



Social Mobility
Commission

Social Mobility and Apprenticeships - Apprenticeships that work for all

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What is social mobility?

The link between a person's occupation or income and the occupation or income of their parents.

In other words, it's about **ensuring your background doesn't determine your future.**



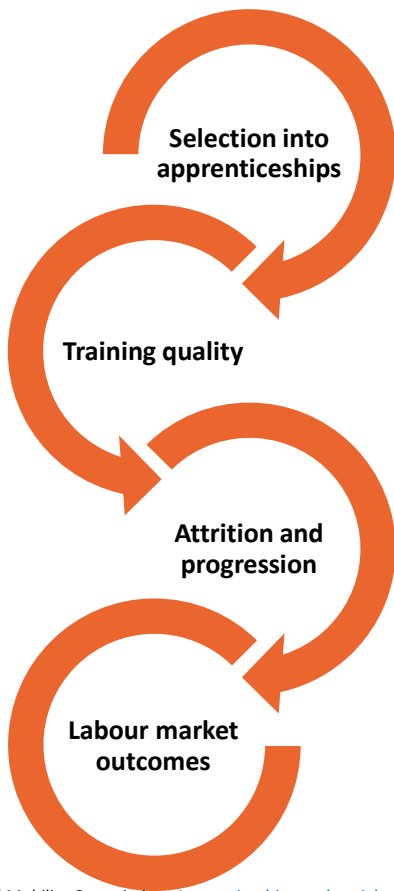
Apprenticeships can be a powerful tool for social mobility

- **Earn while you learn** – especially important for disadvantaged apprentices
- **Alternative** to academic-based study
- **Second chance** training for adults
- **Re-training** in declining industries
- A way to address the **class pay gap**

So are apprenticeship programmes delivering on this? Apprenticeships must be supported by inclusive practices. Too often, we assume this happens by default.

So what is happening?

People who could benefit the most are missing out at every stage of the apprenticeship journey – and employers are missing out on their contribution. COVID-19 is further exacerbating the situation.



1. Since the levy began, employers have fallen into the same old trap of supporting those who already have access to opportunities.

- Since the apprenticeship levy was introduced in 2017, it has funded a higher proportion of higher-level apprenticeships more likely to be taken by learners from more privileged backgrounds than people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

2. When people from disadvantaged backgrounds do make it through the door, it's often on a lower-value apprenticeship.

- Just **16%** of degree apprentices (the fastest growing option) are from disadvantaged backgrounds. We even found quality gaps within the same apprenticeship at the same level by socio-economic background.

3. Apprentices from lower socio-economic backgrounds are being overlooked for progression opportunities.

- **63%** of disadvantaged male apprentices complete their apprenticeship vs. 67% of others.

4. Disadvantaged apprentices have lower career earnings.

- But crucially, when apprentices from lower socio-economic backgrounds do finish their training, they benefit the most; they get an average **16%** boost to their earnings (vs. 10% for others).



Apprenticeships Toolkit

- **Apprenticeships are one of the best mechanisms available to build diverse, skilled teams from the ground up and an effective tool for social mobility if targeted.**

However our research has found that:

- The apprenticeship levy has funded more higher-level apprenticeships that were more likely taken up by learners from privileged backgrounds.
- Disadvantage gaps exist for working class apprentices at every stage of the journey.

In response:

- We published a toolkit aimed at giving practical tips and actions to employers and training providers on what they can do to ensure that their apprenticeship programmes are supporting social mobility.
- The toolkit is designed as a roadmap for anyone working in apprenticeships who is committed to improving socio-economic diversity and inclusion. It includes recommendations, case studies and best practice guidance.

How you can help

By making your apprenticeships more accessible to people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, you can help our economy recover and your workforce to thrive. Take these steps to be part of the change.



OUTREACH

Target from the onset

- Target recruitment in the social mobility 'cold spots'
- Provide outreach programmes in schools and further education colleges that will encourage individuals to consider apprenticeships
- Work with external partners to help co-design and deliver your outreach programme



HIRING

Recruit for potential

- Make your apprenticeship inclusive – where possible, build in flexibility around location and working hours
- Consider offering more Level 2 apprenticeships as they don't require any pre-existing achievements in English and maths.



SUPPORT

Support your apprentices

- Build in flexibility for home working, location and job design
- Offer pastoral support, for example, through staff networks, mentoring programmes or buddy schemes.
- Support and resource an apprentice network



PROGRESSION

Progression pathways

- Design progression pathways - build a pipeline for apprenticeships from Level 2 up
- Provide further training: ensure that your training opportunities are open to self-selection, managers talk to employees regularly about options and you support a culture of continual learning



DATA

Use your data

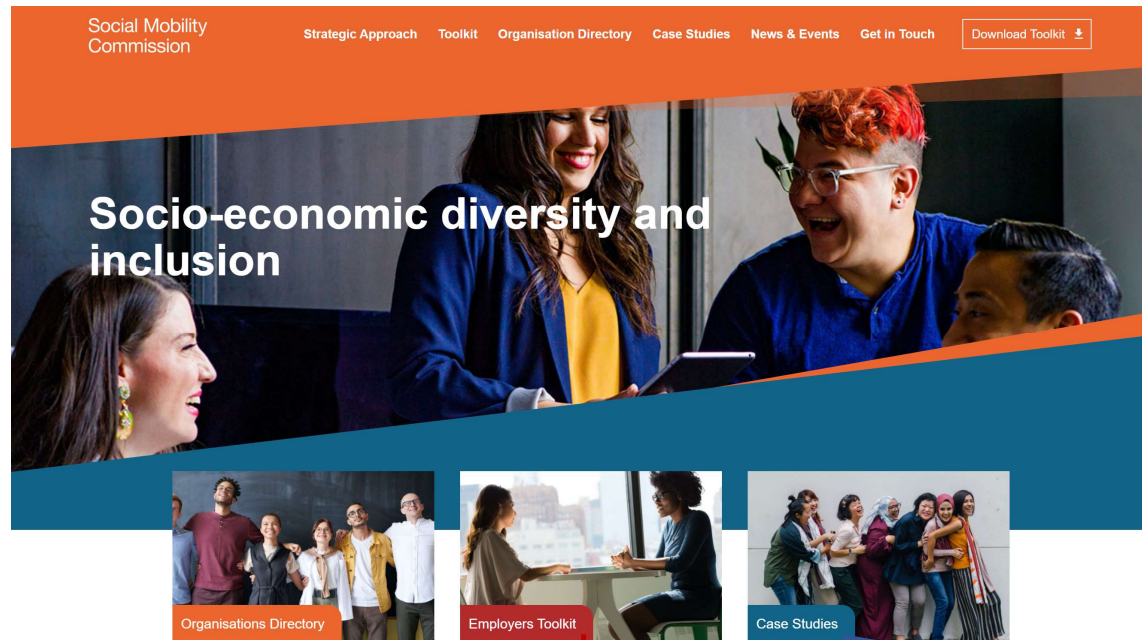
- [Measure](#) the socio-economic diversity of your apprenticeship **applications** and **offers**
- Use this to inform your review and refinements

WIDER ECOSYSTEM

Share your levy

- Support SMEs by transferring levy funds to your supply chain, particularly those in social mobility 'cold spots'

Socialmobilityworks.org



ORGANISATION DIRECTORY

- Searchable by topic and location
- Contact details






EMPLOYERS TOOLKIT

- Advice across keys areas: Outreach, Hiring, Progression, Leadership & Culture, Advocacy and Data

CASE STUDIES

- Help you make the case for socio-economic diversity and inclusion

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