

[UN Human Rights Council 45: statement for the Interactive Dialogue on COVID-19](#)

Thank you, Madam President,

We welcome the High Commissioner's update on the impact of the pandemic on human rights. As this Council stressed in its Presidential statement, States must ensure that human rights are respected in their response to the pandemic.

We are concerned by the reports of clampdowns on freedom of expression, by allegations of people being arrested for criticising the government's response, accused of disinformation or even terrorism; of doctors being silenced; of access to information denied; of human rights defenders and journalists arbitrarily detained; of online civic space – more crucial than ever – being unduly restricted; and by some countries using the pandemic as an excuse to roll back women's rights and discriminate against LGBT citizens.

We are concerned too by the disproportionate impact the crisis is having on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable – leaving them even further behind; by its impact on women and girls; and by the increase in domestic violence.

All actors have a role to play so that we can build back better. Global collaboration and resourcing is essential for the necessary vaccines, treatments and tests. The UK, through our newly merged Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, has pledged £774 million to support the global effort. We are proud that, with the UN Secretary-General, the WHO and Republic of South Africa, we will co-host a high level event at UNGA on 30 September to accelerate multilateral activity, particularly the COVAX Vaccines Facility.

High Commissioner, how can we fully involve all actors and stakeholders in the response and recovery, to build back better?

[Prevalence of graffiti on Britain's rail network: letter to Network Rail](#)

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[Calls to end 'blight' of graffiti on roads and railways as part of Great British September Clean](#)

- government requests review of response times to tackling graffiti on country's transport network
- Network Rail allocates additional funds to tackling vandalism, and Highways England cleaning blitz during lockdown removes 33% more graffiti compared with the same time last year
- Transport Secretary visits London Bridge to see anti-graffiti measures

Action is being taken to tackle the 'blight' of graffiti on Britain's roads and railways as part of the Great British September Clean, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has announced today (15 September 2020).

[In a letter to the rail industry](#), the Transport Secretary has called for long-term plans to tackle the issue. These proposals should build on action already taken, including a review of response times to graffiti vandalism so any instances are dealt with quickly, helping to prevent more serious crimes and passengers to feel safe when returning to the railway.

Network Rail has already undertaken significant work in this area, allocating an additional £1 million in the spring to carry out a graffiti blitz on top of its annual £3.5 million programme of anti-graffiti measures.

Grffiti on the railway can be unsightly, make passengers feel unsafe and, if not dealt with quickly, lead to further crime taking place. People often put their lives at risk in the act of spraying difficult surfaces, such as bridges or trains in sidings.

During the lockdown period, Highways England has also undertaken a cleaning blitz around main roads – removing 33% more graffiti compared with the same time last year. Highways England will now double the level of its resources and activity, to speed up graffiti removal rates on the road network across England.

The Transport Secretary visited London Bridge on Monday (14 September 2020) to see first-hand the clean-up work carried out by Network Rail's southern graffiti taskforce.

He also visited a railway arch mural created by street artist Jimmy C in

memory of the victims of the London Bridge terror attacks. The series of hearts floating in space on Stoney Street is one of 100 murals produced by the artist – and fellow street artist Lionel Stanhope – set to be in place across stations in the South East by spring 2021.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Phenomenal efforts have been made throughout this pandemic to ensure our transport network is clean and maintained to the highest standards, helping keep people safe, and people deserve roads and railways that are not blighted by graffiti and vandalism.

As we continue our focus on building back better as we recover from COVID-19, I want us to feel proud of our transport infrastructure and public spaces. Our extra investment to remove graffiti from our roads and railways means we can double our efforts to fight this issue and represents a positive step in the right direction.

Richard McIlwain, Deputy Chief Executive of environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, said:

We would encourage everyone to do their bit to help clean up the country and, during the Great British September Clean, ridding our transport network of graffiti would be a positive step towards creating a better environment for everyone.

Places that are covered in graffiti, particularly low-grade tagging, signal to the community at large that an area is unloved and uncared for and leads to increases in other environmental crimes such as littering and fly-tipping so we would urge everyone responsible for looking after our transport network to keep it graffiti and litter-free.

The government has been working closely with train operators to return services back to close-to-normal levels as passenger numbers increase, putting extensive measures in place to make sure their services are safe to use, including heightened cleaning procedures, queue-management systems, and providing hand sanitiser in the busiest stations on the network.

[The long shadow of deprivation](#)

The effect of deprivation in dozens of English local authorities is now so persistent that some families face being locked into disadvantage for generations unless the right action is taken, a new report shows today.

In the most detailed study of regional social mobility ever conducted in the UK, the report from the Social Mobility Commission identifies local councils with the worst and the best social mobility in England. In the “coldest spots” those from disadvantaged backgrounds, entitled to free school meals, have little chance of making a better life for themselves or their children. They also earn much less than their more affluent peers.

These areas, which range across England, include:

- Chiltern
- Bradford
- Thanet
- Bolton
- Wolverhampton
- Kingston-upon-Hull
- Fenland
- Mansfield
- Walsall
- Gateshead
- Kirklees
- St Helens
- Dudley
- Bolton
- Wigan

Individuals aged 28 from disadvantaged families in these councils earn on average just over half the amount of those from similar backgrounds in the most mobile areas. They also earn much less than those of the same age from more affluent families living nearby.

Steven Cooper, interim co-chair of the commission said:

These findings are very challenging. They tell a story of deep unfairness, determined by where you grow up. It is not a story of north versus south or urban versus rural; this is a story of local areas side by side with vastly different outcomes for the disadvantaged sons growing up there.

Areas with high social mobility, where those from poorer backgrounds earn more and the pay gap with those from affluent families is smaller include:

- Forest Heath
- West Oxfordshire
- South Derbyshire
- Cherwell
- Kingston upon Thames
- South Gloucestershire
- Tower Hamlets
- North Hertfordshire
- Eden

The research, carried out by the [Institute for Fiscal Studies \(IFS\)](#) and [UCL Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities \(CEPEO\)](#), links educational data and HMRC earnings for the first time to identify young sons from disadvantaged families – those entitled to free school meals. The sons who were born between 1986 and 1988 and went to state schools in England, were followed from aged 16 to 28.

The results, covering around 320 local councils in England and 800,000 young adults, show a postcode lottery for disadvantaged people. In areas with high social mobility, disadvantaged young adults earn twice as much as those with similar backgrounds in areas with low social mobility – on average, over £20,000 compared with under £10,000. Annual earnings from this group range from £6,900 (Chiltern) to £24,600 (Uttlesford).

Councils with the lowest earnings for disadvantaged individuals include:

- Bradford
- Hyndburn
- Gateshead
- Thanet

But they also include:

- West Devon
- Sheffield
- Malvern Hills
- Kensington and Chelsea.

Those with the highest earnings include:

- Broxbourne
- East Hertfordshire
- Forest Heath
- Havering
- Uttlesford
- Wokingham

But those from poor backgrounds also face unfairness on their doorstep. Pay gaps between the most and least deprived individuals in local authorities with the poorest social mobility are 2.5 times higher than in areas of high social mobility.

Education, often blamed for social mobility differences, is only part of the answer. In areas with high social mobility, gaps in educational achievement account for almost the entire pay difference between the most and least advantaged sons. On average it accounts for 80% of the difference.

However, in local authorities where social mobility is low it is much harder to escape deprivation. In such areas, up to 33% of the pay gap between the highest and lowest earners is down to non-education factors, like local labour markets and family background.

Disadvantaged workers are restricted by factors including limited social

networks (fewer internships); inability to move to more prosperous areas; limited or no financial support from family; less resilience to economic turbulence due to previous crisis such as 2008 financial crash and less developed soft skills.

The commission is now urging regional and community leaders to use the findings to help draw up tailored, sustained, local programmes to boost social mobility, building on the approach in some Opportunity Areas. The commission will also ask the government to extend its current Opportunity Areas programme – which gives support to 12 councils – to include several more authorities identified as the areas with the most entrenched disadvantage.

Professor Lindsey Macmillan, Director of CEPE0 at UCL and Research Fellow at IFS said:

This new evidence highlights the need for a joined up-approach across government, third sector organisations, and employers. The education system alone cannot tackle this postcode lottery – a strategy that considers the entire life experience, from birth through to adulthood, is crucial to ensuring fairer life chances for all.

Laura van der Erve, Research Economist at IFS and co-author of the report, said:

Not only do children from disadvantaged backgrounds have considerably lower school attainment and lower adult earnings than their peers from more affluent backgrounds, we also find large differences in the outcomes of children from disadvantaged backgrounds across the country. This highlights that children's opportunities in England are still defined by both the family they were born into and the area they grew up in.

Key findings

- Social mobility in England is a postcode lottery, with large differences across areas in both the adult pay of disadvantaged adults, and the size of the pay gap for those from deprived families, relative to those from affluent families.
- Disadvantaged young adults in areas with high social mobility can earn twice as much as their counterparts in areas where it is low – over £20,000 compared with under £10,000
- Pay gaps between deprived and affluent young adults in areas with low social mobility are 2.5 times larger than those in areas with high social mobility.
- In areas of low social mobility, up to 33% of the pay gap is driven by family background and local market factors, over and beyond educational achievement.

- Characteristics of the coldest spots: fewer professional and managerial occupations; fewer outstanding schools; higher levels of deprivation and moderate population density.

The Social Mobility Commission is an independent 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.

Notes to Editors

Tables on the best and worst social mobility areas are presented as a separate document. Regional maps and tables are set out at the back of the report.

The research only provides results for men as many women exit the labour market or are working part-time at age 28 because they start to have children and this is related to family background. Estimates for women would therefore not be comparable to men as we cannot adjust for this,

The commission board comprises:

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

[100,000 apply to join police in first year of recruitment drive](#)

More than 100,000 people have applied to become police officers one year into the Government's recruitment drive.

Provisional data from forces across England and Wales shows they have

received almost 101,000 applications between October and August, as part of plans to sign up 20,000 additional officers over the next three years.

This comes as new TV and radio adverts encouraging people to “make their difference” by joining the police launch nationwide today (Tuesday 15 September).

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

This year we have seen people come together in the face of adversity to serve their communities in response to the pandemic.

It is clear the national emergency has inspired people across the country to become part of our brave, selfless police family.

If you want to make a difference, apply today and sign up with our police – they are the best in the world.

More than 4,300 additional officers have already been recruited and are supporting the emergency services’ response to the virus.

This puts forces well on their way to meeting the first target of 6,000 additional officers in England and Wales by March 2021.

Martin Hewitt, chair of the National Police Chiefs’ Council, said:

The interest already shown in joining the police is very encouraging and brings us closer to an additional 20,000 new recruits.

I have always said the fact that we’re well on our way to achieving this ambition does not mean we’re complacent, if we truly want to have a police service that reflects our communities we have more to do in reaching out to those currently under-represented.

The College of Policing has also rolled out online assessment centres, which have been used by 39 police forces to date, to ensure that recruitment continues at pace while social restrictions are in place.

The new process includes an online assessment stage, where candidates complete a situational judgement test, an interview, briefing exercise and written exercise.

Chief Constable Mike Cunningham, CEO of the College of Policing, said:

It is really pleasing that so many people are applying to join the police service and we will continue to support forces in recruiting additional officers to keep the public safe.

It has been vital that forces have been able to continue to recruit new officers in spite of the COVID restrictions and I am very happy that we in the College have been able to support the service by introducing new online assessment processes which have now been used by thousands of candidates.

We are committed to ensuring that everyone in policing, including the newest recruits, have the knowledge and skills they need to do the job and they will continue to get our full support.

New adverts have been released today show policing's central role in the community, featuring officers from a range of backgrounds, representing forces including Essex and Nottinghamshire Police.

Speaking at the Police Superintendents' Association's conference last week the Home Secretary said that ambition on police diversity "knows no bounds".

She also reiterated that the recruitment of 20,000 additional officers was a "once in a lifetime opportunity" to create a generation of police leaders who better represent the country they serve.

Anyone interested in applying to their local force can search 'Join the Police' to find out more.