background of their intakes.



Government should **enact the 'Socio-economic Duty' clause of the Equality Act 2010**, obligating public bodies to give due regard to how they can reduce the impact of socio-economic disadvantage.



The Sutton Trust champions social mobility from birth to the workplace so that all young people have the chance to succeed in life. It does this through evidence-led programmes, agenda setting research and policy influence.

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