



Social Mobility
Commission

Masterclass: Progression

Training that supports people and business success

March 2022

Today's session

Today we will cover:



Introduction to social mobility and progression, SMC

Donna Catley, Chief People Officer, Compass Group UK & Ireland

Charlotte Chirwa, Social Mobility Lead, Department for Work and Pensions

Q&A session

What is social mobility?

Social mobility is the link between a person's occupation or income and the occupation or income of their parents. In other words, it's about **ensuring your background doesn't determine your future.**

Progression

Progression is often the last thing people tackle. Interventions may be ineffective if the rest of the building blocks aren't in place i.e., the culture, structure, support and opportunities so staff can take your efforts seriously.



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ATTRACTION MYTH

There is a suggestion that the challenge of diversity is concerned mostly with the early career pipeline, i.e. outreach is the solution¹



LONGER PROGRESSION TIMELINE

Those from lower socio-economic backgrounds take a year and a half longer on average to reach senior roles than their more advantaged colleagues¹



FUNDED TRAINING

Employer-funded training is **more likely** to be given to those from higher socio-economic backgrounds in every category of job. When offered, it might not be accessible to all (e.g. delivered digitally, not offered flexibly, or time off not given)²



INCLUSION NOT REALISED

Many organisations still tilt their norms towards those from a privileged backgrounds⁴



RETENTION MINDSET

Fast-paced, customer- and profit-focused industries have a tendency to view frontline staff as disposable and replaceable and therefore organisations did not prioritise investing in staff development³



JOBS NOT CAREERS

Frontline staff often don't see their jobs as a career and report having other more important priorities in their life³



CONFIDENCE

Individuals often lack confidence in their ability to progress and have low expectations of employers to provide training and access to progression³



CAREER PATHS

Individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds often self-select into operational or technical roles, which often cause bottle necks on progression⁴

1: Bridge group: [Pathways to partnership: challenging the myth of meritocracy](#), 2020

2: Social Mobility Commission, [State of the Nation 2018-19](#), 2019

3 Social Mobility Commission, [Training Progression Research](#) (2020)

4. Social Mobility Commission, [Navigating the Labyrinth](#) (2021)



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Increasing in-work training and progression for frontline workers



Research report
November 2020

Findings



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- 1. Social mobility was rarely reported to be a priority for organisations in these sectors.** There was generally low engagement with the concept of social mobility; few leaders in these sectors saw it as a priority or within their remit.
- 2. These fast-paced sectors are customer and profit-focused.** There was a tendency to view frontline staff as replaceable, therefore not worth investing in their progression.
- 3. Frontline staff in these sectors tended not to see jobs as careers.** Low expectations of these sectors to provide training and access to progression, particularly where there was seen to be a lack of meaningful opportunities.
- 4. Organisations did not work with frontline staff to develop opportunities that were appealing or in an appropriate format** (e.g. opportunities were more commonly offered to higher-skilled, office-based staff).
- 5. Channels to communicate training and progression opportunities to frontline staff were not always effective** (e.g. no line management meetings to discuss training needs or aspirations).
- 6. Organisations tended to have a short-term focus.** Hindering investment in longer-term gains, such as training staff to retain them.



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Solutions



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Four key steps for organisations to support in-work training and careers guidance around progression:

1. Strategic leader buy-in is essential to develop and embed an effective progression culture.
2. Review company structures and ways of working to enable access to meaningful career progression opportunities at all levels.
3. Create an environment where it is the norm for frontline staff to expect to have training and career conversations with their managers.
4. Embed measures throughout the business that prioritise and support individuals to progress at their own pace.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Employer's Masterclass

Social Mobility at the DWP

Socio-economic Diversity

Being successful doesn't necessarily make you great. What makes you great is when you reach back and help somebody else become great.

Joel Osteen

● [audioonly](#)

Supporting Development

Confidence

Networking

Applications

Believing

Ownership



Development Programmes

- Aspire
- Summer School
- Operational Delivery Leadership Programme
- Future Leader's Academy
- Beyond Boundaries
- Catapult
- Online Learning Platform

Summary

Outreach Work

Flexible work locations

Line Managers and Diversity

Staff Networks

Performance discussions

Shadowing/Work Experience



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Q&A



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Next steps:

Complete our feedback survey

Find more resources on
www.socialmobilityworks.org



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Next event:

Masterclass: How to talk about class in the workplace

Wednesday 27 April, 1pm - 2pm



- Submissions close on 27 May 2022
- Annual benchmarking tool of best practice in social mobility
- Every entrant receives a bespoke feedback report on performance
- Open to employers of any size, sector and stage of their social mobility journey
- Public launch in Q4, featuring the Top 75 Employers and Key Findings Report of data trends and insights

Register your interest:

socialmobility.org.uk/index/

SMF is here to help:

employerindex@socialmobility.org.uk

Top 75 Employers

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