UNIVERSITY OF EXETER | Centre for Social Mobility

SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE SOUTH WEST

Levelling up through education

Acknowledgements

About the authors

Anne-Marie Sim is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Exeter. Prior to this, she completed a PhD in social anthropology at the University of Oxford, investigating children's talk about the future through 18 months' immersive fieldwork with children in and out of school environments. Anne-Marie has also worked as a strategy consultant for the Boston Consulting Group, and has a first-class undergraduate degree in Economics & Management from the University of Oxford.

Lee Elliot Major OBE is the country's first Professor of Social Mobility based at the University of Exeter. As one of the world's leading social mobility experts, his work is dedicated to improving the prospects of disadvantaged young people. Lee was formerly Chief Executive of the Sutton Trust and a trustee of the Education Endowment Foundation. He is focused on the impact of research, working closely with Government advisers and policy makers as well as schools, universities and employers.

Contents

Executive Summary

This report offers a major contribution to national efforts to level up opportunities and improve the skills and education of young people across the country.

Our proposals directly address the Levelling Up White Paper's key requirements and its 2030 missions on education and skills, and ultimately living standards.

The report highlights the urgent need for levelling up in the South West.

Our research shows that the South West has the worst educational outcomes for disadvantaged young people in the country, and low social mobility compared with other areas. In particular:

- School attainment gaps between poorer pupils and the rest are the largest of all English regions at the end of both primary and secondary school

- 40% of disadvantaged pupils[1] attained a standard pass in GCSE English and Maths in 2019 compared with almost 60% in Inner London

- 17% of disadvantaged students went on to university in 2018/19 – the lowest rate of all English regions – compared with 45% in London

- Upward occupational mobility was the 3rd lowest of 19 regions in 2015, and West Somerset ranked bottom of 324 local authority districts in the Social Mobility Index

This report presents a case study of a regional approach to levelling up through education by outlining the challenges facing the South West peninsula and putting forward recommendations to address these challenges. Our research focuses on the peninsula, comprising Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, where outcomes are largely in line with the wider South West region.

We recommend that every region in the country should have its own dedicated approach to levelling up based on an in-depth understanding of its own challenges.

Our report on the South West peninsula has found:

- Generally good employment rates but low earnings and poor pay: for example, 41% of jobs in Torridge, Devon, pay below the national living wage – the second highest rate in the country

- Rates of child poverty after housing costs around or above average in many areas, indicating a substantial working poor population

- There is more to disadvantage than financial poverty as measured by rates of Free School Meals status, which are generally low across the region

- Higher than average rates of poor mental health outcomes for both children and adults

- Fewer schools rated Good or Outstanding, particularly in deprived areas

- Recruitment, retention and training challenges for isolated and remote schools, and lower levels of school funding and teacher pay

- Long travel times incurred in pursuing further education or work: for example, for students from Dulverton in West Somerset, attending their nearest FE college means a 12 hour+ day; there is a 27% drop out rate

- Fewer professional jobs available in most areas and lower returns to education, indicating a low skills equilibrium for young workers

- A youth exodus: the highest number of 16-24 year olds and highest number of students leaving of any region, with implications for those 'left behind'

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1   4,291 pupils

Three central challenges for the peninsula are:

1. A low wage economy: poorly paid jobs impact on the lives of children growing up in working poor families and mean fewer job opportunities for young people in particular

2. Disconnected areas: the South West is the most coastal and most rural of all English regions, which creates significant barriers to accessing education and other services

3. A lack of impetus for change: some school leaders, communities and politicians believe things are 'fine', and there is an absence of a strong political voice at the national level advocating on behalf of the region, unlike for example the Northern Powerhouse movement

Four projects to trial in the South West

This report makes four proposals, together with recommendations to national government and South West organisations to take these proposals forward. These are pragmatic solutions and policy initiatives with the potential to improve educational, job and earnings outcomes for marginalised young people. We intend to trial these proposals in the peninsula as a test case for national efforts to level up.

The proposals focus on education and skills, and on building the human, social and institutional capitals outlined in the Government's Levelling Up White Paper. They address the Levelling Up requirements to spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest, and empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency.

School-centred cradle to career (C2C) models

Tackling disadvantage requires going 'beyond the school gates'. Cradle to career models provide place-based support to individuals and families in a community by identifying broad barriers to good attainment and coordinating local assets to address these inequities. In particular, they target the crucial developmental stage that occurs before children start school – the first 1001 days of life and early years.

We recommend:

- **National:** The Department for Education should encourage appropriate schools and trusts to consider key aspects of school-centred cradle to career models informed by our evaluation of what has impact

- **South West:** Multi-academy trusts and local authorities should scale up key aspects of school-centred cradle to career models – informed by our evaluation

A university-led tutoring service

This provides targeted additional support for disadvantaged pupils to level up the educational playing field. Drawing on universities' student populations, the service aims to embed high quality regional tutoring into the education system across the country. This supports the Office for Students' new focus on ensuring universities help to raise attainment in schools, and would contribute to national efforts to embed extra tutoring in schools for the most disadvantaged pupils.

We recommend:

- **National:** The Office for Students and Department for Education should promote the uptake of university-led tutoring in all universities contributing to national efforts to introduce high quality tutoring in schools to help disadvantaged pupils in particular

- **South West:** Universities, colleges and schools should scale up university-led tutoring so it benefits pupils across the entire peninsula

Sharper focus on disadvantage

This recommendation aims to bring all schools' practices around pupil disadvantage up to the levels we see in the best performing schools, through a package of five initiatives (three nationally driven and two potentially regionally or locally driven): a module on disadvantage in initial teacher education; Ofsted to make reduction of a school's disadvantage gap a key criteria; a data-driven score card to assist school engagement with disadvantage; Regional Schools Commissioners to lead a regional drive to instil best practice in schools and academy trusts; and a concerted effort to improve parental engagement.

We recommend:

- **National:** The Department for Education should introduce stronger incentives and measures in the national accountability system for schools to encourage a sharper focus on disadvantage

- **South West:** A dedicated group of school leaders should be established to consider how our proposals can be implemented in the region

Post-16 skills reform

This recommendation addresses the bridging period between education and work. It proposes that the South West peninsula takes the lead in current national skills reforms, with the aim of becoming a leading region for higher technical education and apprenticeships. It sets out some potential actions – including flexible learning options and subsidised travel – that could reduce the cost and risk to young people of pursuing qualifications. These could help the Government meet its objectives to boost high quality skills in the lowest skilled areas.

We recommend:

- **National:** The Government should make significant regional investment in the South West to create a series of hubs for technical skills

- **South West:** Schools, colleges, universities, employers and local authorities should develop a coordinated plan to create hubs for technical skills

A South West Social Mobility Commission

In addition to the proposals above, we recommend the setting up of a South West Social Mobility Commission. This recommendation recognises this report cannot address all of the challenges we outline. A dedicated regional body would bring together key individuals and organisations in the region and drive forward wider work to address the barriers for disadvantaged young people.

Introduction

Kian was initially thrilled to have been accepted onto the school's basketball squad after weeks of try-outs[2]. But despite his initial excitement at being selected, the following week he relinquished his spot on the team and stopped attending lunchtime training sessions.

Along with tens of thousands of other pupils across the region, Kian travels to school every day by bus. His half-hour journey takes him down country lanes winding between farming fields. The school-provided minibus is a necessity as public transport is very limited.

Kian's mother had told him he would be unable to attend any after-school training sessions as she was unable to drive and could not afford a taxi fare to get him home. The cost of the new basketball kit was also too expensive. Neither Kian nor his mother reached out to the school. For Kian, this was because he didn't want to be seen as 'different'; for his mother, because she didn't want to be seen as a 'charity case'.

For Justine and her fellow pupils in Year 10, a school trip to a local Russell Group university was their first visit to any university. Justine rarely has the opportunity to travel beyond town, and even less so in the past two years as a result of COVID-19. When they arrived at the university, Justine's jaw dropped. The size of the buildings, the fact that students lived on campus, the restaurants, coffee shops and facilities… the campus was like a whole town, not a place of study. On the journey back, Justine was in high spirits. The trip had been brilliant.

Yet, it was just that – a trip. University wasn't meant for them. Justine and her friends knew no one who had been. And people had still done alright – in fact, her uncle had left school without any GCSEs and was managing the local pub. Justine wasn't sure what she wanted to do, but like her friends she was concentrating on getting 5s in English and Maths. This was what was needed to get jobs and apprenticeships, and this would be enough to aim for.

For many people in the country the South West is associated with a 'better' quality of life, with easy access to beaches and national parks, lower crime rates and a slower pace of life. Yet for young people like Kian and Justine, living in the South West can sometimes be an isolating experience.

Social mobility is about doing well in life irrespective of your background[3]. Studies suggest that the link between a person's outcomes and their parent's background in the UK is stronger than it could or should be[4]. Background can be defined in many ways: from the occupations of your parents to their earnings or the school you attended. In this report we consider social mobility in its broadest sense – what it tells us about the prospects of living decent lives. The guiding principle is that background shouldn't determine what people end up doing in their lives. But this doesn't mean we should all pursue the same path, or that success in life is judged in just one narrow way.

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2   Names and some details have been changed to protect anonymity

3   In economic research, mobility patterns are usually assessed by studying individual or family earnings and income, with a small set of studies also looking at wealth. In sociology the changing status of people is studied in terms of social classes, based on the jobs people and their parents do. Social mobility can be measured in absolute or relative terms. In education debates, social mobility has been used as a more generic term for improving the results of pupils from poorer backgrounds – tied to efforts to close achievement gaps between disadvantaged children and their more privileged peers. The guiding principle is that children should fulfil their potential irrespective of their background

4   Elliot Major and Machin (2018)

Poor social mobility is one of the biggest social challenges facing the UK, with millions of children and young people unable to fulfil their potential. Income mobility levels in the UK are low by international standards, and are likely to decline further following the pandemic[5]. Of particular concern is the social mobility of those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is about the capacity to escape poverty and other forms of socioeconomic disadvantage. The evidence suggests that it is particularly hard to do[6]. Sociologists also report large differences in the odds of being in the professional and managerial classes, and warn of increasing rates of downward, rather than upward, mobility[7].

For those growing up poor, where you grow up in the country also matters for your life outcomes. Social mobility rates vary across the country. For example, in 2011, children of lower-occupation fathers in the suburbs of London were more than twice as likely to have reached the top occupations than children of similar fathers in Cumbria or Devon[8]. Meanwhile, educational attainment gaps between poorer pupils and their more privileged peers in London are almost half what they are in other regions[9]. Those already marginalised through poverty are further marginalised in so-called left behind areas, where employment opportunities are limited and educational disparities are wide.

The government's focus on 'levelling up' recognises the fact that many areas of the UK have been neglected for too long. These areas are in urgent need of the targeted approaches and funding that address the challenges specific to their local communities and economies. We believe that levelling up the educational playing field needs to be a crucial part of this agenda. As well as delivering equity, a committed investment in human capital – improving the education and skills of everyone in an area – is a key driver of the sustainable economic growth required to support decent jobs and livelihoods in the long term[10].

Levelling up should not exclusively focus on the country's North-South divide. The South West is one of the worst areas in the country to grow up poor. Disadvantaged pupils in the South West are the furthest behind of any region in the country at the end of both primary and secondary school[11]. Only 40% of disadvantaged pupils in the South West attained a pass in GCSE English and Maths in 2019, compared with almost 60% in Inner London[12]. This is associated with bleak prospects: the region ranks 3rd lowest of 19 areas for upward occupational mobility[13]. And West Somerset was ranked the worst local authority district in the country for overall social mobility[14].

We need more regional and local approaches. Understanding regional and local dynamics is crucial to understanding why a place is failing to provide good educational, employment and earnings outcomes for its disadvantaged young people. Tackling poor social mobility also requires meaningfully addressing specific regional challenges. This is not about propelling high-achieving poor kids to opportunities elsewhere; it's about changing the system to enable those growing up in disadvantaged circumstances to achieve decent lives in the areas in which they live.

This report identifies measures, broadly educational in scope, which could improve life outcomes for poorer young people in the South West peninsula[15], based on an in-depth assessment of the region's specific challenges. These measures are backed by evidence and have a strong chance of success, provided they are implemented well[16]. This is about changing individual lives, as well as bettering society through the broader benefits that improved social mobility brings. By taking forward our recommendations, we aim to improve life outcomes for disadvantaged young people in the South West. And by demonstrating how we can address these challenges in the peninsula, we aim to provide a compelling test case for a regional approach to the national levelling up agenda.

5   Elliot Major, Eyles and Machin (2021)

6   Research shows that social mobility is lowest at the top and bottom quintiles of parental socioeconomic backgrounds. In other words, coming from a very disadvantaged starting place makes it much more difficult to move up the social ladder (just as coming from a very privileged starting place makes it harder to move down).

7   Bukodi and Goldthorpe (2019)

8   Bell, Blundell and Machin (2019)

9   There are many potential factors in this disparity including London's high ethnic diversity and the better educational outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils from some ethnic backgrounds compared with disadvantaged pupils from White British backgrounds

10 For example, Acemoglu (2008)

11 Hutchinson, Reader and Akhal (2020)

12 Starkey-Midha (2020)

13 Friedman and Macmillan (2017)

14 Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission (2016)

15 We focus on the South West peninsula, which we define as Devon, Cornwall and Somerset (including Plymouth and Torbay) – a definition used by, for example, Peninsula Transport, a sub-national transport body for the region. Different understandings of the South West peninsula include and exclude all or parts of Somerset and Dorset. We focus on the peninsula region rather than the wider South West region (as defined by government office regions / Eurostat NUTS 1 classification) because we believe there are challenges specific to the peninsula that are less relevant to the wider South West. However, some of the statistics and studies we cite are based on the wider South West region, as this is the level at which much analysis is carried out

16 Implementation is critical to any programme's success, as Elliot Major and Higgins (2019) note

2 Social mobility across the South West peninsula

How does social mobility in the South West peninsula compare to other regions nationally? In this section, we look at some key social mobility studies and indicators.

The South West peninsula conjures up visions of a coastal and rural idyll. And for many, it is. Thousands are drawn to the region each year for the good life. An upsurge in people moving to the area was reported during the COVID pandemic – along with soaring house prices[17].

Yet, there is another story often untold. Beneath the glossy images of the region lie deep-seated social mobility problems and poor educational outcomes. For those growing up poor in the peninsula, there are limited opportunities at school and at work. Many are unlikely to experience upward mobility. And too many fail to reach the basic education benchmarks at school. Children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are associated with the worst educational attainment of all English regions.

Poorer pupils[18] in the South West are the furthest behind at the end of both primary and secondary school; fewer poorer pupils attain basic Maths and English GCSE qualifications; and fewer go on to university than in any other region.

- The South West has the largest attainment gaps in the country at the end of primary school. Nationally, disadvantaged pupils are on average 9.3 months behind. Across peninsula local authorities, they are between 10.8 months (Devon) and 12.5 months (Somerset) behind and the gap has been widening[19].

- The South West also has the largest attainment gaps in the country at the end of secondary school. Nationally, disadvantaged pupils are on average 18.1 months behind. Across peninsula local authorities, they are between 20.7 months (Cornwall) and 24.5 months (Plymouth) behind[20].

- 60% of disadvantaged pupils in the South West didn't gain passes in GCSE English and Maths in 2019 – compared with 40% in Inner London[21].

- Torbay has the country's fourth largest attainment gap at age 16-19. Nationally, disadvantaged students attain on average 3 A level grades lower than other students. In Torbay, the average gap is 4.4 A level grades[22].

- Only 18% of disadvantaged young people in the South West enter higher education by age 19 – the lowest of all English regions. The rate for poorer pupils in London is now higher than for young people as a whole in the region[23].

Young people in the region also face a low likelihood of accessing a good job, and the region has some of the UK's highest concentrations of 'below living wage' jobs.

- The South West ranks 3rd worst of 19 regions for upward occupational mobility[24] and Devon 2nd worst of 35 areas[25].

- 4 of Devon's 8 districts are in the UK's top-25 low-pay 'hotspots' (local authorities with the highest proportions of jobs paying below the national living wage)[26].

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17 For example, inews.co.uk/news/uk/devon-cornwall-rents-soar-city-dwellers-escape-urban-lockdowns-848605?ico=read_more

18 We use the term 'poorer pupils' interchangeably with 'disadvantaged pupils' where the group of pupils being referenced are those eligible for Free School Meals, an income-based measure of disadvantage

19 Hutchinson, Reader and Akhal (2020)

20 Hutchinson, Reader and Akhal (2020)

21 Starkey-Midha (2020); 6,366 pupils in the South West; 5,512 pupils in Inner London - www.gov.uk/government/statistics/key-stage-4-performance-2019-revised

22 Tuckett, Robinson and Bunting (2021)

23 explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education/2018-19

24 Friedman and Macmillan (2017)

25 Bell, Blundell and Machin (2019)

26 Richardson (2021)

Neglect from political discourse

Despite these stark statistics, the idea of a North-South divide means the South West is frequently assumed to be similar to London and the South East. At the same time, the South West has not generated a strong, coordinated response to the challenges being faced. It lacks the political heft at the national level observed in other regions – for example, the Northern Powerhouse movement.

At the regional level, there is a lack of a clear idea of what the South West is. People have a sense that Bristol dominates any discussion of the South West, with the peninsula (itself not a clearly defined area) overlooked. Internally, arbitrary geo-political borders and lack of a joined-up approach, combined with parochialism and sparse political challenge across the region, mean attempts to change the status quo have been limited.

However, there are voices in the region calling for change. This report aims to build on this support.
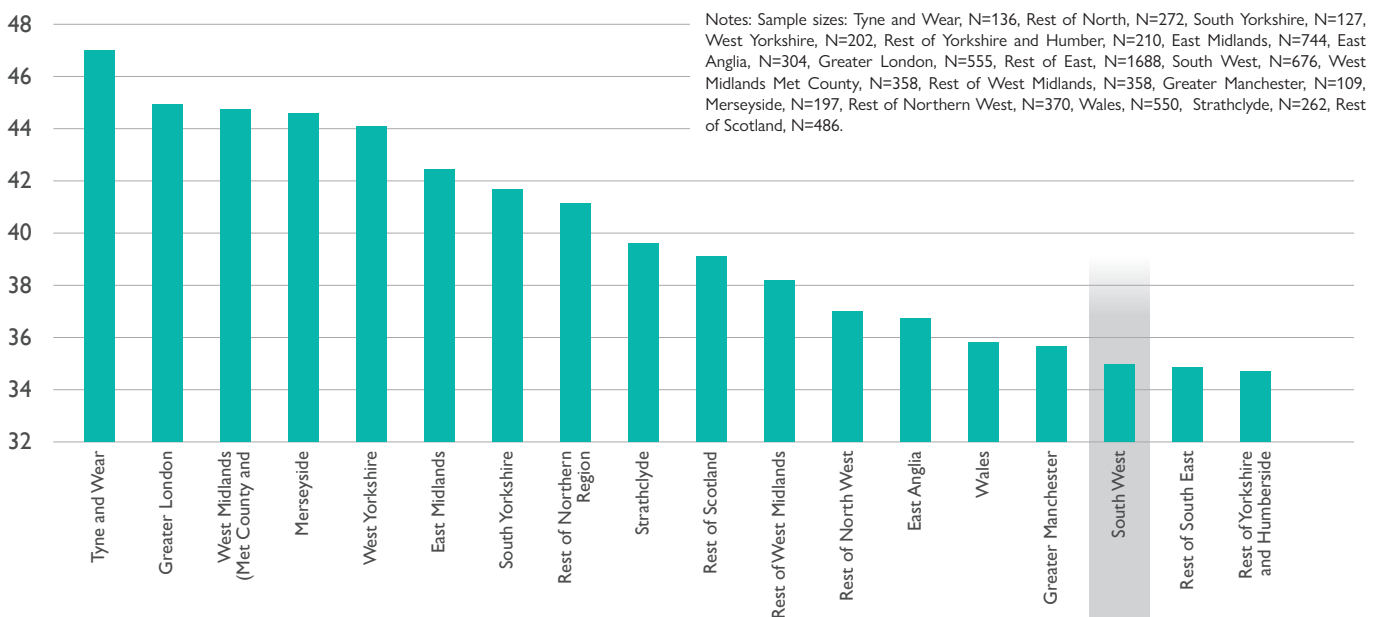
Intergenerational social mobility

Studies of intergenerational social mobility can compare outcomes for people relative to their class background in different regions. They describe adult outcomes and are therefore historical in perspective, relating to the characteristics of people in previous decades when they were younger.

Figure 1 Absolute upward mobility by region[27]

This chart shows the percentage of individuals who experienced upward mobility relative to their parents, based on the stated occupation and parental occupation of individuals aged 25-60 who grew up and remained in different UK regions, in 2015. The South West ranks 17th of 19 regions, and 17th of 19 when measuring only by destination region (where individuals currently live)[28].

Intergenerational social mobility measures how well off an individual is or what their occupational or class status is relative to their parents. This can be measured in absolute terms (how one generation compares to a previous one) or relative terms (net of change in overall earnings or occupational structure, whether individuals have been able to alter their position in the earnings / occupations hierarchy). Relative mobility is a zero sum game: it describes the chances of securing finite opportunities. Achieving good absolute and relative mobility are both important if we are to improve overall life outcomes and their equitable distribution.

In recent years, several studies have emerged that examine intergenerational mobility at a regional level. See Appendix for further detail.

Notes: Sample sizes: Tyne and Wear, N=136, Rest of North, N=272, South Yorkshire, N=127, West Yorkshire, N=202, Rest of Yorkshire and Humber, N=210, East Midlands, N=744, East Anglia, N=304, Greater London, N=555, Rest of East, N=1688, South West, N=676, West Midlands Met County, N=358, Rest of West Midlands, N=358, Greater Manchester, N=109, Merseyside, N=197, Rest of Northern West, N=370, Wales, N=550, Strathclyde, N=262, Rest of Scotland, N=486.

27 Friedman and Macmillan (2017)
28 Measuring only by destination region gives a larger sample, but is subject to domestic migration effects

There is some evidence that *relative* upwards mobility to the top job categories has been relatively good in the South West (5th best in the same study). This suggests that while people in the South West have had less chance than those elsewhere of moving up the jobs ladder relative to their parents, this is likely to be due to poor opportunities all round rather than the hoarding of privilege by elites. The latter is a smaller problem in the South West than elsewhere. This is in line with the region's high rate of absolute downward mobility, which indicates that those who choose to stay in or come to the South West are more likely to experience a fall in status relative to their class background than people elsewhere.

How significant are these regional variations? According to the study above, they are 'small but important'. For example, while around 45% or more of those growing up and living in Tyne and Wear, Greater London, West Midlands Met County and Merseyside

have experienced some upward mobility, in Yorkshire & Humber (excluding West and South Yorkshire), the South East and the South West this figure is closer to one in three. Another study reported that, in 2011,

... children of lower-occupation fathers in the suburbs of London were more than twice as likely to have reached the top occupations than children of similar fathers in Cumbria or Devon[29].

There is significant intra-regional variation: social mobility 'hotspots' and 'coldspots' are spread across the region. There may also be some signs of relative improvement for recent generations across at least some parts of the peninsula. However, the problem with intergenerational studies is that they capture historic trends.

Education attainment gaps

Turning to education, the outlook for future generations does not bode well.

At the end of each phase of school – primary and secondary – disadvantaged pupils in the South West are the furthest 'behind' of disadvantaged pupils in all English regions.

Since educational attainment is a strong predictor of later outcomes[30], tracking attainment based on pupil background is a useful way of capturing an understanding of likely future mobility.

Free School Meal (FSM) or Pupil Premium (PP) status is the proxy measure for social disadvantage used by many studies and government reports, despite limitations[31] – see page 14 for how FSM and PP status are calculated. A big advantage to using these measures is that data is readily and easily available for all state schools in England. In these studies, 'disadvantaged pupils' is the term typically used to refer to pupils who have been eligible for Free School Meals at any point over the last six years – currently around 25% of all pupils, and therefore roughly equivalent to a bottom quartile of parental income[32].

Disadvantaged pupils' attainment is then compared with other pupils' attainment to ascertain the effect of low parental income on educational outcomes (calculated as an attainment gap). As attainment is typically norm referenced, this gap is a relative measure.

29 Bell, Blundell and Machin (2019)
30 See for example Chetty, Hendren, Kline and Saez (2014)
31 For example, Hobbs and Vignoles (2007)
32 Julius and Ghosh (2022)

Figure 2 Attainment gaps by region and peninsula local authority[33]

The charts show the gap (based on assessment scores but converted into months of learning) between average attainment by disadvantaged pupils regionally and average attainment by other pupils nationally in 2019. The larger the gap, the further 'behind' disadvantaged pupils are.

Early Years
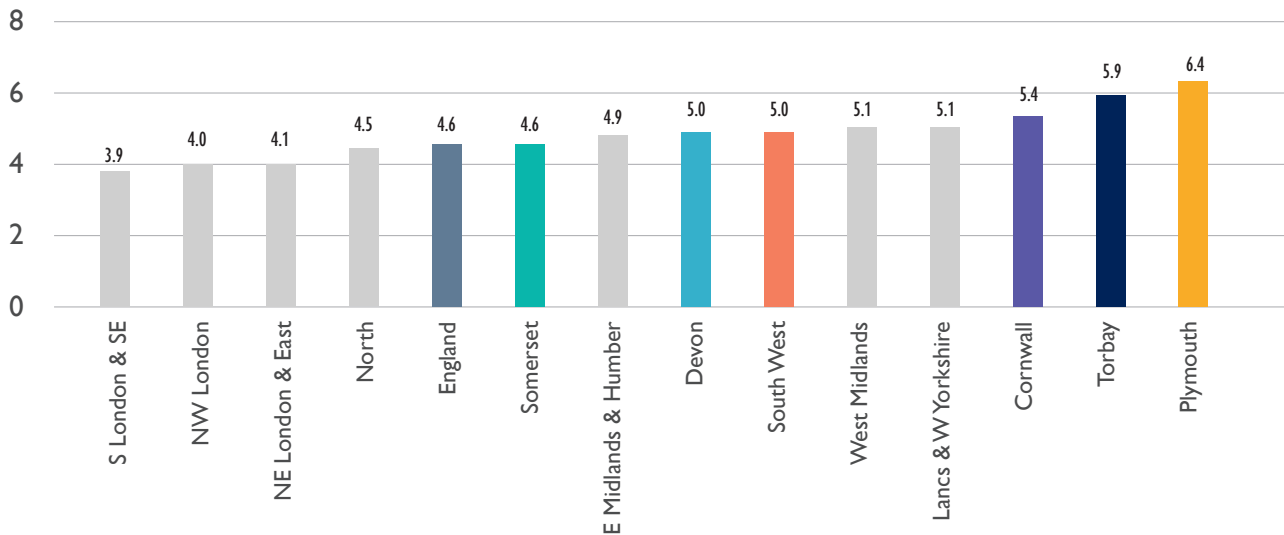
Primary
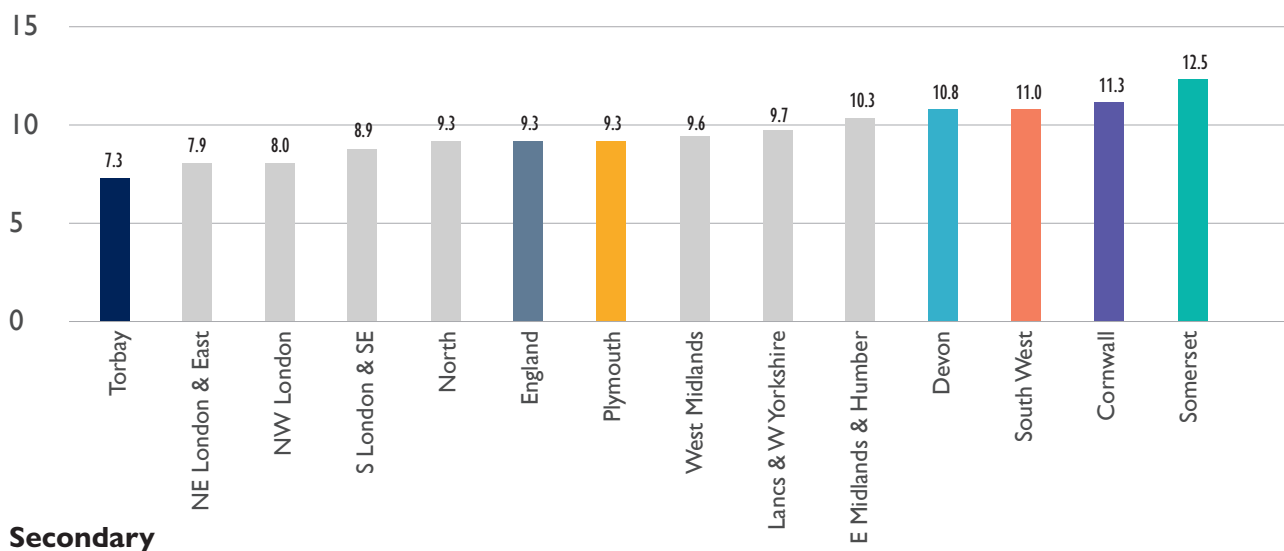
Secondary
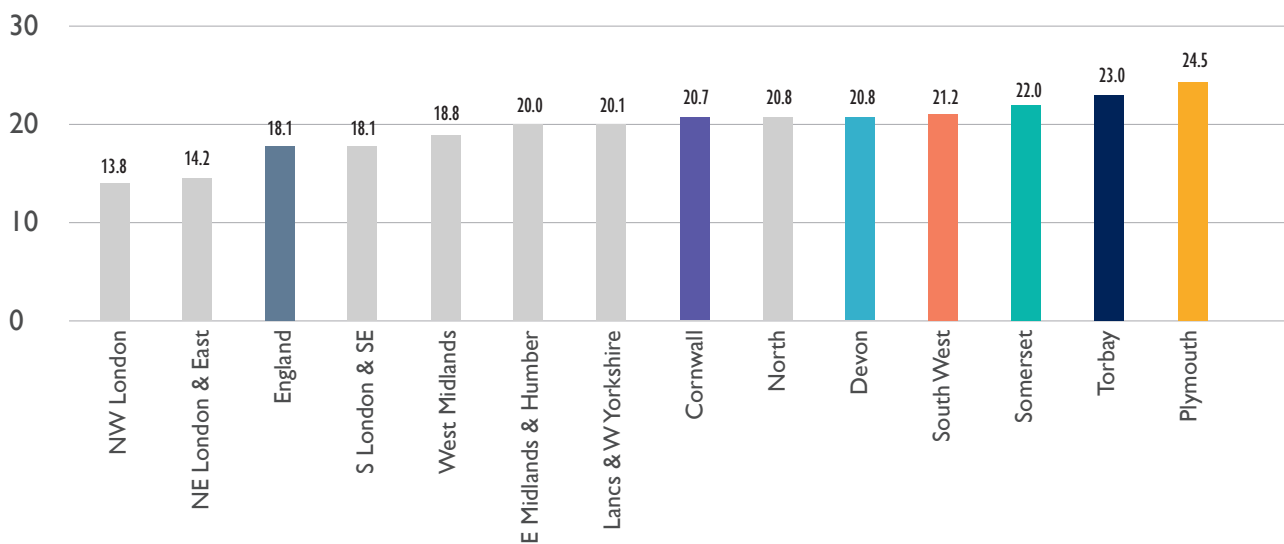
33 Hutchinson, Reader and Akhal (2020). This is based on 2019 examination results – the last set of national examination results before the disruption caused by COVID-19

What this means is that disadvantaged pupils in the South West are attaining fewer crucial qualifications when they leave school than disadvantaged pupils elsewhere. Looking at just headline attainment rates masks the underperformance of disadvantaged pupils in the region. The **GCSE English and Maths pass rate** amongst non-disadvantaged pupils was 74% in Inner London and 72% in the South West. But **amongst disadvantaged pupils, it was close to 60% in Inner London and 40% in the South West**. In other words, where you grow up in the country matters if you are from a disadvantaged background.

Figure 3 GCSE English and Maths pass rate – 2019[34]

	South West (bottom)	Inner London (top)
Non-disadvantaged	71.5%	74.2%
Disadvantaged	40.3%	58.7%

A further cause for concern is that **performance appears to have been worsening relative to other places**. Between 2017 and 2019, disadvantage attainment gaps in the South West became relatively worse than other regions. And there is a longer-running trend to this underperformance: over the period from 2004/05 to 2015/16, when national disadvantage gaps were closing, the South West had smaller improvements than most other regions for FSM pupils for whom English was a first language[35].

Figure 4 Attainment gaps by region over time – 2017 to 2019[36]

The charts show the Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 disadvantage attainment gaps for England and English regions, calculated as months of learning, between 2017 and 2019.

Disadvantage gap, months – KS2, 2017-2019

Legend: NE London & East, NW London & South Central, S London & South East, England, North, W Midlands, Lancs & W Yorkshire, E Midlands & Humber, South West
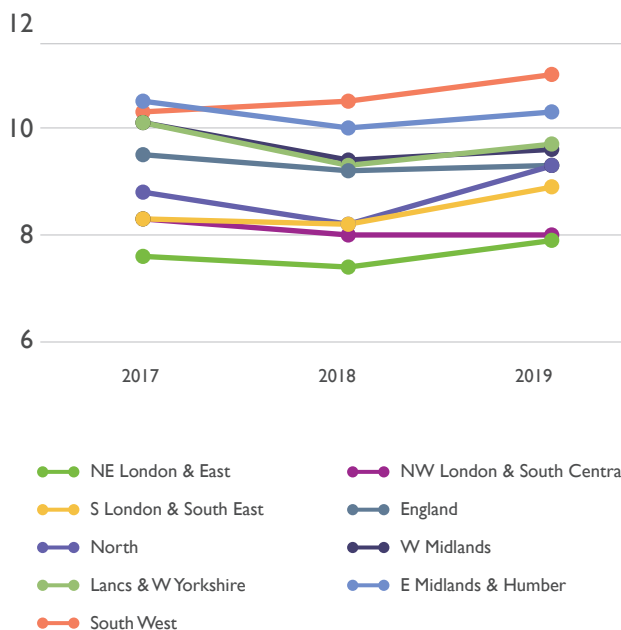
Disadvantage gap, months – KS4, 2017-2019

Legend: NW London & S Central, NE London & East, S London & South East, England, W Midlands, E Midlands & Humber, Lancs & W Yorkshire, North, South West
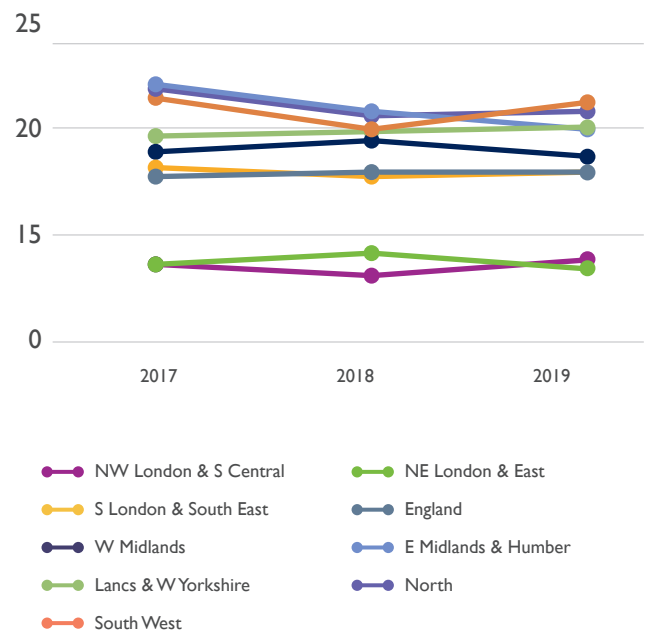
34 Starkey-Midha (2020)

35 Perera and Treadaway (2016)

36 Data from Hutchinson, Reader and Akhal (2020); Hutchinson, Bonetti, Crenna-Jennings and Akhal (2019); Hutchinson, Robinson, Carr, Hunt, Crenna-Jennings and Akhal (2018)

Post-16 destinations

Beyond Key Stage (KS) 4, most young people stay in education, start an apprenticeship or find employment. There is little regional variation in overall sustained activity, but significant variation in destination type, especially post-18. At the end of KS4, the South West has one of the highest proportions of young people starting an apprenticeship (5%), just behind the North East and in line with Yorkshire & The Humber. After 16-18 study, the region has the **highest proportion of young people entering employment** (32% compared with 25% nationally).

Figure 5 Key Stage 4 and 16-18 destination measures – England and South West[37]

	Sustained education, apprenticeship or employment	Sustained education destination	Sustained apprenticeship	Sustained employment destination
England, KS4	94.0%	87.2%	3.7%	3.1%
South West, KS4	94.6%	86.1%	5.0%	3.5%
England, 16-18	80.7%	47.4%	8.4%	24.9%
South West, 16-18	80.9%	39.3%	9.9%	31.7%

Progression to higher education or training is the lowest of all regions amongst both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.

Progression to high tariff universities (institutions with higher entry grades for A-levels and other qualifications) is also the lowest of all regions.

Higher education is not necessarily the right path for all or more students – but these low progression rates are indicative of the prior poor attainment as well as other barriers that young people in the region face.

Figure 6 Rates of progression to higher education and high tariff higher education by region – 2018/19[38]

The charts show the percentage of disadvantaged (last six years FSM) and other students progressing to higher education and high tariff higher education in 2018/19.

Progression to higher education

Region	Disadvantaged	Non-disadvantaged
Inner London	49%	59%
London	45%	58%
Outer London	41%	57%
West Midlands	28%	45%
North West	24%	45%
Yorkshire & Humber	22%	43%
North East	21%	44%
East of England	21%	43%
East Midlands	18%	42%
South East	18%	44%
South West	17%	40%

Progression to high tariff higher education

Region	Disadvantaged	Non-disadvantaged
Inner London	10%	17%
London	9%	17%
Outer London	7%	18%
North West	4%	13%
West Midlands	3%	9%
North East	3%	11%
Yorkshire & Humber	3%	11%
East of England	3%	11%
East Midlands	2%	10%
South East	2%	13%
South West	2%	10%

■ Disadvantaged ■ Non-disadvantaged

37 explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-destination-measures and explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/16-18-destination-measures

38 explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education/2018-19

A comparison with London shows the stark difference in opportunity between those from the capital and those from the South West.

Figure 7 Progression to higher education rate, all and high tariff universities – 2018/19[39]

	South West (bottom)	London (top)
Non-disadvantaged, all	40%	58%
Disadvantaged, all	17%	45%
Non-disadvantaged, high tariff	10%	17%
Disadvantaged, high tariff	2%	9%

Apprenticeships can offer an alternative route to employment, with good returns. Whilst the South West had the second highest proportion of apprenticeship starts in 2021/22 (with 2.7 starts per 1000 population)[40], numbers are still small compared with other destinations.

Given that relatively few adults go on to complete further training once they have left formal education, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds in the peninsula are likely to be less qualified than their peers elsewhere in the country, with implications for their job prospects and potential earnings.

How is Free School Meals status calculated?

Free school meals are available to pupils in receipt of, or whose parents are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit (with annual net earned income of no more than £7,400)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (if not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and with annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on

A pupil is only FSM-eligible when a claim has been made on their behalf, and their eligibility has been verified by the relevant school or local authority.

Pupil premium is funding to improve education outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in schools in England. Eligible pupils are:

- Pupils who are eligible for free school meals, or have been eligible in the past 6 years
- Pupils who have been adopted from care or have left care
- Children who are looked after by the local authority

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39 Ibid

40 explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2021-22; analysis using ONS regional population figures

Intra-regional variation

These averages conceal variations across the peninsula. At Key Stage 2 (end of primary school), much of the region has gaps in the largest 25% of gaps in the country. A geographic divide can be observed, with the better-connected southern parts of Devon, Torbay and parts of Plymouth performing better. At Key Stage 4 (GCSE), only Tiverton and Honiton has a significantly lower-than-average gap.

Figure 8 Attainment gaps by parliamentary constituency across the South West peninsula, 2019[41]

The maps show the gaps, calculated as months of learning, between average attainment by disadvantaged pupils in a parliamentary constituency (smallest geographic area covered by the data) and average attainment by non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. Colour coding represents the quartile to which a parliamentary constituency belongs, based on the national distribution of gaps.

KS2 attainment gaps

Average for England is 9.3 months

- Smallest 25% (-1.9 – 8.3)
- Lower-mid 25% (8.3 – 10.0)
- Upper-mid 25% (10.0 – 11.7)
- Largest 25% (11.7 – 15.5)
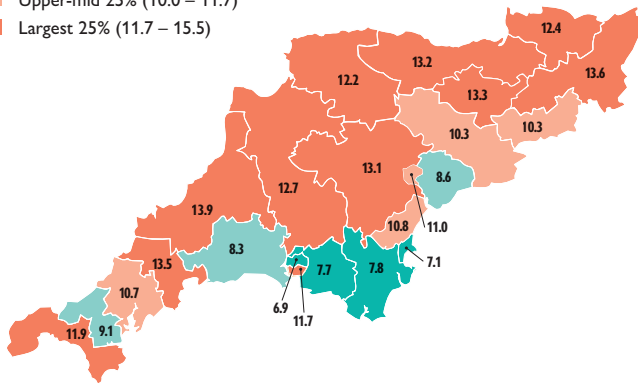
KS4 attainment gaps

Average for England is 18.1 months

- Smallest 25% (0.5 – 16.0)
- Lower-mid 25% (16.0 – 19.5)
- Upper-mid 25% (19.5 – 21.8)
- Largest 25% (21.8 – 29.6)

Taunton Deane – 4th worst of 534 parliamentary constituencies

Plymouth, Moor View – 8th worst of 534 parliamentary constituencies
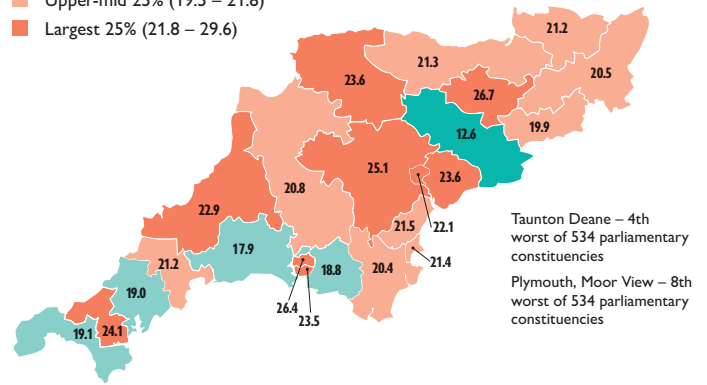
Within the peninsula, **gaps widened significantly in most local authorities between 2017 and 2019** – except for a drastic improvement in Torbay and Plymouth at Key Stage 2 and a marginal improvement in Cornwall at Key Stage 4.

Figure 9 Attainment gaps by local authority in South West peninsula, 2017 – 2019[42]

The charts show the KS2 and KS4 disadvantage attainment gaps for England and peninsula local authorities, calculated as months of learning, between 2017 and 2019.

Disadvantage gap, months – primary
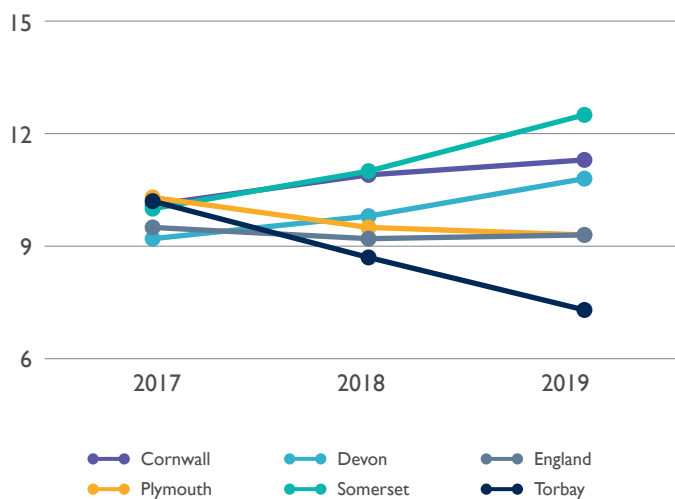
Disadvantage gap, months – secondary

- Cornwall
- Devon
- England
- Plymouth
- Somerset
- Torbay
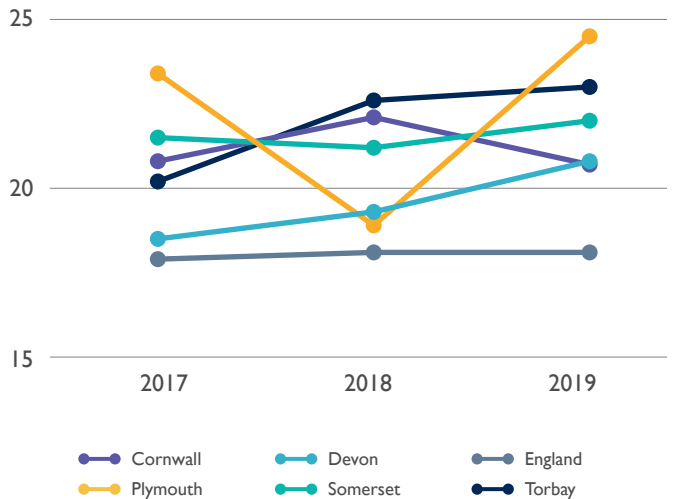
41 Hutchinson, Reader and Akhal (2020)

42 Data from Hutchinson, Reader and Akhal (2020); Hutchinson, Bonetti, Crenna-Jennings and Akhal (2019); Hutchinson, Robinson, Carr, Hunt, Crenna-Jennings and Akhal (2018)

Whilst areas with higher attainment across all pupils tend to have smaller disadvantage gaps, there is significant variation across the peninsula. For example, while the average GCSE grade for all pupils in Central Devon was 4.6 (above the national average of 4.5), the area's disadvantage attainment gap of 25.1 months was one of the highest in the country[43]. In such areas, very poor attainment by disadvantaged pupils can be masked by good attainment by other pupils, meaning the problem is 'hidden'.

Rurality appears to be associated with larger attainment gaps, despite lower rates of disadvantage. Between 2017 and 2019, rural schools on aggregate in Devon and Cornwall had a mean average within-school GCSE disadvantage attainment gap of 10.9 grades compared with 8.1 grades across urban schools. Average rates of disadvantage by FSM were 13.3% (rural) and 15.6% (urban)[44].

43 Hutchinson, Reader and Akhal (2020)
44 Data from SWIFT (South West Institute for Teaching), October 2020; analysis own

The disadvantage conundrum

The poor attainment of disadvantaged pupils (as measured by Free School Meals status) in the South West is observed even though the region has a relatively low proportion of disadvantaged pupils compared with other regions. This is surprising because at a school level, lower rates of FSM are typically associated with higher

attainment[45]. The FSM rate in the South West was 16.5% of pupils in October 2020, compared with 19.7% for England – the lowest of all regions[46]. And this low rate of disadvantage (typically <20%) was widespread across the peninsula and across schools.

Figure 10 Share of disadvantaged pupils by parliamentary constituency across the peninsula[47]

The map shows 2019 rates of disadvantage at KS4 (proportion of KS4 pupils who were eligible for Free School Meals at any point over the last 6 years) by parliamentary constituency. Colour coding is at 5% intervals from 10% to 35%.

KS4 disadvantage rates

Average disadvantage rate for England is 26.5%

- 10-15%
- 15-20%
- 20-25%
- 25-30%
- 30-35%
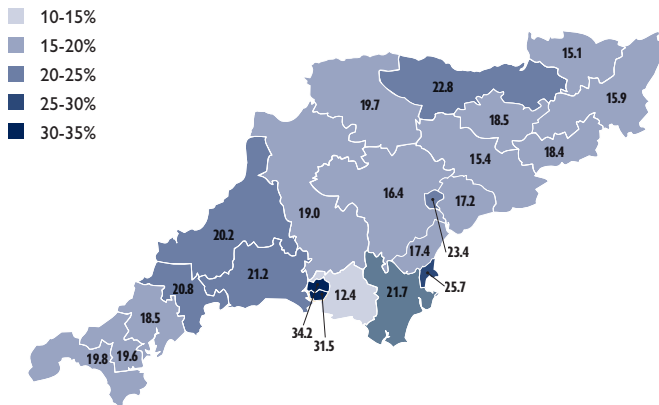
Based on this, we would expect the South West peninsula to have higher rates of attainment amongst its disadvantaged pupils. Yet, this is not the case.

At all deciles of disadvantage above the 0-9% decile, disadvantaged pupils in South West schools perform worse than their peers nationally. In the next section, we suggest additional region-specific barriers to good attainment – both in and out of school – that poorer pupils in the peninsula might be facing.

Figure 11 Proportion of schools in disadvantaged pupil deciles for South West and England[48]

The chart shows the percentage of schools in the South West and England as a whole, split into deciles based on proportion of disadvantaged pupils. Most schools in the South West have <20% disadvantaged pupils (over half, compared with a third nationally), with the majority of schools in the 10-19% decile.

% Proportion 'histogram' of establishments in each KS4 disadvantage decile
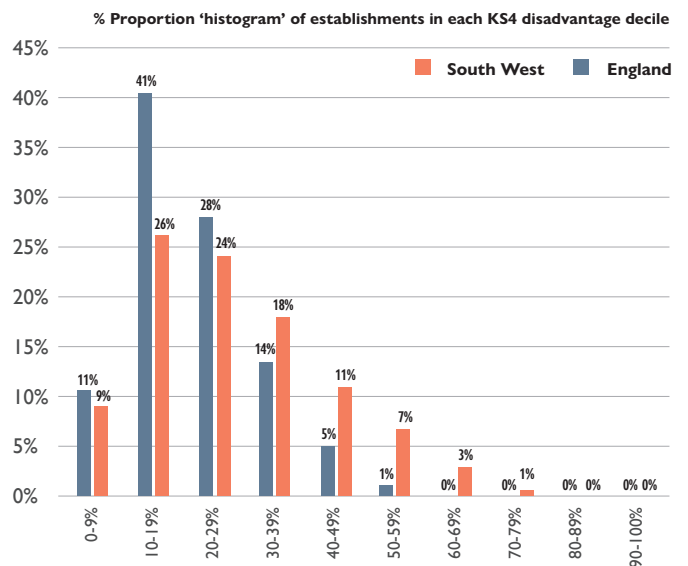
Figure 12 Progress for disadvantaged pupils by school disadvantage decile for South West and rest of England, 2019[49]

Chart shows average school Progress 8 scores for disadvantaged pupils in the South West and rest of England, grouped by proportion of disadvantaged pupils at KS4 (by decile).

2019 (adjusted) P8 Scores by Decile of % Disadvantaged KS4 Pupils
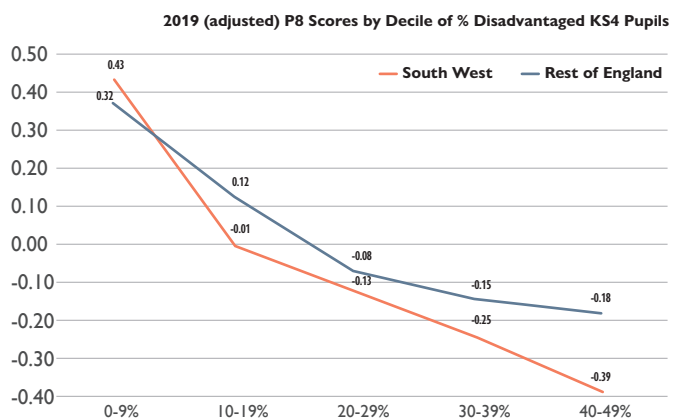
45 Education Endowment Foundation (2018)
46 explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/free-school-meals-autumn-term/2020-21-autumn-term
47 Hutchinson, Reader and Akhal (2020)
48 From a presentation by the South West Regional Schools Commissioner's Office, 2021
49 Ibid.

3 Understanding disadvantage in the South West peninsula

In this section we show how disadvantage in the peninsula is made of up of several different dimensions. These are crucial to understanding the barriers to good educational, jobs and earnings outcomes. There is more to disadvantage than financial poverty as measured by rates of Free School Meals status.

Geography

The South West is the largest, least densely populated, most rural and most coastal English region.

Figure 13 Rural/urban classification of small geographic areas in the South West[50]

The map shows the peninsula (left of the red line) and wider South West, colour coded at the level of Middle Layer Super Output Areas (small geographic areas with a similarly sized population of around 8,000 people on average) according to the Office for National Statistics' rural/urban definition, in 2011.

Rural/urban classification
- Urban major conurbation
- Urban minor conurbation
- Urban city and town
- Urban city and town in a sparse setting
- Rural town and fringe
- Rural town and fringe in a sparse setting
- Rural village
- Rural village in a sparse setting

BRISTOL

EXETER

PLYMOUTH

PENZANCE

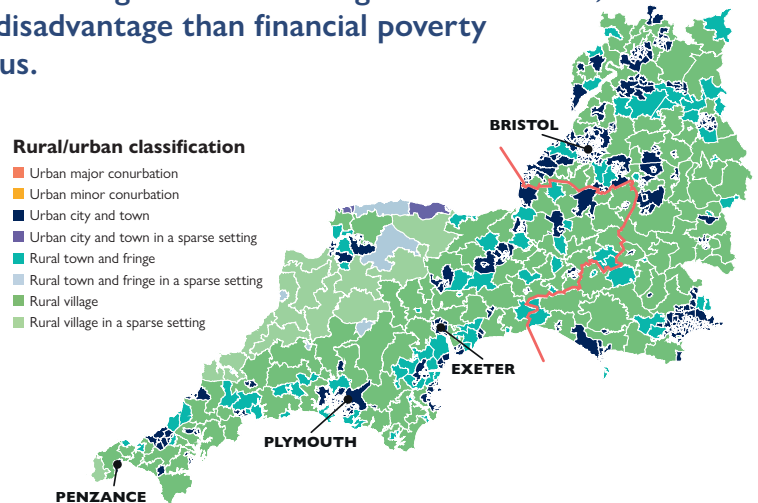With a double coastline, dispersed population, and in its furthest reaches as distant from London as Newcastle is, the South West peninsula suffers from many of the challenges afflicting other coastal, rural and remote areas, as well as its own distinctive challenges.

Many coastal towns around the country suffer from high rates of poverty, unemployment and health risk factors, together with poor housing and public service provision[51]. Like many coastal cities, towns and villages, places in the peninsula have experienced the decimation of industries that previously employed significant numbers of people – ports and shipbuilding, traditional seaside resorts, fishing. Meanwhile rural areas, while typically less deprived than urban areas, can harbour 'hidden' deprivation that isn't always captured in indicators of disadvantage[52]. Rurality also heightens the link between disadvantage and poor educational outcomes[53]. For poorer young people growing up within pockets of urban or rural poverty across the peninsula, a combination of remoteness from the rest of the country and poor public transport connections locally may mean some experiences, opportunities and pathways will be out of reach and sight.

Key statistics on the South West:
- 9,203 square miles: largest English region by size
- 5.6M people: third least populous English region
- 610 people per square mile (ppsm): least densely populated English region. (East Midlands – 800ppsm; London – 14,770ppsm)
- Circa 1/3rd of the population live in settlements of less than 10,000 people – most rural English region
- Longest coastline of all English regions

The South West peninsula:
- Cornwall with longest coastline of all British counties (1,086km); Devon with third longest (819km)
- Two national parks – Exmoor and Dartmoor – covering 635 square miles
- One motorway, the M5, links Exeter (population: c. 129,000) to Bristol and the Midlands, via Somerset. West of the M5, main arterial roads are the A30, A38 and A361
- 40 miles / approx. 1 hour to travel between Exeter and the peninsula's largest city, Plymouth (population: c. 264,000)
- 75 miles / approx. 2 hours to travel between Plymouth and Penzance (population: c. 21,000), Cornwall's most westerly major town
- While 96% of the UK has access to superfast broadband (>=30Mbit/s), in Mid Devon, this figure is 78%; 3% of premises don't meet Universal Service Obligation standards

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50 Office for National Statistics (2011)
51 For example, see Whitty (2021); House of Lords (2019); Ovenden-Hope and Passy (2019)
52 For example Shucksmith, Chapman, Glass and Atterton (2021); The Key (2018)
53 For example cfey.org/2019/04/breaking-the-link-attainment-poverty-and-rural-schools

Employment and earnings

Employment opportunities are limited and wages and earnings low.

Most areas in the peninsula have a higher proportion of routine jobs and lower proportion of managerial and professional jobs than the national average and wider South West. In terms of social mobility, this means

fewer high status job opportunities available to young people, and less scope for upward movement. It also means that despite low rates of eligibility for Free School Meals, **more children than average are likely to come from 'working class' backgrounds**.

Figure 14 Proportion of jobs in different occupational groups across South West local authorities[54]

The maps show the proportion of jobs in each local authority in the peninsula and wider South West for Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) major groups 1-3 (managerial and professional occupations), 6-7 (caring, sales and service occupations) and 8-9 (elementary and process occupations). SOC groups 1-3 are considered higher status jobs and SOC groups 6-9 lower status jobs. Based on where people live, not where jobs are located. Colour coding indicates proportion of jobs from lowest (lightest shade) to highest (darkest shade). Light orange indicates lack of data. Scales vary. SOC 1-3 from <37.18% (lightest shade) to <56.3% (darkest shade). SOC 6-7 from <14.0% (lightest) to <24.8% (darkest). SOC 8-9 from <13.84% (lightest) to <23.6% (darkest).

Managerial and professional occupations

SOC major groups 1-3
National average: 50.2% of jobs
But <40% of jobs in Torridge, Torbay, South Somerset, Sedgemoor, Plymouth and Cornwall

Caring, sales and service occupations

SOC major groups 6-7
National average: 15.7% of jobs
But > 19% of jobs in South Somerset, Plymouth, Exeter, Torbay and East Devon

Elementary and process occupations

SOC major groups 8-9
National average: 14.8% of jobs
But > 20% of jobs in Torridge, South Somerset, Torbay and North Devon

Peninsula

Rest of SW

Lowest   Highest
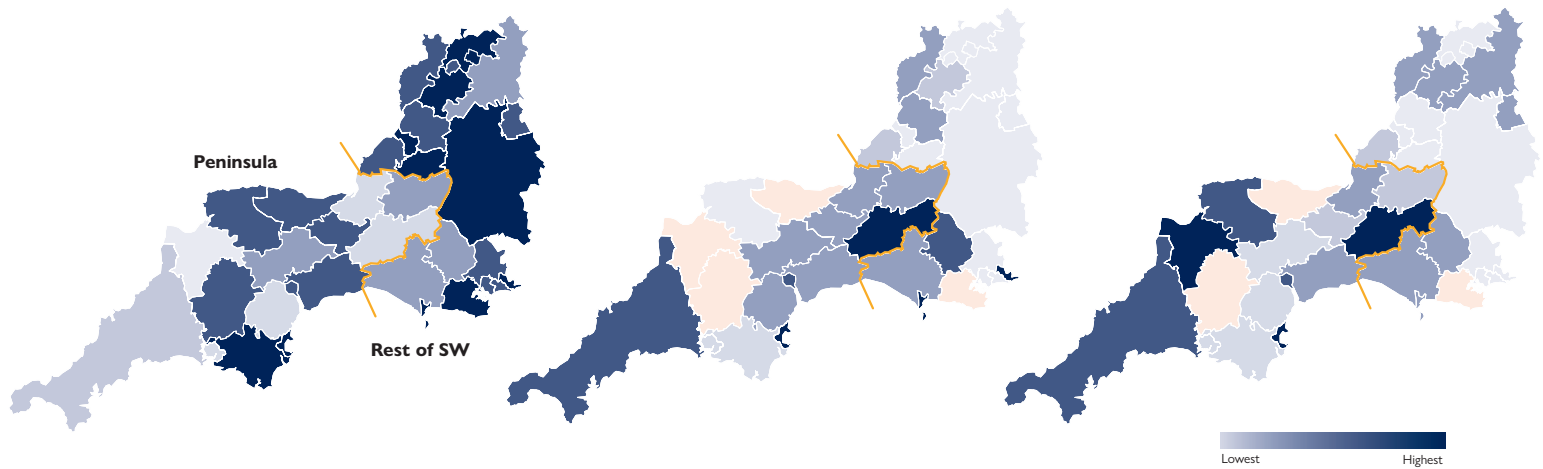
Figure 15 Industry / employment types across peninsula local authorities[55]

The first two charts show the proportion of employee jobs in the hospitality and retail industries, respectively. The third chart shows the amount of self-employment as a proportion of total employment. Select lower tier local authorities within the peninsula (with the highest proportions) are shown, alongside the averages for the South West, UK and Exeter for comparison.

Hospitality – over 70% of jobs pay below the Living Wage
Proportion of jobs in accommodation and food services
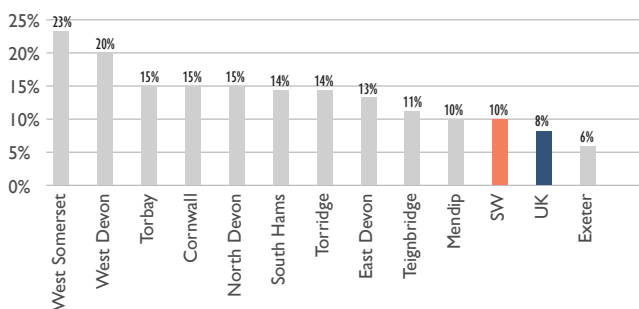
Retail – 37% of jobs pay below the Living Wage
Proportion of jobs in wholesale or retail, and motor services
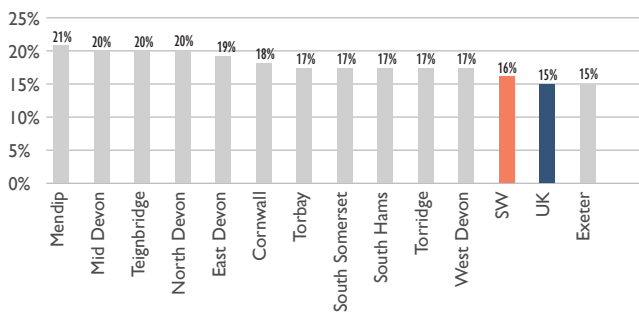
Self-employment – 49% of workers earn less than the Minimum Wage
Self-employment as a proportion of total employment
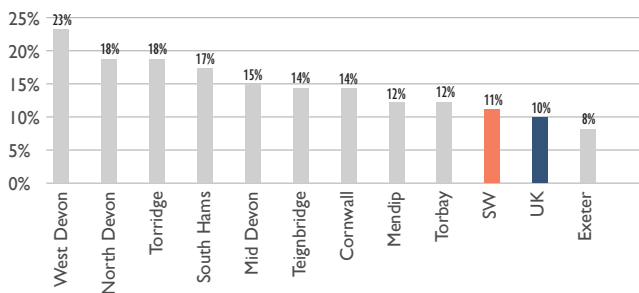
The regional economy is dominated by low-pay sectors, with fewer than average large employers. Hospitality, retail and agriculture, as well as self-employment, are all over-represented. These sectors have high proportions of low-wage, part-time, casual and seasonal work, and often offer poor opportunities for progression.

Four of Devon's eight districts are amongst the 25 local authorities in the country with the highest proportion of jobs paying below the national living wage: 41% of jobs in Torridge (7,000 of its 17,000 jobs) paid below £9.30/hour in 2021.

Figure 16 Local authority districts in Devon with low wage 'hotspots' highlighted[56]

The map indicates the four local authority districts in Devon which feature in the UK's top 25 low wage 'hotspots' – local authorities with the highest proportions of jobs in the country paying below the national Living Wage.

Torridge
41.2% of jobs (7,000 out of 17,000 jobs) pay below the Living Wage

West Devon
36.0% of jobs (4,000 out of 12,000 jobs) pay below the Living Wage

Mid Devon
33.1% of jobs (10,000 out of 28,000 jobs) pay below the Living Wage

Teignbridge
33.0% of jobs (12,000 out of 36,000 jobs) pay below the Living Wage

Cornwall and West Somerset (highlighted) also have high proportions of jobs paying below the Living Wage

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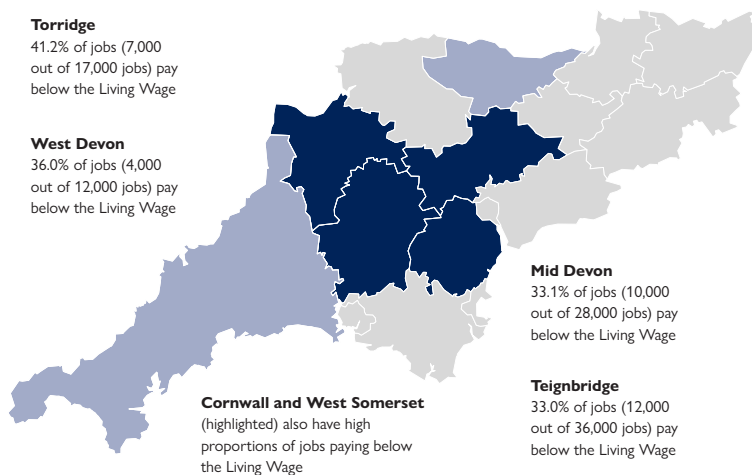
55 NOMIS data, accessed 01/05/2021 – from ONS Business Register and Employment Survey; Below Living Wage statistics from Living Wage Foundation (2021); www.tuc.org.uk/news/two-million-self-employed-adults-earn-less-minimum-wage

56 Richardson (2021)

Unlike in many other left-behind coastal areas, employment rates across the South West peninsula are fairly good, which may go some way to accounting for the region's low rates of pupils with Free School Meals status (see page 14 for how FSM status is calculated). However, underemployment is an issue. **Part-time work accounts for a high proportion of jobs** in the region: over 40% of jobs in Cornwall, North Devon

and Torbay, compared with 32% nationally[57]. The upshot of this mix of low pay and underemployment is that **median gross weekly pay is between 10 – 25% lower than the national average** in many local authority districts and **low paid workers (those in the 25th percentile) in the South West are the worst paid of all UK regions.**

Figure 17 Employment rates for the South West and UK and across South West local authorities[58]

The chart shows the employment rate for the South West (orange) and UK (blue) from 2015 to 2020. The map shows the employment rate by lower-tier local authority for the peninsula and wider South West. Colour coding indicates level of employment from lowest (lightest shade) to highest (darkest shade).

Figure 18 Gross weekly pay for all workers across UK regions and South West local authorities[59]

The chart shows gross weekly pay in £ for all low-paid workers (25th percentile) by region. The map shows median gross weekly pay for all workers by lower-tier local authority for the peninsula and wider South West. Colour coding indicates level of pay from lowest (lightest shade) to highest (darkest shade). Both are based on where people live, not where they work.

Employment rate for the South West and UK
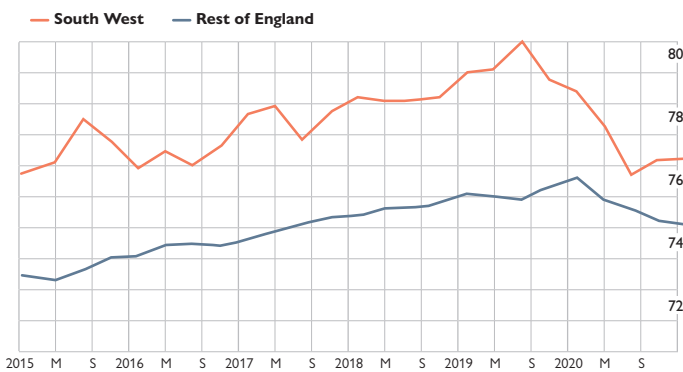
Gross weekly pay for low-paid workers (£)
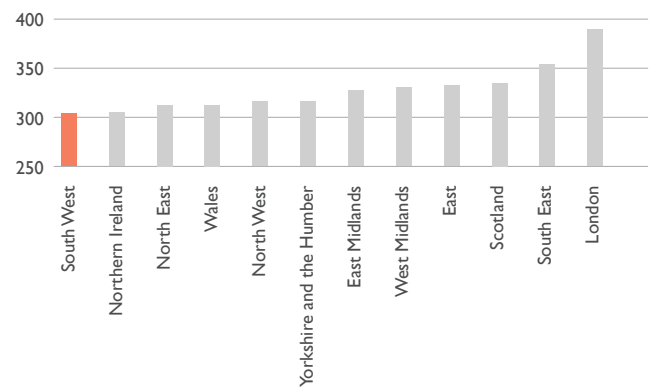
Employment rate by local authority

But lower in West Devon (71%), Sedgemoor (72.5%), Torbay (72.7%), Torridge (74.6%) and Cornwall (74.9%)

National average is 75.4%

< 74.3   < 77.6   <80.9   <84.2   <87.5

Gross weekly pay for all workers (£)
National average is £504

694 - 773
615 - 693
536 - 614
457 - 535
378 - 456

Pay is particularly low in West Devon (£387) and Torridge (£393)
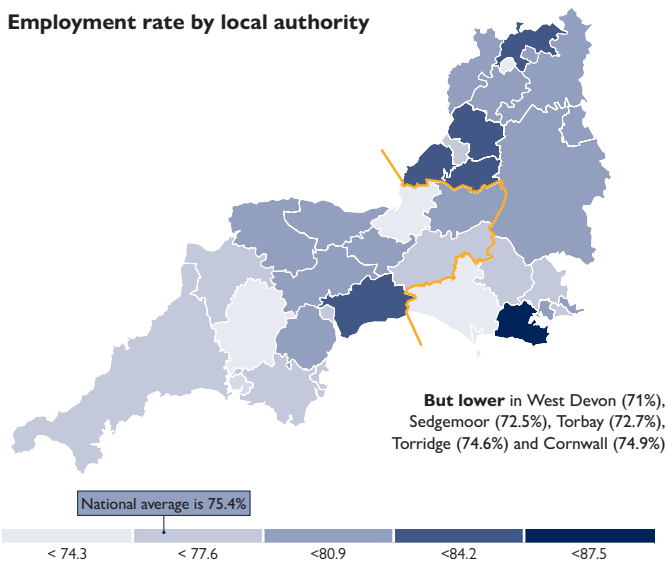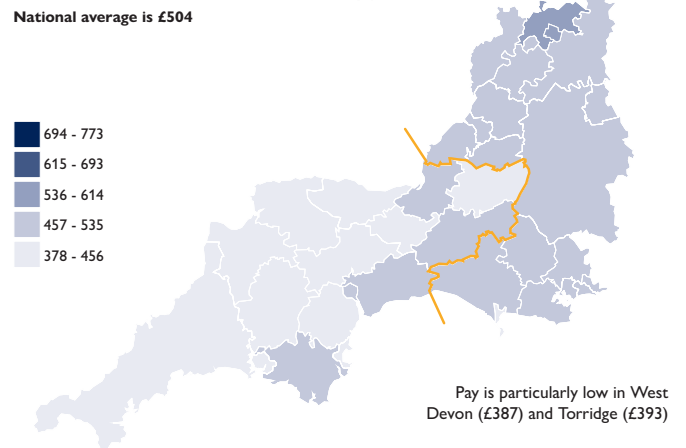
57   NOMIS data, accessed 01/05/2021 – from ONS Business Register and Employment Survey
58   NOMIS data, accessed 01/05/2021 – from ONS annual population survey
59   NOMIS data, accessed 01/03/2022 – from Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – resident analysis

Other indicators of disadvantage

There is more disadvantage across the South West peninsula than is evident from disadvantage rates as measured by Free School Meals. Low FSM rates can conjure a picture of relative affluence – but the reality is different. As indicated above, despite low rates of FSM, earnings across much of the region are low. Meanwhile, housing costs are high, reaching crisis point during the COVID pandemic[60]. This combination of factors means **significant rates of child poverty (after housing costs)** – that is, children living in households with an income that is less than 60% of the national median household income after local housing costs. Rates are close to or above the national average in most parliamentary constituencies, indicating that a sizeable proportion of children are growing up in working poor households.

Children experiencing poverty on average do less well at school. This is likely due to a range of intermediate outcomes and co-occurring disadvantages, including poorer nutrition and physical health, poorer mental health and lower parental educational attainment.

Figure 19 Child poverty after housing costs across peninsula parliamentary constituencies[61]

The map shows the percentage of children living in relative poverty across the peninsula's parliamentary constituencies. Colour coding is from yellow (lowest) to purple (highest), based on the national distribution.

2019/20 data
UK average is 31%
South West average is 26%

Children living in poverty

0%   30%   60%

In particular, **disadvantage in rural areas may be being overlooked**. In urban Plymouth, child poverty and FSM rates are similar, at around 33%. But in more rural areas, child poverty rates are significantly higher than corresponding FSM rates (shown on page 17) e.g. North Cornwall (37% child poverty vs. 20% FSM) and Torridge and West Dev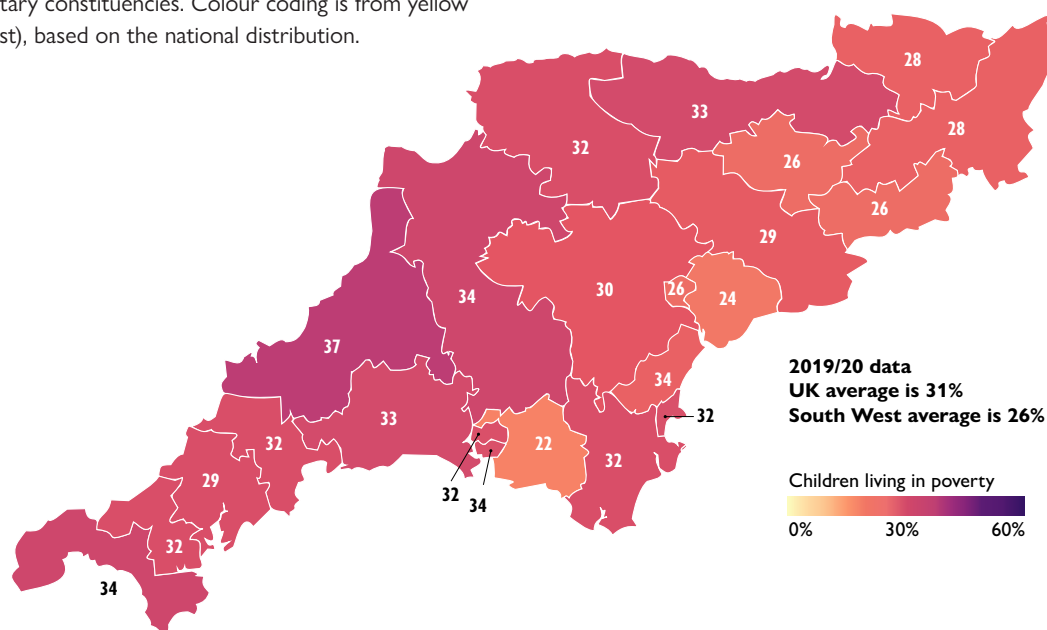on (34% child poverty vs. 19% FSM). In other words, whilst many families in Plymouth and Torbay are acutely poor (and therefore eligible for FSM), across Cornwall and the more remote parts of Devon (north and west) and Somerset (west), many families may be struggling with poverty that doesn't show up in FSM statistics. Research suggests that a disproportionate number of rural households are on low incomes that fall just above the FSM threshold[62]. We also know that at every decile of disadvantage, rurality is associated with worse educational outcomes[63].

60   For example: www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jun/20/rural-house-prices-in-england-and-wales-rise-twice-as-fast-as-in-cities; https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/action-plan-to-tackle-devons-housing-crisis

61   www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/local-child-poverty-data-2014-15-2019-20

62   The Key (2018)

63   'Achievement of English and Maths GCSEs at a 9 to 4 pass in England, based on Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices (IDACI) decile and residency of pupil (2017/18)' in Defra (2021)

The Index of Multiple Deprivation provides a broader view on disadvantage, incorporating several different indicators in addition to income (see box for details). Aggregating to the local authority level, we can see that Plymouth and Torbay have high proportions of residents living in deprived areas. Cornwall has a high proportion of residents living in more deprived areas, but fewer in the most deprived areas nationally. And Devon and Somerset are mostly comprised of areas in the middle ranks, with significantly fewer areas ranking in the most deprived quintile.

However, whilst Devon and Somerset, and to a lesser extent Cornwall, appear to be less deprived than average, this is likely to be driven by their largely rural populations. Very few rural areas nationally fall into the most deprived quintile (3%, compared with 24% of urban areas) or second most deprived quintile (13%, compared with 23% of urban areas), typically because disadvantage in rural areas is more dispersed. When comparing only rural areas, **rural parts of the peninsula can be seen to be relatively more deprived than other rural areas nationally** – in line with other coastal and remote areas of the country.
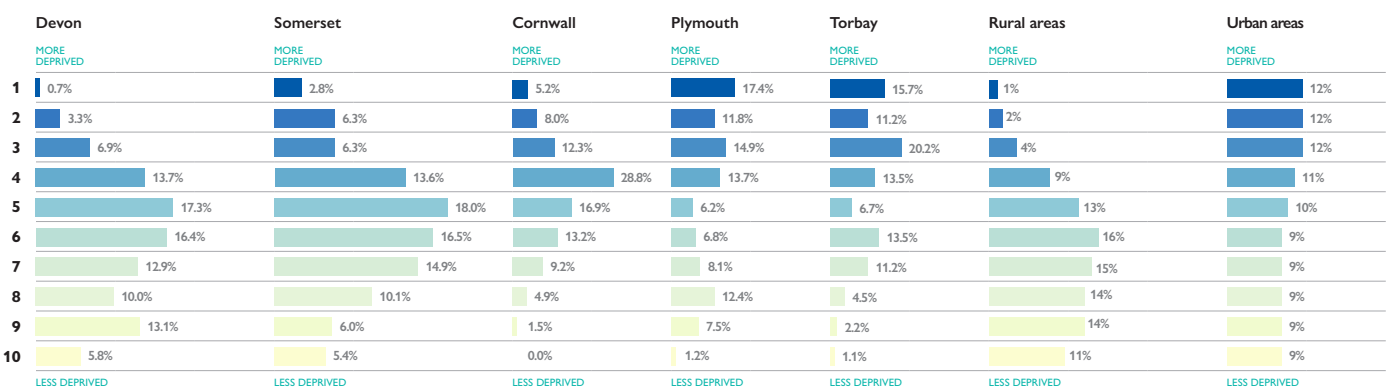
> The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD, 2019) ranks 32,844 small areas (Lower Layer Super Output Areas) with an average population of 1,500 across 7 domains of deprivation: income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment.
>
> The indices and combined index can be used to compare (but not quantify) how deprived different areas are, along the different dimensions of deprivation. All regions have both some of the most and least deprived areas within them.
>
> Across the peninsula, the majority of in particular rural areas rank low on risk of crime, but high on barriers to housing and services and living environment – driven by high housing costs, poor housing quality, and long distances to access services.

Figure 20 Proportion of population living in national IMD deciles by peninsula local authority and by rural-urban classification[64]

The charts show the percentage of Lower Layer Super Output Areas in each national decile of the IMD, 2019 for peninsula local authorities, as well as for rural and urban areas in England according to the rural-urban classification.

	Devon	Somerset	Cornwall	Plymouth	Torbay	Rural areas	Urban areas
	MORE DEPRIVED	MORE DEPRIVED	MORE DEPRIVED	MORE DEPRIVED	MORE DEPRIVED	MORE DEPRIVED	MORE DEPRIVED
1	0.7%	2.8%	5.2%	17.4%	15.7%	1%	12%
2	3.3%	6.3%	8.0%	11.8%	11.2%	2%	12%
3	6.9%	6.3%	12.3%	14.9%	20.2%	4%	12%
4	13.7%	13.6%	28.8%	13.7%	13.5%	9%	11%
5	17.3%	18.0%	16.9%	6.2%	6.7%	13%	10%
6	16.4%	16.5%	13.2%	6.8%	13.5%	16%	9%
7	12.9%	14.9%	9.2%	8.1%	11.2%	15%	9%
8	10.0%	10.1%	4.9%	12.4%	4.5%	14%	9%
9	13.1%	6.0%	1.5%	7.5%	2.2%	14%	9%
10	5.8%	5.4%	0.0%	1.2%	1.1%	11%	9%
	LESS DEPRIVED	LESS DEPRIVED	LESS DEPRIVED	LESS DEPRIVED	LESS DEPRIVED	LESS DEPRIVED	LESS DEPRIVED

In some areas – in particular, parts of Plymouth, Torbay and Cornwall – the long-term decline of dominant industries means significant **pockets of multigenerational and persistent disadvantage. In these areas, poverty and associated disadvantages** can be deeply embedded: worklessness (16.3% in Torbay, 16.2% in Plymouth and 15.3% in Cornwall, compared with 13.9% nationally[65]) can become the norm; poor parental experiences of education can negatively influence children's attitudes towards school; and the concurrent incidence of other disadvantages associated with poverty, including family breakdown, domestic violence and substance abuse, is frequently high.

We know that how deeply embedded poverty is matters to attainment – pupils who have been eligible for Free School Meals for at least 80% of their school lives (persistent/long term disadvantaged) have an average attainment gap that is roughly twice as large as that for pupils who have been eligible for less than 20% of their school lives[66]. While still relatively low compared with other regions, the South West has seen a deepening of disadvantage in recent years – the number of schools with a high proportion of White British/Afro-Caribbean long term disadvantaged pupils increased by 90% between 2017/18 and 2018/19.

64   www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019 and Defra (2021)
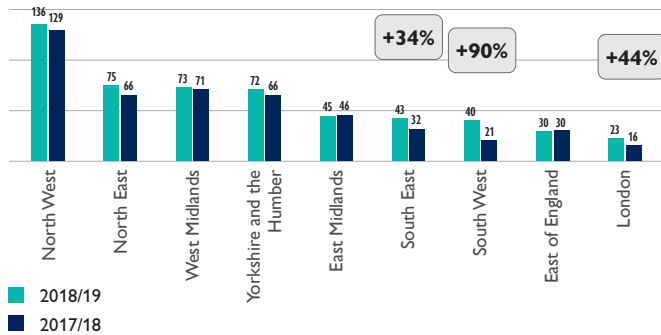
65   NOMIS data, accessed 01/05/2021 – from ONS Annual Population Survey

66   Hutchinson, Reader and Akhal (2020)

Figure 21 Secondary schools with >10% of cohort in high impact long term disadvantaged group[67]

The chart shows the number of secondary schools with >10% of pupils in a 'high impact long term disadvantaged group' – described below – by region for 2018/19 and 2017/18. Boxes show the percentage increase in numbers between 2017/18 and 2018/19 for the three regions with the largest increases.

	2018/19	2017/18
North West	136	129
North East	75	66
West Midlands	73	71
Yorkshire and the Humber	72	66
East Midlands	45	46
South East	43	32
South West	40	21
East of England	30	30
London	23	16

+34%   +90%   +44%

Long term disadvantage refers to pupils who have been FSM eligible for at least 80% of their school lives; high impact group refers to long term disadvantaged pupils belonging to either White British or Afro-Caribbean ethnic groups, where disadvantage correlates most strongly with poor educational outcomes.

Health outcomes are useful indicators of disadvantage as they both co-correlate with and lead to poorer educational outcomes[68]. **Adult and child health indicators suggest there is a mental health challenge across the peninsula**. Hospitalisation for a mental health condition (children), hospitalisation for self-harm (children and adults) and suicide rates (adults), are significantly higher than the national average, as is alcohol-related harm amongst children and adults.

Figure 22 Adult and child health outcomes for peninsula local authorities relative to the national average[69]

The boxes show a selection of adult and child health indicators for each of the peninsula's local authorities, colour coded according to their relative performance against the national average. Yellow indicates in line with the national average; green indicates significantly better than the national average; red indicates significantly worse than the national average. Bold text indicates issues common across the peninsula.

Adult health indicators

Devon	Somerset	Cornwall	Plymouth	Torbay
Life expectancy U75 mortality Alcohol related harm Physical activity Excess weight Violent crime	Life expectancy U75 mortality Violent crime Road deaths and injury	U75 mortality Violent crime		Road deaths and injury
Smoking prevalence	Smoking prevalence Physical activity	Life expectancy Smoking prevalence Physical activity Excess weight	Suicide rate Alcohol related harm Smoking prevalence Physical activity Road deaths and injury Violent crime	Smoking prevalence Physical activity Excess weight Road deaths and injury Violent crime
Suicide rate **Hospital stays for self harm** Road deaths and injury	**Suicide rate** **Hospital stays for self harm** **Alcohol related harm** Excess weight	**Suicide rate** **Hospital stays for self harm** **Alcohol related harm** Road deaths and injury	Life expectancy U75 mortality **Hospital stays for self harm** Excess weight	Life expectancy U75 mortality **Suicide rate** **Hospital stays for self harm** **Alcohol related harm**

Child health indicators

Devon	Somerset	Cornwall	Plymouth	Torbay
Child obesity (aged 10-11) Under 18 conceptions Breastfeeding initiation Children in care	Child obesity (aged 10-11) Under 18 conceptions Breastfeeding initiation Children in care	Child obesity (aged 10-11) Breastfeeding initiation Children in care		
Infant mortality rate Substance misuse	Infant mortality rate	Infant mortality rate Under 18 conceptions Alcohol-specific harm (U-18) Self harm (10-24)	Infant mortality rate Child obesity (aged 10-11) Substance misuse	Infant mortality rate Child obesity (aged 10-11) Smoking during pregnancy Mental health condition Substance misuse
Smoking during pregnancy **Alcohol-specific harm (U-18)** **Mental health condition** **Self harm (10-24)** Injuries in children (U-14)	**Smoking during pregnancy** **Alcohol-specific harm (U-18)** Substance misuse **Mental health condition** **Self harm (10-24)** Injuries in children (U-14)	**Smoking during pregnancy** Substance misuse **Mental health condition**	**Smoking during pregnancy** **Alcohol-specific harm (U-18)** Under 18 conceptions **Mental health condition** **Self harm (10-24)** Injuries in children (U-14) Children in care	Under 18 conceptions **Alcohol-specific harm (U-18)** **Self harm (10-24)** Children in care Homeless or at risk

67   Northern Powerhouse Partnership (2021)

68   Marmot, Allen, Goldblatt, Herd and Morrison (2020)

69   Data from Public Health England (2021)

Provision of public services

Rural and remote areas can suffer from fewer family, children and youth services, less choice of providers, difficulties of access and 'invisibility' of need. Parents and carers may have less interaction with service providers during their children's early years and children may have less exposure to a range of learning and enrichment opportunities than their peers living in busier or better-connected areas.

Disadvantaged children and their families are likely to benefit most from access to good quality services. There is evidence that the **quality of crucial services may be lower across the peninsula than elsewhere.**

School Ofsted ratings are worse in the South West than the national average, and particularly so in deprived areas.

The South West has a lower proportion of Good and Outstanding schools than most other regions (joint lowest with Yorkshire & the Humber), and the lowest proportion in deprived areas.

Figure 23 Regional performance of schools according to Ofsted ratings[70]

The charts show the proportion of schools rated by Ofsted as outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate, by region and for England as a whole, as at 31 August 2021. First chart shows all schools. Second chart shows only schools in deprived and most deprived areas.
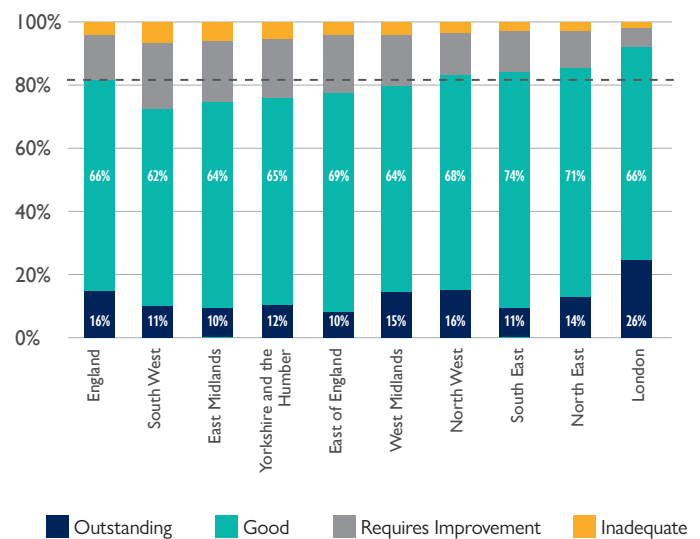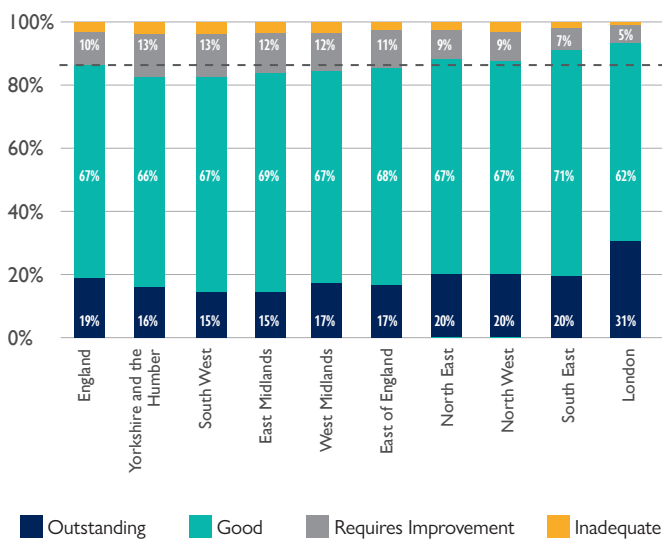
Within the peninsula, there are low proportions of Outstanding schools across all local authorities, although this deficit is made up in part by slightly higher proportions of Good schools, except in Plymouth. Devon and Somerset underperform in deprived areas.

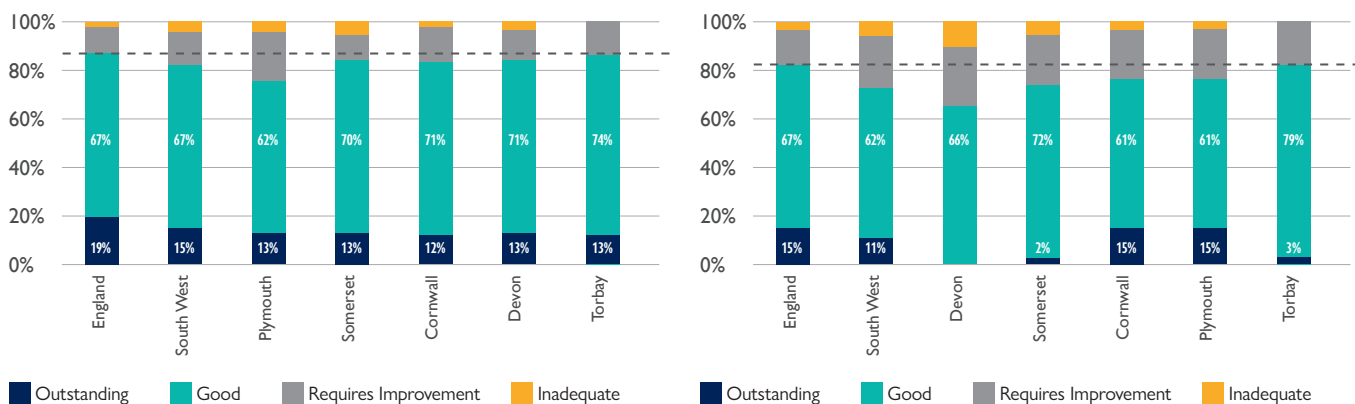**Figure 24** Peninsula performance of schools according to Ofsted ratings[71]

The charts show proportion of schools rated outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate, by peninsula local authority and for the South West and England as a whole. First chart shows all schools. Second chart shows only schools in deprived and most deprived areas.


Funding for education and non-statutory children's social care including early years and family support services appears to be relatively low across the peninsula

For example, in Plymouth and Cornwall, this spending was less than £2000 per child, compared with a median of £2753 across 150 English local authorities.

This equates to a difference of over £14,000 less funding over the course of a child's life from 0 to 18. Spending was only close to (although slightly less than) the median in Devon. The low spend on education and preventative children's social care appears to be driven by both lower-than-average overall funding and higher-than-average spending on adult social care, potentially attributable to the peninsula's ageing population. See Appendix for details.

Figure 25 Spending on education and preventative children's social care per 0-19 population[72]

The chart shows peninsula local authority spending on education and preventative children's social care (see Appendix for definition) in pounds per head. For comparison, the median spend from 150 English local authorities is also shown.
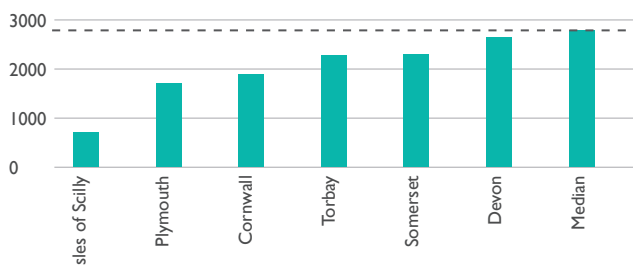
School funding is also relatively low in Cornwall and to a lesser extent Devon.

There may be several causes for this, including low pupil premium numbers compared with other local authorities and a more limited ability to attract funding from business and other sponsors for school initiatives.

Rural and remote schools may also incur higher costs in relation to pupil enrichment activities, professional development for staff, and support for disadvantaged pupils[73]. Teacher salaries are concomitantly low. **This can be a problem in attracting and retaining good teachers** to/in these areas, especially given the region's higher than average housing costs.

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71 Ibid.

72 Data from **https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2021-to-2022-budget-individual-local-authority-data** (2021) and NOMIS population estimates (2022); analysis own

73 See for example The Key (2018)

**Figure 26** Average school income and teacher salary[74]

The maps show average school income (in pounds per pupil) and average gross salary of teachers (in pounds) by local authority. Local authorities are colour coded from lowest (lightest shade) to highest (darkest shade).

School income (£ per pupil)

Total income (£ per pupil)
(Total sample size: 13,322 schools)

4721   14079
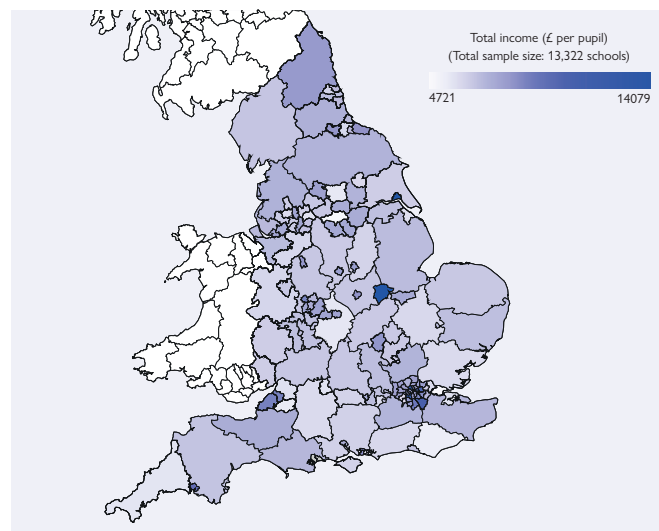
Cornwall – 142nd out of 149 local authorities; Devon – 97th; Torbay – 70th; Somerset – 57th; Plymouth – 14th

Average gross salary of teachers (£)

Average gross salary of teachers (£)
(Total sample size: 19,822 schools)

36201   46071
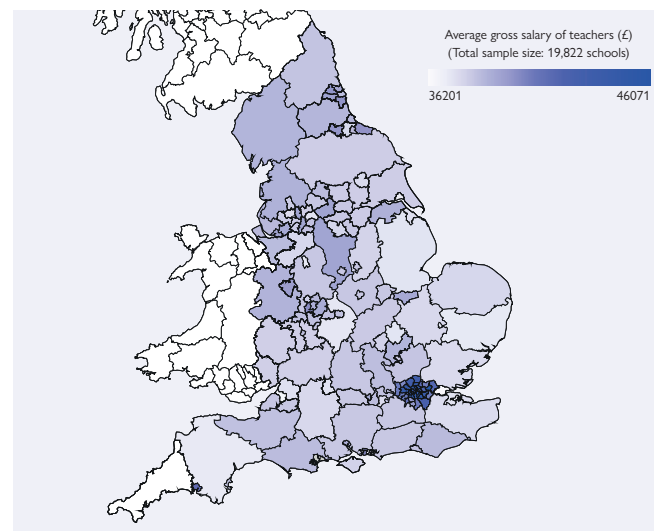
Cornwall – 151st out of 151 local authorities; Devon – 148th; Torbay – 127th; Plymouth – 103rd; Somerset – 84th

Teacher recruitment is likely to be a particular issue in coastal and isolated schools in the region. As Ovenden-Hope and Passy (2019) note: "the main issues are … due to housing and travel cost and limited opportunities for teachers' partners, and difficulties with high levels of teacher churn or a static staff"[75]. Beyond rurality and remoteness, recruiting good teachers to disadvantaged communities where selective schooling is prevalent, such as Torbay and Plymouth, can be difficult[76]. At the other end of the staffing spectrum, low churn can lead to a stagnation in the circulation and adoption of new ideas in teaching and leadership. This may be exacerbated by the attraction of the region to those looking to wind down their careers.

There may also be a lack of impetus to tackle the issues due to a **perception amongst some leaders, organisations and communities that 'things are fine'** and do not need changing[77]. One driver of this may be the perception that the region offers a good quality of life. Together with the 'hidden' nature of disadvantage in the region (including low FSM rates and, in some areas, decent overall attainment rates), this can enable leaders

and communities to justify the notion that things are fine. Another may derive from a sense of localism that reduces comparison with outside-region areas and sets the bar for attainment inwardly. Low churn in institutions can be a contributory factor to this, reducing the impetus to change and embedding a sense that 'things have always been this way'[78]. And in schools, low FSM rates may mean teachers and leaders are less aware of and adept at understanding disadvantage amongst their pupils, and ways in which they might support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Another manifestation of this could be in authorised absences from school. Rates of absenteeism across peninsula local authorities in 2018/19 were higher than average[79] but notably this was fuelled by authorised absences rather than unauthorised absences (which were around or lower than the England average). The percentage of persistent absentees (pupils missing more than 10% of school) was also higher across peninsula local authorities[80]. Authorised absences may be due to problems travelling to school.

74   Schools Dash, accessed 23/12/21
75   Ovenden-Hope and Passy (2019), pp.42
76   For example https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2016/06/inequalities-in-access-to-teachers-in-selective-schooling-areas/
77   This was something that came up in numerous conversations we had with those working in education in the region
78   Ovenden-Hope and Passy (2019)
79   Except for Devon at primary phase
80   Except for Devon at primary phase

Access to opportunities

Geographic isolation may mean that children from disadvantaged backgrounds growing up in the South West peninsula have exposure to a more limited set of life opportunities than disadvantaged children in better connected, more dynamic areas. This may curtail their aspirations and expectations for their own lives, demotivating them to do well at school.
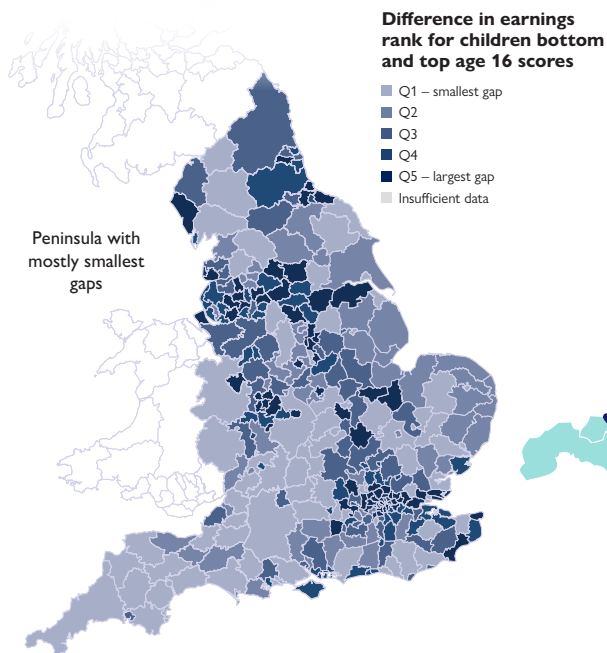
The limited availability of skilled jobs locally means young people may not see the benefit of attaining highly. In fact, the difference in earnings between those who gained top and bottom GCSE grades is markedly lower across the South West peninsula than elsewhere. This means that not investing time or effort in education may be a

rational response to the **low returns to education** seen locally. Outside of the Exeter area, a low wage, low skills equilibrium holds across much of the region.

Many areas of the peninsula have **limited local post-16 educational provision**, which may affect both students' post-16 options and their motivation to achieve highly at earlier ages. Poorer young people, in particular, may not feel it is worth pursuing further study or training when outcomes are uncertain and the risks high. The availability of work locally, including cash in hand jobs, can be attractive, enabling young people to earn money immediately, help out their families and gain some independence.

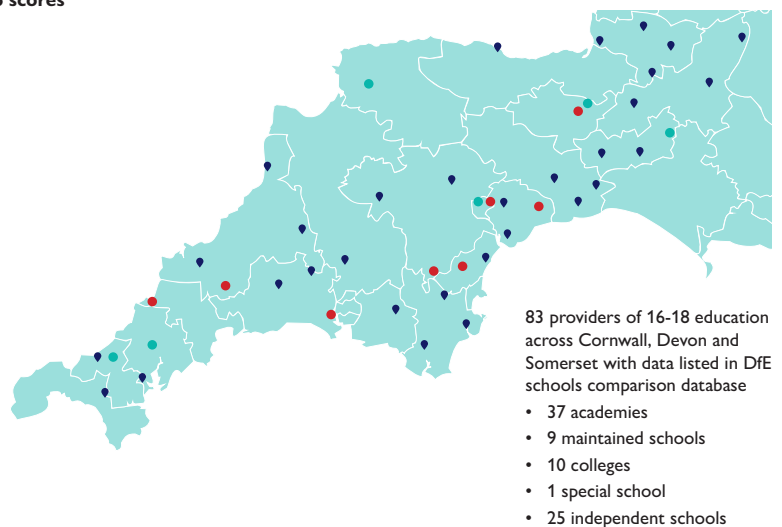**Figure 27** Returns to education[81]

The map shows the difference in earnings rank for children who scored in the bottom and top quintiles of GCSE assessments, aged 16. Colour coding indicates quintiles from smallest (lightest shade) to largest (darkest shade) gaps, by lower tier local authority.

Difference in earnings rank for children bottom and top age 16 scores

Q1 – smallest gap
Q2
Q3
Q4
Q5 – largest gap
Insufficient data

Peninsula with mostly smallest gaps

Figure 28 16-18 educational provision[82]

The map shows location of state providers of post-16 education across the peninsula. Blue markers indicate a provider; red circles indicate multiple providers in this vicinity; green circles indicate further education colleges that also offer higher education qualifications.

83 providers of 16-18 education across Cornwall, Devon and Somerset with data listed in DfE schools comparison database
• 37 academies
• 9 maintained schools
• 10 colleges
• 1 special school
• 25 independent schools

Those who do choose to pursue further education and training face **long and potentially expensive commutes**. For example, students from Dulverton in West Somerset have a 12 hour+ day after factoring in travel times by public transport to their nearest further education college. The dropout rate for these students is 27%[83]. College students whose families are on very low incomes may qualify for a travel bursary, which they need to apply for through means assessment; others who may

be just above this threshold can expect to pay over £500 for a yearly student bus pass.

Coastal places are also typically exporters of younger, working age people in good health, and importers of retirees and those looking to wind down their careers. The South West is the 'oldest' of all UK regions, with an average age of 42 (national average: 39) and smallest working age population.

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81 Carneiro, Cattan, Dearden, van der Erve, Krutikova and Macmillan (2020)

82 www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk - 16-18 providers, where data is available

83 Data provided by the West Somerset Opportunity Area

Figure 29 Population profiles for each of the peninsula's local authorities[84]

Population profiles show the percentage of the population in 5-year age groups from 0 to 90+, split by gender, in 2016. The black line in each profile indicates the population profile for England in 2016. The red line indicates the projected population profile for each local authority in 2020. Plymouth is the only peninsula local authority with a larger than average younger population.
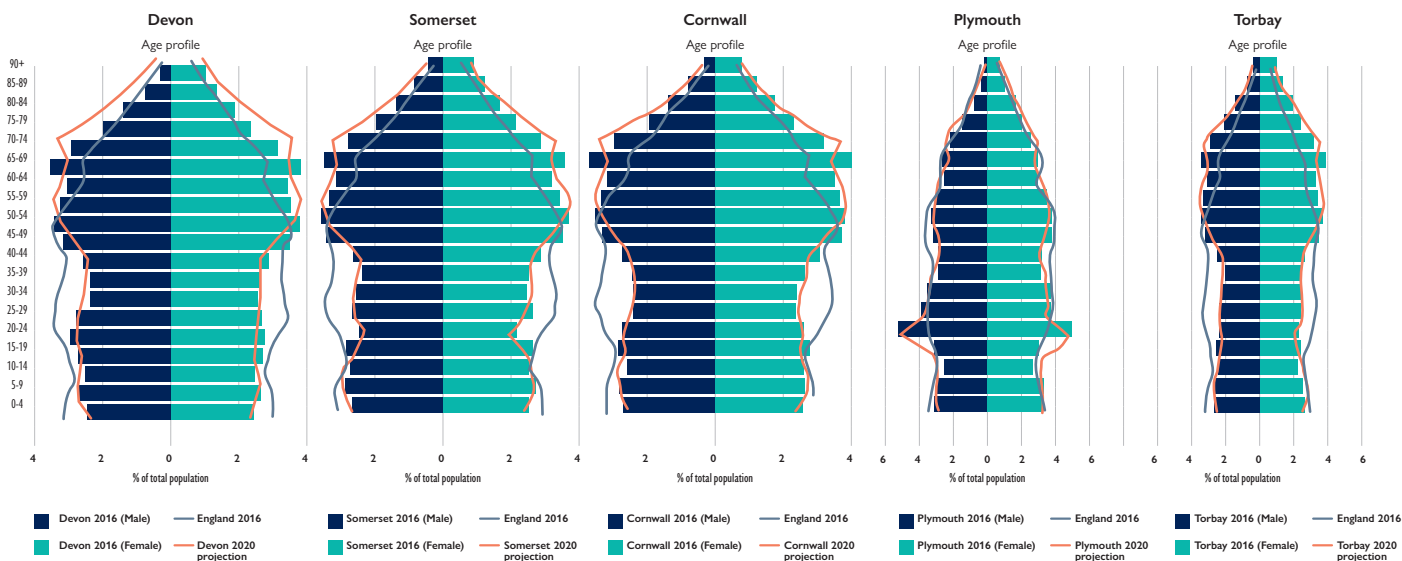
For better-off children and young people, it may feel almost inevitable that they will leave their local area for university elsewhere, even if they one day expect to return. **Regional outflows indicate a youth exodus** – the South West had the highest number of 16-24 year olds leave between 2010 and 2011 of all regions, despite its relatively small population. It also had the highest number of students move to pursue higher education in other regions, despite low rates of progression to higher education.

However, for those growing up in disadvantaged family backgrounds, moving away for university or work might be too expensive, risky, or simply not the norm. Yet, for these young people, there may also be the feeling of being 'left behind': with so many other young people leaving, rural and coastal communities in the peninsula may offer limited dynamism or change, few peer networks and limited numbers of young role models.
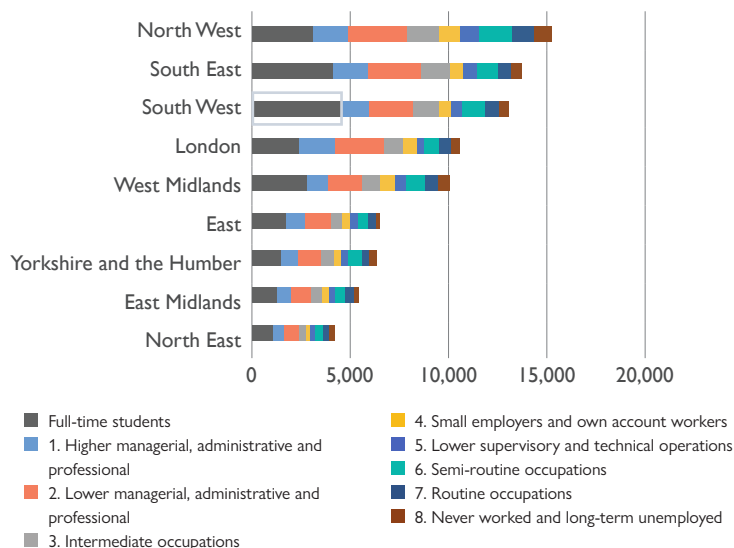
Figure 30 Regional outflows by age and occupation[85]

The charts shows the number of people leaving each region between 2010 and 2011, by age group and occupational category.

Regional outflows by age – 2010-11

Regional outflows by occupation – 2010-11

4 Summary of the challenges

What are the challenges for disadvantaged young people in the South West peninsula to attaining good educational outcomes and skills, and good jobs and earnings? Here we provide a summary of the main barriers to social mobility in the region.

It is widely acknowledged that there are common barriers to good educational outcomes faced by disadvantaged children everywhere. These factors include:

- Inequalities in child development such as poorer perinatal health, differences in the physical and social home learning environment and community disadvantage;

- Inequalities in school preparedness such as limited access to high-quality Early Years' education;

- Stressors experienced by disadvantaged children in school such as a higher likelihood of moving schools; and

- Differential school practices such as poorer teaching, unconscious bias, attainment grouping that exacerbates early gaps, and limited curriculum relevance[86].

But there are also challenges specific to the South West peninsula: geographically based factors that are likely to contribute to poorer outcomes across the region.

We summarise these as follows:

1. Low wage economy

- **Factors:** economy weighted towards low-paid service sector; few large employers; long-term decline of specific industries, especially coastal and mining

- **Implications:** low skills equilibrium and poor returns to education; working poor families; in some areas, multigenerational and persistent disadvantage associated with long-term economic decline

2. Disconnected areas

- **Factors:** distance from rest of the country; coastal and/or rural geography; dispersed population

- **Implications:** community and school isolation; poor transport and digital connectivity; difficulties of service provision

3. Lack of impetus for change

- **Factors:** perception amongst some leaders and communities that things are fine (perceived quality of life; hidden disadvantage; localism); quality of personnel; political fragmentation and parochialism

- **Implications:** lack of focus on disadvantaged pupils and lack of expertise in addressing disadvantage; lower quality teaching and leadership; lack of coordinated response and political heft at a national level

86 Crenna-Jennings (2018)
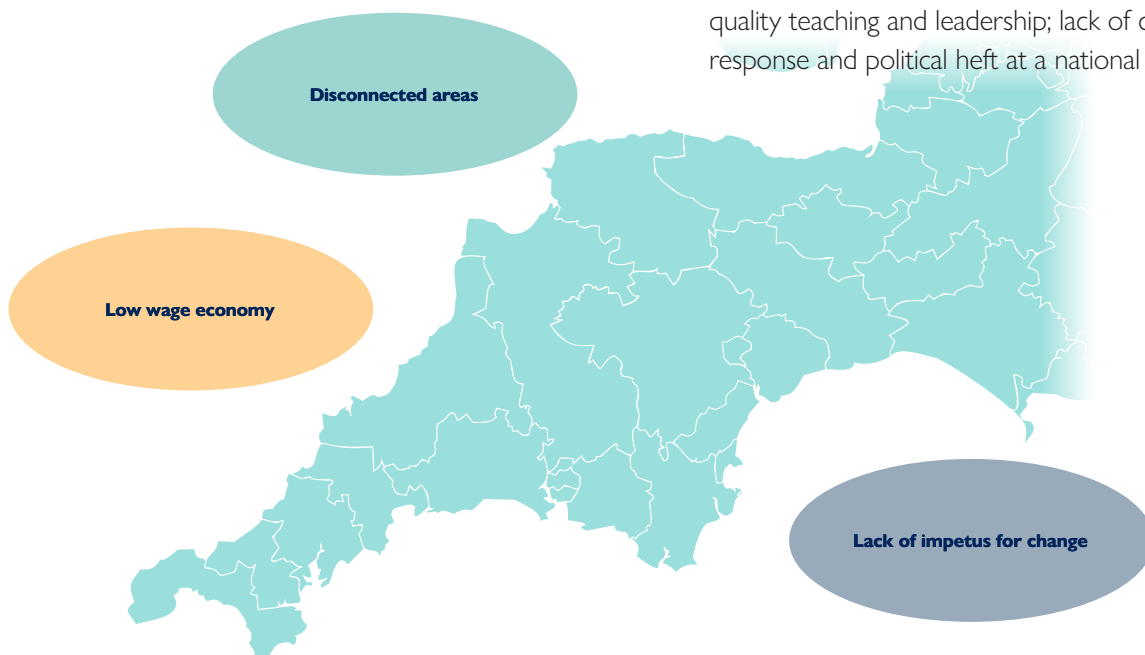
5 Recommendations

Addressing the disparity in educational outcomes between children growing up poor and their better-off peers is vital to ensuring a fairer and more productive future for everyone in the South West peninsula and beyond.

In this section, we outline **four recommendations for levelling up through education**. These are practical yet ambitious initiatives that tackle disadvantage in different ways and at different stages of the life course from 0 to 21. Some of the recommendations aim to create immediate impact while others are longer term strategies. Some are more evidence-informed while others are more opportunistic. Together, we think these proposals have a strong chance of success in addressing some of the inequities affecting disadvantaged students in the peninsula and potentially other regions.

Our recommendations, like this report, are **aimed at both the South West and national government**. The initiatives speak to the national levelling up challenge (see later section). They address many of the challenges outlined in this report, but could also be applied to other regions. The recommendations could be trialled in the South West peninsula, as a test case for national efforts to level up.

The recommendations:

School-centred cradle to career (C2C) models. This recommendation recognises that tackling disadvantage requires going 'beyond the school gates'. C2C models focus on identifying the wider barriers to good attainment that individuals, families and communities face, and they coordinate local assets to address these inequities. In particular, they target the crucial developmental stage that occurs before children start school – the first 1001 days (from conception to age two) and early years. They use the school's central place in a community to act as a 'front door' to bring in and nurture relationships with families, and as an anchor organisation to connect organisations delivering support. Taking a holistic and long-term view, these models aim to build local capacity to support children's learning and, over the longer term, effect systemic change in an area.

A university-led tutoring service. This recommendation takes a very different, but complementary, approach. Focusing on just literacy and numeracy at key points in children's school lives, it provides targeted additional support for disadvantaged pupils to level up the educational playing field. Drawing on the university undergraduate student population, the service provides a sustainable source of student tutors to local schools in a region. Students are trained in delivering one-to-one/small group tutoring, develop practical experience and skills, and potentially earn credits towards an introductory module in teaching. The ultimate aim is to embed high quality regional tutoring into the university system across the country.

Sharper focus on disadvantage. This recommendation focuses on how school leaders and teachers address disadvantage within schools. The aim is to bring all schools' practices up to the levels we see in the best performing schools. It does so through a package of five initiatives (three nationally driven and two potentially regionally or locally driven): a focus on disadvantage in initial teacher education; an imperative for school leaders to reduce their school disadvantage attainment gap through changes to the Ofsted framework; ongoing school engagement with pupil and community disadvantage assisted by a data-driven score card; a regional drive to instil best practice in schools and academy trusts led by Regional Schools Commissioners; and a concerted effort to improve the school-home interface by engaging parents in different ways – in particular those whose current engagement is low.

Post-16 skills reform. This recommendation addresses the bridging period between education and work. It proposes that the South West peninsula takes the lead in current Government skills reforms, with the aim of becoming a hub of technical education, including apprenticeships. The proposal calls for organisations in the region to work together to make this happen. It also sets out some potential actions – including flexible learning options and travel assistance – that could reduce the cost and risk to young people of pursuing the higher qualifications that typically lead to better jobs and earnings outcomes. These could help the Government meet its objectives around high quality skills in the lowest skilled areas.

A South West Social Mobility Commission

In addition to the proposals above, this report also recommends the setting up of a South West Social Mobility Commission. This recommendation recognises that this report cannot address all of the challenges outlined.

A dedicated regional commission aligns with the Government's aims of empowering local leaders and communities, as set out in its Levelling Up White Paper. The Commission would bring together key individuals and organisations in the region to drive forward wider work to address the barriers for disadvantaged young people in the region. It would also provide oversight to ensure that progress is made.

Why are we recommending these ideas?

We have chosen these initiatives because they comprise:

- A **conception to early years focus**, recognising how critical this life phase is to children's educational success. A large proportion of brain development occurs during this period[87]. Meanwhile, prior attainment is the biggest predictor of later attainment. Intervening during later life phases is typically both more costly and less effective[88]. Early years interventions can help to reduce the environmental stressors associated with poverty and give new parents information, guidance and support to give their children the best possible start in life.

- **Making disadvantage front and centre** of work in schools. For some schools, this will already be the case. However, as this report suggests, disadvantage can pass under the radar. Even where this isn't the case, schools can benefit from being equipped with the training and tools to identify and support disadvantaged pupils, the incentives to direct resources to this effort, and external support to boost disadvantaged pupils' learning.

- A concerted effort to **embed change in an area for the longer term**. While many of the ideas in our recommendations already exist in one form or another across the country, what these recommendations propose is a means of embedding change – either within a particular area or throughout the education system – with the aim of overcoming the inconsistency associated with patchwork initiatives.

- An aim to be **tactical around existing initiatives** – for example, the university tutoring service is timely given the government's call on universities to do more to raise school attainment; school-centred community hubs could fit well with the government's intended roll-out of Family Hubs; and post-16 skills

reform builds on the national skills agenda. Being pragmatic around current policy directions, these recommendations have the potential to have high immediate impact on current generations growing up in disadvantaged circumstances in the South West peninsula and beyond.

In coming to these recommendations, we considered a range of other ideas, including:

- An **Early Years literacy programme** combining public messaging (akin to the 5-a-day health campaign) with on-the-ground support such as Health Visitors providing new parents with basic information and guidance on early years oracy and literacy

- Development of **'Parent power plans'** promoting greater involvement of parents in their children's education through measures like accessible Ofsted summaries; school-centred workshops on topics like study skills; and simple guidance, prompts and reminders around transitions

- **Curriculum and assessment reform**, with a greater focus on vocational and technical education and replacement of the current examination system with a basic school leavers' certificate alongside current graded exams

- A package of regional measures to address **teacher recruitment and retention**, including use of measures like 'golden handcuffs'; dedicated leadership training programmes to retain talent in the region; and wider considerations like subsidised housing / rent control for teachers

- A system of **fairer funding** that addresses coastal and rural disadvantage, as evident in the peninsula's low levels of education funding – to give greater financial clout in attracting and retaining teaching and leadership talent

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87 www.developingchild.harvard.edu
88 Heckman and Mosso (2014)

- A regional approach to **Information, Advice and Guidance** (IAG), making use of a digital solution to give real-time mapping of local job vacancies and skills needs to students, teachers and careers advisors

- **Human capital tax breaks** to incentivise business investment in worker training

Some of these we omitted as standalone recommendations and instead incorporated into our current set of recommendations because of significant overlap. Other ideas we rejected because of their scale. Human capital tax breaks and changes to funding for example are items that would require wholesale change at the national level, which we felt to be beyond the scope of this report. Finally, we rejected the idea of reforms to Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) as much is already occurring in this area, and we felt that proposals here would be neither new nor innovative.

How do these recommendations contribute to Levelling Up?

Our proposals directly address the Levelling Up White Paper's key requirements, capitals and 2030 missions[89].

The proposals speak in particular to the Levelling Up requirements to:

- Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest:

  - C2C models and the university-led tutoring service do this by coordinating an offer for disadvantaged children and their families potentially in hard-to-reach areas

  - The sharper focus on disadvantage and post-16 skills reform seek to improve the provision of education and skills, especially for disadvantaged young people, across a region

- Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency

  - C2C models engage local communities and build community capacity with the aim of being community led in the long term

  - The South West Social Mobility Commission and post-16 skills reform aim to bring together local leaders and organisations to drive these agendas forward across the region

Overall, the proposals also aim to boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards in the longer term by improving education and skills across the region, in particular for those from poorer backgrounds.

The proposals drive an improvement across many of the 6 capitals highlighted in the paper:

- Human capital – all four proposals seek to improve education and skills levels across a region

- Institutional capital – all four proposals and the South West Social Mobility Commission aim to build local leadership, capacity and capability

- Social capital – for example through C2C models' family and community relationship building and the strengthening of the school-home interface as part of the sharper focus on disadvantage

- Physical capital – for example through proposals in the post-16 skills reform to address the transport challenges facing young people with subsidised travel and blended learning options

The proposals also contribute directly to the 2030 missions on education and skills, and ultimately living standards:

- Education: that 90% of primary school children will achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, with an increase of over a third in the worst performing areas

  - C2C models, the university-led tutoring service and the sharper focus on disadvantage directly target the attainment of children from disadvantaged backgrounds who are the most likely not to achieve these standards (and even more so in the South West than elsewhere)

- Skills: that 200,000 more people will successfully complete high quality training annually, including 80,000 in the lowest skilled areas

  - Post-16 skills reform aims to drive the national skills reform agenda in the South West, including the flexible lifetime skills guarantee and Local Skills Improvement Plans, in particular by considering how to facilitate training for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds

- Living Standards: that pay, productivity and employment will have risen in every area of the UK

  - All four proposals and the Social Mobility Commission for the South West aim to reduce the barriers to good employment outcomes for disadvantaged young people, thereby improving living standards in the region

Our recommendations would make important contributions to levelling up. But there are many other issues that lie outside the scope of this report – including building the region's physical, intangible and financial capital. Tackling the housing crisis and improving employment opportunities in the South West peninsula are crucial needs for people to lead decent lives and for young people to be able to aspire to remain and thrive in the region. Addressing the region's poor underlying infrastructure – transport and digital – is also vital to people's prospects in the immediate and longer terms. The peninsula has unique opportunities which should be made the most of: its desirability as a place to live, coupled with new ways of digital working, mean there is significant potential to attract large businesses to the region and improve the opportunities available to young people locally.

Yet, an essential strand to levelling up is to improve educational opportunities. This is the only way that both equity and economic growth can be secured in the longer term. Our recommendations will reduce the barriers to good educational and employment outcomes facing disadvantaged young people growing up in the South West peninsula and elsewhere.

Summary of the recommendations

In the chapters that follow, we recommend what different stakeholders, national and regional, could do to take these ideas forward. We explain how the first two recommendations could be piloted in the South West and beyond, as a test case for scaling at a national level. We believe the third and fourth initiatives could also be taken forward in a similar way.

We summarise our recommendations as follows:

Initiative	Challenges addressed (South West-specific and general)	Life stage	Potential stakeholders
School-centred cradle to career models	• Multigenerational and persistent disadvantage • Working poor families • Lack of focus on disadvantaged pupils • Inequalities in child development • Inequalities in school preparedness • Stressors experienced by disadvantaged children	0-21	• Schools and multi-academy trusts • Local authorities and health services • Charities
Recommendations			
• **National:** Department for Education to encourage appropriate schools and trusts to consider key aspects of school-centred cradle to career models informed by our evaluation of what has most impact • **South West:** Multi-academy trusts and local authorities should scale up key aspects of school-centred cradle to career models – informed by our evaluation			
University-led tutoring service	• Lack of focus on disadvantaged pupils • Lack of coordinated response and political heft at a national level	10-16	• Universities • Schools and multi-academy trusts • Local authorities • Tutoring providers
Recommendations			
• **National:** Office for Students and Department for Education to promote the uptake of university-led tutoring in all universities contributing to national efforts to introduce high quality tutoring in all schools to help disadvantaged pupils in particular • **South West:** Universities, colleges and schools to scale up university led tutoring so it benefits pupils across the entire peninsula (initial target of 700 tutors tutoring 1400 pupils)			
Sharper focus on disadvantage	• Lack of focus on disadvantaged pupils • Community and school isolation • Lower quality teaching and leadership • Differential school practices	4-18	• Regional Schools Commissioners • Schools and multi-academy trusts • Ofsted • Local authorities
Recommendations			
• **National:** Department for Education to introduce stronger incentives and measures in the national accountability system for schools to encourage sharper focus on disadvantage • **South West:** A dedicated group of school leaders should be established to consider how our proposals can be implemented in the region			
Post-16 skills reform	• Poor transport and digital connectivity • Low skills equilibrium and poor returns to education	16-21	• Local authorities and local transport authorities • Further education colleges • Universities • Schools and multi-academy trusts • Businesses and business groups • Charities
Recommendations			
• **National:** Government to make significant regional investment in the South West to create a series of hubs for technical skills • **South West:** Schools, colleges, universities, employers and local authorities to develop a coordinated plan to create hubs for technical skills			

School-centred cradle to career models

WHAT:

Cradle to career (C2C) models provide place-based support for individuals, families and communities to address multiple sources of disadvantage that occur throughout children's lives, from conception through to adulthood. Every model is different, tailored to the community context through intensive community listening and mapping of existing community assets. Schools act as the anchor organisation and 'front door' to a range of community-based, evidence-informed interventions designed to reduce inequities as children grow up.

WHY:

C2C models address the fact that disadvantage is complex and rooted in society, as described in section 3. Rather than trying to intervene when attainment gaps amongst disadvantaged pupils have already emerged, which is often costly or ineffectual, C2C models look to reduce inequities from before birth to prevent gaps from emerging in the first place. And they look to provide continual support across different contexts as children grow up, recognising that what happens outside of school is as crucial to good attainment as what happens in school. As the most visible asset in many communities, schools are well-placed to do the community relationship building that is key to developing a C2C model.

HOW:

We think this approach has the potential to be transformational in communities across the country. However, there is still limited knowledge about how C2C models should be developed – that is, in what contexts they would be most effective, key enablers and barriers to success, and what the key principles of C2C models should be, notwithstanding that every model will be tailored to its context. We believe that a promising example of an effective C2C model in the UK is the Reach model in Feltham, London. We will be working with Reach as they embark on a partnership programme with a small number of partner schools (including two in the South West peninsula) who are setting up their own C2C models. We will document learnings through the first two years of the partnership process and develop guidance for policy makers, schools and trusts interested in this approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

National government:

Department for Education to encourage appropriate schools and trusts to consider key aspects of school-centred cradle to career models informed by our evaluation of what has most impact. Funding to be made available where this is the case, potentially by widening the eligibility and funding for Family Hubs[90].

South West:

Multi-academy trusts and local authorities should scale up key aspects of school-centred cradle to career models – informed by our evaluation. There is an opportunity for local authorities and schools to work together to bid for funding to set up Family Hubs in their area, where no current provisions exist.

COST (Reach partnership):

Potentially significant. Seed funding required to conduct listening exercise and develop appropriate local C2C model. Additional costs include:

- Significant time input by a school's senior leadership team to set up and run their C2C model
- Potentially, additional staff to run the C2C model
- Potentially, funding for any activities or programmes commissioned within or delivered by the C2C model
- In the longer term, building community capacity may reduce running costs and the burden on other services through stronger social support networks / earlier intervention

LENGTH OF PROJECT:

Long term. 2-year pilot examines enablers and barriers, with findings to be published each year.

EXPECTED RETURN:

Expect improvement across a range of indicators, including pupil attainment and progression. Improved attainment is likely to take several years to materialise, but other data and intermediate outcomes can give an indication of how effective a model is sooner. Building community capacity may take longer.

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90 Family Hubs are the government's proposed network of local authority-led central access points for integrated family services. There are complementarities between the approaches although school-centred C2C models differ from Family Hubs in that the former's community is typically spatially centred around the school whilst the latter's criteria are more prescriptive and they deliver statutory services and control commissioning and funding of service delivery
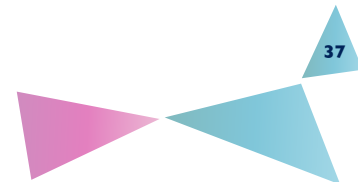
What is it? How does it work?

Disadvantage is a complex and embedded issue: it defies easy definition, has no simple causes and cannot be solved by one solution or organisation. C2C models recognise that good outcomes for children neither begin nor end with the school, and that supporting children, parents and communities beyond the school gates is as crucial to in-school attainment as good quality teaching and learning. They focus on improving educational outcomes by addressing disadvantage at multiple levels, from the individual to the family context, from the home environment to the neighbourhood, from health to housing, and so on, over a sustained period of time.

School-centred C2C models use the school's central place in a community to coordinate and facilitate access to a range of initiatives that address disadvantage, such as accessible antenatal classes and family support. Initiatives are typically provided by delivery partners rather than the school itself. The school's role is in building strong, long term relationships with children and parents as well as community actors to understand community needs and assets and how these might be brought together. The approach extends the reach of support being provided by a school to life stages outside of their typical remit (from 0 to 21) and out into the community. In particular, C2C models look to support the critical first 1001 days of life[91] and early years[92] because of how crucial these are to children's development. This helps to ensure that disadvantaged children start school on a more even footing.

All places are different and will need a different C2C model that addresses the specifics of community needs and existing provisions in that area. For example, what works in a dispersed rural community in Devon may be completely different from what works in a London suburb, and indeed will likely be different from what works for a community elsewhere in the county. That said, an example of the initiatives a C2C model might include are: (before birth) antenatal classes and new parent peer support, (during the early years) parent education programmes like Peep[93] and Stay & Play sessions, (through the school years) dedicated family support, parenting classes and pupil enrichment activities, (and from 16-21) individualised job and university application support and NEET prevention coaching.

The approach builds on programmes in the UK such as the Extended Schools and Sure Start initiatives, as well as the Government's current Family Hubs initiative[94]. However, key differences include:

- A high-performing school at its core, ensuring an in and out of school C2C vision with a central focus on improving educational attainment and progression for disadvantaged pupils (in the widest sense of disadvantage) – rather than supporting a more wide-ranging set of service objectives;

- The community as intrinsic to the model's design and delivery – starting with a deep and ongoing community listening exercise and aiming for community organisations and individuals to ultimately lead on elements of delivery[95].

What is the evidence?

The notion of cradle to career draws on initiatives like the Harlem Children's Zone and Strive Together partnership in the United States (see Appendix for a comparison of these and similar place-based programmes). These initiatives recognise that programmes targeted at particular children, at particular stages in their lives, often produce positive but unsustained effects[96]. Early Years interventions for example might raise attainment for participants in pre-school tests, only for these gains to disappear by age 7[97]. By providing a tight web of support for families within a place, C2C models aim to create a pipeline of change for individuals. And in the longer term, they aspire to create a 'tipping-point' of change at the community level that permanently disrupts cycles of disadvantage[98].

It is important to note that a C2C model is not one initiative but instead an approach for bringing together a range of initiatives in one place. A key principle for such an approach is that the individual initiatives that C2C models bring together should themselves be supported by evidence as to their efficacy. As such, C2C models

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91 The first 1001 days of life refers to the period from conception to age 2

92 Early Years usually refers to the period between birth and age 5 (i.e. before a child starts school)

93 The Peep Learning Together Programme (LTP) is a parent education programme developed by the charity Peeple that helps parents support children's everyday learning and play

94 Carpenter, Cummings, Dyson, Jones, Kassam, Laing, Muijs, Papps, Peters and Todd (2011); Melhuish, Belsky and Barnes (2010); Department for Education (2021)

95 For example, at Reach Feltham, 40+ local residents (parents/young people/community members) have been trained to lead listening campaigns and have listened to 200+ local residents so far; 24 local mothers have been trained as Birth and Beyond Community supporters and have supported 75 isolated new mums

96 See for example Tough (2009) for an account of Geoffrey Canada's motivations for starting the Harlem Children's Zone; https://www.strivetogether.org/who-we-are/our-history/#sub-menu

97 For example, Blanden, Del Bono, Hansen and Rabe (2021)

98 Dyson, Kerr, Raffo and Wigelsworth (2012)

should have a positive effect, if only as the sum of the individual initiatives comprising them. Nevertheless, the premise for such models is that they should produce benefits over and above the individual initiatives being provided.

An analysis of Children's Zones uses a theory of change methodology to argue that this kind of approach should work: there is a strong evidence base around interventions to tackle disadvantage, and by addressing them in a large-scale and coordinated way, it is plausible that there should be an impact beyond the benefits provided by the standalone programmes offered within a zone[99]. Further, given that disadvantage takes multiple forms which often coincide and cluster by area, it is plausible that such initiatives might "create a 'tipping point' in which environments which are 'toxic' to children's development become supportive"[100]. In other words, the approach has the potential to create systemic change.

Given that C2C models are comprised of an evolving array of initiatives operating in complex and shifting contexts, finding conclusive evidence of their overall impact is difficult. Instead, a combination of quantitative evidence of changes to outcomes combined with qualitative evidence describing how initiatives are addressing problems can give strong indications that a model is contributing to improved outcomes in an area. Further, it can provide useful explanatory mechanisms for how, why and in what contexts something works, rather than simply whether it does or doesn't work[101].

At Reach in Feltham, a combination of academic data, programme participation rates, participant feedback, anecdotal evidence and a clearly articulated theory of change provide strong signs that the approach is having impact. The school's first set of GCSE results in 2017 placed it 16th in the country for pupil progress and 70% of children from its first graduating cohort went to university (compared with 20% across the local community). Feedback from participants supports the notion that the model's interventions are contributory factors in reducing barriers to good attainment. Anecdotally, health practitioners in the area have noted having capacity freed up by Reach's work[102].

Strive Together's partner case studies provide similar types of evidence. Operating since 2011 and consisting of nearly 70 C2C partnerships working in local communities across the US, the network shares individual case studies that articulate the mechanisms by which an initiative works, backed up by supporting data that provide evidence of impact[103].

There have been some attempts at quantifying the overall impact of C2C approaches – in particular, the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ). For example, Dobbie and Fryer (2011) use siblings and pupils living in and outside of the Zone to proxy a randomised controlled trial. Their study found no apparent attainment effects from the neighbourhood programme, but attainment benefits associated with the Zone's schools[104]. Nevertheless, evaluations of specific activities within HCZ have typically been positive.

Whilst the Reach model has shown strong signs of success, what is less clear is what factors have contributed to its success and the extent to which this kind of success can be replicated elsewhere. We believe documenting learnings as Reach embarks on a small-scale roll-out of its approach is crucial. We will work with partner schools in very different contexts as they develop their own C2C models. This will enable us to identify the enablers and barriers to effective C2C models, which other schools and policy makers will be able to learn from when considering the approach for their own communities and possible wider scale-up.

Why have we chosen to recommend this approach?

This approach could be transformative. A school-centred C2C model has the potential to nurture long-term relationships with families in a way that few other service providers can: for example, a family with several siblings could have a relationship with a school or trust for over twenty years. There is a recognition within both national and local government that approaches are required that tackle disadvantage in a deeper and more concerted way than is currently the case. Nationally, the government's investment in twelve Opportunity Areas has taken a place-based approach to improving outcomes for disadvantaged young people growing up in social mobility

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99   Ibid.

100 Ibid., pp.13

101 For example, Kerr and Dyson (2019)

102 A key question is whether or not these results can be replicated elsewhere. This is something we are seeking to review in our work with Reach and partner schools

103 www.strivetogether.org/our-impact/case-studies

104 Dobbie and Fryer (2011)

'coldspots'[105]. The latest government announcement of 55 Education Investment Areas continues this approach[106]. Meanwhile, local authorities are looking for ways to address entrenched, multigenerational disadvantage to reduce the high costs associated with its impacts. The C2C approach fits in with a desire for place-based, long term and holistic solutions to disadvantage.

COVID has highlighted the central role schools play in many communities – well-placed to identify pupils in need and, for many, the most visible and accessible point of contact in the community. In rural and remote areas like many parts of the South West peninsula, schools may be one of the few accessible public touchpoints available[107]. Even before the pandemic, schools have increasingly been offering social welfare support for children alongside core education. Yet, there is little guidance on how schools should approach this work. Developing an understanding of the key elements of an effective school-centred C2C model will help schools to perform this role most effectively. Of course, a key challenge is how schools can fit this in alongside everything else they do.

Additionally, the approach fits well with government's plans for Family Hubs, as recommended in its 1001 Days report and backed by its recent Family Hubs Local Transformation Fund that aims to deliver Family Hubs to local authorities without provision by March 2024[108]. Family Hubs are intended to bring together services for families in a more accessible, connected and relationship-centred way, through a branded, single point of access consisting of a physical place, virtual access, and outreach. Hubs are intended to be multi-agency, have a joint commissioning plan, cover both statutory and non-statutory services, and bring on board third sector organisations. Whilst we think that school-centred C2C models are a good bet for many communities irrespective of establishing all of the above services, Family Hubs presents a potential opportunity for establishing this type of model.

105 www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-and-opportunity-areas; www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-areas-insight-guides; Easton, McCrone, Smith, Harland and Sims (2018)

106 HM Government (2022)

107 In this regard, they may be especially effective at making the most of innovative existing programmes like Kailo, HeadStart and Livewell Southwest, which support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

108 www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-hubs-transformation-fund

University-led tutoring service

WHAT:

One to one and small group tutoring provides tailored support to pupils to achieve specific learning objectives. This more intensive work is often used to provide extra support for learners at risk of falling behind – helping to ensure pupils stay on track with classroom teaching. Tutoring can also boost pupil confidence and engagement with education. Tutoring for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds can be provided by teachers and a range of tutoring organisations. But universities are ideally placed to contribute to these efforts by embedding a student volunteer tutoring service in their local region. Recruiting undergraduates to tutor by completing a credit bearing module at university offers a systematic and sustainable model of tutoring. If all universities across the country became involved, a National Tutoring Service could benefit hundreds of thousands of pupils.

WHY:

Tutoring is one of the few educational strategies with a substantial evidence base showing the potential to raise pupil attainment at scale. Recent trials in England of tutoring given by undergraduate students saw pupil attainment increase by +3 months over the course of a year. Disadvantaged pupils appeared to derive particular benefit, meaning that targeting of the initiative has the potential to reduce the disadvantage attainment gap. The challenge is achieving a sustainable, quality-assured service that reaches as many disadvantaged pupils as possible. Universities can act to embed tutoring in their region by building on their links with local schools and academy trusts, and making volunteer tutoring amongst their students standard practice.

HOW:

This approach has the potential to root undergraduate tutoring in the education system. National government and university bodies have expressed strong interest in the idea, especially in the wake of an increased onus on universities to support efforts to improve school attainment. The key question is how such an approach can be implemented – in particular, how universities should reward students, how they should work with existing tutoring organisations and schools/trusts, and how the service could be funded. We will work with colleagues at the University of Exeter to pilot a tutoring service for the local region. This will produce a model that other universities will be able to use. We will set out the key parameters universities will need to consider when setting up a regional tutoring service.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

National government:

Office for Students and Department for Education to promote the uptake of university led tutoring in all universities contributing to national efforts to introduce high quality tutoring in all schools to help disadvantaged pupils in particular

South West:

Universities, colleges and schools to scale up university led tutoring so it benefits pupils across the entire peninsula

COST (pilot):

Circa. £275/pupil (current National Tutoring Programme rate) for one term of weekly tutoring. Actual costs will depend on:

- Additional staff commitment required by universities, potentially funded within widening participation budgets
- Provision of training, potentially conducted (and subsidised) by non-profit tutoring organisations or multi-academy trusts with teaching provision, and paid for by schools receiving the tutoring

LENGTH OF PROJECT:

Yearly student cohorts, providing tutoring in one-term blocks. 1 – 3 year pilot, with findings published each year.

- Year 1: Small scale pilot to understand the model
- Year 2: Model is refined and a limited scale-up involves more students and schools
- Year 3: Larger scale up with 700 to 1400 students tutoring 1400 to 2800 pupils across the region

EXPECTED RETURN:

- An expected learning gain of +0.8 grades[109] for each disadvantaged pupil who participates
- Provision of a valuable and enriching experience for students (to be tested in student feedback)
- Better quality assurance than through current models – potentially leading to new quality standards
- By Year 3, more pupils reached than through the current National Tutoring Programme. We envisage 5-10% of students signing up meaning a volunteer tutor pool of 700 to 1400 tutors

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109 Estimate from CoachBright

What is it? How does it work?

One to one and small group tutoring has the potential to target attainment gaps by offering tailored learning support to disadvantaged pupils who have low prior attainment, are at risk of falling behind, or are struggling in particular areas. Tutors can focus on the needs of the learner, match teaching to the pupil's understanding, and provide more interaction and more tailored feedback than is possible with whole class teaching. Tutors can also help with preparing for exams, potentially helping pupils at key transition points such as the move to secondary school or for crucial exams like GCSEs. Where student volunteers are able to foster positive relationships with pupils, they may also become role models for young people, potentially helping them to consider university as an option – which may boost low rates of progression to higher education in areas like the South West peninsula. This could be a key strand of universities' social mobility efforts.

The model draws on universities' student populations to provide a sustainable source of volunteers to tutor disadvantaged school pupils across their local region. Undergraduate students would be recruited to tutor pupils from local schools, potentially as part of an accredited teaching module that contributes academic credits towards students' overall degrees. The regional nature of the service would help to strengthen ties between universities and students and their local schools and communities. To support pupils in geographically hard-to-reach areas – which are often more likely to be social mobility cold spots – a blended approach could be adopted. This could include launching a programme at a university followed by online tutoring sessions and finishing with a close event in person.

For students, the service would enable them to participate in a local volunteering opportunity, appealing to students' sense of civic duty and giving back to others (this is offered by 'AmeriCorps' in the US among other volunteering organisations). Beyond this, we think there are several ways through which universities can embed volunteer tutoring amongst their student cohorts. One option is enabling students to take a credit-bearing module that includes a structured and assessed tutoring component. As well as rewarding students with academic credits, the course would offer them a valuable practice-based learning experience and taster in teaching.

The design would also help to provide quality assurance for schools. An additional potential benefit is that it may encourage more graduates to consider teaching as a career.

Current efforts to provide extra tutoring – for example through the Government's National Tutoring Programme – face several challenges including the lack of quality tutors available around the country. There are also concerns about its sustainability: it costs £200 million a year and uses for-profit tutoring partners to provide scale, which raises quality concerns. A university-led National Tutoring Service is an untapped opportunity to develop a cost-effective sustainable model that would strengthen the links between universities and schools in their region. With existing links to charities and local schools, universities are well placed to coordinate the service and promote volunteering among students. A national programme could be delivered by hundreds of universities across the country, involving tens of thousands of students and benefitting hundreds of thousands of pupils every year.

What is the evidence?

One-to-one tutoring is one of the few education strategies that we know raises pupil attainment at scale. A review of the evidence suggests that, delivered well, tutoring can lead to an extra five months learning gain for pupils during one academic year[110]. Some of this evidence includes outcomes reported by commercial tutoring providers, however. A more realistic outcome is for an extra three months' progress during the school year at primary school level, as reported in recent trials of the Tutor Trust programme – with slightly less progress expected for secondary pupils[111]. Results across trials are fairly variable, however, and implementation is critical. Key success factors include the quality of tutoring, and communication between teachers/schools and tutors/tutoring providers including how well the tutoring integrates with classroom teaching. While tutoring by qualified teachers results in the greatest learning gains, undergraduate tutoring works – as demonstrated in the Tutor Trust trials. Major trials overseas have also confirmed that undergraduate tutoring leads to significant learning gains[112].

110 educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition

111 Torgerson, Bell, Coleman, Elliott, Fairhurst, Gascoine, Hewitt and Torgerson (2018)

112 For example, see Nickow, Oreopoulos and Quan (2020) for a US synthesis; Carlana and La Ferrara (2021)

In addition to attainment gains, most tutoring evaluations note additional perceived benefits from tutoring. Learners and teachers typically report improvements in learners' confidence and their engagement with education. Teachers also report valuing pupils having an additional adult role model and tutors' work in helping pupils prepare for exams.

There are a number of parameters involved in designing a tutoring service, including the involvement of different stakeholders; which schools and which pupils are selected for tutoring; which subjects are tutored; the location and format of the tutoring; tutor recruitment, training and quality assurance; how the tutoring is funded; and how outcomes are monitored and evaluated.

We have evidence on some but not all of these parameters. Trials involving disadvantaged pupils provide indicative evidence that tutoring can produce even greater benefits for this subset of pupils, which is promising for this initiative[113]. How pupils are selected usually depends on both the tutoring provider and school. Some tutoring charities work only with 'deprived' schools that meet criteria such as a certain proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium or location in a deprived area. Others work with all schools, but select pupils, or a percentage of pupils, who meet certain criteria for disadvantage – typically eligibility for pupil premium (see Appendix for a list of examples of tutoring charities). In most cases, schools and providers then agree the aims of the tutoring, with class teachers nominating pupils they believe would most benefit from the extra support.

There appear to be slightly larger gains associated with primary level tutoring compared with secondary level (+6 months compared with +4 months, on average, respectively)[114]. Tutoring at primary level is typically provided during Years 5 and 6, whilst at secondary it is typically during Years 10 and 11 (but sometimes Year 9). A-level support can also be provided during Years 12 and 13. Where tutoring takes place outside of school, primary level tutoring can result in better take-up and attendance, as parents are typically more involved. A general rule of thumb in educational interventions is that the earlier the intervention the better, which would support more tutoring during the primary phase[115].

However, tutoring during crucial exam years can provide pupils with additional support in particular aspects of content that they may be struggling with, as well as with general exam preparation, which could help make a vital difference to the qualifications pupils achieve.

Based on a synthesis of the evidence, the Education Endowment Foundation toolkit concludes that short, regular tutoring sessions over a fixed period of time produce the best outcomes. In a further review, the authors advise that clear targets over a fixed period of time be set, and reviews undertaken if no progress is observed over a couple of weeks[116]. The optimum timing is approximately half an hour, three to five times a week, over a set period of time – for example, ten weeks or a term. However, most tutoring providers offer tutoring in weekly sessions of around one hour, as this is usually more practical.

A recent randomised trial in Italy found that disadvantaged pupils who were randomly selected for 3-6 hours of free online tutoring by university students did substantially better than their peers who were not given the same opportunity[117]. A pilot of online tutoring in England during the period of school closures due to COVID-19 found that online tutoring was both feasible and resulted in perceived benefits to learners and teachers[118]. Although the majority of learners stated that they would prefer in-person tutoring if this were to be possible going forward, they nonetheless enjoyed and felt that they benefitted from online tutoring sessions. This is promising in terms of being able to deliver tutoring in geographically hard-to-reach areas. Establishing a relationship between the tutor and tutee was particularly important (more so than with in-person tutoring) and should be made an explicit element of the tutoring format – for example, allocating time to this step. An initial in-person meeting can help with this, suggesting that some kind of blended approach may be the best solution.

In terms of subjects, whilst tutoring of any number of subjects is possible, there is more evidence around literacy and maths tutoring. Tutoring in literacy has on average resulted in bigger progress gains than maths (+6 months compared with +2 months)[119].

113 Torgerson, Bell, Coleman, Elliott, Fairhurst, Gascoine, Hewitt and Torgerson (2018)

114 educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition

115 Heckman and Mosso (2014)

116 Elliot Major and Higgins (2019)

117 Carlana and La Ferrara (2021)

118 Marshall, Bury, Wishart, Hammelsbeck and Roberts (2021)

119 educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition

A meta-analysis of US programmes suggests reading tutoring results in higher effect sizes in earlier grades, while maths tutoring yields higher effect sizes in later grades[120].

Small group tutoring can be a cost-effective way of providing tutoring. Evidence suggests that one-to-two tuition can deliver as much benefit as one-to-one tuition[121]. Beyond two pupils, results diminish and therefore the lower cost of delivery needs to be weighed against reduced effectiveness. Consideration should also be paid to other factors including the subject matter and group composition. For example, most studies involving small group tutoring have centred on reading, which may work better in small groups than other subjects. Some pupils may prefer having peers present, finding one-to-one tutoring too intense, whilst others may benefit from more individualised support. Selecting which pupils to pair or group together can increase teacher workload.

The budget required for the programme would depend on several aspects of the model. We believe a pilot to work out different possible options would be helpful in this regard. Considerations include the feasibility of integrating tutoring into a credit-bearing module or whether students might be rewarded in a different way; how tutors might be trained (for example, this could be done by non-profit tutoring providers or by academy trusts); and what roles within the university would be needed to support administration of the service.

Why have we chosen to recommend this approach?

In the South West peninsula, interventions are urgently needed to reduce the educational inequalities that currently result in the largest disadvantage attainment gaps in the country. In addition, the number of pupils receiving private tutoring outside of school hours has been rising, with an estimated quarter of state school pupils in the UK, and almost a half in London, now receiving tuition[122]. As poorer families are unable to afford this additional support, this trend risks widening disadvantage attainment gaps. This initiative would provide immediate and direct educational support to level up opportunities for disadvantaged pupils across a region.

A regional tutoring service could be a core way in which universities help to raise school attainment – an emerging aspect of national government education policy, as recently announced by the universities minister. The approach would help universities meet their civic duties and commitment to social mobility, in addition to helping to establish a culture of volunteering on their campuses. Many universities already offer a range of initiatives involving schools and local communities, aimed at widening participation. A university tutoring service would need to ensure it integrated with these other initiatives.

There is a growing sector of effective charities and social enterprises already delivering a range of successful programmes deploying students as tutors and coaches. These include Action Tutoring, IntoUniversity, Tutor Trust, CoachBright, the Tutorfair Foundation, and the Access Project among others. This charitable arm of the tutoring sector already deploys several thousand students as tutors for disadvantaged pupils. A well-designed university-led tutoring service would need to integrate well with the work of these organisations, minimising duplication and ensuring that their local expertise is leveraged. Non-profit tutoring providers could potentially provide coordination to ensure teacher workload is not increased, and work closely with schools to ensure the tutoring integrates with the work of teachers. These organisations would have a track record of supporting schools and understand the time constraints and pressures teachers are under.

120 Nickow, Oreopoulos and Quan (2020)
121 Elliot Major and Higgins (2019)
122 Jerrim (2017)

Sharper focus on disadvantage

WHAT:

This is a package of five initiatives aimed at embedding a sharper focus on disadvantage throughout the school system. The first two are national-level initiatives while the following three can be driven at a regional or local level:

- A provision in initial teacher education to ensure all teachers are trained on key elements of disadvantage
- Adjusting the Ofsted framework to ensure schools admit a fair share of disadvantaged pupils and are rated Outstanding only if they can demonstrate progress in reducing the disadvantage gap in their school
- Development of a disadvantage scorecard that all schools should complete, with data on various aspects of disadvantage within their school population and wider community
- Tasking Regional Schools Commissioners with driving the focus on disadvantage amongst schools in their region, including the sharing of best practice between schools and trusts
- Greater engagement with parents, making use of different communication channels and behavioural insights to provide information and guidance and nudge parent involvement

WHY:

There is significant variation in the ways in which schools do and don't engage with pupil disadvantage. This proposal aims to bring the practices of all schools and teachers up to the level we see in the best performing schools. It does so at multiple levels: through teachers, in the form of training and ongoing school engagement with disadvantage (initiatives 1 and 3); at the system level, through oversight and collaboration (initiatives 2 and 4); and via the school-home interface, by bringing as many parents as possible into the equation – in particular those whose current engagement is low (initiative 5). These strands are all key: we know that teachers are the most important lever in schools for improving outcomes; Ofsted inspections are highlighted by many school leaders as a key driver of their behaviour; and raising parental involvement leads to better pupil attainment.

HOW:

This recommendation is at the idea stage, and we would recommend further development of the idea to take it forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

National government:

Department for Education to introduce stronger incentives and measures in the national accountability system for schools to encourage sharper focus on disadvantage

South West:

A dedicated group of school leaders should be established to consider how our proposals can be implemented in the region

What is it? How does it work?

This initiative targets key elements of the education system to bring about a sharper focus on disadvantage to better support the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. It aims to ensure that:

- Addressing disadvantage is front and centre of educational practice, rather than an additional consideration;

- All school leaders and teachers have a wide understanding of disadvantage that goes beyond economic disadvantage to include the multiple barriers to good outcomes that children and young people might be facing;

- The work that all schools do around disadvantage is brought up to the exemplary levels seen in some schools.

We propose five key ways in which this sharper focus can be achieved. The first two are national-level initiatives while the following three can be driven at a regional or local level.

1. **Initial teacher education.** Teachers should be trained on key elements of disadvantage, for example through a module in the Early Career Framework. This training should ensure teachers develop a nuanced and complex understanding of disadvantage that avoids oversimplification, deficit models and negative stereotyping. It should provide practical steps teachers can take to identify and understand disadvantage amongst their pupils, reduce practices that are detrimental to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (such as low expectations), and reflect on ways in which teachers and schools can better support disadvantaged pupils.

2. **Adjusting the Ofsted framework.** The accountability system, comprised of school 'league tables' and Ofsted assessments, are high-stakes and serve to influence school leaders' behaviour[123]. This can sometimes result in perverse incentives and gaming behaviours that negatively impact on disadvantaged pupils – for example, schools reducing their intake of disadvantaged pupils[124]. Combatting some of these negative incentives and behaviours should be a priority. Taking a school's context into account and ensuring it is admitting a fair share of disadvantaged pupils could be incorporated into Ofsted's remit.

   Further, the imperative to tackle disadvantage could be made stronger. Current Ofsted guidance states that a school should be achieving for 'all its pupils, including the most disadvantaged pupils'[125]. In better-rated schools, both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils attain more highly – but the disadvantage gap remains the same irrespective of a school's rating[126]. Closing the disadvantage gap could become a key performance indicator, with Ofsted giving Outstanding ratings only if schools can demonstrate progress in reducing the disadvantage gap in their school.

3. **School disadvantage scorecard.** To enable all schools to better understand disadvantage amongst their pupils and the wider community the school serves, we propose developing a disadvantage scorecard that all schools should complete. The scorecard would include a wide range of indicators beyond just pupil premium numbers, such as area-level occupational and educational data, weighted health indicators relevant to educational outcomes, access to transport, and so on. The scorecard would help bring to school leaders' and teachers' attention different types of disadvantage that might exist in the community. This type of data has limitations and should never replace the knowledge teachers gain from knowing their pupils, parents and the wider community on a personal and everyday basis. But it would nevertheless be a good starting point for in-school discussions and training – to be used in complement with teachers' everyday experiences. We are working with Reach Foundation on developing a simple scorecard that all schools could use.

4. **Sharing of best practice between schools.** Bringing all schools up to the level of best practice seen in some schools could have a significant impact. Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) should be tasked with driving the focus on disadvantage amongst schools and academy trusts in their region. This will be helped by more schools moving to the multi-academy trust model. RSCs should ensure all schools and academy trusts have a dedicated senior leader responsible for addressing disadvantage and a vision and plan in place for doing so. Driving area-wide collaboration between schools and trusts to address disadvantage collectively should become a key performance indicator. Whilst many collaborative efforts currently exist, there is scope for this to become the norm for all schools and trusts in all areas across the country. This should particularly benefit more isolated schools in coastal and rural areas.

5. **Engagement with parents.** As the biggest single influence on children's outcomes, the role of parents and carers has not been given sufficient systematic support. Further, the English education system is premised on choice, yet access to information and guidance is often limited and favours parents 'in the know'[127]. A range of engagement activities should be developed to offer information, guidance and skills to parents throughout children's lives, and especially around transition points. These should optimise different channels of communication and behavioural insights to take into account barriers to engagement such as parental time pressures, parents' own poor educational experiences and limited language skills. For example, before having to make primary or secondary school choices, parents and pupils could be given short pamphlets or video links with accessible Ofsted summaries of local schools, and text message prompts just before school open days with a list of questions they could ask at these. Parents could also be given guidance and prompts on how to support their children's learning in the home environment, such as promoting twenty minutes of daily reading together[128].

123 Wilson, Croxson and Atkinson (2006); Ehren, Perryman and Spours (2014)

124 De Wolf and Janssens (2007)

125 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook#overall-effectiveness

126 Education Endowment Foundation (2018)

127 De Wolf and Janssens (2007)

128 Elliot Major (2021) covers evidence on what parents might do to help their children's learning at home

What is the evidence?

Between and within-school variation tell us that schools and teachers can and do matter to pupils' attainment[129]. Whilst teaching quality is essential to achieving good educational outcomes[130], focusing on improving classroom teaching in and of itself does not reduce attainment gaps. A gaping achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their better-off peers exists in schools ranging from Inadequate to Outstanding[131].

Unsurprisingly, there is significant variation in the ways in which schools do or don't engage with pupil disadvantage. Firstly, understandings of disadvantage can be narrow. A recent Ofsted report suggests that some local authorities, schools and early years providers view disadvantage only in economic terms – in other words, according to Free School Meal status or eligibility for state benefits – whereas *"the most effective schools and settings visited had a much wider definition of disadvantage"*, which recognised *"the unique circumstances surrounding an individual child, group of children or family"*[132].

Narrow and fixed views of disadvantage can also lead to schools labelling and limiting their expectations for pupils categorised as such. For example, a report looking at best practice to support the attainment of disadvantaged pupils found that: *"More successful schools viewed supporting disadvantaged pupils as their responsibility and saw it as part of their commitment to help each pupil succeed. They treated each pupil as an individual with specific challenges and needs, whereas less successful schools tended to view their disadvantaged pupils as a group whose home environment and lack of access to opportunities limited their chances of success."*[133]

Practices that schools and teachers engage in can reduce or compound the effects of disadvantages experienced in the home or community environments. For example, some setting processes at school can serve to disadvantage pupils from certain backgrounds through – amongst other factors – teacher bias and misallocation to group, low expectations and poorer teaching quality in lower sets, consequent pupil perceptions of their own ability, and a self-fulfilling prophecy[134].

Whilst there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to closing the attainment gap, best bets for practices that successful schools have in common include:

- Having a broad understanding of disadvantage at the level of individual pupil experience

- Setting a culture of high expectations for all pupils

- Understanding how schools can make a difference

- Intelligent analysis and accountability to drive provision

- A professional improvement culture that invests in staff development

- A culture of shared accountability for student achievement

- High investment in familial support and engagement[135]

There needs to be an explicit focus on disadvantage that involves teachers both knowing and knowing how to engage all of their pupils (and parents). This can be achieved through initial teacher training and ongoing engagement with disadvantage in schools facilitated through data.

Ofsted represents an important tool in directing school leaders' and teachers' attention and resources. Studies show that what is measured has a significant impact on school behaviours, and the Ofsted framework is therefore a key means by which better support for disadvantaged pupils can be incentivised throughout the system[136].

For schools that have successfully embedded measures that support disadvantaged pupils' attainment, continued development should involve learning from and contributing to national networks, as well as working with neighbouring schools to raise standards. There is evidence that school collaboration has positive effects on teachers and teaching, and professional development (but limited evidence of a direct effect on student outcomes)[137]. In areas like the South West peninsula, where schools are more likely to be dispersed over wider areas and accessing continuous professional development may be more difficult and costly, peer-to-peer support and networks may be particularly beneficial.

129 Strand (2016); Husbands and Pearce (2012)

130 For example, https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-improvement-planning/1-high-quality-teaching

131 See Education Endowment Foundation (2018)
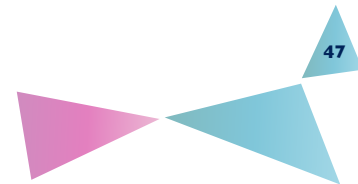
132 Ofsted (2016) pp.12

133 Macleod, Sharp, Bernardinelli, Skipp and Higgins (2015) pp.89-90

134 Francis and Wong (2013)

135 Cockerill, Grieveson, Bingham and Higgins (2021)

136 Wilson, Croxson and Atkinson (2006); Ehren, Perryman and Spours (2014)

137 Armstrong, Brown and Chapman (2020)

Shared history, geography and demographics are enabling factors in effective collaboration suggesting that pursuing collaboration at the regional and local level makes most sense[138].

Finally, if the current education system in England – premised on the notion of parental choice – is to be more effective, more needs to be done to foster all parents' understanding, empowerment and inclusion. The publishing of school performance data is intended to promote school choice and incentivise leaders to improve their schools, however the extent to which parents can and do make use of this data is unclear[139]. Finding ways of communicating effectively with parents and meaningfully engaging them in the education system is vital.

A systematic review found indicative evidence that interventions to increase parental involvement can be effective in raising child attainment[140]. This is significant, since the same reviewers found insufficient evidence to determine causality in the case of twelve other attitudinal and behavioural factors, including parental expectations, parenting styles, individual aspirations, self-concept/self-esteem and participation in extra-curricular activities and paid work[141]. Interventions that encouraged and/or trained parents to mentor, read, do homework or engage in classroom activities with their children were effective. Some recent programmes that make use of behavioural insights are promising because of their relative low cost and scalability. Rather than trying to persuade parents of the potential long-term benefits of reading, the interventions nudge behaviour directly through text message reminders, commitment devices and rewards[142].

Why have we chosen to recommend this approach?

This initiative embeds into the schools system the use of data, practices that nudge behaviour, incentives and collaboration. Recent studies have shown how these measures can effect positive outcomes at relatively low cost. Data is becoming increasingly widely available across different social domains, while nudge interventions have increasingly been the topic of research. There is already promising work happening through existing school-to-school networks – for example, in the South West peninsula through the South West MAT leaders network (which focuses on inclusive teaching and pedagogy) and the Plymouth Commission (a collaboration between 19 secondary schools in Plymouth to tackle Plymouth's very large Key Stage 4 disadvantage gap).

The above measures could be especially useful in regions like the South West peninsula, where low pupil premium numbers may mean disadvantage passes under the radar, and isn't effectively addressed. Development of a disadvantage scorecard should serve to raise awareness in schools about the multiple barriers to good attainment that children and families in an area might be facing. Meanwhile, the region's high level of academisation means the Regional Schools Commissioner can play a strong role in driving a focus on disadvantage and promoting beneficial collaborations amongst all schools and trusts.

Early career teacher training on disadvantage and changes to the Ofsted framework are levers at the national level that would complement initiatives that could be developed locally.

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138 Ibid.

139 De Wolf and Janssens (2007)

140 See and Gorard (2015)

141 Gorard, See and Davies (2012)

142 For example, Barone, Fougère and Martel (2020); Mayer, Kalil, Oreopoulos and Gallegos (2019)

Post-16 skills reform

WHAT:

This proposal is for stakeholders in the South West peninsula to build on current national skills reforms to make the peninsula a leading region for higher technical education. The proposal includes:

- Creating a shared ambition amongst stakeholders to make the peninsula a leading region for technical skills and apprenticeships;
- Ensuring high quality technical pathways are promoted across schools, academy trusts, colleges and universities, and with the help of third sector organisations;
- Making a serious commitment to flexible learning through for example:
  - The creation of modular course structures transferrable between institutions;
  - Off-season and compressed courses;
  - Options for blended learning, including study space and student support at secondary schools in remote areas without post-16 provision;
- Ensuring young people are prioritised in public transport reforms;
- A free travel pass for 16-19 year olds, and transport training in all schools.

WHY:

The Government's skills reform agenda recognises that there is a large and growing higher technical skills gap in the UK. Technical skills pathways are often complicated to navigate and seen as an unattractive option, despite the potentially high returns available to higher technical skills (Levels 4 and 5). Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds can find enrolling and sustaining participation in a course of further study or training costly and risky, especially relative to finding immediate employment. With high performing colleges, good college-university links, relatively high numbers of apprenticeships starts, and an Institute of Technology, the South West peninsula is well-placed to take advantage of the Government's skills reform agenda. With the right level of shared ambition across key stakeholders and a detailed understanding of the barriers disadvantaged young people face when considering their post-16 options, the peninsula could become a leading region for technical education.

HOW:

This recommendation is at the idea stage, and we would recommend further development of the idea to take it forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

National government:

Government to make significant regional investment in the South West to create a series of hubs for technical skills

South West:

Schools, colleges, universities, employers and local authorities to develop a coordinated plan to create hubs for technical skills

What is it? How does it work?

This is a proposal for key organisations in the South West peninsula to build on current national skills reforms to make the peninsula a leading region for higher technical education.

The Government's recent (2021) *Skills for Jobs* white paper sets out reforms to post-16 technical education and training[143], drawing on recommendations from the 2019 independent *Review of post-18 education and funding* (the Augar Review)[144]. These documents also build on the 2016 *Post-16 skills plan*[145] and *Independent report on technical education* (the Sainsbury Report)[146], the 2012 *Richard Review of Apprenticeships*[147] and 2011 *Review of Vocational Education* (the Wolf Report)[148].

Current reforms set out to make technical pathways an attractive alternative to academic pathways by bringing clarity to, and raising the status of, technical qualifications – for example, through Local Skills Improvement Plans, employer-led standards on Higher Technical qualifications and Higher and Degree Apprenticeships, Institutes of Technology (IoTs) and A level-equivalent T levels. They also address funding disparities and propose a lifelong learning offer equivalent to four years of full-time post-18 education to enable more flexible learning throughout people's adult lives.

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143 Department for Education (2021)

144 Department for Education (2019)

145 Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Department for Education (2016)

146 Independent panel on Technical Education (2016)

147 Richard (2012)

148 Wolf (2011)

These skills reforms represent a strong opportunity for the South West peninsula. Whilst at an early stage of development and therefore a preliminary set of ideas only, we propose the following:

- Creating a shared ambition amongst stakeholders, including regional businesses and business groups, universities, colleges, schools, local authorities and third sector organisations, to make the peninsula a leading region for technical education and apprenticeships – this complements Government proposals for Local Skills Improvement Plans;

- Ensuring high quality technical pathways are promoted across schools, academy trusts, colleges and universities, and with the help of third sector organisations including careers and jobs services – as proposed in the Skills for Jobs white paper;

- Making a serious commitment to flexible learning through:

  - The creation of modular course structures transferrable between institutions – helping to pioneer proposals set out in the Skills for Jobs white paper;

  - Off-season and compressed courses that fit around the seasonal nature of work in the peninsula, enabling disadvantaged young people to combine work and study over the course of a year;

  - Options for blended learning, including for example provisions for study space and student support at secondary schools in remote areas without post-16 provision, with students able to split their time between online learning in school and in-person learning at a further education college further afield (reducing students' weekly commuting time, but increasing the support – peer, technical and pastoral – to aid distance learning);

- Ensuring young people are prioritised in public transport reforms including new bus service improvement plans. Where bus routes are unviable, alternative travel options should be made available to young people on apprenticeships and enrolled at college, such as moped or electric bike provision or demand-responsive transport;

- A free travel pass for 16-19 year olds (possibly trialled for apprentices only), potentially sponsored by business, as is the case in Greater Manchester. Transport training in schools should become the norm.

In many left behind areas, the incentives for young people to invest in further education or training will be outweighed by alternative options. Working provides immediate returns; casual work can be attractive where it offers cash in hand. By contrast, enrolling and sustaining participation in a course of further study or training can be costly and risky, in terms of the time investment, commitment and lost earnings involved. Increasing the opportunities for flexible learning and making travel easier and cheaper would reduce this risk and cost, with the potential to deliver high returns on investment over the longer term, when considering the lifetime earnings effects of higher level qualifications.

What is the evidence?

The reports cited above set out the case for change. They draw attention to the limited numbers of young people attaining valuable higher level technical skills, relative to both commensurate academic qualifications and low level technical and vocational qualifications. Disadvantaged students are more likely to pursue technical and vocational pathways and are more likely to do so through a further education rather than higher education institution. Disparities in funding and levels of qualification offered mean disadvantaged students are more likely to be in less well funded institutions and be working towards lower level qualifications that may offer poor returns in the jobs market. As well as a lack of equity, the reports highlight the effects of higher technical skills gaps on the economy.

The Augar review argues that there is a huge and growing imbalance between the funding, clout and cachet attaching to higher education versus further education that both underserves those taking further education routes and potentially over channels young people into higher education[149]. Perverse incentives drive both providers and learners towards immediate, full-time Level 6 qualifications despite possible oversupply in the economy – 30% of graduates are in roles that don't require a graduate qualification. Simultaneously, despite consistent unmet demand from employers for Level 4 and 5 technical qualifications, there is a massive undersupply in the market, particularly in STEM subjects.

149   Department for Education (2019)

Only 4% of young people achieve a qualification at higher technical level by the age of 25. According to the Skills for Jobs white paper, this is despite the fact that: "*technical courses can lead to better career outcomes for those who follow them, with men with a higher technical (level 4) qualification earning on average £5,100 more at age 30, and women with a higher technical (level 5) qualification earning £2,700 more at age 30, than those with a degree (level 6)*"[150].

As is the case elsewhere in the country, there is evidence of a skills problem in the South West peninsula, including low supply of and demand for skills in many areas (as discussed earlier in this report). There is also evidence of a mismatch between the subjects in which qualifications are being obtained compared with job vacancies in the region, including shortages in health and social care, manufacturing and skilled trades. Nevertheless, forecasts suggest there will be growing demand for both managerial and higher technical skills (L4+) as automation and digitisation accelerate. Big data, health technologies, agri-food, environment, marine, aerospace, defence, space and energy are cited as key growth areas by business groups[151].

Flexible learning – typically used to describe e-learning and blended learning – has been analysed in various studies[152]. Benefits include students being able to study at their own pace and fit study around work, childcare and other commitments. Several studies express concern about the uncritically positive way in which the term 'flexible' is used (typically implying a student-centred course design), when oftentimes flexibility is limited and learners bear additional responsibilities if they are to gain successful outcomes. E-learning and blended learning can also suffer from various difficulties including issues with technology access, lack of a student peer network and peer learning opportunities, low tutor contact time, and problems in maintaining learning momentum. However, careful course design, responsive pedagogies and additional support structures can lead to successful outcomes. Our proposal builds on these ideas – although more research is needed into what would be most beneficial to students in rural and remote parts of the peninsula looking to pursue further education or training.

Improving transport access is also vital. Access to transport and social exclusion go hand in hand. Research notes the spatial mismatch between the housing of low income populations and the location of employment and other service destinations, which places an additional financial and temporal burden on low income residents[153]. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are particularly underserved, with no national support for 16-19 travel, despite the requirement for young people to remain in education or training at this age. College bursary schemes can be complex, onerous and inflexible, with eligibility thresholds low; those pursuing other pathways such as apprenticeships may receive little or no support.

Programmes from various areas provide evidence that addressing these issues is feasible. For example, the Merseyside Objective One programme addressed exclusion through a people-centred focus, such as dedicated *Joblink* buses, flexibly routed to take jobseekers to interviews and training; a Workwise initiative to assist local people with travel information and a low-cost scooter or bike loan in the first month after securing a job; and *Neighbourhood Travel Teams* to provide travel advice and assistance in local job centres, including a personalised travel plan, travel training and a free bus pass. These initiatives targeted six priority groups that included 16-19 year olds and adult jobseekers. Key to the programme's success was the lead role and strategic planning undertaken by the local transport authority, Merseytravel; partnership working with a range of regional agencies; voluntary and community links to ensure people's transport needs were being met; and significant financial resources put into the scheme[154]. In Manchester, the 'Our Pass' scheme provides young people with free bus travel across Greater Manchester, as well as access and discounts to leisure and work-oriented events. The scheme is part funded by local business sponsorship.

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150   Department for Education (2021), pp.6

151   https://heartofswlep.co.uk/growing-our-economy/local-industrial-strategy/; https://cioslep.com/case-study/local-industry-strategy/

152   See for example Andrade and Alden-Rivers (2019); Loon (2022); Müller and Mildenberger (2021); Department for Education (2021)

153   See for example Lucas (2013); Kenyon (2011)

154   Lucas (2013)

Why have we chosen to recommend this approach?

Addressing low progression rates to L3+ qualifications is the other side of the coin needed to improve social mobility in the South West, in complement to raising school attainment. In regions like the South West peninsula, it is clear that there are significant barriers to young people progressing in education and training beyond GCSE. Reducing some of these barriers is urgently required.

There is a good opportunity to take the lead in the move towards a lifelong learning model and sector reforms, and the South West is well placed to take advantage. The region has a number of high-performing colleges with strong links to local universities, and collaborations that tie in with the Heart of the South West (Devon and Somerset) and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Local Industrial Strategies[155]. A recently established Institute of Technology (SWIoT) focuses on digital and engineering, with foundation degrees, HNDs and HNCs, and degree, advanced and higher apprenticeships offered via a range of education partners and employers across Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. A data analytics 'skills accelerator' developed across the city of Exeter has also been adopted by the Heart of the South West LEP area as part of its Local Industrial strategy.

Meanwhile, COVID has accelerated many educational providers' moves towards digital and blended learning, with online lessons and learning platforms giving learners access to materials before and after lessons. Whilst these moves have brought up issues of access and engagement, they have also led to innovative and community solutions being found, including shared spaces for digital access and provision of free take-home devices.

In terms of transport, the government's new Bus Strategy represents an opportunity for local transport authorities to prioritise access for disadvantaged young people[156]. A key challenge local governments have faced has been their inability to adequately effect change in commercially operated public transport systems. New monetary incentives and the requirement for bus companies and local transport authorities to work together to produce bus service improvement plans means this is now a possibility. In particular, the strategy notes that improvements are needed to make bus transport a viable means of getting to work or college, and that for rural areas services may need to be more frequent and comprehensive. Given the huge impact – to both individual lives and the economy – to be gained from a young person being able to upskill or get onto a higher-earning career trajectory early on, young people need to be prioritised in these reforms.

There is a good opportunity to deliver user-centric public transport in the South West peninsula via Peninsula Transport – a collaboration between Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay local transport authorities. The collaboration offers potential for a joined-up regional approach that matches transport provision to housing areas and nearby jobs and service hubs, irrespective of local authority boundaries.

155 heartofswlep.co.uk/growing-our-economy/local-industrial-strategy; cioslep.com/case-study/local-industry-strategy
156 Department for Transport (2021)

6 Conclusion

Improving social mobility through education

This report is concerned with ensuring that people can live decent lives in the areas in which they are born and grow up, as well as move elsewhere if they choose.

Crucially, this requires that all children and young people are provided with the educational opportunities that enable them to thrive at learning, build confidence and gain good qualifications.

Children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are too often being 'left behind' in education, and nowhere more so than in parts of the South West.

Action is needed to address the barriers created by disadvantage. These barriers exist within and beyond the education system, but our focus is on what can be done to level up through education.

Next steps

In collaboration with key organisations, we are taking forward our proposals. We will be:

1) Working with Reach Foundation and five schools (including two in the South West peninsula) to evaluate the barriers and enablers to setting up cradle to career models. The aim is to develop a set of guidance materials for other schools/trusts and policy makers interested in the approach. We are also working with Reach on developing a score card that could be used by schools to collect data around disadvantage amongst their pupils and wider communities

2) Working with the University of Exeter to develop a tutoring pilot to work out how quality assurance for schools, pupils and student tutors can be embedded through a credit-bearing module. The aim is to then scale up at Exeter University and share the model amongst all universities and policy makers

3) Working with a dedicated group of school leaders across the South West to consider how our proposals around a sharper focus on disadvantage in schools can be implemented in the region

4) Engaging in lobbying for relevant policy change and funding at a national level

5) Looking to bring together relevant organisations to take forward our post-16 skills proposal

A call to action

This report is intended as a call to action. As the government launches its plan for levelling up the UK, there has never been a better time for organisations in the South West to come together to challenge the region's deep-seated social mobility issues, and what has become the status quo in the region for too long.

This is also a great opportunity for national government to support practical work being undertaken to level up. We hope this report will be just the start of the vital work needed to level up the educational playing field across the South West peninsula and elsewhere. The ultimate aim is to improve thousands of young lives now and for the future.

Appendix

Summary of regional intergenerational social mobility studies

Study	Class background	Age range	Region	Type of mobility	Measure	Observation year	Rank vs. other regions
Friedman and Macmillan (2017)	All	25-60	South West	Absolute upward occupational mobility	% of population experiencing any upward mobility	2015	17/19
				Absolute downward occupational mobility	% of population experiencing any downward mobility	2015	2/19
				Relative mobility to top two occupational classes	Odds ratio between children with parents from top two classes and parents from any other class	2015	5/19
Bell, Blundell and Machin (2019)	Low-status occupational background	28-37	Cornwall	Absolute upward occupational mobility	Average rank of children whose fathers ranked in the 25th percentile	1991	34/35
						2001	26/35
						2011	19/35
			Devon	Absolute upward occupational mobility	Average rank of children whose fathers ranked in the 25th percentile	1991	28/35
						2001	24/35
						2011	34/35
			Dorset and Somerset	Absolute upward occupational mobility	Average rank of children whose fathers ranked in the 25th percentile	1991	31/35
						2001	25/35
						2011	12/35
Social Mobility Commission (2020)	Free School Meals (FSM) status	28	South West local authority districts	Absolute upwards earnings mobility	Median earnings of FSM sons	2014-2016	Various – most in middle quintiles
	Top and bottom quintile socio-economic status (SES)			Relative upwards earnings mobility	Earnings gap between sons of top and bottom quintile parent SES within an area	2014-2016	Various – most in middle or better quintiles
Social Mobility Commission (2017)	N/A – area-level indicators rather than individual	Various, split by life stage	South West local authority districts	Index proxying potential social mobility	Composite of various area-level indicators	2016	Various. West Somerset 324/324

Intergenerational social mobility studies in more detail

In Friedman and Macmillan's (2017) analysis of occupational mobility for those aged 25 to 60 in 2015[157], the South West ranks 3rd worst of 19 regions for absolute upward mobility[158]. This outcome is similar whether looking at adults currently living in the South West or those who grew up and stayed in the region only (i.e. irrespective of migration effects). Absolute downward mobility was also high for those born in and living in the region (2nd highest of 19

regions), suggesting the region had fewer opportunities than other areas for individuals to improve their occupational position relative to their parents.

The study also gives an indication of relative mobility as measured by the odds of ending up in the top two classes if one is from the top two classes compared to the odds of ending up in the top two classes from any lower class. On this measure, the South West ranks 5th best of 19

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157 Friedman and Macmillan (2017) measure occupational mobility using data from the Understanding Society and Labour Force Survey panel surveys. Those surveyed are aged between 25 and 60, and assessment is of individuals' occupations and parental occupation at age 14, stratified into NS-SEC classes, where parental occupation is obtained through a question in the survey. For robustness, the authors check actual parental occupation through linked records for a smaller subsection of the data, and find survey answers to be robust. Total sample size is 17,101 participants across 19 regions from Understanding Society and 53,601 from the Labour Force Survey. Assessment is done on the basis of participants' region of destination (i.e. where they are working now), with region of origin (where participants were born) also included to enable the effects of migration on mobility to be inferred

regions, suggesting a lower reproduction of privilege than in many other regions. However, this measure is restricted to movement to the top two classes and gives little insight into relative mobility elsewhere in the distribution, including potential 'stickiness' at the bottom of the occupational ladder.

Bell, Blundell and Machin's (2019) work gives further insight into occupational mobility in the region[159], including a view on mobility for a more disadvantaged set of individuals whose fathers' occupations were in the 25th percentile nationally[160]. It also provides separate data for Devon, Cornwall and Dorset and Somerset and gives a view on change over time through the outcomes of different birth cohorts in 1991, 2001 and 2011[161].

For individuals from more disadvantaged backgrounds, we generally see poor upward occupational mobility compared with other regions, except for Dorset and Somerset and Cornwall for the latest cohort (born in 1974 – 1983).

In 1991, for a cohort born between 1954 and 1963, Cornwall ranked 2nd worst of 35 areas for upward mobility, Dorset and Somerset 5th worst and Devon 8th worst. In 2001, for a cohort born between 1964 and 1973, there was a relative improvement but the peninsula remained a worse place to grow up disadvantaged than many other areas, ranking 10th, 11th and 12th worst of 35 areas. In 2011, for a cohort born between 1974 and 1983, we see a divergence: Dorset and Somerset ranked 12th best of 35 areas, Cornwall placed roughly in the middle of the distribution, but Devon ranked 2nd worst, above only Cumbria. What this means is that children of lower-occupation fathers in the suburbs of London were more than twice as likely to have reached the top occupations than children of similar fathers in Cumbria or Devon.

The Social Mobility Commission's (2020) report tracks the earnings of individuals aged 28 in the mid-2010s (born between 1986 and 1988) who were eligible for Free

School Meals (FSM) aged 16[162]. Whilst this doesn't give an exact intergenerational comparison of earnings, it enables geographic comparison of earnings for a set of children of low-earning parents. It also proxies relative mobility within an area by comparing the adult earnings of children whose parents were in the top and bottom quintiles of socio-economic status (SES).

The data suggests no strong regional patterning, with 'hotspots' and 'coldspots' distributed across the country. Across the South West peninsula, median earnings vary from £10,000 in West Devon (bottom quintile nationally) to £17,700 in West Somerset (top quintile nationally). However, the majority of local authorities are in the middle of the national distribution, with median incomes between £12,600 and £16,700. The gap in earnings between sons from the top and bottom of parent SES is relatively small for most local authorities across the peninsula, suggesting good relative mobility. However, given that this is a within-area comparison, it is just as likely that this is driven by low potential earnings all round, rather than by strong upwards mobility. Poor earnings in the region generally would support this.

Finally, whilst not actually measuring intergenerational social mobility, the Social Mobility Index aims to provide an indication of potential mobility for current generations through a series of area-level proxies[163]. The Index ranks local authorities across the country according to how well they perform on a combination of area-level indicators for education quality, youth and adult outcomes. The South West peninsula generally performs poorly, although with better performance in the better-connected south and east of Devon. West Somerset's position at the bottom of the Index led to it being selected as one of twelve Opportunity Areas, designated specific funding and support to improve outcomes for children and young people[164].

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158 The authors calculate the percentage of the population experiencing any upward intergenerational mobility for each region – a measure of absolute upward mobility

159 Bell, Blundell and Machin (2019) use linked 1% census and life events data to assess the occupational class, higher education and home ownership status of 3 birth cohorts (those born in 54-63, 64-73 and 74-83) and that of their parents, based on the region in which they grew up. Participants are aged between 28 and 37 on assessment, with an average age of 32. Parental assessment is based on when the child was aged between 8 and 17, with an average age of 12. Occupational class and parental occupational class are ranked using the CAMSIS scale. Cohorts typically contain around 60,000 participants. A benefit of using linked census data is the accuracy of results, since it does not rely on participant recall of parental occupation (which panel surveys do)

160 Conditional expected rank at the 25th percentile gives the average occupational rank of those whose fathers are close to the bottom of the occupational distribution. It is a measure of absolute upward mobility at the sub-national level for those from more disadvantaged backgrounds as measured through parental occupation. Fathers' occupations are used as there are fewer data gaps. Mothers' occupations are also used to cross-check and findings prove to be robust

161 The authors base their geographical analysis on Eurostat NUTS 2 definitions, of which there are 35. For our purposes, Devon and Cornwall are delineated separately, while Somerset is combined with Dorset

162 The report estimates earnings mobility using the LEO dataset that links school and university learner records with HMRC and DWP earnings, employment and benefits data. Only sons are included in the sample, because the data does not include participation rates or hours worked, where lower female participation rates and higher female part-time working skews results. Parental SES is derived from individual-level disadvantage aged 16 (eligibility for Free School Meals) and area-level deprivation measures. Three birth cohorts (1986, 1987 and 1988) are examined, based on earliest and latest available data, meaning sons' earnings are assessed when they are aged 28 in 2013/4 to 2016/7. One disadvantage to the data is that age 28 is still relatively young to assess earnings, as occupational maturity may not yet have been reached. The report also looks at the same sons' educational attainment at KS4 in the years 2001/2 to 2003/4, to estimate the contribution of educational attainment to earnings. Area comparison is based on where sons grew up

163 The Social Mobility Index (2016) is a composite index with breakdowns across four life stages: early years, school, youth and adult outcomes. Indicators used include, for children, the proportion of Ofsted-rated Good and Outstanding educational providers and proportion of disadvantaged children achieving expected levels of attainment in an area; and for adults, median salaries, proportions of managerial/professional and low-waged work, house price affordability and home ownership

164 The Index was compiled when West Somerset was a separate local authority district. It has since combined with Taunton Deane to become Somerset West and Taunton

Funding

An analysis of local authority revenue expenditure in 2021-22 suggests that peninsula local authorities spent relatively less than many other local authorities on education and preventative children's social care (with only Devon close to the median)[165]. This appears to be driven both by relatively low total per population service expenditure budgets (except Torbay and Isles of Scilly) and a relatively larger proportion of spend on adult social care (except Isles of Scilly), which may be attributable in part to the peninsula's ageing population. In Torbay, a relatively high amount is spent on education and children's social care when taking into account statutory services, mainly driven by spending on looked after children and safeguarding.

	LA budget (£/head)	Rank	Children's services - selected (£/child)	Rank	Children's services – selected (% of budget)	Rank	Adult services (% of budget)	Rank	Children's services – all (£/child)	Rank	Children's services - all (% of budget)	Rank
Isles of Scilly	2411	149	708	1	5	2	19	32	758	1	6	2
Plymouth	1195	18	1768	17	34	22	30	143	2527	23	49	25
Cornwall	1220	26	1926	23	33	21	29	139	2281	12	39	7
Torbay	1437	70	2275	45	32	19	26	118	3744	97	53	55
Somerset	1185	16	2287	47	42	51	27	125	2984	49	54	64
Devon	1254	33	2679	71	44	64	30	145	3321	68	54	60
Median	1441	75	2753	75	45	75	23	75	3365	75	56	75

Notes:

Rank (1 = worst; 150 = best, of 150 local authorities)

1. LA budget = Total local authority service expenditure per population (all)

2. Children's services (£/head) = £ spending per 0-19 population on education and preventative children's social care (defined below)

3. Children's services (% of budget) = % of LA service expenditure on education and preventative children's social care

4. Adult services (% of budget) = % of LA service expenditure on adult social care

5. Children's services – all (£/child) = £ spending per 0-19 population on education and all children's social care (defined below)

6. Children's services - all (% of budget) = % of LA service expenditure on education and all children's social care

Preventative children's social care

We have used expenditure on certain elements of children's social care to drive our analysis (columns 4-7), in order to try to capture local authorities' spend on non-statutory preventative services (the elements most likely to be squeezed by insufficient funding).

The categories we have included (which may not fully align with provision of non-statutory services) are:

1. Sure start children's centres/flying start and early years

2. Other children and family services

3. Family support services

4. Services for young people

All children's social care

In the final columns (10-13), we include all elements of children's social care, which include the above plus:

5. Children looked after

6. Youth justice

7. Safeguarding children and young people's services

8. Asylum seekers

Whilst these may also be squeezed by insufficient budgets, they are to a greater extent driven by numbers of children requiring support, due to local authorities' statutory duties.

We use 2020 population estimates provided by NOMIS to calculate per population and per 0-19 population figures.

Ranking is by the 150 English local authorities for which data was available.

165 Data from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2021-to-2022-budget-individual-local-authority-data (2021) and NOMIS population estimates (2022); analysis own

Comparison of some place-based programmes in the US and UK

|	Harlem Children's Zone	Strive Partnership	West London Zone	Reach Feltham	Opportunity Areas
Where, when and who	USA – Harlem, New York. Piloted in 1990s. Started in 1997 as 24 blocks; now 14,000+ youth and 14,000+ adults across 97 blocks. Later rolled out across 20 US states as Obama's 'Promise Neighbourhoods' programme	USA – Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. Started in 2006 by a group of local leaders partnering with three school districts. StriveTogether network founded in 2011 and now supporting nearly 70 communities across the US	UK – West London, various boroughs. Piloted in 2015. Launched in September 2016 in partnership with 132 children and families, 3 schools and 12 charities; now 1,000+ young people in 32 school settings (age 2-18)	UK – Feltham, London. 2012 – Reach Academy all-through free school; 2018 – finalised Reach Children's Hub. Now partnering with various schools across the UK to support set up of their own cradle to career models and children's hubs	UK – 12 local authority districts chosen due to poor social mobility, regional spread and type of area (rural, coastal, former industrial). 3-year programme started in 2017, extended to 2022; currently looking to establish legacy
Key delivery mechanism	Neighbourhood-wide network of programmes and services for children, families and communities, including 2 Promise Academies (opened in 2004/05) with wraparound services (open to those living within and outside of the Zone), and community services available to anyone living within the Zone	Backbone organisation that convenes local partners and provides a framework for measuring progress across various life-stage milestones. Focus is on sharing data to target investment to local practices already getting better results for youth, and coaching to build capacity	Provides Link Workers based in schools to work 1-to-1 with selected children, providing a 2-year individual support plan and linking them with charities in the community. Works closely with schools and 40 local delivery partners; commissions partners to address gaps	Reach Academy: 2 all-through (age 2-18) academies with wraparound services for pupils. Children's Hub and Convening Project: convenes partners and provides delivery of programmes and services to children and families in Feltham – accessed through the academies, walk-ins, local authority referrals and outreach	Local board with independent chair working together with local DfE delivery unit develops plan and organises delivery through local schools, colleges, EY providers, and other local partners including Careers and Enterprise Company, National Citizens Service, and local businesses
Key initiatives within the programme	Baby College; Harlem Gems; Peacemakers; Community Center; Center for Higher Education and Career Support; Healthy Harlem	Varies across communities, but includes initiatives like youth voice events; community boards; parent coaches and advocates; lobbying; and paid fellowships	Link Worker 1-to-1 support; Delivery partners provide counselling, academic support, work experience, and sports, arts and other opportunities	Family Support; Birth & Beyond; Early Learning Community; Community Farm; Girls Group; Feltham Futures; Adult Education	Initiatives across 4 life stages: Early Years, School, 16-19 and Careers that includes school / home-based interventions, professional development and service join-up
Funding model	Harlem: 77% private grants and contributions (~$125M); 6% government grants (~$10M), with c.$80M spent on programmes in 2019/20	In 2019, StriveTogether (network) revenue was $16M ($15M from grants). Network members typically identify with an anchor organisation (United Way: 28%; standalone: 25%; foundation: 24%; other 16%; HE: 6%; government: 1%) who commits to being fiscal agent	Each child supported by their local council topped up with support from central government, their school and philanthropy	Academy started through Free Schools programme; funding for programmes and hub (now separate) from various foundations including Place2Be (original funder)	Initial £72M split equally across 12 Opportunity Areas (OAs) (£2M per area per year); £18M funding in years 4 and 5 (£1.5M per area per year) – totalling £9M per OA over 5 years

Comparison of some non-profit organisations offering tutoring within the South West

Organisation	Model	National capacity in 2019/20	South West coverage	Provision	Tutors
CoachBright	Social mobility charity aiming to widen university access for high potential pupils from low-income families	1400 pupils and 700 university student tutors/ coaches across 41 schools	Exeter, Plymouth, Barnstaple, Devon, Somerset, Bristol	• 1:2 and 1:3 in-person or online • Staff work with teachers to select suitable pupils – mid to high-attaining pupils whom teachers believe will benefit from additional support; at least 80% of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds • Official NTP partner offering tutoring to 2200 pupils across 60 schools (min. 20 pupils per school) in 2020/21, with 681 pupils across 34 schools in the South West	Volunteer undergraduate students or recent graduates with high attainment in tutored subject
Tutorfair Foundation	Foundation arm of private tutoring marketplace providing volunteer-led tutoring for families unable to afford private tutoring. Lessons purchased through for-profit arm include donation to the foundation	261 pupils and 26 tutors across 11 schools Tutorfair-on-demand signed up 650 pupils and 140 volunteers (closed since 2019 while looking to scale)		• Online tutoring: 1:1, 1:2 and 1:3 • Work with schools where >50% of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium and/or <25% of low-income students expected to achieve grade 5+ in GCSE English and Maths • Tutorfair on-demand (2017-2019): text and image-based app where GCSE Maths pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds could post questions during homework hours to a network of volunteer students	Tutors already working for Tutorfair can sign up to volunteer
Action Tutoring	Education charity supporting pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve a meaningful level of academic attainment, helping them to progress to further education, employment or training	2,108 pupils and 1098 tutors in 95 schools across 8 cities	Bristol; potentially looking to expand into Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire	• 1:1, 1:2 and 1:3 in-person or online • Official NTP partner working with 10 primary and 6 secondary schools across Bristol, typically with: • 15-20 pupils supported by 8-10 tutors, with an AT staff member overseeing delivery; additional teacher support for online model • 1-1.5hrs/session, over 8-10 weeks, with aim of delivering 3 programmes/year to schools	Volunteers aged 18-82 including university students, corporates and retirees
Into University	Charity providing local learning centres offering a programme of academic support, mentoring, subject specialism and employability support	42,500 pupils and 2000 volunteers across 31 learning centres and 267 schools	Bristol East, Bristol South, Weston-super-Mare	• 31 learning centres across the country provide a quiet, safe space in which to complete homework, with on-hand academic and other support • Programmes run at its centres and in local schools • Centres cater to those who have experienced care, are eligible for Free Schools Meals or are living in social housing	Volunteers aged 18+ including university students, corporates and members of the local community

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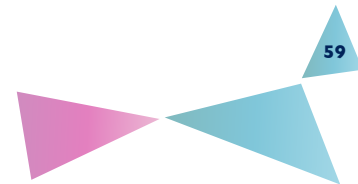
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