

Social mobility



May 2020

Produced by: Hilary Stevens, Gabrielle Climie and Jo Holmes from Marchmont Observatory, University of Exeter on behalf of the SAP.

This deep dive is part of a Department for Education funded programme to enhance the analytic capacity and capability of local Skills Advisory Panels.

Income inequality in the UK has increased and social mobility stalled. Many people – particularly young people – feel acutely that background shapes where you end up; that there are less opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds compared to better-off peers; and the majority feel that while they are better off than their parents in terms of education, this does not translate into better living standards and job security (Social Mobility Commission, 2020).

Even before Covid-19 had laid bare the spatial disparities and income inequalities that blight our society and economy, the Government had committed to ‘levelling up’ regions and bringing the 10 year programme of austerity to an end. The Covid-19 crisis makes achieving these ambitions even more urgent and more challenging. The consequences of the pandemic for social mobility were spelled out recently in a paper produced by Stephen Machin, Professor of Economics at LSE and Lee Elliot Major, Professor of Social Mobility at the University of Exeter (2020)

“.. make no mistake: the long term reverberations of the crisis will likely exacerbate the divide in life changes between the poor and privileged. Covid-19 has the scope to increase the toxic mix of rising economic and education inequality that hinder social mobility. Unless we tackle these inequalities, we face a dark age of declining opportunity.”

This paper considers issues of social mobility within the immediate context of Covid-19 but also alongside the longer term prospects for the Future of Work. A future that the RSA (2019) recently declared could be characterized by: rising inequality, growing suppression in the workplace, stagnant wages, heightened discrimination and bias and deepening geographic divisions. Clearly, the time for action is upon us.

For further information about this deep dive or any other SAP related activity please contact Hilary Stevens at hilary.j.stevens@exeter.ac.uk.

“Britain is stuck. Too many of us are destined to end up in the same positions occupied by our parents – particularly if we sit on the lowest or highest rungs of life’s economic ladder. Generations growing up today face a bleak future: falling real wages, shrinking opportunities and greater income divides. The dream of just doing better, let alone climbing the social ladder, is dying.”

Major and Machin (2018)

What is ‘social mobility’?

Social mobility is fundamentally about ensuring that a person’s occupation and income are not tied to where they start in life: “it is about fairness across society and ensuring that people of all backgrounds get equal opportunities and choices in early years, at school, in further education, in universities and at work”. (Social Mobility Commission, 2019). This is the relative form of social mobility often described in public policy arenas, which is concerned with how opportunities are distributed across society. It is distinct from absolute social mobility which is about increasing opportunities for *everybody* so that each generation does better than the last (Gaffney and Baumburg, 2014). Both forms of social mobility can be examined through the lens of social class (or often occupation, as a proxy) and income.

According to the Social Mobility Commission (2018) relative occupational mobility has changed little over the last five years: those from better off backgrounds are almost 80 per cent more likely to land a top job than their working class peers. Furthermore, at 34 per cent, the share of working-class people in professional occupations in 2018 was only a little higher than it was 2014 (32 per cent) despite the increased number of jobs available at this level. In addition to providing annual ‘state of the nation’ reports, the Social Mobility Commission (SMC) has examined government social mobility policies, concluding that whilst policies - such as increasing employment and getting more working-class young people into university - have had a positive impact, overall, too little has been done to break the link between socio-economic background and social progress. This is despite successive Government’s making the pursuit of higher levels of social mobility one of the ‘holy grails’ of public policy (SMC, 2017).

Widening income inequality in the UK means that the consequences of poor social mobility are much more significant than they were in the past – the rewards and penalties of social mobility or immobility are that much greater (Gaffney and Baumburg, 2014). These pressures are only likely to become more intensive as mega-trends such as technological change – are anticipated to exacerbate existing inequalities and spatial disparities in the future. Social mobility is socially unjust; and inefficient. Economists as well as moral philosophers should be concerned about social mobility. Talent is being wasted.

Who is most at risk of being ‘left behind’?

While (absolute) social mobility represents the norm rather than the exception in contemporary Britain – 43% experience some form of upward mobility compared to their parents whereas 29% experience downward movement – strong barriers to quality of opportunity persist (Friedman et al, 2017) and these are not distributed uniformly across the population. The SMC’s latest ‘State of the Nation’ report (2018)

explored, for the first time, the interaction between class, gender, ethnicity and disability in terms of employment and pay in Great Britain. They found:

- People with disabilities face particularly acute challenges: just 21 per cent of people with disabilities from working class families work in a professional or managerial occupation, compared to 43 percent of people with disabilities from better-off background.
- Differences by gender were less pronounced than for disability, but notwithstanding this, men from all backgrounds were more likely to enter professional occupations than women with the same background. Furthermore, professional women from a working class background earned 36% less than men from a professional background.
- The likelihood of working in high-paid jobs varied considerably by ethnic minority group. For example, people from working class Chinese backgrounds do better than people from professional Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds.

Annual Population Survey data available on NOMIS only allows limited analysis of the characteristics of people working in professional and managerial occupations in the Heart of the South West and crucially, it is not possible to distinguish between those coming from working class or professional backgrounds originally. However, data suggests that women (aged 16+) living in the Heart of the South West are less likely than local men, and women nationally, to work in professional and managerial occupations¹. Unfortunately, comparable analysis is not possible by ethnicity – even between ‘white’ and ‘ethnic minority’ groups – because the sample sizes for the latter are too small to generate reliable estimates. People from working-class backgrounds are more likely to be unemployed or economically inactive than those from professional occupations.

“While there is no evidence of generations of families never working, there is some association in workless experiences across generations. Health-related conditions appear to be one mechanism explaining this association, but the key driver relates to the labour market conditions in a person’s immediate environment. Specifically, those from workless households in buoyant labour markets have similar changes of employment to those from working households, whereas those from areas with high levels of unemployment are over 25 percentage points more likely to be workless”.

Friedman et al. (2017)

Does where you grow up affect your social mobility?

While there is copious evidence showing life chances are affected by family background there is very little research exploring whether the role of family background is attenuated or enhanced by the place where you grow up, particularly at low-level geographies. Bell et al. (2019) recently found that upward occupational mobility was greatest in London but concluded that, “upward mobility may be more about childhood environment than local labour market conditions”. In terms of local results, focusing on children born in Devon between 1974 and 1983, the researchers found that:

¹ Annual Population Survey, January to December 2019.

- The county had the second lowest level of upward occupational mobility of all 35 NUTS2 areas in England and Wales
- Children of parents with degrees had a 45-percentage point higher chance of going to University than children of parents without degrees.

Being willing and able to move to London can enhance an individual's social mobility – although background plays an important role. Using new data from the Office for National Statistics the SMC found that people who moved to London were more likely to be in professional occupations than those that did not. People from professional backgrounds were considerably more likely to move region than those from working class backgrounds and were three times more likely to move to London. This effect holds in every region, with the exception of London, where working class people are as likely to move region.

“Put simply, it is those from privileged backgrounds who are much more likely, and able, to move and take advantage of London’s lucrative job opportunities.”

SMC (2018)

The SMC's social mobility index (SMC, 2019) ranks the 324 local authority areas according to a composite index of social mobility based on a basket of indicators that are known determinants of social mobility - wages, employment, schooling, occupation and home ownership. The resulting analysis provides a useful proxy of spatial differences in intergenerational mobility but is limited to the lack of data on residents' background. The index identifies West Somerset as having the lowest social mobility of all the local authority districts, with Torrington also a social mobility 'cold spot'. Sedgemoor, ranking 258th is just outside this 'cold zone'. Of the remaining local authority areas in the Heart of the South West, only South Hams is a social mobility 'hot spot' - these tend to be located mainly in London and the South East - but Exeter, ranking 81st just about makes it into the top quartile for social mobility.

Living standards and social mobility

Living standards drive social mobility because those with higher living standard typically have more choices in life, and are more able to take risks. It can affect: intra-generational mobility – that is, how individuals' social class and income changes over their lifetime; and inter-generational mobility – how an individual's circumstances compare with that of their parents. Taking each of these in turn:

- High living standards can help individuals progress professionally by providing the means to invest in privately-funded learning to up-skill or retrain; relocate to another region; or commute further to access the most the lucrative job opportunities. The ability to accumulate savings can also buffer households against unexpected job loss or ill-health or fund entrepreneurial activities. Individuals from better-off backgrounds are also more likely to own their own home and purchase more expensive houses (larger, in better neighbourhoods) than those from working class backgrounds. Recently, we have seen how middle-class, professional workers through the nature of their work, and their access to space and technology that allows them to work from home, have suffered least, so far, materially from the Covid-19 crisis. These individuals are also at less risk of losing their jobs due automation and are better equipped than those who are less well-off to successfully navigate labour market transitions.
- All these benefits, of course, are also conferred upon the children of affluent parents providing them with an edge over their working class peers, and therefore influencing inter-generational mobility. These advantages might include private education or tutoring, better nutrition and access to

sporting or leisure opportunities, sole use of a laptop and access to broadband, connections and professional networks and so on. The home learning environment “makes a huge difference in terms of the development of children” (SMC, 2019) not just in terms of the physical characteristics of the home and the resources within it but also the learning support received by children from caregivers. These findings are also reflected in a recent survey of the parents of school-age children conducted by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (Andrew et al, 2020). The survey found that children from better-off families are spending more time on learning than are those from poorer families, had access to more resources for home learning and were more likely to be provided with online classes and access to online videoconferencing with teachers.

- Research published by the Sutton Trust (Cullinane & Montecute, 2018) found that just over a third (34%) of parents with children aged 5 to 16 reported their child does not have access to their own computer, laptop or tablet they can use to access the internet on at home: a crucial finding in the context of the current lockdown.
- The closure of between 500 and 10,000 children’s centres – facilities that the Sutton Trust found led to a better home learning environment and a less chaotic home life – is highlighted as an issue of concern by the SMC (2019).

Before we unpick some of the themes touched on above, what do we know about living standards in the Heart of the South West?

- Overall, household income is lower than the national average although income varies substantially within the area. For example, household income (after housing costs) in the richest neighbourhood, in Exeter (£35,200) is almost double that of the poorest neighbourhood, in Torbay £17,300². The Heart of the South West has a significantly smaller proportion (7%) of Middle Super Output Areas (MSOA) in the richest quartile (25%) of households nationally. This lower standard of living could inhibit social mobility.
- While working class residents (48 per cent) are more likely to own their own home than the England average (45 per cent), home-ownership is still significantly less common than among the professional and managerial class (83 per cent)³.
- The LEP area has a higher employment rate than the England average overall, and for men and women, disabled people and ethnic minorities. However, employment is more heavily concentrated in low-paying sectors and occupations and some pockets of low employment persist (particularly in Torbay).
- Consequently, around 178,000 jobs in the area pay below the real Living Wage – a level of pay reflecting the Living Wage Foundation’s assessment of that needed to maintain a basic standard of living (Living Wage Foundation, 2020)⁴. This overall number of low-paid jobs represents more than two-fifths (43%) of employee jobs in Torbay, almost one third (30%) of jobs in Somerset and around

² Office for National Statistics: Income estimates for small areas, England and Wales, 2018. Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/smallareaincomeestimatesformiddlelayersuperoutputareasenglandandwales>. Accessed on: 12th May 2020

³ Office for National Census, 2011 Census Table. Accessed via NOMIS on 14th May 2020.

⁴ The real Living Wage is voluntary and based on a calculation reflected the cost of living, based on a basket of household goods and services. The current rate for people aged 18 and over working outside London is £9.30 an hour. The National Living Wage, is statutory for the over 25s and is set at a percentage of medium earnings. The current National Living Wage is £8.72. Note: the statutory Minimum Wage for the for those aged 21 to 25 is £8.20.

a quarter in Plymouth (24%) and Devon (26%). Across the UK, among full time workers, women (17.5%) are more likely to be employed in low paying jobs than men (13%).

- In 2018/19, 44,400 children in the Heart of the South West were living in families in relative low income. This number is rising. The proportion of children living in low income is higher than the Great Britain average (18%) in Torridge (20%) and is closer to this national benchmark in West Somerset (18%) and North Devon (17%), Torbay (17%), Plymouth (16%) and West Devon (16%).
- More than 65,000 households⁵ in the Heart of the South West are “workless” with a further 130,000 household containing at least one person who is working and one person who is either unemployed or inactive⁶. Within the LEP area, the percentage of workless households is higher than the England average (13.5 per cent) in Torbay (17.2 per cent) and Plymouth (13.8 per cent) but is lower than the national average in Somerset (11.3 per cent) and Devon (12.1 per cent).

Impact of Covid-19 on living standards

The Covid-19 crisis is undoubtedly affecting some household’s incomes although it will be some time before this is picked up in official statistics.

“...poor neighbourhoods and individuals are particularly affected by the Covid-19 crisis. They are more exposed to health risks because they work in critical sectors. They are less likely to be able to work remotely, putting their incomes and jobs at higher risk. They have smaller apartments and live in more densely populated neighbourhoods, exposing them to greater health risks. Finally, they have smaller savings (if at all), giving them smaller buffers.

Bergamini (2020)

Analysis produced by Joyce & Xu (2020) at the Institute for Fiscal Studies show that young people, low-income workers, and women are likely to be disproportionately affected due to their greater prominence in sectors that have shut down. In addition, self-employed people who on average earn less than employees and who are also more likely to be operating in shut down sectors are likely to be negatively affected. Young people⁷ and those on low incomes are among those least likely to have savings: statistics from The Money Charity⁸ suggest that in March 2020, 12.8 million households in the UK have either no, or less than £1,500, in savings. Analysis of household spending patterns by the richest and poorest households - also published by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (Crawford et al, 2020) – reveals that “on average, lower-household incomes will tend to find it harder to weather any income shocks that the crisis will bring: a greater proportion of their spending goes towards essentials and bills that will be harder to cut if they experience income falls.”

⁵ Excluding student households

⁶ Office for National Statistics (2019) Non-student households by combined economic activity status of household members by local authority: Table A2 LA. Available from:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/unemployment/datasets/nonstudenthouseholdsbycombinedeconomicactivitystatusofhouseholdmembersbylocalauthoritytablea2la>. Accessed on: 13th May 2020

⁷ ONS (2018) Adults with formal savings, by sage and economic activity status. Available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/pensionssavingsandinvestments/adhocs/009315adultswithformalsavingsbyageandeconomicactivitystatus>. Accessed on 15th May 2020.

⁸ <https://themoneycharity.org.uk/money-statistics/>

Our companion-piece “Covid-19: Review of the economic impacts in the Heart of the South West and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly LEP areas” (Marchmont Observatory. 2020) provides a detailed picture of how the crisis is unfolding locally. From a social mobility perspective, key findings include the observations that:

- While few employees nationally had been made redundant, more than one-fifths (22 per cent) of employees across the UK have been placed on furlough leave and might therefore be considered ‘at risk’ of losing their jobs or suffering other adverse employment consequences of the pandemic.
- All local authority areas – except Exeter and Plymouth – have a higher proportion of ‘at risk’ jobs than the national average, with Devon particularly badly affected. Minehead, Kingsteignton, and Sidmouth in particular, have a high proportion of people employed in sectors that have largely shut down. Minehead, Kingsteignton, and Sidmouth in particular, have a high proportion of people employed in sectors that have largely shut down.

A report jointly produced by Devon County Council and Plymouth City Council (2020) suggests around 123,000 jobs across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay could be at risk due to the crisis.

Education and social mobility

Education is vital for social mobility: higher qualifications are correlated with higher employment rates and higher earnings (ONS, 2019). Furthermore, projections suggests that over the next 10 years, the number of jobs requiring a qualification at Level 3 or below will fall, and that the number of jobs requiring a qualification at Level 4 will increase (Institute of Employment Research and Cambridge Econometrics, 2020). While the scale of the changes may (or may not) be over-optimistic given that the projections were published prior to the Covid-19 crisis, they represent a continuation of long-term trends.

An evidence briefing published by the Economic & Social Research Council (2012) suggests that educational performance appears to be one of the main barriers which stop people moving out of poverty. Yet as our analysis will show below – poorer children are failing to achieve their educational potential. The review found that education mobility for the current generation of children has not changed for the least educated households and that the strong correlation between parental education and children’s achievement in the UK is very high by international standards. Other key findings include:

- Disadvantaged children are more likely to arrive at school lacking basic social skills.
- The aspirations, attitudes and behaviour of parents and children play an important part in explaining why poor children typically do worse at school.
- Better educated parents put their children into ‘better schools’⁹, particularly at the secondary school level. They can do this by living in (often, more expensive) areas with good access to these types of schools.
- The effect of gaining a certification and not just merely length of schooling alone play an important role in explaining future economic success.
- The selective system as a whole yields no mobility advantage of any kind to children from any particular origin: any assistance to low-origin children provided by grammar schools is cancelled out by the hindrance suffered by those who attended secondary moderns.

⁹ Those with better: teachers and other resources, and a better classroom environment, including better behaved pupils and better interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers.

- Secondary schools are important not only for attainment but also to encourage students from poorer backgrounds to apply to high-status institutions.
- Efforts to make the school funding system more equitable might help to improve the UK's record on social mobility since this is correlated with inequality.

More recently, Major and Machin (2018) described “an escalating educational arms race in which the poorest children are increasingly ill-equipped to fight. And where the ever greater rewards go to the offspring of the social elites”. They continue:

“Middle-class advantage was once found through A-levels and university degrees; today it is achieved through elite degrees, postgraduate qualifications and exclusive internships. Just as the education system expands to equalise opportunities, so a new frontier emerges enabling the well-off to climb one step up again. An Oxbridge degree confers a much greater advantage than a “bog-standard” degree. Failing to get basic GCSEs at age 16 incurs a bigger penalty than for previous generations.”

Major and Machin (2018)

The following sections highlight the nature and scale of disadvantage experienced by poorer children compared to their wealthier peers at each stage in the education process. For brevity, and expedience, these represent a snap-shot rather than a full summary, with each deserving a more considered examination of the issues in future. Where available, we complement the national research with statistics for the Heart of the South West and finish with an examination of the implications of Covid-19 on the education and social mobility of children.

Early years

“Gaps between advantage and less advantaged children open up before birth and persist throughout life. By age five, 57 per cent of children entitled to free school meals (FSM) reach a good level of development, compared to 74 per cent of their more advantaged peers.”

SMC (2019)

Early year's education appears to benefit children's development regardless of their household income and socio-economic status but given the lower starting point among disadvantaged children and the reduced likelihood to take up childcare, early education and childcare may be of particular importance for the most disadvantaged children (EDI, 2020). Provision also provides vital support to working families requiring childcare (Montacute, 2020).

The SMC (2019) has identified three strategic problems affecting the early year's workforce:

“Firstly, there is a shortage of staff across the whole system, secondly, the staff recruited often have fewer skills and qualifications, and thirdly, when high-quality, well-qualified practitioners do join the workforce, it can be a challenge to retain them, with turnover estimated at approximately 17 per cent.”

Early years and childcare provision is delivered in a range of settings including group-based providers, school-based nurseries and registered childminders. Across England, around 72,000 providers offer 1.7

million Ofsted registered places¹⁰. All 3-4 years olds in England are eligible for at least 570 free hours of childcare per year and 2 years olds can get free childcare if parents are receiving state benefits or the child meets certain criteria (for example, has a statement of educational needs).

Within the Heart of the South West:

- There are around 40,000 funded early years' children of whom more than 6,100 are from disadvantaged backgrounds¹¹. The percentage of disadvantaged children in this cohort is lower than the England average in most local authority areas within the Heart of the South West with the exceptions of Torbay (21.7%), Plymouth (19.5%), Torridge (18.5%) and West Somerset (17.5%).
- In 2018, almost half of children entitled to Free School Meals did not reach a good level of development at age five in Somerset (47%), Torbay (47%), Devon (45%) and Plymouth (45%)¹². This compares to around one quarter of their more advantaged peers. The attainment gap is wider than the England average (17 percentage points) in Torbay (24 percentage points), Somerset (21 percentage points) and Devon (19 percentage points) but is marginally lower in Plymouth (16 percentage points).

Schools and sixth forms

“Schools have the power to be formative and transformative. They have the power to enable young people to grow into confident, resilient and happy adults who have the skills and knowledge to make positive contributions to the societies in which they live and the world around them. It is imperative that they do this for every student, including the least advantaged.”

SMC, 2019

There are huge disparities in the attainment of children at state schools depending on their socio-economic background and between state and independent schools (SMC, 2019). EPI (2020) found that the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers was over 18 months by age of 16. The gap is wider still for pupils with special educational needs. At key stage 4 the percentage of free school meal eligible pupils achieving a good¹³ GCSE pass in English and maths is 42 per cent compared to 69 per cent of all other pupils. The gap in attainment has not diminished over the last 8 years¹⁴. Disparities also exist at A Level, by age 19, 16 per cent of pupils entitled to free schools meals attained at least 2 A Levels, compared to 39 per cent of all other pupils.

Partridge et al (2020) also notes that the school system *“disproportionately excludes pupils with special educational needs, who have grown up in poverty, who have a social workers and from certain ethnic*

¹⁰ Department for Education (2019) Survey of Children and Early Years Providers: Main Summary, England, 2019. Available at:

¹¹ Department for Education “Education provision: children under 5 years of age, January 2019: Underlying data. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819822/Provision_for_children_under_5_2019_-_underlying_data.zip. Accessed: 12th May 2020.

¹² Department for Education “Early year’s foundation stage profile results 2018 to 2019: EYFSP pupil characteristics 2019: underlying data. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877992/EYFSP_pupil_characteristics_2019_underlying_data.zip. Accessed on 13th May 2020

¹³ Grade 4 or above (equivalent to a low C).

¹⁴ Department for Education: Key stage 4 performance 2019 (revised) Local authority characteristics data. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863125/2019_KS4_Revised_Local_authority_characteristics_data.xlsx. Access on 14th May 2020.

minority groups. But currently, children who the system should hold on to are being let go and let down. Being excluded from school has negative consequences for the rest of a child's life".

Within the Heart of the South West:

- Around 31,000 pupils are known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals (FSM)¹⁵. The proportion of FSM pupils is higher in Pupil Referral Units (39 per cent) and Special Schools (38 per cent) than state-funded Primary Schools (14 per cent), state-funded Secondary Schools (12%) and local authority alternative provision (14 per cent). The proportion of FSM pupils is close to the national average in all settings.
- Torbay has the highest percentage of FSM pupils overall (18 per cent) closely followed by Plymouth (17 per cent). The proportions in Somerset (13 per cent), and Devon (11 per cent) are either equal to or below the LEP wide average (13 per cent).
- Pupils eligible for FSM (34 per cent) are significantly less likely to leave school with good GCSE passes in maths and English than other pupils (66 per cent). Attainment among both groups is lowest in Plymouth (29 per cent and 61 per cent)¹⁶.
- More than 300 pupils were permanently excluded from schools during 2017/18 mainly due to persistently disruptive behaviour (40 per cent); physical assault against a pupil (13 per cent) or adult (13 per cent) or for reasons related to drug and alcohol (9 per cent). Additionally, more than 6,000 pupils were temporarily, excluded from state-funded primary, secondary and special schools during 2017/18. These pupils lost, on average, around 4 days of school.
- A minority of pupils do not enter sustained destinations upon leaving school. This includes around 700 pupils whose known status is reflected in DfE's Key Stage 4 destination statistics, and almost 3,500 16 to 17 year olds who are not meeting the duty to participate in education or training¹⁷. FSM pupils are less likely than other pupils to enter a sustained employment and education destination upon leaving school. The proportion for FSM pupils not entering a sustained destination is highest in Torbay (17 per cent), Mid Devon (15 per cent) and South Somerset (14 per cent).

Further education and apprenticeships

"...With just 40 per cent of Britain's young people following the 'traditional' path of GCSEs, A Levels, and into HE, technical education is the default route for the remaining 60 per cent to ensure a smooth transition into the labour market. It is a sector that has long been under funded and overlooked. It is therefore a critical area to address for improving social mobility."

SMC (2019)

¹⁵ ONS Schools, pupils and their characteristics, January 19

¹⁶ Department for Education: Key stage 4 performance 2019 (revised) Local authority characteristics data. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863125/2019_KS4_Revised_Local_authority_characteristics_data.xlsx. Access on 14th May 2020.

¹⁷ Department for Education: 16 to 17 year olds recorded in education and training and NEET by local authority, 2019. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/811032/2019_NEET_and_participation_tables.xlsx. Accessed on: 14th May 2020.

According to the SMC (2019) “the FE system is complex, with numerous qualifications, a diverse range of students and challenging logistics in course delivery. Structural issues, such as the segregation of the education system, teacher recruitment and retention issues, and inequalities in funding put enormous strain on the system”. Recent changes in FE that particularly effect disadvantaged students include reduced access to: extra-curricula activities such as sport, music and drama, and educational visits; good careers advice and mental health support.

All students who fail to achieve good GCSE passes in maths & English at 16 must either resit the exam or be enrolled in Functional Skills qualifications. Success rates, however, in resits are low.

The SMC (2019) describes apprenticeships as “*potentially an effective vehicle for social mobility by offering the means to ‘earn and learn’, route into work for those with no or low qualification, an alternative path to qualifications for those who do not excel in traditional school environments, and routes into professions that were traditionally reserved for university graduates. Additionally, apprenticeships could offer workers stuck in low pay a means of upskilling. However, the current apprenticeship system in England is not fulfilling this potential.*”

The Commission observe two-tier system:

“A system in which advantaged students gain access to the highest levels while the disadvantaged students are stuck at the lower end due to institutional and cultural barriers is not a system that is creating equal opportunities for all, and not one that will improve social mobility.”

Students who were eligible for free schools meals (FSM) at age 15, were most strongly represented on qualifications below level 2 (33%), and under-represented in higher education and on AS and A Levels (8% and 7%). This is reflective of a general trend for higher FSM representation on lower levels of qualifications¹⁸.

Within the Heart of the South West:

- Most of the cohort leaving school in 2016/17 secured a sustained education outcome but FSM pupils (81 per cent) were less likely to do so than other pupils (96 per cent). The proportion of FSM pupils entering a sustained education outcome was lowest in West Somerset (71 per cent) and Mid Devon (73 per cent) and South Hams (74 per cent).
- FSM pupils locally were more likely than other pupils to study at a further education college (52 per cent compared to 46 per cent) and were less likely to study at school or college sixth form (29 per cent compared to 38 per cent) or take part in an apprenticeship (3 per cent compared to 7 per cent). Apprenticeships, were however, more popular among FSM pupils in west Somerset (10 per cent).
- State funded students taking vocational qualifications at Level 3 included: 1,736 students on Applied General courses; and 594 students on Tech level courses. Applied General students accounted for 27 per cent of all Level 3 students in 2018/19 (the same proportion as the national average)
- Attainment among Applied General and Tech levels students was higher than the national average in Devon but lower than the national average for one or both courses in the other local authority areas.

¹⁸

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786779/Students_and_qualifications_at_level_3_and_below_in_England.pdf

Higher education

“Higher education can act as an engine for social mobility if disadvantaged students win places, participate fully during the course of their degrees (in both the academic and extra-curricular life of the university), and receive the teaching and advice required to transition into a career.”

SMC (2019)

Low income-students are still far less likely to undertake degree than their better-off peers, particularly at the most prestigious institutions: 43 per cent of non-free school meal entitled state-funded pupils entered higher education by age 19, compared to 26 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals (SMC, 2019). While the number of FSM-eligible pupils entering higher education has increased, the gap in entry rates has remained broadly unchanged over the last decade. Students living in the most deprived areas before starting University were also less likely to achieve a degree classification of 2:1 or above (67 per cent) than those living in the most affluent areas (85 per cent)¹⁹. Disadvantage students are also more likely than their better-off peers to drop out and are less likely to be in a high-skilled job six months after graduating.

Within the Heart of the South West:

- The percentage of disadvantaged 16 to 18 year olds who achieve qualification(s) at Level 3 and who progress into higher education is lower than the England average (46 per cent) in all local authority districts but is particularly low in Mid-Devon (21 per cent), West Somerset (22 per cent) and the South Hams (22 per cent).
- Almost 4,600 international students were enrolled on courses at higher education institutions in the sub-region, during 2018/19. International students accounted for more than one-fifth (22 per cent) of all students enrolled at these institutions.
- The number of residents enrolling on first year undergraduate courses (at any location in the UK) fell by 14 per cent among young people and 37 per cent among mature students between 2011/12 and 2018/19. However, the number of young (13 per cent) and mature (29 per cent) students enrolling on a first year postgraduate courses has risen, suggesting that people are increasingly looking at these higher level qualifications to differentiate themselves in the labour market.

¹⁹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/>

Implications of Covid-19 on education

“The closure of schools is likely to have a considerable impact for all pupils, but the largest impact is likely to fall on those from the poorest families. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are already twice as likely to leave formal education without GCSEs in English and maths compared to their better-off classmates. We already know that time away from school, for example during the summer holidays, widens this gap. Furthermore, due to the ongoing economic crisis caused by the pandemic, many more families will be facing other challenges which indirectly impact on attainment, such as increased poverty and food insecurity.”

Montecute (2020)

Over the last few weeks several commentators have offered their assessment of the likely impact of Covid-19 on the outcomes for disadvantaged young people; and proposals to address them.

- Education Policy Institute’s report, [“Preventing the disadvantage gaps from increasing during and after the Covid-19 pandemic”](#).
- Dr Rebecca Montecute’s report, [“Social Mobility and Covid-19: Implication of the Covid-19 crisis for educational inequality”](#) published by the Sutton Trust.
- Several articles on the RSA website on topics including: [the need for extra support for children starting secondary school](#); [avoiding unconscious bias in marking](#);
- Briefing paper on The National Tutoring Service, [“Levelling-up education’s playing field”](#) published by Major, Tyers and Chu.

Themes emerging from these reports include:

- Concern about “learning loss” which all pupils are likely to suffer as a result of school closures but which authors’ warn will particularly affect students from disadvantaged backgrounds due to their home environment being less likely to be conducive to learning. The loss will be greater the longer students are away from their educational settings and will widen the attainment gap in both the short and long term. Access to resources for online learning and assessment is a particular concern for pupils and students from less well-off backgrounds.
- Recognition that childcare and educational settings will be under financial stress which may undermine their long-term viability. Many childcare providers were struggling to stay afloat before this current crisis.
- Potential for bias in grading GCSE and A Level results and under-represented groups resulting in potentially unstable results. Research suggests that predicted grades often under-predict the performance of high-attaining disadvantaged students.
- The need to support children starting secondary schools during the Covid-19 crisis. Many of the groups of children most vulnerable during transition are also disproportionately likely to experience exclusion from school, achieve worse academically at Key Stage 4 and end up NEET after school.
- Rising numbers of unemployed people – young and old – and the need to reskill and retrain these individuals.

- Furloughed apprentices on the lowest wages are likely to struggle with any reduction in their pay. Apprentices from poorer backgrounds may also be less likely to receive financial support from their families, especially if their families are under increased financial strain.
- Finally, Lynn Dobbs, vice-chancellor of London Metropolitan University has called for “all universities to step up work with hard-to-reach schools. This means working closely with these schools to design social mobility programmes that work for their communities, engage with further education colleges and adult learners, and use contextualised offers to give more opportunities to students whose grades may be lower because of the school they went to” (The Guardian, 16th April 2020).

Working lives and social mobility

“Great Britain is experiencing the beginnings of a technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work and interact. It has been called the Fourth Industrial Revolution and may be as transformative to society as the revolutionary changes brought about by the steam, electricity, and digital technology across the nineteenth and twentieth century. Just like the pioneering and ultimately life-improving technologies before them, the rise of modern robotics and artificial intelligence, the ‘internet of things’ and biotechnology and predicted to improve standards of living and cause disruption to working lives. They could also have huge consequences for social mobility.”

SMC (2019)

The Future of Work Briefing in this series (to be published shortly) found that: while it seems likely that the number of jobs will increase in future, most of this will be higher skilled jobs that may also place a premium on ‘human-skills’ that cannot be automated. This, the SMC concludes, *“means that an enormous effort is needed to train and prepare millions of currently low skilled adults for the new future of work, at a scale which has not been seen since Britain introduced The Open University post World War I to upskill its workforce for a modern era.”*

Unfortunately, persistent inequalities in learning exist in the UK with the adults who could most benefit from participating in learning are the least likely to do so. Those in lower social groups those with fewer years of initial education, and those furthest from the labour market remain under-represented in learning. Participation also declines with age, with older adults being significantly less likely to participate in learning. Moreover, the latest Adult Participation in Learning Survey recorded the lowest participation rate in the 23-year history of the survey (Learning and Work Institute, 2019).

The disruption is also likely to change the nature of work and how it is organised. Business models have evolved, with many employment contracts becoming more flexible. As Major and Machin (2018) observe:

“Britain’s emerging industrial model is that companies directly employ elite graduates as core workers, and contract out lower-level work to temping agencies and other contractors. For the global

²⁰ Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/apr/16/universities-must-create-opportunities-for-the-people-coronavirus-will-harm-most>. Accessed on 17th May 2020.

executives and private equity owners, that's the obvious way to maximise profits. But it has created a two-tier system between those pursuing seamless career progression and those stuck in dead-end, insecure jobs without a future."

Furthermore, around 30 per cent of jobs in the UK are at high risk of automation (Berriman and Hawksworth, 2017) potentially affecting large numbers of jobs in the wholesale and retail trade and manufacturing sector. The new jobs created will only benefit those that have been displaced if they are given the opportunity to retain and upskill. The SMC (2020) assessment of the current adult learning system, however, is far from flattering: "a poor in-work training culture among British employers on average, a fragmented, inflexible and underfunded adult training systems, and a consistent low-take up of training and adult education among low-paid British workers. But if social mobility is to improve, Britain needs a skills system that enables a lifetime of education and training whilst in work."

Analysis of statistics for the Heart of the South West reveals that²¹:

- Young people eligible for FSM in the Heart of the South West are significantly more likely to leave school at age 19 without having achieved a Level 2 in English and maths than other pupils locally; and are more likely to do so than young people eligible for FSM nationally. The proportions vary across the area: Somerset (63 per cent); Plymouth (62 percent), Torbay (60 percent) and Devon (58 percent) but each is higher than the national average (56 per cent). For context, only 28 per cent of pupils nationally who are not eligible for FSM do not achieve this standard. The gap in attainment between those who are eligible for free school meals and those who are ineligible has persisted over time with year-on-year fluctuations at the local authority level revealing little or no improvement over the last 10 years.
- The Heart of the South West has a higher share of residents employed in occupations²² that are typically associated with low-pay (35 per cent) than the England as a whole (32 per cent).
- It also has higher share of residents who are self-employed (18 per cent compared to 16 percent) and people who are working part-time (29 per cent compared to 25 percent). The share working in non-permanent employment is not statistically different to the England figure (5 per cent compared to 4 per cent).
- Almost one-quarter (23 per cent) of employed residents had participated in work-related training within the last 3 weeks compared to 25 per cent across England. As nationally, job-related training is most commonly undertaken by public sector workers (47 per cent), those with Level 4 qualifications (37 per cent) and those in managerial and professional occupations (36 per cent). By contrast participation is lowest among production sector employees (19 per cent).
- In the last full year, almost 63,400 adults living in the Heart of the South West participated in government-funded learning. Around half of this activity comprised education and training (31,500) with the remainder broadly equally split between apprenticeships (20,000) and community learning (14,300). As nationally, participation in adult funded education has fallen substantially since 2010/11. Participation fell by more than one-third (35 per cent) overall and within this, large falls were also recorded for community learning (33 per cent) and education and skills (19 percent). While adult participation in apprenticeships had increased (12 per cent) this is not sufficient to compensate for an overall decline in work place learning.

²¹ The first three bullet points are based on Annual Population Survey for January to December 2019 available from NOMIS and accessed on 14th May 2020.

²² This includes: caring leisure and other service occupations; sales and customer service occupations; process, plant and machine operatives; and elementary occupations.

“The pandemic has shone a light on a deeply divided workplace: the highly paid, salaried graduate elites on one side, and workers in dead-end jobs, lacking basic rights or entitlements, on the other. Those who are able to work from home (on average richer individuals) are significantly less likely to be furloughed or lose their jobs. Indeed many middle class salaried earners will be accumulating wealth, via forced saving from not spending on the likes of expensive holidays or restaurants.”

Major & Machin (2020)

While a picture is beginning to emerge about magnitude of the impact of coronavirus on headline labour market indicators, such as employment and unemployment, redundancy and furloughed workers, very limited information exists about which types of people have been most affected and how these effects are distributed across the UK.

The ONS' Business Impact of Covid-19 Survey (BISC)²³ provides us with information about how the crisis is affecting different sectors. The second wave²⁴ of the survey revealed that 26 per cent of the UK's workforce employed by businesses continuing to trade are currently on furlough leave²⁵ with the most affected industries, unsurprisingly: accommodation & food service activities (50 per cent of workforce on furlough leave); arts, entertainment and recreation (47 per cent) and construction (46 per cent). Applying these percentages to the industrial distribution of employment in the Heart of the South West suggests that around 173,000 jobs could currently be considered 'at risk' with the highest numbers in: wholesale & retail trades (40,400), accommodation & food services (36,900), construction (17,823), Manufacturing (16,100) and administrative & support service activities. Other findings from this source, and others include:

- Almost half of the workforce (47 per cent) is working remotely instead of their place of work. Remote-working is particularly common in: information and communication (87 per cent); professional, scientific and technical activities (78 per cent) and education (77 per cent).
- At this stage, at least, redundancies are rare, affecting less than 1 per cent of the workforce of all businesses although Marchmont Observatory's (2020) analysis of online job vacancies reveals vacancies were 52 percent lower in April 2020 than the previous month.
- The lockdown has yet to feed into statistics for the Claimant Count²⁶ but caseloads for Universal Credit increased across by more than one fifth (23 per cent) between February and March 2020.

These industrial patterns mean that some workers have been more affected than others. Analysis published by Joyce and Xu (2020) from the Institute of Fiscal Studies shows that:

- the lockdown will hit young workers the hardest: employees aged under 25 are about two and a half times as likely to work in a sector that is shut down as other employees

²³ ONS (2020) Business Impact of Covid-19 Survey (BICS). Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/economicoutputandproductivity/output/datasets/businessimpactofcovid19surveybics>. Accessed on 16th May 2020.

²⁴ Relating to the period 6 April 2020 to 19 April 2020.

²⁵ Under the terms of the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

²⁶ data for April will be published on the 19th May 2020

- Women are about one third more likely to work in a sector that is now shut down than men; and
- Low earners are seven times as likely as high earners to have worked in a sector that is now shut down.

The lockdown's disproportionate impact on low earning learners is also highlighted by Gardiner & Slaughter (2020) in their analysis of the Resolution Foundation's coronavirus survey. They find:

- Almost one-third (30 per cent) of the lowest earning fifth of employees have been furloughed or lost their job, compared to less than one-in-ten (8 per cent) of the top earning fifth of employees pre-coronavirus.
- Employees in atypical work are more likely to have been furloughed, or lost jobs or hours.
- There is less variation in experience of furloughing, or job or hours loss, by demographic characteristics although white employees appear slightly more likely to have been furloughed than those from BAME groups surveyed.
- Less than two-fifths of self-employed people have applied or are planning to apply for government support.
- More than four fifths (83 per cent) of the highest earning fifth of employees are working from home 'some or all of the time' currently, compared to more than two-fifths (44 per cent) of the lowest fifth of earners. Half of employees who can work from home expect to work from home more after the outbreak.
- One-in-eight (13 per cent) employees believe it is likely that there will lose their job in the next three months.

Discussion: emerging issues

As evidence builds on who is currently affected, and who is likely to be affected from the coronavirus lockdown, the scale of the challenge in supporting individuals, businesses and institutions begins to emerge. We offer the following summary of the issues that have emerged from our 'rapid review' of the impact of Covid-19 on the social mobility in the Heart of the South West in the hope that it is of some value to the development of local recovery plans. We do not profess to have "turned every stone". There is still (much) more to be done to fully understand how local actors can best support young people at each stage of their education; to help workers displaced from their jobs and those that remain in work to adjust to new working arrangements; and to support business owners and managers in their efforts to keep viable business alive, and deal with the emotional and financial toll of business failure.

Focusing on the supply-side first, a number of short-term priorities emerge:

- To get children and young adults back into childcare, education and training settings as soon as it is safe for them to do so; and to provide the emotional and psychological support needed to enable them to make a successful transition. Research suggests that those from poorer backgrounds may need additional support to return to learning and may have experienced greater 'learning loss' than those from wealthier backgrounds. Supporting the transition between institutions (for example, between primary and secondary school) is particularly important. Gaining the confidence of unions,

teachers and parents and guardians that it is safe for children to return to these settings will be instrumental.

- Ensuring that all pupils but particularly those from low-income backgrounds either have access to the technology they need to access online learning resources and communication platforms (for example, through the provision of laptops or financial contribution towards broadband costs), or are set work that they can complete using paper resources. Ideally, both parents and children should have access to specialist advisers that can support learning and good mental health over this period. Awareness raising of the support in this regard will be needed.
- Local authorities may wish to ensure that they have an accurate and up-to-date picture of the financial health of childcare and educational settings and a strategy put in place to maintain provision to affected children and students should these settings be forced to close.
- Explore ways to instill confidence in the grading of GCSE, A Level and degree courses this year among young people, further and higher education institutions and employers. We know, for example, that there is potential for bias in teacher assessments that disproportionately works against under-represented groups.
- Providing young people in all educational settings who were planning to enter the workforce this year with an enhanced advice and guidance offer, allowing them to re-evaluate their prospects for employment within the context of their education and training options. Additional provision and/or financial assistance may be necessary to allow young people to continue in education & training longer than they had originally planned, as part time and casual work often open to students is not available.
- All education providers should be encouraged to review access, attainment and progression within their institutions from the prism of social mobility. FE and HE providers should identify opportunities to do more to encourage young people to enter FE and HE provision whilst the labour market that they face looks increasingly precarious.
- Explore opportunities provided by an increase in online learning to improve access to provision to those in rural areas.

For those already in the workforce:

- It is important that everyone is aware of the support that is available to them and they are familiar with their employment rights. People on low incomes, 'key workers' and those without access to the internet should be a priority. The unions and charities such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau will be important partners in this regard
- Those who feel 'at risk' or have already lost jobs or hours should have access to high-quality back to work support. Some of those who have or will be displaced, will have little experience of job search in the digital age. Marchmont Observatory's work with unemployed older workers through the "South West Opportunities for Older People project provides useful information about the challenges presented and practices that are known to help. Crucially, job seekers under-valued – and were often unaware of – their skills and personal attributes and were inexperienced in promoting themselves to prospective employers.
- Set up a 'dating service' matching the skills of furloughed workers within short-term projects or jobs within the voluntary sector.
- Many will lack qualifications at all or have low level qualifications increasing their likelihood of becoming trapped in a cycle of unemployment, and low-paid and/or insecure work. Possibilities for

employment will be constrained by the offerings of the immediate labour market with some lacking the resources to commute or move to another area. Possibly building on the National Retraining Scheme, more needs to be done to support people to acquire qualifications and/or experience that will lead to good jobs close to their communities. Digital skills are likely to feature prominently here.

Over the longer-term, particularly in the context of Fourth Industrial Revolution, a renaissance in adult learning is required. In a fast changing world, an 'up front' education system is not providing opportunities for sufficient number of people, across all types, to acquire up-skills or re-train in work. A revolution in learning is required to achieve the culture of 'lifelong learning' that we have been aspiring to for decades.

Finally, from a supply-side point of view, people will always be needed to perform roles in society that do not require high level qualifications and clearly, not everyone is interested in or able to acquire these qualifications. If Covid-19 has shown us nothing else, it is the societal value of 'essential workers' many of whom are remunerated poorly. Local partners should back the Living Wage Foundation's²⁷ campaign for a real living wage and promote this to other employers. Those more fortunate than others, for example, university graduate students should be encouraged to contribute to society by, for example, tutoring disadvantaged pupils in maths and English in nearby schools.

Moving on to the demand-side, the uncomfortable truth is that many businesses will not survive the crisis. Research quoted by the BBC²⁸ suggests that nearly of fifth will not do so, in spite of unprecedented government support. Moreover, most privately-owned firms are not international corporates: as many as 9 in 10 in the South West of England are family owned. Even before the covid-19 crisis, evidence was emerging of a rising number of underperforming 'zombie firms' that were able to carry on due to low interest rates but were weakening overall economic performance (Banerjee & Hofmann, 2018). Specifically, KPMG (2019) suggested this time last year, that as many as one in seven UK firms were potentially "under sustained financial strain" and that their growth could "spell trouble ahead". Yael Seflin, KPMG's chief economist, is quoted in The Guardian (2018): "*Many unproductive businesses have been able to stumble on in recent times, generating just enough profits to continue trading but without the innovation, dynamism or investment necessary to sustain bottom-line growth.*"

In the context of Covid-19 this raises difficult questions about how finite resources should be deployed. There is some consolation to be found in economic theory that suggests the inevitable rise in business failure will improve opportunities for new and existing companies. Local partners therefore have an important role to play in supporting business growth as a response to the covid-19 pandemic: helping to create the right conditions for employment creation in new and existing productive and innovative firms. Indeed, last year the CIPD (2018) challenged LEPs to place greater emphasis on the "broader issue of raising the demand for skills or improving the use of skills locally". More specifically, among their recommendations they suggest that LEPs should:

- Emphasise local skills ecosystems that integrate current infrastructure (for example LEPs, Growth Hubs, anchor institutions, business networks and SWIoT) to address improved supply and demand and remove tacit acceptance of low-skills equilibrium.
- Support skills supply initiatives that go beyond a narrow focus on work entry for those leaving education or furthest from the labour market, and which help to facilitate in-work progression. To engage SMEs, less bureaucratic initiatives are needed.

²⁷ <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/>

²⁸ Verity, A (2020) Coronavirus: A fifth of smaller firms 'will run out of cash. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52114414>. Accessed on: 17th May 2020

- Develop effective mechanisms to influence skills demand, working with employers on job design that creates stable, fairly paid work that offers training and in-work progression and promotes inclusive growth. Current initiatives such as combined authority employment standards should be evaluated for effectiveness here.
- Introduce and develop business support programmes that deliver robust human resource management input to again influence skills demand, improve skills utilisation and increase productivity. Access to these will be particularly important for SMEs and should offer specialist support (for example OECD, People Skills).

To this list we add, the recommendation that the LEP should support the development of regional and local skills escalators which aim to ensure that all local people (starting at school) are able to access skills training in the strategic skills that the economy requires and that development pathways are created between providers.

These findings and recommendations are intended to frame discussions around the medium and longer terms decisions about how we apply the “build back better” maxim not just to our Covid-19 response but also our longer terms ambitions about developing a future economy and workforce that works for everybody. Specific measures could include: activities to support an entrepreneurial culture by, among other things, offering pupils and students of all ages, the opportunity to develop entrepreneurship skills; providing mentoring, and practical advice and guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs; developing the leadership and management skills within existing businesses in particular around innovation; supporting the commercialisation and transfer of technology and ‘know-how’ that resides within our higher education institutions and research facilities to local businesses. It will also be important to build on existing work to cultivate specialist ‘clusters’ (e.g. around marine, analytics etc.) as these are known to generate ‘localisation economies’ (Zymek & Jones, 2020). Given that more people are likely to want to work from home after the Covid-19 crisis, this may precipitate new conversations about the role of cities and their source of ‘urbanisation economies’ since more dispersed firms could reduce the benefit firms derive from sharing the common-resources offered by large cities. This trade-off may however be desirable, even necessary, in the drive for socially inclusive, clean growth.

References

Andrew, A., Cattan, S., Costa Dias, M., Farquharson, C. Kraftman, L., Krutikova, S. Phimister, A. and Sevilla, A. (2020) Learning during the lockdown: real-time data on children’s experiences during home learning. Institute for Fiscal Studies. Available from: <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14848>. Accessed on: 18th May 2020

Banerjee, R. & Hofmann, B. (2018) The rise of zombie firms: causes and consequences. BIS Quarterly Review. September 2018. Available from: https://www.bis.org/publ/qtrpdf/r_qt1809g.pdf. Accessed on: 17th May 2020

Bell, B., Blundell J., and Machin S. (2019) Where is the Land of Hope and Glory? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in England and Wales Centre for Economic Performance mimeo. Available at: <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/dp1591.pdf>. Accessed on 11th May 2020

Bergamini, E. (2020) How COVID-19 is laying bare inequality. Blog post on Bruegel on 31st March 2020. Available at <https://www.bruegel.org/2020/03/how-covid-19-is-laying-bare-inequality/>. Accessed on 12th May 2020

Crawford, R. Davenport, A. Joyce, R and Levell, P. (2020) Household spending and coronavirus. Briefing note. Institute for Fiscal Studies. Available at: <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14795>. Accessed on: 16th May 2020.

Cullinane, C. & Montacute, R. (2018) Pay as you go? Sutton Trust. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/ourresearch/internships-pay-as-you-go/>. Accessed on: 18th May 2020

Dellot, B., Mason, R. and Wallace-Stephens, F. (2019) The Four Futures of Work: Coping with uncertainty in an age of radical technologies. RSA. Available from: <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/local-areas-coronavirus-employment>. Accessed on 11th May 2020

Devon County Council and Plymouth City Council (2020) Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Economic Resilience Report March 2020.

Economic & Social Research Council (2012) Evidence Briefing: Education vital for social mobility. Available at: <https://esrc.ukri.org/files/news-events-and-publications/evidence-briefings/education-vital-for-social-mobility/> Accessed on 14th May 2020

Education Policy Institute (2020) Preventing the disadvantage gap from increasing during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Proposals from the Education Policy Institute. EDI. Available at: https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/EPI-Policy-paper-Impact-of-Covid-19_docx.pdf. Accessed on 12th May 2020

Friedman, S., Laurison, D. and Macmillan, L. 2017. Social Mobility in Contemporary Britain: New Insights from the Labour Force Survey. London: Social Mobility Commission. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596945/The_class_pay_gap_and_intergenerational_worklessness.pdf. Accessed on 11th May 2020.

Gaffney, D & Baumberg, B. (2014) Dismantling the barriers to social mobility. TUC. Available from: https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/Social_Mobility_Touchstone_Extra.pdf. Access on 13th May 2020

Gardner, L. & Slaughter, H. (2020) The effects of the coronavirus crisis on workers: Flash findings from the Resolution Foundation's coronavirus survey. Resolution Foundation. Available from: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/05/The-effect-of-the-coronavirus-crisis-on-workers.pdf>. Accessed on: 16th May 2020

Joyce, R. & Xu, X. (2020) Sector shutdowns during the coronavirus: which workers are most exposed? Briefing note. Institute for Fiscal Studies. Available at: <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14791>. Accessed on: 16th May 2020

Zymek, R. & Jones, B. (2020) UK Regional Productivity Differences: An Evidence Review. Industrial Strategy Briefing Paper. Available from: <https://industrialstrategy council.org/uk-regional-productivity-differences-evidence-review>. Accessed on: 17th May 2020

KPMG (2019) Zombies in our midst: the rise of zombie firms in the UK could spell trouble ahead. KPMG Economic Insights May 2019. Available at: <https://home.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/uk/pdf/2019/05/zombie-in-our-midst.pdf>. Accessed on 17th May 2020.

Landreth Strong, F. (2020) Children starting secondary school during Covid-19 need extra support. RSA. 5 May 2020. Available at <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/rsa-blogs/2020/05/starting-secondary-school>. Accessed on 11th May 2020

Learning and Work Institute (2019) Adult Participation in Learning Survey Report. Available from: <https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/adult-participation-in-learning-survey-2019/> Accessed: 15th May 2020

Living Wage Foundation (date) Life on low pay. Available from: https://www.livingwage.org.uk/sites/default/files/LWF%20Life%20on%20Low%20Pay%20Report_0.pdf. Accessed on 12th May 2020.

Major, L.E & Machin, S. (2018) Social mobility requires far more than a good education. Article in The Guardian on 27th September 2018. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/sep/27/social-mobility-good-education>. Accessed on 13th May 2020.

Major, L. E. & Machin, S. (2020) Covid-19 is increasing the divide in life chances between rich and poor . Democratic Audit. 22nd April 2020. Available at <https://www.democraticaudit.com/2020/04/22/covid-19-is-increasing-the-divide-in-life-chances-between-rich-and-poor/>. Accessed on 11th May 2020

Mason, D. (2020) Making sure school closures don't leave some students behind. 25th March 2020. RSA. Available at: <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/rsa-blogs/2020/03/school-closures-disadvantage>. Accessed on 11th May 2020.

Montacute, R. (2020) Social Mobility and Cov-19: Implications of the Covid-19 crisis for educational inequality. The Sutton Trust. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-and-Social-Mobility-1.pdf>. Accessed on 12th May 2020

Department for Education (2019) Graduate Labour market statistics 2018. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/797308/GLMS_2018_publication_main_text.pdf. Accessed on 14th May 2020.

Partridge, L., Landreth Strong, F., Loble, E and Mason, D. (2020) Pinball kids: Preventing school exclusions. RSA. Available at: Accessed on 11th May 2020.

Partridge, L. (2020) Avoiding unconscious bias in replacements for cancelled GCSE and A-level exams. Article on 20 April 2020, RSA. Available at <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/rsa-blogs/2020/04/cancelled-exams-covid>. Accessed on 11th May 2020

Social Mobility Commission (2019) State of the Nation 2018-19: Social Mobility in Great Britain. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/798404/SMC_State_of_the_Nation_Report_2018-19.pdf. Accessed on 11th May 2020

Wallace-Stephens, F. & Lockey, A. (2020) Which local areas are most at risk in terms of impacts of coronavirus on employment? RSA. Available at <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/local-areas-coronavirus-employment>. Accessed on 11th May 2020.