

UK Social Mobility Awards™

In association with

 **Capita**

2019 WINNERS CASE STUDY REPORT

BY THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INVESTIGATION

Organised by

Making the Leap.

About the UK Social Mobility Awards



The UK Social Mobility Awards (SOMOs) were launched in 2017 by the charity Making the Leap. The SOMOs were the first national awards specifically established to recognise and encourage action that will promote and increase social mobility within Britain's companies and public institutions. These awards recognise best practice and innovation. They celebrate excellence and achievement and elevate social mobility as a cause equal to the level of other diversity issues. By raising awareness and celebrating the people and organisations that are committed to bringing about social change, we believe that together we can advance the cause of social mobility in this country.

In the main report that follows we set out the story behind many of the winners from the 2019 SOMO Awards, each sharing their impressive achievements to stimulate greater social mobility. There were twelve categories for which individuals and organisations could be nominated (four for individuals and eight for organisations). Two of the organisational categories, School/College of the Year and University of the Year, are new to this year's awards given the vital importance that educational institutions play in fostering social mobility. The award for Outstanding Contribution to Social Mobility honours an individual who has made a remarkable contribution, over a long period, to advancing the social mobility agenda.

The twelve awards were thus:

- Champion of the Year
- Mentor of the Year
- Rising Star
- Organisation of the Year
- Innovation
- Leadership of the Year
- Recruitment Programme of the Year
- Progression Programme of the Year
- Community Programme of the Year
- School/College of the Year
- University of the Year
- Outstanding Contribution to Social Mobility

Having seen the success of the first three years, our ambition is greater. We want more organisations to be a part of this movement. We want to see more companies feel inspired by each others' initiatives, to collaborate and share their own experiences. We want more UK businesses to recognise – and talk about – how investing in social mobility can bring significant benefits.

You can keep up-to-date about the 2020 Awards, including advice for entering, on the SOMOs' website (somo.uk).

About Making The Leap



Making The Leap is a London-based charity, founded in 1993, that improves social mobility by raising the aspirations of, and increasing opportunities for, young people between the ages of 11 and 30. The vision is to give young people from poorer backgrounds the same opportunities to succeed in their careers as those from wealthier families. Each month, Making the Leap equips hundreds of young people with the soft skills they need to succeed. Every year it raises aspirations and access to opportunities for over 10,000 young people.

Introduction to the Report

Making social progress is slow work

If we take a long view of social progress in Britain, we can see that we've made huge strides forward in some areas of society - Britons live much longer than they used to, have higher incomes, and more of us are in professional jobs. We are also more geographically mobile and more diverse than a generation ago. And yet, despite all this change, patterns of social advantage and disadvantage are persistently replicated through the generations in Britain. The academic research on the topic (summarised, for example, in our 2018 book *Social Progress in Britain*) consistently shows that being born to working class parents reduces the chances of reaching the top occupations, and that progress towards greater 'social fluidity' has been glacially slow.

Why should we care about social mobility at all? There are two main answers to this question. The first answer states that fairness and equality of opportunity should be a guiding moral principle of a liberal developed society. All developed societies exhibit a high degree of inequality of outcome, but this inequality is widely held to be more acceptable if there is a level playing field for gaining access to more privileged positions. Equality of opportunity has thus become a fundamental moral principle of contemporary societies, and discrimination against minorities and other 'protected groups' has been formally outlawed across Europe and North America.

The second answer is about economic efficiency and the potential wastage of talent. If talented people are being prevented from reaching their potential because of their social backgrounds, by implication it follows that less talented people (but from privileged backgrounds) are taking their places. The economic efficiency argument states that we ought to strive for the best-fitting person in every role. If irrelevant factors such as ethnicity, socio-economic background or other ascribed qualities are used as selection or promotion criteria in the job market, there is bound to be some loss of efficiency. The business case for social mobility is further strengthened by research suggesting that diversity can promote innovation and business success. If everyone is recruited from the same narrow social base, they are more likely to share similar outlooks and to fall victim to 'group think', thus stifling innovation. The business case for promoting social mobility was widely recognised among this year's entrants to the UK Social Mobility Awards. For example, Nissan, winners of the Community Programme of the Year Award, stressed that recruiting widely for employees was good for business. Ian Green, Senior Controller and Section Manager at the Nissan Skills Foundation, explained, "It's not just for the sake of corporate social responsibility.

We want to attract young people into manufacturing and engineering and not just for ourselves. It's also for our supply base."

Nevertheless, despite moral and business arguments for promoting social mobility and equality of opportunity, progress has been painfully slow. Governments have often seen education as the key to promoting social mobility, and there has indeed been great progress in spreading access to academic qualifications such as GCSEs, and, to a lesser extent, access to A levels and university degrees. Yet, recent research by Sam Friedman and Daniel Laurison has shown that, even among people with similar educational qualifications, social background continues to have a significant effect on access to elite professions, top jobs, and top salaries. Widening educational opportunities has not therefore solved the problem of entrenched inequalities.

Whereas traditionally the focus of social mobility efforts have looked to the education sector, the UK Social Mobility Awards (SOMOs) importantly add focus on the role of the world of business and, more generally, to the organisations that recruit people into work and into top jobs. If there is a single strand connecting the SOMOs winners, it is the demonstration that the actions of employers and business organisations can directly improve the life chances of individuals and thus improve the fairness of society as a whole. As Greene King's Lynne Kennedy (winner of the Recruitment Programme of the Year Award) explained: "Because we are the leading hospitality company, we can help to put social mobility to the front and centre for a wide range of employees and recruiters in the business." Similarly, Justine Greening (winner of the Outstanding Contribution to Social Mobility Award) co-founded the Social Mobility Pledge in March 2018, with the aim of encouraging businesses to play a crucial role in boosting social mobility in the UK, and to highlight which organisations and employers are going the extra mile to create a level playing field.

One way of increasing the size of the pool of talent is to provide training and tangible work experience to individuals typically excluded from the labour market. This was another important theme of this year's awards, with impressive schemes such as Movement to Work, described by Patty Gordon of the Department for Work and Pensions (winner of the Leadership of the Year Award), which provides job training and quality work experience to young people aged 18 to 24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

Of course, schools and universities continue to play prominent roles in promoting social mobility. Southmoor Academy's Aspirations Programme (winner of the School/College of the Year Award) targets students as young as age 8, recognising that programmes to promote social mobility can have a better chance of success if interventions start at younger ages. Similarly, Nottingham Trent University (NTU) is heavily involved in local schools, working to help raise educational attainment among secondary school students so that university admission is an attainable goal. Once at university, NTU goes to great lengths to ensure that students stay engaged in learning and complete their degree.

Even at Oxbridge, social mobility has taken centre stage. For instance, in the latest undergraduate admissions round, 69.1% of UK offers from Oxford were made to state school applicants, compared to 55.6% just a few years ago. Cambridge reports similar admissions statistics. While these are positive signs of progress, there is still room for improvement, as state schools are still markedly under-represented at Oxbridge (e.g., approximately 90% of university applicants from the UK are from the state school sector).

In the ten case studies that follow, we have attempted to get to the heart of the issue: What are the concrete actions that individuals and organisations take? What examples can these set for other people and organisations that want to follow in their footsteps?

The case studies were compiled based on submission information and on interviews conducted by Sara Mullen in December of 2019 and January of 2020. We are very grateful that these winners were willing to spare the time to share their experiences with us, resulting in this report, which we hope will inspire award competition entries for 2020. Coming back to our earlier point, making social change is slow work, but these case studies show how much can be done by employers and educational institutions. To be sure, these initiatives need to be scaled up, but they shine a light on the possibility of a fairer society in which those in privileged positions routinely do what they can to level the playing field for everyone else.

Sara Mullen, Anthony Heath, and David Kirk

The Centre for Social Investigation, Nuffield College, Oxford

March 2020.

The Centre For Social Investigation (CSI) was established by Nuffield College, Oxford University, in September 2014. In keeping with the College's Charter which emphasises "the study by co-operation between academic and non-academic persons of social (including economic and political) problems", the Centre aims to address contemporary social issues of public interest and to engage with policy-makers and the public more generally, carrying out authoritative, non-partisan research on central social issues which draws upon expertise in economics, politics, sociology, and social policy. CSI has carried out research for the Social Mobility Commission on the childhood roots of social mobility, and for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on social integration as well as community engagement.

Recent studies include topics such as ethnic discrimination in the labour market in Britain, homelessness in Oxford, public safety and road accidents following the deployment of Uber in Britain, and public perceptions of the Brexit negotiations. Yet CSI and Nuffield are not merely interested in the study of social mobility; like the SOMO Award winners and many other organisations, Nuffield College is actively engaged in promoting social mobility. Last year, the College launched the Nuffield Undergraduate Scholars Institute, a one-of-a-kind widening participation scheme specifically designed to open up access to graduate study to sociodemographic groups typically underrepresented among higher education faculty and graduate students.

For further information about CSI, visit our website: <http://csi.nuff.ox.ac.uk>

Champion Of The Year 2019 - Winner **PROFESSOR PAMELA GILLIES CBE**



Who are Professor Pamela Gillies and Glasgow Caledonian University?

Professor Pamela Gillies CBE FRSE has been Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Glasgow Caledonian University since 2006. A Founding Member of the Global Advisory Council for the African Leadership University and a founding Board member of the Grameen Caledonian College of Nursing in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Professor Gillies was awarded a CBE for services to education and public health in 2012. She is a Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health of the Royal College of Physicians of London, a Fellow of the Academy for Social Sciences, an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Glasgow, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. In 2018, Professor Gillies was invited to become a member of the Board of Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights UK.

Glasgow Caledonian University is a distinctive, inclusive and forward-looking university that is committed to its social mission to promote the common good. It has become an international centre of excellence in higher education, promoting employability and global citizenship in its graduates. It has a tradition of widening access to higher education for talented individuals regardless of their backgrounds, and it leverages its intellectual and social capital for the benefit of the communities in Scotland and internationally.

Why did she enter the Awards?

Professor Gillies was put forward for the Award by 'The Caledonian Club,' which is an award-winning community outreach initiative established in 2008. It works with children as young as three and their families to raise their aspirations towards achieving life-changing opportunities through the benefits of education. Since its inception, the Club has engaged 18,000 young people and 4,000 parents and carers in Glasgow and London. Professor Gillies' vision for the Caledonian Club illustrates the life-changing impact universities can have to help drive social change. She explains, "We knew in the 1990s that the social class gap in attainment appears at the age of 2 to 3 years; we knew that we had to work as early as we could in education to close that gap."

Professor Gillies has her own story about social mobility: "I was a wee lassie from Lochee, near Dundee, and was the first to go to university in my family. It has really opened doors of opportunity. I've had the most extraordinary opportunities in life as the result of my educational experience and have been able to meet incredibly inspiring individuals as diverse as Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel Prize winner for whom social mobility is absolutely fundamental to everything he does, to Annie Lennox, our amazing new Chancellor".

What did she do?

She set about creating and leading on the values of a culture that fundamentally promotes social mobility and social capital for all the communities that the university serves, both at home and overseas. She says, "Sustaining and leading a values led culture, I think, is the most important aspect of my role as Vice-Chancellor. It means that you constantly live and demonstrate the values that the institution holds dear." It did not happen overnight, and she has been in the role for 14 years. The university now comprises 40% female professors and its gender pay gap is the lowest in the university sector. It was one of the first universities to be an accredited living wage employer, and to have equal representation in terms of gender and race on its executive board and court.

Strong student engagement is also something that the university has worked hard at, to encourage its students to engage with promoting social mobility. Engagement has been accomplished locally, including through the Caledonian Club, and overseas as well. For instance, Vision Sciences students work to develop their practical skills on board South Africa's Phelophepa "train of hope," taking vital health care to South Africa's poorest and most remote regions. Professor Gillies says "You've got to constantly demonstrate your commitment to social mobility to be authentic, and it doesn't surprise me that well over 90% in our recent staff survey agreed that our mission statement 'for the common good' was important to them and something they valued."

The university also has the Grameen Caledonian College of Nursing in Bangladesh, which it developed with their previous Chancellor, Muhammad Yunus, as a social business. It was developed to reach out to the poorest families in rural areas of Bangladesh and offer them a rare opportunity of education. She says "I do not want the Nursing College to run as a charity because once you spend a charity dollar, you have to fundraise again and again. How can we create sustainable development through education that promotes social mobility? That's what the Nursing College is about."

A focus on sustainability was also a key objective in their efforts to support work-based learning at the Transnet rail company in South Africa. Glasgow Caledonian University developed a BSc degree in railway operations management, working to help South Africa build human capital while the country invests in building its rail infrastructure. Professor Gillies noted, "If there's

a theme for us about social mobility, it's that it has to be founded on a sustainable and co-created model that will deliver sustained change over time. It's the embedding within the existing model of the business or university. Becoming sustainable, I think, is absolutely critical."

A focus closer to home for the university has been in saying to the local community, "come in and use our resources." Families come in to learn life skills with their kids, such as nutrition, reading and writing, and applying for benefits. The university targets nursery, primary, and secondary schools within defined areas of deprivation. Professor Gillies declares, "You need to work with the whole community. Targeting individuals and pulling them out of their local grouping can have a negative impact; research shows that peer to peer education, group education and keeping groups together may be the best way to promote understanding and life skills development."

How does she measure her success?

Through programmes with younger children, the university assesses success, in part, through problem-solving games on tablet devices. Staff also develop case studies based on stories that young people tell about themselves and their families. Professor Gillies explains, "Digital storytelling is so powerful now and our young people use it all the time. It's certainly one of the tools that helps us sustain the work that we do and measure the social impact of our engagement".

She believes that the long-term impact of this work will create healthier, more prosperous individuals and families where social cohesion is promoted. "It's just so fundamentally right. We know that with individuals who come from the most challenging of environments, if you give them a chance, they are robust and they are resilient. We need a talent pool that is resilient and entrepreneurial, to promote the productivity of our nation. Then that prosperity can go back into improving the environment for the most vulnerable and susceptible in society. To promote life chances, the commitment to 'the common good' is absolutely fundamental to promoting social mobility. It's good for us all to do it."

Mentor Of The Year 2019 - Winner

FRANKLIN ASANTE



Who are Franklin Asante and Coutts Bank?

Franklin Asante has been with Coutts for 11 years and his role is to look after the Entrepreneur clients in a personal capacity, helping them to manage, preserve, and grow their wealth.

Coutts is widely recognised as one of the leading private banks in the UK. Its progressive, long-term approach to wealth management is founded on experience gained through looking after clients and their money for over three centuries. It offers award-winning and innovative private banking solutions that enable its clients to engage with their wealth in the way that suits them. Headquartered in London, Coutts's regional presence comprises offices within some of the UK's most exciting and vibrant centres and its award-winning digital capability ensures that its clients are continuously connected to their advisers, wherever they are.

Why did he enter the Awards?

Franklin was nominated for the Mentor of the Year Award, he thinks because he has been heavily involved in social mobility initiatives out in the community. He said that he been active in "Working with schools from inner city London and creating mentoring programmes from the Bank, to give members of staff opportunities to engage with parts of other communities where they may not necessarily be based."

What did he do?

During his Award acceptance speech, Franklin said, "I was that kid that social mobility was trying to help. I grew up in NW London, where quite a lot of the organisations that work in that (social mobility) space have quite a heavy presence. One of the first organisations I now work with, Arrival Education, started off in the school that I went to."

Franklin is eager to share his own experience and story, through individual and large-scale mentoring projects and, more recently, through social media. He joined Coutts in a clerical position and worked his way up the ladder, and has reached a senior level in a very short space of time. He explained, "I think that what I enjoy the most and the impact I can have is about two things; number one, the schools I go into. A couple of months back I was in a school where I addressed 200 kids in a school hall and talked for an hour and that really resonates. I get so many letters and emails from the kids I speak to and it's about being able to connect to people on that level." He emphasises the importance of children being able to relate to role models.

The second point Franklin emphasised is that he is very positive about the impact that social media can have within the social mobility space. He said, "I have a social media page (Instagram - The Urban Financier). It's not huge, just over 15,000 followers on there, and I use that as a channel to go on chat shows and do podcasts to spread the word." He explained, "It's also about diversity, but diversity of thought, because a lot of people in inner city London areas may have better resilience than some of those who have been bought up in better circumstances, except they can't demonstrate their resilience on a CV."

He emphasised the importance of resilience, saying that "I think a lot of it comes through life lessons. It's instinctive that you think outside the box because you've had to face challenges whereas a lot of people might crumble at the first sign of defeat. I'm used to dealing with things in my way in challenging times and difficult times, being a real problem solver." This in turn impacts upon business: "if you're turning business away because you're not able to think outside the box, you're losing money. Where people can think outside the box, it brings a whole new dynamism into the organisation."

How does he measure his success?

One measure of Coutts's success is recruiting. Franklin noted that Coutts is now employing staff who have been recruited via its social mobility work, specifically its mentoring schemes and apprenticeships. The impact is clear for him, "If you look at the range of diversity in the Bank's clients, it has come on in leaps

and bounds in the last 5 years. People have told me that they thought they were not the kind of person you would want in the bank and I said 'Why not? Wealth doesn't discriminate. Come in.'" He went on to say, "Working with entrepreneurs means that a lot of people that work with me are interested in how they can become self-made millionaires. I have the knowledge and the access, and these people have all the brains and ideas. There was one guy I mentored, funnily enough we went to the same school."

He reached out to me on Facebook several years ago and he said he was inspired by me. We got talking and I mentored him through his career and what he wanted to do. He didn't go to university; he came from a social housing flat and now owns two properties and has managed to take a whole year off for travelling because of his income. That was someone I knew running around in the playground."

Organisation Of The Year 2019 - Winner

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE



What is the Ministry of Justice (MoJ)?

The Ministry of Justice is a major government department, at the heart of the justice system, working to protect and advance the principles of justice and employing in the region of 70,000 staff. Its vision is to deliver a world-class justice system that works for everyone in society.

Why did they enter the Awards?

As the first government department to publish a Social Mobility plan, the MoJ has always been a great supporter of the UK Social Mobility Awards. It believes that the SOMOs are the number one vehicle for it to showcase the work that its staff have done and to seek critical friendship from the experts on the panel. Drew Morris, Head of MoJ's Social Mobility Programme, said "We are very keen to play our part in the social mobility movement, and, by extension, engage with the other organisations and build that community of both practice and values. That's a really important leadership angle for big organisations like the MoJ to consider. We want to inspire other organisations and we are always learning from others too."

The MoJ was successful in the individual awards categories last year, with former Director-General Matthew Coats winning the Champion of the Year Award. The Department was so inspired by the range and the quality of organisations that were nominated and received awards that it was determined to challenge

itself to see if it could compete on the organisational level. Drew acknowledges that there is a wider commitment on the part of the Civil Service to put its work on social mobility out into the public domain, so that it not only gains insight from others but hopefully inspires others by some of the work that the MoJ and other departments have undertaken. "There's a genuine concerted effort now across the Civil Service, centred on the work by Bernadette Kelly, who is the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Transport.

It's underpinned by a lot of good activism on behalf of the Civil Service Social Mobility Network, which has hubs across the UK."

What did they do?

The MoJ has designed a comprehensive people transformation programme, which weaves social mobility into the fabric of the organisation. The MoJ's social mobility strategy states that to thrive, the organisation must reflect the society it serves. Attracting people is based on merit and potential, rather than polish, and on capability, rather than cultural capital. Last year the MoJ launched its third Social Mobility Strategic Plan, which sets out a three-year vision to achieve fundamental organisational change. The Plan includes an Interventions Map of 14 key initiatives, including a ground-breaking commitment to develop a junior talent offering linking outreach, recruitment, and progression. It has invested in a team of eight staff to deliver a social mobility programme as part of a three-year vision to transform its culture, linking

key people processes with a commitment to attracting, recruiting, and developing a diverse population of talented staff.

By 2022, the vision is to deliver in four key areas:

1) Linking outreach to the talent pipeline; 2) Changing mindsets alongside processes; 3) Using a data-driven approach; and 4) Playing a leading role in the UK social mobility movement.

The MoJ's Strategic Plan sets milestones to be achieved throughout the year, and it has seven key aims:

- Working with young people
- Investing in non-university graduates
- Attracting an array of talent
- Removing barriers
- Expanding their understanding
- Career progression
- Working with others.

Drew says, "The thing that I'm most proud about is our Schools Programme. It has delivered about 750 events, and the programme has worked with around 65,000 pupils from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, where schools have a higher than average eligibility for free school meals. I'm very proud that we have had about 1,100 Social Mobility (SM) Ambassadors who visit schools and other educational establishments. There's been a lot of research which suggests that early interventions pay greater dividends." The MoJ has come to realise that there is scope for earlier intervention, and in the past year has seen really exciting work by some of their SM Ambassadors in the Merseyside area, where they have gone into primary schools and built a package of interventions to engage with pupils who are age 10 and 11.

How do they measure their success?

Drew believes that the MoJ's success has come about through the breadth and ambition of the staff's work and the fact that they've taken a strategic approach. The MoJ's social mobility programme was pitched from day one as an organisational change programme and, as a consequence, they've put in place strong programme management ranging from reporting and governance processes through to setting targets and performance tracking. "We've treated it as a transformation programme and what gets measured gets done."

He thinks there are two key approaches to measurement: One, is to be strategic and set out what you want to do

and measure your progress; and two, if no data or metrics exist, create them. "That's what we did. We asked questions in the People Survey before the Government's socioeconomic background measures came out. That enabled us to come up with three really useful targets. One of the real strengths of this programme has been the fact that we've taken a really agile approach to delivery."

The MoJ is now starting to see individuals coming into the organisation who have previously engaged with its social mobility schemes. Drew says "There's a really good example of an individual who joined us this year as a result of an internship, which we had launched with Middlesex University. This individual has now joined the Civil Service, and, by his own admission, says that he wouldn't have even known that the Civil Service was a viable employer had the MoJ and Middlesex University not introduced him to some of the opportunities that were out there. These are small gains in the short term, but I'm very confident that this is a positive pattern that we are starting to see."

It's clear that the MoJ is committed for the long term. Drew says "It's quite difficult to demonstrate impact across 20 to 30 years, but that's not going to stop us from putting considerable effort into making things better."

Leadership Of The Year 2019 - Winner

DWP



Who is the DWP?

DWP is the largest UK Government department, employing about 82,000 people. It is responsible for welfare, pensions, and child maintenance policy. As the UK's biggest public service department, it administers the State Pension and a range of working age, disability, and ill health benefits to around 20 million claimants and customers. Through a network of 640 job centres, it supports getting people into work.

Why did they enter the Awards?

Patty Gordon, Head of Movement to Work and Social Mobility, says "We're doing some amazing work and there's so much passion around Movement to Work (MtW) in the DWP. A lot of people do it on a voluntary basis alongside their day jobs and I thought it would be such a great way of recognising the effort and the motivation around it. It wasn't about the winning; it was to celebrate some success together. We've got thousands of volunteers who support Movement to Work."

DWP leads the MtW programmatic efforts within the Civil Service. MtW programmes are aimed at 18-30-year olds given the concentration of the unemployed in this age range. Moreover, 88% of businesses believe school leavers are unprepared for work and 76% of firms believe a lack of work experience is the reason young people are unprepared. Youth unemployment is estimated to cost the UK £28 billion over the next decade.¹

MtW seeks to break the vicious 'no job, no experience' cycle that is preventing young people not currently in education, employment, or training (NEET) from stepping onto the career ladder. The Civil Service seeks to unlock the potential of these young people by offering quality work placement opportunities that can help bring about lasting change, not only in the lives of those people on the programme, but in society as a whole. MtW is one of DWP's flagship work experience programmes – uniquely placed to support its aim as a government department concerned with youth employment, and as an employer keen to build a talent pipeline to increase social mobility and diversity.

What did they do?

DWP set up a programme that would drive social mobility not just within the DWP but across the Civil Service, by providing individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds with challenging and meaningful work experience in an organisation which historically has mainly employed individuals from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. In 2018, MtW was embedded into Civil Service strategic work plans and the Social Mobility Action Plan. All departments were asked to consider MtW as a talent pipeline to attract young people from diverse backgrounds, as a way of building social mobility and diversity as well as helping the Civil Service's aspiration to be the most inclusive employer in the UK by 2020.

Patty explained that DWP staff use data from the Social Mobility Index combined with their age 18 to 30 benefit claimant data to pinpoint areas in need of resources. This gives them a clear picture about opportunities for social mobility, and they can then target the 'cold spots' such as parts of inner-city Birmingham and Newcastle, amongst many other places. Hence, DWP's efforts provide an opportunity for the Civil Service to be less London-centric and more representative of the country it serves.

Young unemployed individuals receive information about the work placement through their Work Coach in their local job centre. They receive a structured work experience programme that lasts between two and six weeks. Patty said, "We go into the job centres and say 'look at the Civil Service and the DWP and the amazing opportunities we have.' We tell the Work Coaches that we don't just have job centres; we have Policy, we have Digital, we have IT, we have HR work, we have every profession you can think of within the Civil Service. We make it an attractive offer so they can see the benefits of sending their young customers to us."

To ensure a quality programme, they have a leadership series for the participant's line managers, where they build their skills for giving a young person the very best work experience. It also provides line managers a step-by-step approach about getting the best from their young person, including how to coach and mentor them.

How do they measure their success?

To measure success, DWP tracks progress at 13 weeks after the end of the work placement. Patty noted, "Our MtW participants are those furthest away from the labour market, and our results show that 42% of young people who undertake a Movement to Work placement gain employment, an apprenticeship, or go on to further education." DWP is planning to digitise most of the data in the future, and will track those who have been on the programme for up to 18 months. Doing so will allow an even greater insight into the success of its work. Informal placement feedback from participants reveals the following positive impacts: increased confidence, development of transferrable skills, enhanced job prospects, improved employability skills, and enhanced CVs.

Patty shared the story of one young man who had come to her department who had never worked, was very introverted, and unable to engage in the workplace. She explained, "I gave him structured work to do around

numbers and he got really into that. It's an amazing thing to be able to bring someone out of their shell. He had a real skill with data. He helped with the work using the Social Mobility Index and data overlay. I also took him to Civil Service Live, which is a big huge fair across seven cities where the Civil Service presents loads of things that are going on under the banner of the 'Brilliant Civil Service.' I ran a market stall in each of the sessions and that's where he came to life. I put his data maps up on the wall. People invited him to their offices to show them how he had done some of that work. We supported him through the application process and he's now working at the Department for International Trade. Amazing!" Given its successes, DWP is currently working to grow Movement to Work, not only within DWP but in 27 other Government departments.

¹Source: British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) Workforce Survey, July 2014 – Developing the talents of the next generation.

Recruitment Programme Of The Year 2019 - Winner

GREENE KING



Who is Greene King?

Greene King started as a small brewing business in 1799, based in the Suffolk market-town of Bury St Edmunds, and have been brewing award-winning ales ever since. Greene King now runs over 2,900 managed, tenanted, leased, and franchised pubs, restaurants, and hotels. You will find them in cities, towns, and villages across England, Scotland, and Wales. They operate three main business sectors: (1) Retail (managed pubs), including Hungry Horse, Farmhouse Inns, Chef & Brewer, Flaming Grill, Old English Inns, Belhaven, and local pubs; (2) Pub partners (tenanted and leased pubs); and (3) Brewing & Brands (cask ale & premium ale brewing). It employs over 39,000 employees across the UK.

Why did they enter the Awards?

Lynne Kennedy, Greene King's Talent Development Manager, explained that it was important for the company to have its social mobility work recognised and visible. "Because we are the leading hospitality company, it's something that we can push forward as part of a wider agenda. We can help to put social mobility to the front and centre for a wide range of employees and recruiters in the business." Its Stepping Up Report, launched in January 2019, set out Greene King's social mobility strategy, which is aligned to their business and people goals of attracting, retaining, and developing talent. The Awards showcase Greene King's commitment to social mobility embodied in the report. "We wanted to demonstrate action and commitment.

Rather than just making statements in reports, it's something that we genuinely believe in and want to make happen," Lynne affirmed. Greene King is a repeat winner of the same category from the 2018 Awards, thereby demonstrating that it is again a recognised leader in work to spur social mobility.

What did they do?

In its Stepping Up Report, Greene King committed to the following:

- Launch the 'Releasing Potential' programme of supporting ex-offenders into employment;
- Increase its commitment to apprenticeships by supporting 20,000 apprentices by 2022;
- Be the first hospitality signatory to the Business in the Community's Race at Work Charter;
- Increase support for internal career progression;
- Extend its Prince's Trust partnership for a fourth year.

Lynne said "It's one of the very few industries where you can start on the bottom of the ladder where you do not have to have any previous experience. You must have the will and you must have the tenacity, the whole 'I can do, and I want to do it' type of behaviour and attitude. We can help grow a career within the hospitality industry right to the top tiers. We have examples of people who left school with no qualifications, have worked their way through, and are doing a fantastic job for us."

The Releasing Potential programme has been extremely successful. Its commitment was to recruit 50 ex-prisoners into the business in the first year of the programme, and it is well on target to achieving that. The programme was driven by the industry shortage of chefs, and Greene King staff looked deeper into areas where they could be sourced. Some of the prisoners were already trained in food production, health, and safety, but had few opportunities for work and often wrote themselves off.

Greene King could see that access to a job was an important way for them to get their lives back on track. Lynne noted, "Some of the necessary skills that we were looking for were absolutely inherent in the prison population." They now work with the MoJ and with partners NOVUS, Only a Pavement Away (OAPA), and Crisis to deliver their programmes. Pub managers go into the prisons and meet the prisoners. Lynne noted, "They're very open and very honest and transparent and say 'I'm in here because of...'" Recruitment managers make hiring decisions based on a work trial, an interview, and the disclosure of the offence. Lynne explained that it's about giving people who may have come from a challenging background a second chance.

How do they measure their success?

Lynne noted that Greene King's retention rates are measured to industry standards, both for its Releasing Potential and Apprenticeship programmes. At the time of its Award application, it had delivered nine Releasing Potential recruitment sessions within prisons, with 47 candidates offered a work trial on their release or when their 'release on temporary licence' was approved.

Lynne recalled, "We have a guy who's probably going to be a team leader in the future. We met him in prison, he was released, and we recruited him into the business. In a short space of time he went from writing himself off within a prison environment to being recruited and moving into a leadership role, and could quite possibly be a general manager of the future. He's been with us currently for five months."

She went on to say, "From a Prince's Trust point of view, we've got a young lady who just won an award with us in Greene King, the Gold Star Award. She was a young lady who was not working, wasn't going anywhere, struggling and feeling disengaged from everything. She was recruited last November and by this September she's received a Gold Star Award. In a year, she's blossomed and won awards both with Greene King and with the Prince's Trust. This has boosted her confidence to believe she can aspire to achieve anything she sets out to do."

Progression Programme Of The Year 2019 - Winner

HMRC



HM Revenue & Customs

What is the HMRC?

Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is the UK's tax, payments and customs authority, and it has a vital purpose: it collects the money that pays for the UK's public services and helps families and individuals with targeted financial support. HMRC employs around 60,000 people and one of its key strategies is moving towards a more highly skilled and sustainable workforce through better training and development, and by creating a new, modern network of large regional centres.

HMRC's social mobility vision embraces its commitment to supporting and nurturing its people by fostering an inclusive workplace, where progression is possible and everyone has the opportunity to succeed regardless of their socio-economic background. HMRC offers and delivers on a range of progression initiatives and schemes to encourage, inspire, and enable its staff to be the best they can be. It's important for HMRC to employ a workforce that reflects the society that it serves – in terms of background and lived experience.

Why did they enter the Awards?

HMRC were familiar with the UK Social Mobility Awards from previous years. Abeda Malek, Policy Transformation and Social Mobility Lead, explained, "it was nice to know that there was something out there that we could be part of and also because of the networking opportunities, to see what other people are doing and learn from them."

With encouragement from their Social Mobility Champion, Ruth Stanier (Director General), and their Social Mobility Working Group they considered which award categories were the closest match to their social mobility vision and submitted an entry for the Community and Progression Awards.

What did they do?

HMRC runs a range of accelerated development programmes that provide a pathways to career progression, enabling staff to develop their skills, abilities, and confidence. Its talent programmes such as Spring, Leap, Embrace and Ascend provide development opportunities for staff at all stages of their career. They also have a very successful Apprenticeship scheme. Nikki Hanmer, Apprenticeship Network Lead, says "No matter what stage you are in your career, there is a programme that matches where you are now and where you want to be. We have just under 4,000 apprentices in the department and we currently run 32 programmes. We do a lot of recruitment externally to bring staff in on the Apprenticeship programme."

HMRC doesn't just focus its efforts internally. Cliff Sale, Social Mobility Programme Lead, said "There are lots of new initiatives around the outreach side of things, such as our work with pupil referral units which started in Nottingham. We're looking at kids who've been excluded from mainstream education and are really struggling in terms of what opportunities the future holds for them. We bring them in and give them the

opportunity to experience work and we provide close mentoring; it has been quite revolutionary in that sense. The feedback that we've had from the kids has been tremendous and this is something that we want to build and expand upon." The initiative has just been rolled-out in Liverpool and there's plans for other regions to become involved.

What is clear from HMRC is that staff want to spread the word and learn. They work closely with other Civil Service departments and recently shared their experience of introducing the new Stride Mentoring Scheme (introduced specifically to help those from a lower socio-economic background) with a number of other government departments.

How do they measure their success?

Suzanne Griffiths, the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Social Mobility Subject Matter Lead says "We recently began collecting socio economic background as part of our graduate entry level programmes and are just starting to look at this data with the graduates that we've taken on. Going forward, we are including socio economic background questions designed by the Cabinet Office, into our HR system. This will give us a better understanding of our workforce and how we develop and retain them"

Other measures such as internal Pulse surveys also provide valuable insight. Suzanne notes that the survey helped identify the need to do better recruitment from lower socio-economic areas, and the need to focus on removing barriers to progression within the organisation. Every year HMRC staff also take part in the Civil Service-wide People Survey, and social mobility questions have also been introduced into the survey for the first time this year.

Abeda explains, "Running focus groups and asking staff what they perceived to be the barriers to, and enablers of, progression in HMRC we found a lot of interesting information. When you have that one-to-one conversation with someone, it gives you the best insight into what is working well and what you need to continue working on. Whether it's through our Social Mobility Network or our Working Group, people come to us and ask what we're going to do next. It's about making everybody aware of what we mean by social mobility."

Community Programme Of The Year 2019 - Winner

NISSAN MOTOR MANUFACTURING



Who is Nissan Motor Manufacturing?

Nissan has one of the most comprehensive European presences of any overseas manufacturer, employing more than 16,000 staff across locally based design, research & development, manufacturing, logistics, and sales & marketing operations. In 2018, Nissan plants in the UK, Spain, and Russia produced about 600,000 vehicles, including award-winning crossovers, commercial vehicles, and the Nissan LEAF, Europe's best selling electric vehicle in 2018. Pursuing a goal of zero emissions and zero fatalities on the road, Nissan is leading the field with its vision of Intelligent Mobility. Designed to guide Nissan's product and technology pipeline, this 360-degree approach to the future of mobility will anchor critical company decisions around how cars are powered, how cars are driven, and how cars integrate into society.

Nissan Sunderland is Britain's largest car production plant, employing over 6,700 staff and producing in excess of 10 million cars since production began in 1986. It is situated in the North-East of England, which historically has been an area of the country with relatively greater levels of deprivation.

Why did Nissan enter the Awards?

In 2012, an analysis of technical apprenticeship applications to the company revealed there had been a 12% drop in the number of applications received, with very few female applicants.

The company's analysis also highlighted that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the area were not applying for technical jobs. The plant Vice President, Kevin Fitzpatrick, requested the Human Resource and Development team to address the issue and consider how to improve the talent pipeline, with a focus on engagement with local schools and young people.

This led to the establishment of The Nissan Skills Foundation (NSF) in 2014, which has four published aims: (1) Raising interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary schools; (2) Raising the aspirations of local youngsters to show that social issues, economic background and gender are not barriers to a potential career in engineering and manufacturing; (3) Raising awareness of opportunities and desire to work for Nissan; and (4) Engaging with the broader community to actively engage with school children from Primary, Secondary and Tertiary institutions.

Ian Green, Senior Controller and Section Manager at the Nissan Skills Foundation, says "We don't really publicise what we do (with respect to social mobility); our core job is building cars to make a profit for the organisation. We just happen to be in a deprived region. It's not just for the sake of CSR (corporate social responsibility); it has a very specific purpose—we want to attract young people into manufacturing and engineering and not just for ourselves. It's also for our supply base." He also has a personal connection with the subject, "The school we did the pilot with was an infant school where I went when

I was a kid. One side of the road is where the social housing is and the other side private housing. There was always a little bit of a gap; now that gap is ginormous. I hadn't realised that until I'd gone into school governance. You look at a small community school and you don't see things that are happening in the background. That's what got me going on the social mobility side. I would have been a free school meal kid back in those days, but my mother didn't claim them because she was too proud. Maybe that's a bit of a driver for me and I also think it's about fairness."

What did they do?

Over the years Nissan Sunderland has developed both structured classroom style lessons and ad hoc engagement events based upon the needs of local schools. The approach is to remove all barriers and raise students' aspirations and understanding of the opportunities available in engineering and manufacturing, and to increase engagement with STEM subjects using innovative activities. Nissan's efforts have expanded from offering two formal programmes to thirteen now. Programmes include:

- F1 in Schools, a competition bringing the thrill of Formula 1 racing into classrooms across the region;
- Industrial Cadets, a scheme aiming to introduce students to the world of manufacturing and industry;
- Nissan Eco School, an activity that teaches students about Nissan's approach to finding solutions to global environmental issues;
- Monozukuri Caravan, a hands-on interactive workshop celebrating the art of making things;
- First Lego Challenge, a competition that aims to introduce students to coding and team working skills; and
- Lesson in a Box, an innovative approach to introducing advanced manufacturing into Key Stage 1 using targeted activities to drive engagement and awareness.

In 2018, 200 STEM ambassadors were registered at the Nissan Sunderland Plant to support the activities, while the new "Days for Change" staff volunteering scheme offers all staff the opportunity to volunteer with the Nissan Skills Foundation (NSF) for two days each year. As of 2019, individual engagement programmes from Year 3 to Year 13 have been developed. These multiple engagement points from early years to higher education are a unique and innovative approach to STEM skill development.

Ian says, "I think where we have been innovative is the year range, going from Year 3 to Year 13. It's all about manufacturing and engineering, but we've gone into really early years. We tried to have those multiple touch points with the young people and they're all different but closely linked." He also has a passion for tackling the gender imbalance he knows exists in the plant. "We now have four girls-only events. These are the ones I still run myself; it's a big thing for me because it's all about fairness. I have 150 girls in front of me and I'm the only bloke in the room, I tell them the key reason I'm doing this is there's not a woman doing my job and there needs to be."

How do they measure their success?

The NSF started as a small school engagement programme with a target of reaching 500 students within a 20-mile radius of the plant. Now in its sixth year (2019), it has engaged with 50,000 students and 350 schools within a 70-mile radius and they know they are doing things right as there's now a waiting list for the programmes as soon as they are launched.

Ian believes that tenacity is a key factor in their success. "Don't be frightened of giving it a go. We pilot everything but we don't just do one pilot; we will maybe try two or three, and some things are more successful than others. It's easy to find excuses not to do these things." They have also won many other prestigious awards including the 2018 Manufacturing Management Magazine – Skills and Community Champion Award. Ian said, "For us, that's the external validation for what we're doing. It's somebody else saying 'yes, you are doing the right thing.'"

School/College Of The Year 2019 - Winner

SOUTHMOOR ACADEMY



Southmoor Academy
ASPIRE • ACHIEVE • ENJOY

What is Southmoor Academy?

Southmoor Academy is a co-educational, 11-18 school with around 1,200 pupils, located in the Grangetown area of Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. Southmoor converted to an Academy in 2012 and is part of the Southmoor Multi Academy Trust, along with Sandhill View Academy. The Sixth Form at Southmoor was set up in 2014. Since opening, 82% of leavers have progressed to university, including 34% to Russell Group universities.

Why did it enter the Awards?

Claire Ungley, the Aspirations and OxNet North East Coordinator, noted, "Aspirations and social mobility are at the heart of everything I do and at the heart of the school's ethos." Hence, the Awards are a close match to the school ethos. The Sixth Form was opened in 2014 specifically to support students' access to top universities. Southmoor Academy Vice Principal Sammy Wright, who is also a Social Mobility Commissioner, was key in setting it up. Claire says that social mobility is "something we're really passionate about and we wanted to see how we compared on a national scale to see if what we're doing here is interesting or different and a way of getting recognition" for the school's efforts. It had lots of high achieving students at GCSE, yet there seemed to be a drop off thereafter. The school wanted to carry those aspirations into the sixth form and allow the students to be the best they could be.

About social mobility, Claire commented, "Just being in the North East and seeing the educational disadvantage at a grassroots level, it's something that the Senior Leadership Team and staff had been experiencing for the whole time they've worked here." As a region, the North East experiences high levels of disadvantage, shown by the Office for Students measures of low participation areas (POLAR4, quintiles 1 and 2). The school does target some lower-income pupils for its Aspirations programme, but staff try and provide something for all students because they think that the geographical area as a whole has signs of disadvantage relative to other areas.

What did they do?

The foundation of the school's social mobility work is its Aspirations Programme for students aged 8 to 18. Claire says, "A lot of aspiration interventions tend to target sixth form students, specifically Year 12s. It's too late to start at that age. By that point they have made a lot of decisions. We realised that we have to start early." Through the programme, students build a network of different advice, cultural capital, confidence, and motivation, to try to give them the same opportunities as students from more advantaged backgrounds might have. Staff believe that it is critical to build connections between primary school, secondary school, university, parents and teachers.

The programme is split up into five phases:

Phase one – ‘Aspirations’ – is delivered to Y4, Y5 and Y6 students. A coordinator visits primary schools and delivers instruction for an hour per class per week for three weeks. Topics include: curiosity, resilience, and excellence in Y4; caring, STEM, and creative careers in Y5; and a focus on university entrance and course offerings in Y6. Each school also receives a tailored parents evening to provide tips about how to foster ambition in children, and the programme ends in a graduation event.

Phase two – ‘Insight’ – is delivered at Southmoor Academy. Students in Y5 and Y6 visit for a day of workshops focused around metacognition and resilience as learners. They experience taster sessions in subjects previously unknown to them, including linguistics, sociology, and psychology, and set themselves independent reading goals.

Phase three – ‘Connections’ – is a two-day summer school event for Y5, Y7, and Y10 students, which is currently in the process of being planned. Students and parents visit a local university for a residential event, to meet students and lecturers and experience what university life might be like.

Phase four – ‘Scholars’ – targets high ability disadvantaged students in Y10. Students complete a weekly programme of seminars and lectures delivered by local academics, across a range of subjects including skeleton science, crime scene investigation, and astrophysics. Students then complete an independent project, inspired by the Extended Project Qualification, to mimic university-style study. The programme ends with a graduation event at a local university for students and their families.

Phase five – ‘OxNet’ – provides support for Y12 students and is facilitated by Oxford and Durham universities. A series of seminars run by academics on ‘The Ordered Universe’ research project, spanning the humanities and sciences, are followed by a two-day Easter residential course at Durham, and a week-long summer school at Oxford.

Claire says “Early on we concentrate on three elements that we believe make a successful person: curiosity, resilience, and excellence. For example, one thing we do is to build a jigsaw puzzle to create a picture of a celebrity who has been curious, resilient, and excellent. For example, JK Rowling, who was curious about

literature; she was resilient as her manuscript for Harry Potter kept on getting rejected; and she became excellent as a world famous author.”

How do they measure their success?

The school has worked to create an evaluation tool, informed by research from the Sutton Trust and the Education Endowment Foundation, for all the programmes that it runs, with the effort on-going. They have put in place some pre and post questionnaires in order to assess progress. Claire says “We’re trying to triangulate that data with exam results and case studies of individual students. In a nutshell, it’s mixed methods, quantitative survey data and qualitative interview answers.” With evidence of the school’s success, staff would also like to start an Aspirations hub, where they work with different institutions.

University Of The Year 2019 - Winner

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY



NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY

Who is Nottingham Trent University?

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) was formed by the amalgamation of several separate institutions of higher education. It originated from the Nottingham Government School of Design, founded in 1843.

It is among the UK's top five recruiters of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and is committed to helping all students achieve their potential, regardless of background. Its staff pride themselves on speaking out about the role of universities in social mobility and are leaders in this area. NTU was the first university to sign Justine Greening's Social Mobility Pledge. Its reputation of a strong data-led approach to social mobility also contributed to NTU being named the Guardian's University of the Year in 2019.

Why did they enter the Awards?

Lucy Adams, NTU's Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator, said social mobility is increasingly one of their specialisms, and the aim of the UK Social Mobility Awards aligns with their goals. A member of the university's press team saw the Awards through the university's work with TASO (Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education), which was set up by the government under one of the 'What Works' programmes. Lucy explained, "TASO is set up to build a network across higher education to showcase and to share best practice in the whole 'what works' framework. This one is specifically set up to look at the fairness

across student access regardless of their background. So I think in terms of raising the profile for TASO, that was why we were seeing it as an opportunity to promote it across the sector."

Traditionally Nottingham had quite a low intake to further and higher education. She says, "A few years ago we became much more targeted on widening participation. We call it WP. Our department became a WP department after Alan Milburn's report about the social mobility 'cold spots' and Nottingham was shown as a particular 'cold spot'. This meant that we did have lots of other stakeholders and key influencers supporting the area and our work gained momentum and we were able to partner with more people."

What did they do?

NTU's Centre for Student and Community Engagement has developed interventions across the whole student lifecycle, including retention and progression. Targeted interventions are personalised to ensure they deliver the outcomes for the student, and every stage of this work is underpinned by data. Outreach efforts target students who meet certain criteria such as receiving free school meals, school postcode, living in a low participation area (POLAR4, quintiles 1 and 2), and Indices of Deprivation.

The Centre team facilitates more than 700 activities each year, places around 300 NTU undergraduates in local schools, works with 30,000 plus school pupils, and matches 1,000 volunteers to a range of community

projects. University students are specially trained and deployed to work in classrooms, to help raise attainment and to support young people to develop the skills, character, and social capital that research shows is vital to academic and professional success.

The Raising the Grade programme is delivered to pupils needing support to improve their predicted GCSE Maths and English grades – keeping the opportunity for a university education open. NTU's outreach work is designed and delivered in response to data, research, and pedagogy, leading to programmes which can also grow social and cultural capital. Lucy explains, "somebody from a WP background might not have this (social and cultural) capital. So, we're trying to fill that gap with such opportunities. Some of it may be around the extra-curricular things but the social part is about building networks; networks that are going to benefit them over the next 15 to 20 years."

To support progression to university education, NTU's Achievement Coaches and Learning Advocates offer individual and small group support in the classroom to help foster pupil attainment. Visits to NTU campuses are then arranged for pupils from as young as Year 6 to help them feel comfortable in a campus setting. These visits continue as pupils progress through to Year 12, when they are able to speak to students and find out what life at university is about. Once enrolled at NTU, the university knows that attendance is a key indicator of student engagement, and high engagement is strongly associated with better performance. The importance of engagement spurred NTU's development of its innovative and award-winning Student Dashboard, which can highlight when students' engagement in their studies declines, based on numerous factors such as attendance at seminars and missing personal tutor appointments.

When an engagement issue is flagged, the student's tutor can then meet the student to look at issues, personal and academic, which may be affecting her or his engagement. This data means NTU staff know that for all students, but WP students in particular, the first months at university are a critical foundational period. Based on this evidence, the university's Collaborative Engagement and Retention Team offers every student starting at the university a mentor who can support her or his transition to higher education and help create a

sense of belonging, which research shows to be a key factor in retention.

NTU has also developed "SCALE-UP," which is a pioneering initiative which flips the traditional teaching model and encourages students and lecturers to work more collaboratively in a roundtable environment.

How does NTU measure its success?

One indicator of success is access: nearly 25% of NTU's UK undergraduate student population comes from households with a combined income of £15k or less. NTU's outreach efforts have reached more than 18,500 unique participants since 2008.

Data from its Student Dashboard form a basis for measuring progress toward student retention and attainment. Lucy explained, "We're using the data that we capture intelligently to impact students' experiences and their outcomes, which will carry on to be more and more refined. We have presented at various conferences about how this feeds into course design, programme design, and student support. We are challenging the way things have been done in the past."

Outstanding Contribution To Social Mobility Award 2019

JUSTINE GREENING



Who are Justine Greening and the Social Mobility Pledge?

Justine Greening was Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities from July 2016 to January 2018. She was elected Conservative MP for Putney, Roehampton and Southfields on 5 May 2005, serving until 2019.

Greening attended her local comprehensive school in Rotherham, South Yorkshire before going on to study economics at Southampton University. She then went on to attain an MBA from the London Business School, and pursued a career in business before entering Parliament.

Greening co-founded the Social Mobility Pledge in March 2018 (www.socialmobilitypledge.org). The aim of the Pledge is to encourage businesses to play a crucial role in boosting social mobility in the UK, and to highlight which organisations and employers are going the extra mile to create a level playing field. By signing the Pledge, businesses commit to undertake work in three specific areas:

(1) Partnership – partner with schools and colleges to provide coaching through careers advice, enrichment experiences and/or mentoring to people from disadvantaged backgrounds or circumstances.

(2) Access – provide structured work-experience and/or apprenticeship opportunities to people from disadvantaged backgrounds or circumstances.

(3) Recruitment – adopt open employee recruitment practices which promote a level playing field for people from disadvantaged backgrounds or circumstances.

Why is she so passionate about Social Mobility?

Greening came from a working-class upbringing in which she experienced unemployment in her own family when her late father was made redundant by British Steel. She attended Oakwood Comprehensive School in Rotherham and was the first member of her family to go to university. She told the Yorkshire Post in November 2019 about growing up in Rotherham, “We had no idea what the banking industry or the City was about. It seemed like a foreign world. We might well have been interested in those opportunities and those very different careers. We just didn’t know about them.”²

Greening thinks that social mobility is not just about noble aspirations. She stressed at the Social Mobility Commission conference in March 2017, “We all want a fairer, more cohesive country; we all want people to have the chance to be able to succeed. But that aspiration has not been enough to deliver the real change that we want. And in Brexit Britain social mobility is now no longer a ‘nice to have’, a ‘good thing to do’. It is a cold, hard, economic imperative for our country.”³

Greening believes that due to the changes in the global economy, jobs and investment will move around the globe, tearing up old assumptions of what it takes to succeed. In the coming decades it is predicted that up to half of today's jobs are at risk of disappearing due to automation. At the same time it is believed that two-thirds of today's primary-school children are going to be doing jobs and careers that do not exist today.

At the 2017 Social Mobility Commission conference, she asserted, "looking ahead, our success is going to depend upon whether as a country we make it possible for everyone to develop the skills and opportunities that they need to succeed in the labour market. And we have to do that on a very simple but powerful assumption, which is that talent is completely evenly spread around the country – it doesn't reside in one bit and not another, it's all over the place. So we are simply missing a trick unless we finally start to level up those parts of the country where that talent isn't being tapped into. And we've got to make sure that we don't let anyone waste talent because of missed opportunities or social barriers. We have to make sure we don't let anyone's talent go to waste."

Social Barometer Poll results for 2019 published by the Social Mobility Commission shows why Greening's work with the Pledge is so vital. It underlines the stark regional difference about people's perceptions of their life prospects. Just 31% of people living in the north-east think there are good opportunities to make progress in their own region compared with 74% in the south-east and 78% of Londoners.

Where are her successes?

As of early 2020, 500 organisations representing more than 4 million employees have signed on to the Social Mobility Pledge.

One example of the many successes that are being created through the Pledge is with ex-offenders. Creating employment programmes for prison leavers also provides benefits for companies committed to the Social Mobility Pledge, considering that 92% of participating employers state that hiring ex-offenders has enhanced their reputation and aided them in winning new contracts. Here is just one example, described in a report produced by Standard Life Aberdeen and the Social Mobility Pledge entitled 'Financial Services and Social Mobility – Powering up the Talent Chain'.⁴

"John came to the Together Group aged thirty having never held a job, a heavy dependence on alcohol and a history of being in and out of prison. Referred to Together Group via a contact in a local college having completed some education in prison, John was determined that his life wouldn't continue down this path. Glasgow Together gave him that opportunity when no one else would. After nine months learning a variety of entirely new skills, he so impressed the bricklaying contractor used by Glasgow Together that he was offered full-time work, progressing to an apprenticeship which should keep him in well-paid, gainful employment for the rest of his working life. Perhaps John's own words best sum his experience up. 'Without this I would have had nothing, I would have been sitting in some flat drinking at 11 o'clock in the morning. When my Dad heard about the brickie job, he took me out for dinner. He'd never done anything like that before.'"

Looking to the future, Greening says, "I'm excited for the year ahead. With our work through the Pledge and a new government that has made it its mission to spread opportunity more evenly and level up Britain, we have a chance, possibly for the first time, to piece together the social mobility jigsaw and bring about real change in Britain."⁵

² Source: <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/opinion/columnists/justine-greening-it-s-in-the-interests-of-yorkshire-business-to-fight-for-social-mobility-1-9127855>

³ Source: <https://www.public-sector.co.uk/article/80d-6d836cfef907592288b505b849523>

⁴ Source: https://issuu.com/socialmobilitypledge/docs/sla_report_26-03?e=37605160/68878799

⁵ Source: <https://www.socialmobilitypledge.org/news/2019/12/18/a-letter-from-justine-greening>

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