

[Press release: Poll: half of Brits believe background determines success](#)

The scale of Britain's 'us and them' society is laid bare today (15 June 2017) in a new report which finds that nearly half of people (48%) believe that where you end up in society today is mainly determined by your background and who your parents are. This compares with 32% who believe everyone has a fair chance to get on regardless of their background.

The [social mobility barometer](#) uncovers feelings of deep social pessimism among young people with half (51%) of 18- to 24-year-olds agreeing with this statement, compared with 40% of those aged 65 and over.

The new poll, published by the Social Mobility Commission, will gauge public attitudes to social mobility annually over the next 5 years. It finds that half of young people think the situation is getting worse with only 30% of 18- to 24-year-olds believing it is becoming easier to move up in British society.

Meanwhile, only a fifth of 18- to 24-year-olds believe they have a better level of job security compared with their parents, and only 17% say they have better job satisfaction.

The poll of nearly 5,000 people, carried out by YouGov before the general election, finds that 4 in 5 people (79%) believe that there is a large gap between the social classes in Britain today. A large majority of people believe that poorer people are held back at nearly every stage of their lives – from childhood, through education and into their careers.

Over three-quarters of people (76%) say poorer people have less opportunity to go to a top university. Meanwhile 66% say poorer people have less opportunity to get into a professional career.

It finds that nearly half of all Brits (49%) consider themselves working class and just over a third (36%) think of themselves as middle class with just one per cent identifying as upper class. Interestingly, 78% of those who grew up in a working class family classify themselves as this now.

A quarter (23%) of people who say that their family was working class when they were growing up, said that their social background has held them back in their working life.

One key finding is that the public believe a geographical divide exists in Britain today with nearly three-quarters of people (71%) say there are 'fairly or very' large differences in opportunity depending on where you live in the country.

Those living in Scotland (75%), Wales (75%) and the North East (76%) are most likely to think that differences in opportunities exist. Around 47% of those who moved from where they grew up say if they had stayed where they were,

they would not had as many opportunities in life.

The Social Mobility Barometer also explores public attitudes to individuals own past social mobility experiences as well as their expectations for future generations.

The barometer finds that people believe that more needs to be done to help those at the bottom of society. Over 6 in 10 people feel that those who are 'just about managing' are not getting enough support from government (61%), while 49% say the least well off are not getting enough support.

Alan Milburn, chair of the Social Mobility Commission, said:

Young people increasingly feel like they are on the wrong side of a profound unfairness in British society – and they are unhappy about it. Perhaps unsurprisingly, what could be dubbed the 'revenge of the young' was evident at the general election with record numbers of young people turning out to vote.

Down the generations, hope has been a defining characteristic of the young, but this poll suggests that today youthful pessimism is becoming the norm. There is a stark intergenerational divide about Britain's social mobility prospects.

The feelings of pessimism young people are expressing are borne out by the facts they are experiencing. Those born in the 1980s are the first post-war cohort not to start their working years with higher incomes than their immediate predecessors. Home ownership, the aspiration of successive generations of ordinary people, is in sharp decline among the young.

Britain's deep social mobility problem, for this generation of young people in particular, is getting worse not better. The 20th century promise that each generation would be better off than the preceding one is being broken.

The research also exposes a deep geographic lottery in Britain today where large majorities of people from the regions feel they have been left behind. The growing sense that we have become a divided 'us and them' society is deeply corrosive of our cohesion as a nation.

It is a wake-up call for the new government when 6 in 10 people say not enough is being done to help those treadmill families who are running hard just to stand still. Cracking Britain's social mobility problem has to become its defining domestic priority.

Jo Hobbs, chief executive of the British Youth Council, added:

As the national youth council of the UK, we hear from young people

all the time that they are struggling and do not have hope for the future. The results of the Social Mobility Barometer chime with our own research that has shown that the majority of young people feel the world is changing for the worse and that they are uncertain and worried about the future. This is why we believe it is crucial that young people are given a voice and are empowered to take an active role in decisions that affect their lives.

1. The Social Mobility Commission is an advisory non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the United Kingdom and to promote social mobility in England. It currently consists of four commissioners and is supported by a small secretariat.
2. The commission board currently comprises:
 - Alan Milburn (chair)
 - Baroness Gillian Shephard (deputy chair)
 - Paul Gregg, Professor of Economic and Social Policy, University of Bath
 - David Johnston, chief executive of the Social Mobility Foundation
3. The functions of the commission include:
 - monitoring progress on improving social mobility
 - providing published advice to ministers on matters relating to social mobility
 - undertaking social mobility advocacy.

[News story: Zarga report published](#)

MAIB's report on the investigation of the failure of a mooring line on board the LNG carrier Zarga while alongside the South Hook LNG terminal, Milford Haven, resulting in serious injury to a deck officer on 2 March 2015 is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, the subsequent actions taken and recommendations made.

PDF, 4.85MB, 116 pages

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[Press release: Brokenshire: NI public voted for strong voice at Stormont](#)

Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said:

The Prime Minister and I will meet the five main Northern Ireland political parties in Downing Street tomorrow to build on the political discussions that restarted on Monday in Belfast.

The UK government is offering whatever support we can, working alongside the Irish government, as appropriate, honouring our respective commitments in the Belfast Agreement to serve the interests of the whole community in Northern Ireland.

There is very little time left. An agreement to restore devolved power-sharing government in Stormont must be reached by the 29 June deadline.

Ultimately, I think the parties understand people voted in the March Assembly elections for a strong voice at Stormont. Northern Ireland's political leaders now have it in their hands to take control and shape a brighter future for everyone in Northern Ireland.

[News story: Minister supports police action to tackle knife crime](#)

The Home Office hosted an event for police forces across the country to try to break the cycle of knife crime.

At the briefing, minister Sarah Newton encouraged more forces to join the Operation Sceptre week of co-ordinated police action on knife crime in July.

There are currently 29 police forces expected to take part, the largest number since it launched 2 years ago.

Sarah Newton MP, The Minister for Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Countering Extremism said:

Knife crime has devastating effects on victims, families and communities. I am hugely encouraged that a record 29 forces have signed up to be part of next month's Operation Sceptre and I hope more join in the next couple of weeks.

We must break this cycle of violence and address the perception of young people who say they need to carry a knife to protect themselves. Let me be clear – knives have no place on our streets – and the Government is committed to working with the police to tackle this issue.

Operation Sceptre is an ongoing series of weeks of intensified action on knife crime, including targeted stop and searches, weapon sweeps, test purchases of knives from retailers, and the use of surrender bins. During a previous week of the operation in October 2016:

- 21 police forces across the country took part

- more than 1,200 weapons were seized
- more than 300 arrests were made
- more than 720 knives were placed in amnesty bins

The event at the Home Office was held in conjunction with the National Police Chiefs Council and the Metropolitan Police. In a speech to attendees, Sarah Newton set out the government's approach to tackling knife crime. This approach included:

- working closely with police and law enforcement, including by supporting Operation Sceptre
- tightening the legislative framework, for example through the introduction of mandatory minimum custodial sentences for repeat convictions and a ban on zombie knives
- working with retailers to prevent the sale of knives to under 18s
- promoting and providing early intervention by working with voluntary sector organisations

The minister stressed that she is keen to support and encourage initiatives that work directly with young people. She also highlighted that a mix of agencies working together is key to tackling the issues around knife crime.

The next Operation Sceptre week of action will begin on 17 July.

Government response: Give safely to support those affected by Grenfell Tower Fire

We are saddened to hear of the tragic events in West London. There are many registered charities on the ground doing what they do best to assist those who have been affected. We are urging members of the public that wish to make donations to check that they give to a registered charity in order to best support those affected, and also importantly to check with those charities what support they need – whether that is money, time or other essential supplies.