

Press release: Adults skills gap

Adult training is often only available for workers who are already highly paid or highly skilled, a new report from the Social Mobility Commission reveals today (29 January 2018).

The [Adult Skills Gap report](#) shows that the poorest adults with the lowest qualifications are the least likely to access adult training – despite being the group who would benefit most. Men in routine and manual occupations are the least likely to learn new skills.

About 30% of those employed in managerial and professional occupations participated in training in the last 3 months compared to 18% in routine and manual jobs. This follows earlier research showing that half (49%) of adults from the lowest socio-economic group receive no training at all after leaving school.

In contrast, high-skilled workers tend to benefit from ‘a virtuous circle’ of frequent in-work training and pay increases, says the research carried out by the Institute for Employment Research, Warwick University. Professional or managerial workers are twice as likely to be sent on courses as other workers, while graduates are 3 times as likely to access training as those with no qualifications.

An individual’s background also has an impact. Workers whose parents came from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to benefit from adult training – which can impact on social mobility. Employees from more privileged backgrounds are more likely than other low-skilled workers to take advantage of in-work learning to rise up the ranks.

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

Too many employers are wasting the potential of their employees by not offering training or progression routes to their low and mid-skilled workers.

Both employers and the government need to act to address this problem. They should start by increasing their investment in training, to bring it closer to that of international competitors, and prioritise this to those with low or no skills. Doing this would benefit both business and the economy as a whole.

The commission has previously found that 1 in 4 of the UK’s low-paid workers will never escape low pay – a problem due largely to low skill levels. Yet the UK lags behind other countries in giving adults a second chance to learn new skills and achieve their potential. The UK spends just two-thirds of the European average on adult training, and investment is in decline. Between 2010 to 2011, and 2015 to 2016 government funding for adult skills fell by 34% in real terms.

The problem is that employers fund 82% of all UK training and tend to prioritise senior, high-skilled employees. Most other training is paid for by individuals themselves – if they can afford it. Free courses run by government make up just 3% of all accessed training courses.

The result is a system with vast numbers of low-skilled workers with little opportunity to build skills and escape low pay. This urgently needs rebalancing – for productivity as much as social mobility, says the commission.

Alastair Da Costa, chair of Capital City College Group and a SMC Commissioner, said:

A lack of ongoing training for low-paid workers is a contributing factor for millions to a lifetime of poorly-paid work. As we prepare to leave the EU, it is more important than ever for us to build relevant skills to improve the UK's productivity. That is why we want to see more investment in life-long learning and adult education – including enabling more courses to be available for those who cannot afford them.

Dr Daria Luchinskaya, from the Institute for Employment Research, Warwick University, said:

This report shows a 'virtuous' and a 'vicious' cycle of learning, whereby those with low or no qualifications are much less likely to access education and training after leaving school than those with high qualifications.

Peter Cheese, Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), said:

These findings should act as a wake-up call for employers to look a lot harder at how they are developing their workforce for the future. Building skills at all levels and roles is essential to improving productivity and performance, for engagement and retention of employees, and to highlight and support progression opportunities. However, many of these are longer term outcomes and too often the focus for training is on short term job needs.

Main findings include:

- the poorest adults with the lowest qualifications are the least likely to access adult training – despite being the group who would benefit most
- previous research has shown that half (49%) of adults from the lowest socio-economic group receive no training at all after leaving school,

compared to 20% from the top group

- this study shows similar findings hold for employed adults participating in training in the last 3 months – 30% of those in professional and managerial jobs against 18% in routine and manual occupations
- graduates are 3 times more likely to receive training than those with no qualifications, while professionals and managers are about twice as likely to receive training as lower-skilled workers
- employers fund 82% of training – prioritising those in senior or professional roles – while most other training is paid for by individuals themselves
- overall investment in adult skills from employer, government and individuals was around £44 billion in 2013 to 2014 – government funds just 7% of this training
- government-funded training aims to support those without the means to pay for their own training and does reach lower-skilled workers and those in deprived areas but 29% of this money still goes to adults in the most affluent 40% of areas
- the UK spends two-thirds of the EU average on adult training
- government funding for the Adult Skills Budget fell by £830 million (cash terms) between 2010 to 2011 and from £2.84 billion to £2.01 billion, equivalent to a 34% fall (real terms) between 2015 to 2016

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. It consists of 13 commissioners and is supported by a small secretariat.

The commission board is chaired by Dame Martina Milburn and comprises:

- Alastair da Costa, Chair of Capital City College Group
- Farrah Storr, Editor-in-chief of Cosmopolitan
- Harvey Matthewson, Aviation Activity Officer at Aerobility and Volunteer
- Jessica Oghenegweke, Project co-ordinator at the Diana Award
- 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, Joint Managing Director Europe at DLA Piper
- Steven Cooper, Chief Executive Officer C.Hoare & Co

The functions of the commission include:

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

[Press release: Minister for the Middle East announces new UK aid package to help Iraq rebuild infrastructure and boost economy](#)

A new UK aid package is to help the Government of Iraq to reinvigorate its economy and rebuild hospitals, schools and other vital infrastructure, allowing Iraqis displaced by conflict to return home and restart their lives, UK Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt announced during a four-day visit to Iraq.

The UK is the first donor to the newly formed Iraq Reform and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF), following close cooperation between the Department for International Development (DFID), the Government of Iraq, the World Bank, Germany and other international partners to develop the fund.

The fund will:

- encourage innovative approaches and provide technical assistance to the Government of Iraq as it reconstructs areas affected by conflict, including the rebuilding of houses, schools, hospitals, factories and roads.
- provide opportunities to utilise UK and international expertise to help the Government of Iraq to carry out vital reforms that will make the country more business friendly.
- help unlock Iraq's economic potential, generate jobs, boost potential for enhanced future trade with the UK and other international partners and lay the ground-work for long-term peace and stability following the conflict with Daesh.

In addition to tackling Iraq's long-term recovery and reconstruction, Mr. Burt also announced further support to help meet the immediate humanitarian needs of the 1.8 million people still displaced from their homes within Iraq, and a boost for stabilisation efforts to ensure vital services such as healthcare and electricity are reinstated quickly in places such as Mosul.

During the visit in which Iraq and the UK agreed to a joint communique to further strengthen bilateral relations, Mr Burt held wide ranging discussions on UK-Iraqi cooperation, trade, development and regional security issues with the Iraqi President Barham Salih, the Prime Minister Adil Abdul Mehdi, Foreign Minister, Deputy Foreign Minister and the Trade and Planning ministers.

He also met Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Nechirvan Barzani, and the Prime-Minister designate, Masrour Barzani. Whilst in the

Kurdistan Region, the minister also met Minister for the Interior, and for Peshmerga Affairs Karim Sinjari, as well as Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani.

In support of the Foreign Secretary's commitment to tackle the persecution of Christians across the globe, the minister also engaged with the Archbishop of Erbil, Bashar Warda and grassroots faith organisations to gain their perspectives on freedom of religion and beliefs in the region.

Speaking from Baghdad the Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt said:

The UK is a strong partner and friend of Iraq. We share a range of mutual and growing priorities which include security, development, foreign policy and trade.

There is much to be celebrated about Iraq's progress since the territorial defeat of Daesh in 2017. But there is more to be done to help Iraq develop the strong, stable future, decided on by all Iraqis, that its people deserve. The UK remains committed to supporting Iraq to develop along non-sectarian lines, and we are particularly concerned about the rights and freedoms afforded to Christians and other minority faith groups.

I am proud that we will be the first donor to the Iraq Reform and Reconstruction Fund. UK aid will provide vital support to the people of Iraq as they rebuild their lives, their businesses and their economic independence.

UK aid announced today for the humanitarian response will support vulnerable people displaced by conflict, providing clean water, medicine and shelter. Since 2014, UK aid in Iraq has provided 4.1 million people with life-saving healthcare, 2 million people with safe water and sanitation, 836,500 people with shelter and more than 408,000 people with food.

- £16 million will be allocated to the Iraq Reform and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF), run by the World Bank, from DFID's budget. The IRRF will support Government of Iraq-led reconstruction efforts following the destruction caused by the conflict with Daesh, and support the implementation of longer term economic reform.
- £6.9 million will be allocated to UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilisation in Iraq from the UK Government's Conflict, Security and Stability Fund (CSSF). It will directly support the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure in areas of Iraq liberated from Daesh. This will include hospitals, school, power plants and roads destroyed in the fighting.
- £10 million will be allocated to UN OCHA's Iraq Humanitarian Pooled Fund from DFID's budget. It will support the ongoing humanitarian response, providing for the immediate needs of vulnerable people in Iraq displaced by conflict. It will help deliver clean water, medicine, shelter and a wide range of additional services to people living within temporary

camp. Since 2014, UK aid in Iraq has provided 4.1 million people with life-saving healthcare, 2 million people with safe water and sanitation, 836,500 people with shelter and more than 408,000 people with food.

- UK aid has provided £252.5 million in humanitarian support and over £110 million in stabilisation funding to the people of Iraq since 2014.
- In 2018, the Foreign Secretary announced a review into the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, led by the Bishop of Truro.
- Globally, around 215 million Christians face persecution, and the population of Christians in the Middle East has declined from 20% to 5% over the last century.
- Exports of goods and services from the UK to Iraq are increasing and reached £0.5bn in 2017, which was a 10% increase on the year before.

ENDS

[News story: New advice for travellers visiting the UK, EU or European Economic Area in the event of a no-deal EU Exit](#)

Travellers who intend to use their European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) must [check what the arrangement is](#) with the specific country they are visiting as the card may not be valid. This advice also applies to students studying in the EU.

In addition, UK nationals should follow current advice from the government which recommends travellers take out separate travel insurance to cover any healthcare requirements needed in any country within the EU or outside. This is particularly advisable for travellers with a pre-existing or long-term health condition.

There is also further guidance for UK nationals living or working in the EU.

The new advice encourages citizens to register for access to healthcare in the EU/EEA country they live in, as some residents may need to be a long-term resident or pay social security contributions to access free or discounted healthcare.

If a resident is in the process of applying for residency the advice suggests individuals take out separate health insurance.

For residents who use the S1 certificate, this may no longer be valid after 29 March 2019. The advice is to check what the latest healthcare arrangements are between the UK and the country British nationals currently live in.

Until further agreements are reached between the UK and individual EU member states, the government advises UK citizens to follow this latest guidance to ensure they are fully prepared for any unexpected healthcare requirements overseas.

[Press release: New schemes to help care leavers access education and employment](#)

New projects have launched to improve the education and training of young people leaving care, helping them make the transition into independent life.

Care leavers will benefit from a £5 million investment in programmes that deliver specialist, bespoke support through personal advisers and transition coaches. The pilot schemes are designed to develop care leavers' confidence, communications and skills needed to enter sustained education, employment and training.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Leaving care can be a daunting time for many young people, who often face the challenges of growing up without the support network others might take for granted.

We all share a responsibility to act and these new projects are focussed on improving the lives of those young adults who have had difficult starts in life.

That is why these pilots in Bristol, Lewisham and Sheffield are so vital in helping ease the transition from care to independence, so they are not facing these milestones alone. Where you start out in life should not determine your destination, so I hope that through this work care leavers get the tools they need to get into training, education or employment.

The £5 million is being used to fund the first ever Social Impact Bonds aimed at preventing care leavers being out of work and training – which have previously been used to tackle problems including homelessness and long-term health issues.

The news comes as the latest data on care leavers aged 19-21 show that 39 per cent of care leavers are NEET, compared to 13 per cent of 19-21 year olds in the general population.

Sheffield City Council Councillor Jackie Drayton, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families said:

We want to ensure that our Care Leavers get every help and support they can to access education, training or employment. I'm pleased that Project Apollo will enable the Council's Leaving Care Service to work with Sheffield Futures to give our care leavers every opportunity to achieve their full potential and progress successfully in the future.

Lewisham Councillor Chris Barnham, Cabinet Member for School Performance and Children's Services, said:

In Lewisham, we give a high priority to helping our care leavers into sustained work, training and education. We are pleased to be able to work with Depaul UK on the i-Aspire programme, which offers a creative and long-term approach, with the opportunity for care leavers to receive support for up to four years. This will ensure that young people are able to build trusting and supportive relationships with staff, with time and space to be able to explore and overcome any barriers to their employment, training and education aspirations.

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, said:

Young people leaving care face a number of challenges that threaten their future and can hold them back from fulfilling their potential. One of the most important roles every council plays is providing that support, we call it being a corporate parent, but through this programme we're demonstrating that it's not just the council's role, it's one for the entire city.

By working together with our partners in 1625 Independent People and engaging with businesses across sectors we've developed opportunities that have benefitted over 200 care leavers. The continuing success of Reboot West helps to ensure diversity in the local talent pool and demonstrates that when we work together as a city we have the ability to ease the challenges young people face when leaving care.

The Social Impact Bonds bring together the public, private and voluntary sectors to solve these challenges, with care leavers in the three regions being offered:

- Sheffield: Specialist support will be provided through transition coaches working alongside Personal Advisers. The support package will

involve support with speech, language and communication needs.

- Bristol: The programme to help 200 care leavers will test a new approach using Acceptance & Commitment Theory (ACT) to develop care leavers' values, aspirations and motivation to succeed. A new team of EET workers will build relationships with care leavers, employers and training providers.
- Lewisham: The project will produce a local employment toolkit, develop the Young Minds resilience framework and deliver financial resilience training through The Money House and resolution training.

Social Impact Bonds work through funding from social investors who pay for the delivery of the services throughout the project, and are then paid a return based upon the results. Those investing in these programmes will be paid depending on the number of care leavers that achieve employment, education or training outcomes over a four year period.

[News story: Academy Bristol seminar: The road to rehabilitation from an ex-offender's perspective](#)



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