

# Extra-curricular activities, soft skills and social mobility

Children from the wealthiest backgrounds are 3 times more likely to take up music classes out of school hours than children from the poorest backgrounds. There is also a 20% participation gap in sport, a new report by the Social Mobility Commission reveals today (Friday 19 July).

The report, '[An Unequal Playing Field](#)', shows huge disparities in children's participation rates across a wide range of extra-curricular activities depending on their social background. Children aged 10 to 15 from wealthier families are much more likely to take part in every type of activity especially music and sport.

The report looks at activities such as arts, music, sport, dance, voluntary work, and youth clubs. It shows that children's participation in extra-curricular activities depends on the schools they attend; the area they are growing up and their socio-economic background.

As household income rises so does increased participation. Those from better-off families are also more likely to engage in a greater number of out of school activities. Children from the poorest families are 3 times more likely to not participate in any extra-curricular activities compared to those from wealthier families.

Some classes are expensive but there are other barriers for the less affluent. In some areas there are access difficulties – schools don't provide the activities and local councils have cut back on their provisions for children and young people. Sometimes, however, children from disadvantaged backgrounds do not take part because they lack confidence or fear they will not fit in.

The University of Bath, who conducted the research, found that children who do participate in extra-curricular activities gain confidence and build up their social skills which is much sought after by employers. They are also more likely to aspire to go on to higher or further education.

Dame Martina Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility Commission said:

It is shocking that so many children from poorer backgrounds never get the chance to join a football team, learn to dance or play music. The activity either costs too much, isn't available or children just feel they won't fit in. As a result they miss out on important benefits – a sense of belonging, increased confidence and social skills which are invaluable to employers. It is high time to level the playing field.

The commission sets out 4 key recommendations for the government, voluntary

groups and schools. These are:

1. Introduce of a national extra-curricular bursary scheme for disadvantaged families
2. Provide of funding to develop and extend voluntary sector initiatives that allow access to activities
3. Increase the capacity of schools to provide extra-curricular activities and provision of extra information
4. Improve data collection and carrying out further research into soft skills development

The research, commissioned by Damian Hinds, the Secretary of State for Education, also discloses wide geographical differences in extra-curricular provision and participation rates. Children in Northern Ireland for example, joined in most activities such as attending youth clubs whilst the North East has the lowest participation in music classes. There are also big variations in activity take-up by ethnicity. Around 4% of British Pakistani youth take music classes compared to 28% of British Indian and 20% of White British youth.

The main findings:

- nearly 3 times as many children from the highest income households take part in music activities (32%) compared to the lowest income households (11%)
- 64% of young people from the highest income households take part in sport compared to 46% of young people from the lowest incomes
- around 4% of British Pakistani youth take music classes, compared to 28% of British Indian and 20% of White British youth
- fewer young people in the North East of England take music classes than anywhere else – 9%, compared to 22% in the South East
- sport is by far the most popular extra-curricular activity with nearly 50% of youth taking part compared to only 8% doing art
- children from the poorest backgrounds are 3 times more likely to not take part in any of the extra-curricular activities examined compared to those from the wealthiest backgrounds

John Herriman, Chief Executive of Greenhouse Sports, a charity helping disadvantaged children through sport, said:

Extra-curricular activity is so important for young people, and can be especially advantageous in helping to improve the life-chances of those from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is the basis of our entire approach at Greenhouse Sports, where we deliver intensive sports coaching and mentoring.

Charlotte Hill, Chief Executive, #iwill Campaign said:

Great education leaders know that education is about more than grades. Taking part in volunteering and other activities is a great

way for young people to develop their character, confidence and vital skills for the future.

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 UK and to promote social mobility in England.

The commission includes:

- Dame Martina Milburn, Chair
- Alastair da Costa, Chair of Capital City College Group
- Farrah Storr, Editor-in-chief, Elle
- Harvey Matthewson, Aviation Activity Officer, Aerobility
- Jessica Oghenegweke, Broadcast and Digital Co-ordinator, The Roundhouse
- Jody Walker, Senior Vice President at TJX Europe (TK Maxx and Home Sense in the UK)
- Liz Williams, Group Director of Digital Society at BT
- Pippa Dunn, Founder of Broody, helping entrepreneurs and start ups
- Saeed Atcha, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Xplode magazine
- Sam Friedman, Associate Professor in Sociology at London School of Economics
- Sammy Wright, Vice Principal of Southmoor Academy, Sunderland
- Sandra Wallace, Partner and Joint Managing Director UK and Europe, DLA Piper
- Steven Cooper, Chief Executive Officer C.Hoare & Co

The functions of the commission includes:

- monitoring progress on improving social mobility
- providing published advice to ministers on matters relating to social mobility
- undertaking social mobility advocacy

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## **Smart boats could revolutionise UK fishing and seafood industries**

The Environment Secretary Michael Gove has today delivered a boost for innovation in the UK fishing and seafood industries with the opening of a new £10 million research and development fund.

The move paves the way for the potential use of artificial intelligence by fishermen and providing a potential double return on investment for the UK

economy.

With the UK fishing industry contributing around £1.4 billion to our economy, employing over 24,000 people, there is huge opportunity for innovation to improve the technology available across the sector.

Unlike existing funding programmes, the [Seafood Innovation Fund](#) will focus on delivering longer-term, cutting-edge innovation.

UK businesses are already developing satellite technology and virtual watch rooms to track vessel movements, and integrating lighting into fishing nets to reduce unwanted catch and improve efficiency. But with the global fishing industry worth nearly £300 billion, this fund will encourage further technological development and unlock export opportunities around the world for UK technology pioneers.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

This government is investing record amounts in research and development, with this £10 million fund further driving UK innovation.

As the UK establishes itself as an independent coastal state, the Seafood Innovation Fund will bring together our world-leading fishing, seafood, and technology industries to deliver more sustainable and productive fisheries for the future.

Dr Joanna Cox, Head of Policy at the [Institution of Engineering and Technology](#) said:

This fund is a 'call to action' for fishermen and engineers to work together to bring forward sustainable and productive solutions at scale to the industry's greatest challenges.

Technology continues to deliver transformational change across the food sector, for instance, boosting the UK farming sector through AI and robotics. We welcome the Secretary of State's announcement and urge the UK engineering community to apply the same pioneering zeal to positively impact the UK's seafood industries through this £10m Seafood Innovation Fund.

Opportunities for innovation will cover all parts of the seafood sector, from catch techniques and fish feed to the management of fisheries. Possible examples of areas that could receive funding include:

- Minimising unwanted catches and monitoring catches – innovations to

fishing gear to reduce environmental impact and better capturing of real-time catch data to avoid unwanted catches and sensitive species

- Sorting and processing of catch – automation of landed catch, improving animal welfare and leading to a higher survival rate for discarded fish
- Information for fisheries management – improved data available for fishing vessels and regulators to enable better decision making on the future management of fishing stocks.
- Advances in sustainable aquaculture – innovation around compensatory aquaculture whereby waste from one form of aquaculture provides a food source and nutrients for another type.

UK Government Minister Lord Duncan said:

The fishing and seafood sectors are vital to many of Scotland's communities and help to support thousands of jobs across the country. The UK Government's Seafood Innovation Fund is helping to support the industry with the technology needed to improve environmentally sustainable fishing practices while streamlining costs.

By contributing to research and development in the sector, the UK Government is looking after the industry's long term interests and supporting Scotland's economy.

Through the modern [Industrial Strategy](#), government is providing the biggest boost to research and development funding in UK history and has set the ambition to boost public and private investment in research and development to 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

The delivery of the fund, which will benefit companies in every corner of the UK, will be overseen by an Executive Board, including representatives from the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

The fund, which was first announced in the 2018 Budget, will be delivered by the [Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science \(Cefas\)](#), the UK's world leader in marine science and technology, with oversight from Defra using money from the Chancellor's National Productivity Investment Fund.

Organisations are encouraged to bid for funding through the [Delta procurement portal](#).

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## [Road safety action plan announced to](#)

# cut road deaths

- government sets out a major package of measures to reduce the number of people killed and injured on roads
- action plan to improve safety for people at every stage of life – from infants in car seats to those with years of driving experience
- increased penalties for failing to wear a seatbelt one of seventy-four measures being considered

Failure to wear a seatbelt could result in penalty points as well as fines, under new plans to reduce the number of deaths on the UK's roads.

Increasing penalties for those who do not strap themselves in is being considered as one of the 74 actions to improve road safety published by the Department for Transport today (19 July 2019). Currently, offenders are given a £100 on-the-spot fine.

In 2017, 27% of car deaths involved people that were not wearing a seatbelt – meaning 1 in 4 car deaths could have been prevented by belting up.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

The UK has some of the safest roads in the world, but we are not complacent and continue to look at how we can make them safer.

Today's action plan is a key milestone in our road safety work and sets out the important steps we are taking to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.

The Department for Transport is also considering the report from the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) on seatbelt use. This report analyses which drivers and passengers are least likely to wear seatbelts, what prompts their behaviour and which interventions would be best to reduce the number of casualties.

Road Safety Minister Michael Ellis said:

Far too many people are not wearing a seatbelt while traveling in a car, needlessly putting their lives at risk.

Increasing penalties for people who disregard the simplest of way of protecting themselves is just one of a long list of actions this government is taking to help keep people safe on our roads.

A Rural Road Users Advisory Panel will also be set up to explore how to boost road safety in rural areas, particularly improving roads and traffic signs,

and issues around speed limits and enforcement.

The action plan is designed to improve road safety for people at every stage of life – from birth to old age. This includes:

For children:

- a £225,000 grant has been given to Good Egg Safety to deliver a nationally-accredited safety training programme for retailers to help parents correctly fit baby and child seats. It comes after 70% of parents said they didn't know how to properly install seats
- a pledge to help improve children's safety will see research commissioned into whether mobile phone use among young pedestrians leads to an increased risk of road collisions
- to help those with special educational needs and cognitive disabilities, the government will fund research into road safety support to help children aged 7 to 18 to understand the dangers near roads

For young adults:

- the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is developing a behavioural change campaign designed to encourage learner drivers to broaden their experience, by using more rural roads and driving at night before taking their test
- research will look further at the benefits of introducing Graduated Driving Licensing on road safety
- THINK! will continue reinforcing vital road safety messages through continuous campaigns focusing on drink driving, using mobile phones while driving, speeding, and dangers around passenger distraction

For adults:

- the government is also investigating whether alcolocks – devices which measure the alcohol in a driver's breath and stop a vehicle from starting if that level is too high – can reduce drink-driving re-offending as part of rehabilitation programmes in the UK. PACTS has been given £50,000 to review drink driving trends and interventions, which will be completed early next year
- there will also be a greater focus on roads policing with a 2 year project with the Home Office and National Police Chiefs' Council. This will identify best practice and gaps in services to see how policing can be improved

For older drivers:

- RoadSafe has been given £50,000 to deliver a digital platform to share best practice to reduce road safety risks for older road users

The action plan builds on a number of projects in the Road Safety Statement, published in 2015, which saw increased enforcement for drug driving, and doubling penalties for using a handheld mobile phone at the wheel.

In other road safety measures, the government is currently consulting on

banning tyres aged 10 years and older from buses, coaches, minibuses and lorries. If proposals are supported, new laws could be introduced later this year, ready to come into force early 2020.

A Road Collision Investigation project, with the RAC Foundation, is also ongoing. This is examining the cause of crashes and if there is a business case for a Road Collision Investigation Branch, which would specialise in learning lessons from serious road accidents.

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## [£33.5 million to support schools to improve](#)

High-performing academy trusts are being encouraged to grow and support more schools across England, supported by £17 million announced today by the Education Secretary Damian Hinds (Friday 19 July).

The Trust Capacity Fund will be used by high performing academy trusts to build on the rising standards in many sponsored academy schools, by ensuring they can provide support to communities and schools that need it most.

Alongside this the Government is setting out more details on a new package of support, worth an estimated £16.5million, to support 2,400 underperforming schools to improve their leadership.

Figures published last week showed that there are 380,000 children now studying in good or outstanding sponsored academies that were previously underperforming council-run schools – and that 7 in 10 previously underperforming schools, have been rated good or outstanding by Ofsted since becoming an academy – compared to 1 in 10 under local authority control.

Education Secretary, Damian Hinds said:

Strong academy trusts across the country are already supporting schools in many of the communities that need it the most and this funding will help this to happen in even more areas.

Academies are at the heart of our reforms to education and just last week new data revealed that the last year has seen 80,000 more children studying in good or outstanding sponsored academies that were previously run by local authorities which is why we must continue to give these charitable institutions the opportunity to turn around more schools.

Launching in September and providing funding until the end of the financial year, the Trust Capacity fund will build on the success of previous rounds of



funding awarded to successful academy trusts to help tackle underperformance and improve schools. It will:

- Support strong academy trusts across the country to provide assistance to communities and schools are most in need of school improvement
- Provide high-potential academy trusts, who have emerging capacity to improve other schools, with funding to meet challenges associated with taking on more schools in different contexts as they develop, deploy school improvement support quickly across a trust, and support collaboration between schools.
- Support smaller academy trusts that wish to merge into existing or new academy trusts, creating new clusters of schools

The Department for Education has also set out a package of bespoke support that will be available for schools with a 'requires improvement' judgement from Ofsted today, from expert education leaders who will provide them with tailored support and advice from National Leaders of Education to help them improve.

A more intensive offer of leadership guidance, plus up to £16,000 in support, will be available to schools with two consecutive 'requires improvement' judgements from Ofsted, to help them improve in a sustainable way, forming part of an estimated £16.5million worth of support from the Government to around 2,400 schools nationwide. The Department will be contacting schools throughout the 2019/20 academic year to offer this support package.

This follows the Secretary of State's commitment at the National Association of Headteachers conference earlier this year, to use Ofsted's 'requires improvement' judgement as the only trigger for offering tailored support to leadership teams, to help their schools to improve and relieve unnecessary pressures on head teachers and leaders.

This also comes as the Department for Education publishes new research on the type of school improvement practices used in high performing countries, offering the Department the chance review a variety of different practices that can be applied to schools in England.

Contributing to the Government's work to raise education standards, the report highlights that the school improvement principles used by the Department are also in place in countries with successful education systems. There is, however, still more to learn about which approaches to school improvement work best in practice.

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# How the Moon landing 50 years ago inspired a generation in the UK

The public were asked to share their memories of the Moon landings and describe how Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins's achievement had inspired them.

The Moon Landing Memories campaign was organised by the [UK Space Agency](#) and the [Arts and Humanities Research Council \(AHRC\)](#), part of UK Research and Innovation.

Memories include:

- a woman in labour who delayed going to hospital so she could catch footage of the crew landing safely
- a man who proposed to his partner on the night of the Moon landing
- many whose experience of the Moon landing led to science and space industry careers.

Fifty of the submissions have been curated into a digital scrapbook and a selection of the best entries will also go on display at the National Space Centre in Leicester as part of its ['One Giant Leap'](#) programme of events.

Science Minister Chris Skidmore said:

These memories of the first Moon landing bring to life the magic of that iconic moment. They clearly show why some of the children who watched live in 1969 were inspired to become the engineers and scientists that are now building our thriving space industry in the UK.

To retain our status as one of the world leaders in the new space age, we need the next generation to follow in their footsteps and our modern Industrial Strategy is backing the industry to create these highly skilled, well-paid space jobs for the future.

Tim Peake, astronaut at the European Space Agency (ESA) said:

Thank you to all those who took part in the Moon Landing Memories campaign. The Apollo 11 lunar landing was humanity's most audacious mission and our greatest achievement.

It is no surprise that for those who watched it live, and for those who were born into a world where humans had already walked on the Moon, it remains a source of inspiration and wonder.

As we reflect on past achievements and celebrate the 50th

anniversary of the Moon landing, we must also look to the future as we embark on a new era of space exploration to the Moon, Mars and beyond.

Further highlights from the entries include an account from Peter Cadogan from Cheltenham who said:

I had just graduated when Apollo 11 landed in 1969 and I stayed up all night waiting to see the first Moon walk. I was about to start my PhD at the Organic Geochemistry Unit at the University of Bristol with Geoffrey Eglinton, whose laboratory was one of just 12 in the UK to receive lunar samples from Apollo 11 and 12.

I soon joined Colin Pillinger (later of Beagle 2 fame) in trying to prove that the tiny amounts of carbon in the Apollo dust samples had come from the Sun. This I managed to do, received my PhD and then went on to determine the ages of Moon rocks with Grenville Turner at the University of Sheffield. 50 years on, I'm now developing computer software to count the very smallest lunar craters automatically.

In addition to those who were inspired to work in astronomy and science, the campaign also revealed accounts of how the Moon landing sparked artistic responses and creativity. Jackie Burns from Essex recalled:

I tried to watch the first moon walk at school – one tiny little black & white TV in the gym hall, with the rest of the school.

I remember crying in frustration because most of the other children were not interested in watching and I was reduced to seeing snatches of the TV screen amongst the moving bodies obscuring my view.

I am now a Fellow of the International Association for Astronomical Artists and the only professional female space artist in the UK.