

# KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Invest in opportunity



Social mobility

## SOCIAL MOBILITY

### INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

The government has said, “tackling the opportunity deficit – creating an open, socially mobile society – is our guiding purpose.”<sup>1</sup> There is a large body of evidence which demonstrates the positive associations between education and social mobility. The UK has a significant distance to travel in this regard. We argue for increased investment in education to support this aim, as evidenced by the following key points.

- There are still significant gaps in progression rates between pupils with and without Free School Meals.<sup>2</sup>

Estimated % who entered HE

	FSM	Non-FSM	Gap (pp)	All
2005/06	13%	33%	19	30%
2006/07	14%	33%	19	31%
2007/08	15%	33%	18	31%
2008/09	17%	35%	18	33%
2009/10	18%	36%	18	34%

- Data showing progression to HE from the state and independent sector for A level students show a significant disparity across school/college type<sup>3</sup>:

Progression rate to all HE Progression rates to most selective HE<sup>a</sup>

	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010
<b>SCHOOL/COLLEGE</b>								
<b>Independent</b>	85%	83%	82%	87%	63%	63%	62%	65%
<b>Selective state<sup>b</sup></b>	..	..	89%	89%	..	..	58%	60%
<b>Other state<sup>c</sup></b>	..	..	68%	69%	..	..	23%	22%
<b>Total state</b>	72%	68%	69%	71%	26%	25%	26%	26%
<b>All</b>	74%	69%	71%	72%	31%	29%	30%	30%
<b>Independent/ State gap (pp)</b>	13	16	13	16	37	38	37	39

<sup>a</sup> The most selective are defined as the top third of HEIs when ranked by mean UCAS tariff score from the top three A level grades of entrants.

<sup>b</sup> Indicators to separately identify selective schools are not available on the matched datasets before 2006/07, so progression rates to HE by age 19 are not available for these schools before 2008/09.

<sup>c</sup> Ibid.

- Social mobility declined in the last quarter of the twentieth century: children born in 1970 improved their position relative to that of their parents less than did those born in 1958. Social mobility has not risen for those born between 1970 and 2000.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>d</sup> The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a system of international assessments that focuses on 15-year-olds' capabilities in reading literacy, mathematics literacy, and science literacy and measures of general or cross-curricular competencies such as problem solving. PISA is coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

- Persistence in secondary education, as measured by the influence of students' socio-economic background on student test score (Programme for International Student Assessment, PISA<sup>d</sup>) achievements, is considerable in many OECD countries. Austria, the Czech Republic, France, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America are among the countries where socio-economic background appears to have the largest influence on students' performance.<sup>5</sup>
- Vocational qualifications at all levels were associated with an increase in the probability of employment for those individuals who left schooling without qualifications.
- There is a circular relationship between poverty and social exclusion, education, employment and income, and the effects are felt from one generation to the next.<sup>6</sup>
- Lifelong learning is particularly associated with behaviours that could have an indirect benefit in supporting people to find routes out of poverty.<sup>7</sup>
- Around one in five further education colleges (FECs) performed significantly better than expected in their widening participation indicator, with a higher proportion of young full-time students from low participation neighbourhoods than might have been expected.<sup>8</sup>
- FECs also compare favourably to HEIs with respect to widening participation for young full-time first degree entrants. Nearly a quarter (22.9 per cent) of all such entrants registered at FECs were from neighbourhoods with low rates of participation in HE: this is more than double the rate (10.5 per cent) for all such entrants registered at English HEIs.<sup>9</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Cabinet Office, (2011), *Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers*, H M Government, available at: [http://www.dpm.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files\\_dpm/resources/opening-doors-breaking-barriers.pdf](http://www.dpm.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files_dpm/resources/opening-doors-breaking-barriers.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup> BIS, (2012), *Widening Participation in Higher Education*, available at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/bis-core/statistics/docs/w/12-p155-widening-participation-higher-education-aug-2012>
- <sup>3</sup> BIS, (2012), *Widening Participation in Higher Education*, available at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/bis-core/statistics/docs/w/12-p155-widening-participation-higher-education-aug-2012>
- <sup>4</sup> Blanden, J. and Machin, S. (2007), *Recent Changes in Intergenerational Mobility in Britain*, Sutton Trust, available at: <http://thest57.demonweb.co.uk/reports/mainreport.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> OECD, (2010), *Economic Policy Reforms: going for growth, A Family Affair: intergenerational social mobility across OECD countries*, chapter 5, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/eco/publicfinanceandfiscalpolicy/45002641.pdf>
- <sup>6</sup> Fullick, L., (2009), *Poverty Reduction and Lifelong Learning*, IFLL Thematic Paper 6, NIACE, available at: <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-Poverty.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> Fullick, L., (2009), *Poverty Reduction and Lifelong Learning*, IFLL Thematic Paper 6, NIACE, available at: <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-Poverty.pdf>
- <sup>8</sup> HEFCE, (2012), *Widening participation and non-continuation indicators for further education colleges: overview of trends*, available at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/content/pubs/2012/201220/Widening%20participation%20and%20non-continuation%20indicators%20for%20FECs.pdf>
- <sup>9</sup> HEFCE, (2012), *Widening participation and non-continuation indicators for further education colleges: overview of trends*, available at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/content/pubs/2012/201220/Widening%20participation%20and%20non-continuation%20indicators%20for%20FECs.pdf>