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Advancing Access CPD Conference*

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The Sutton Trust



EARLY YEARS



SCHOOLS



APPRENTICESHIPS



HIGHER EDUCATION



ACCESS TO THE WORKPLACE

The Sutton Trust champions social mobility from birth to the workplace so that every young person – no matter who their parents are, what school they go to, or where they live – has the chance to succeed in life

Social Mobility in the UK

The poorest children
are
**11 MONTHS
BEHIND**
when starting school

High-performing
comprehensive schools
take in
HALF THE NUMBER
of poorer pupils than the
average school

Disadvantaged students are
TWICE AS LIKELY
to leave formal education
without GCSEs in English
and Maths

Social Mobility in the UK

8 TOP SCHOOLS

send as many pupils to
Oxbridge as three-
quarters of all schools

Degree apprentices are

2X AS LIKELY

to come from the
wealthiest areas than the
poorest

Wealthy children

are

2.5X MORE LIKELY

to end up
wealthy themselves

A personal story



Social Mobility and HE

Low-income students are **4 X MORE LIKELY** to be socially mobile if they attend university

RESEARCH BRIEF | NOVEMBER 2021

Universities and Social Mobility: Summary Report

The Sutton Trust

KEY FINDINGS

- Higher education is a key driver of social mobility in this country. Young people from less well-off backgrounds who attend university are more likely to become socially mobile into higher income brackets, and income gaps are lower between graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers compared to non-graduates.
- The research calculates a 'mobility rate' for universities, subjects and individual degrees, based on how many students from disadvantaged backgrounds get in, and how many of them go on to be high earners after graduation. The research uses data from a cohort of young people who attended university in the mid-2000s and recently turned 30, as well as projecting forward for more recent cohorts.
- Many of the top ranking institutions for social mobility are less selective universities located in London, combining high access rates with good earnings outcomes. This is likely due to the higher salaries on offer for graduates in London, as well as the relatively high rates of disadvantaged pupils with high levels of attainment, along with the ethnic mix.
- Less selective universities take on the majority of poorer students who attend university. While they often have lower graduate earnings on average, many of their graduates from poorer homes in fact go on to achieve well in the labour market. This is further emphasised when the characteristics of their students, including their school attainment, is taken into account.
- More selective institutions offer the best chance of becoming a higher earner, even taking into account prior characteristics of their students, as well as having a lower 'class pay gap' among their graduates. Access to these institutions has improved in the last two decades, but some selective universities with high rates of mobility demonstrate that more can be done. The data indicates that improving access does not have a significant negative effect on labour market success.
- Social mobility at English universities appears to be gradually moving in the right direction, largely owing to the work done by universities, charities and others in improving levels of access in recent years. While the role of higher education in social mobility is constrained by wider educational inequalities, this research demonstrates the impact universities can have, as well as the improvements that can still be made.

INTRODUCTION

This Sutton Trust summary accompanies the report ["Which university degrees are best for intergenerational mobility?"](#), produced by the Institute for Fiscal Studies in partnership with the Sutton Trust and the Department for Education. The research is a landmark piece of work for the study of social mobility in this country, utilising data on socio-economic background and education pathways linked to adult labour market outcomes for virtually the entire population. This provides the clearest picture yet on the role of higher education in social mobility. Since its inception in 1997, the Sutton Trust has promoted access to higher education, in particular the most selective institutions, as a key lever for improving social mobility. This piece demonstrates some of the progress made over this time, as well as highlighting the work that still needs to be done. The report looks in detail at how higher education attendance influences the chances of social mobility. While social mobility can take many forms, this piece looks at income mobility in particular, looking at how many young people who grow up economically disadvantaged move into high income groups when they reach adulthood, and which university pathway they have taken. Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) at 16 is used as the marker of disadvantage while growing up, while adult earnings are measured at age 30, allowing time for careers to stabilise and mature. The top fifth of incomes, a common threshold used for income mobility, is the primary measure used here, but other thresholds are also explored in the full report. Social mobility, by its nature, is something which can only be clearly seen through a rear-view mirror. Today's mid-career adults passed through the education system a decade or more ago. The key cohort of young people examined in

2002-2004 Took GCSEs → 2004-2006 Begin entering university → 2007-2009 Begin to graduate → 2015-2019 Earnings at age 30

1

Which university degrees are best for intergenerational mobility?

Research report
November 2021

Jack Britton, Elaine Drayton and Laura van der Erve

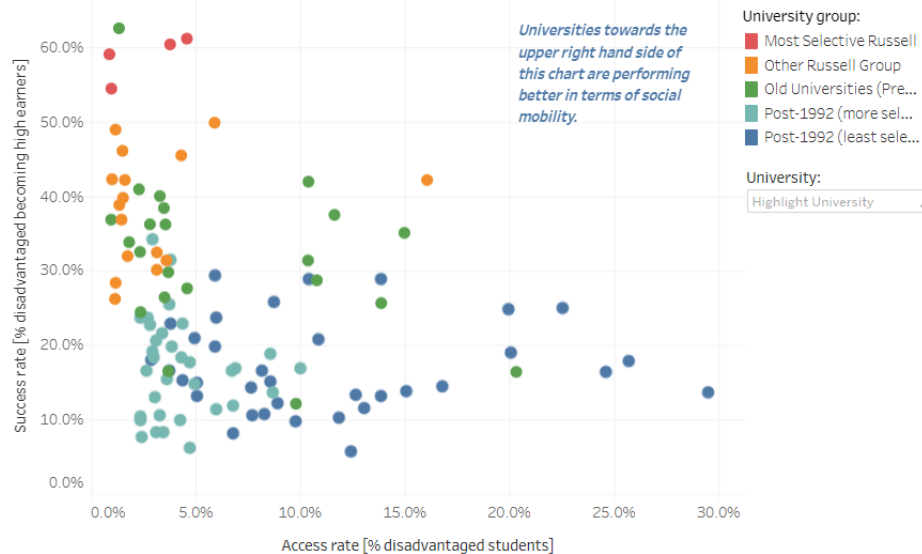
Institute for Fiscal Studies

Supporting Social Mobility
Social Science in Government

It's not all about Oxbridge (or even RG!)

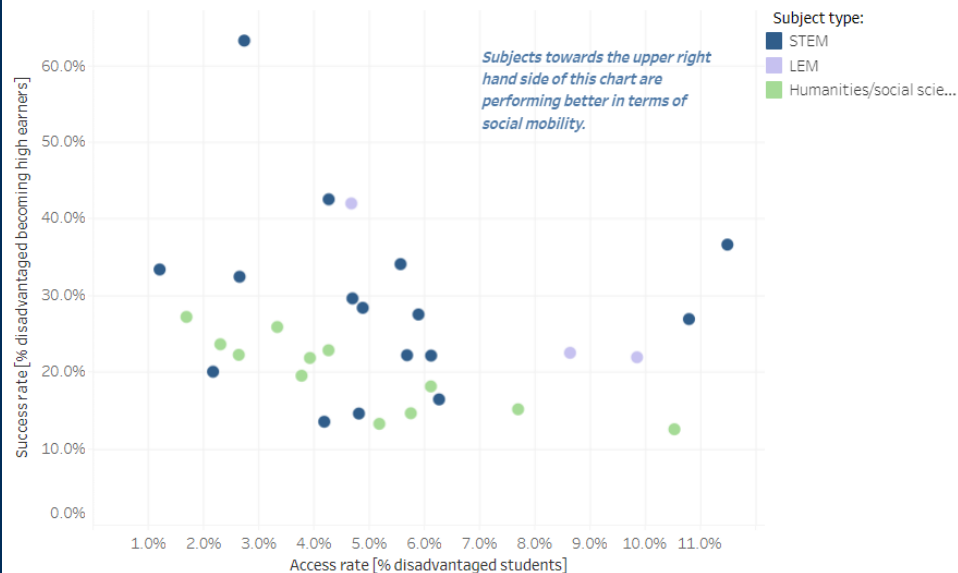
Mobility stats: Universities

Click on tabs to explore data from later cohorts and other mobility measures.



Mobility stats: Subjects

Click on tabs to explore data from later cohorts and other mobility measures.



Rank	Subject	Subject type
1	Pharmacology	STEM
2	Computing	STEM
3	Law	LEM
4	Economics	LEM
5	Business	LEM
6	Engineering	STEM
7	Maths	STEM
8	Medicine	STEM
9	Allied to med	STEM
10	Architecture	STEM
11	Chemistry	STEM
12	Biosciences	STEM
13	Social care	Humanities/social science..
14	Nursing	STEM
15	Sociology	Humanities/social science..
16	Comms	Humanities/social science..
17	Psychology	STEM
18	Politics	Humanities/social science..
19	Philosophy	Humanities/social science..
20	Physics	STEM

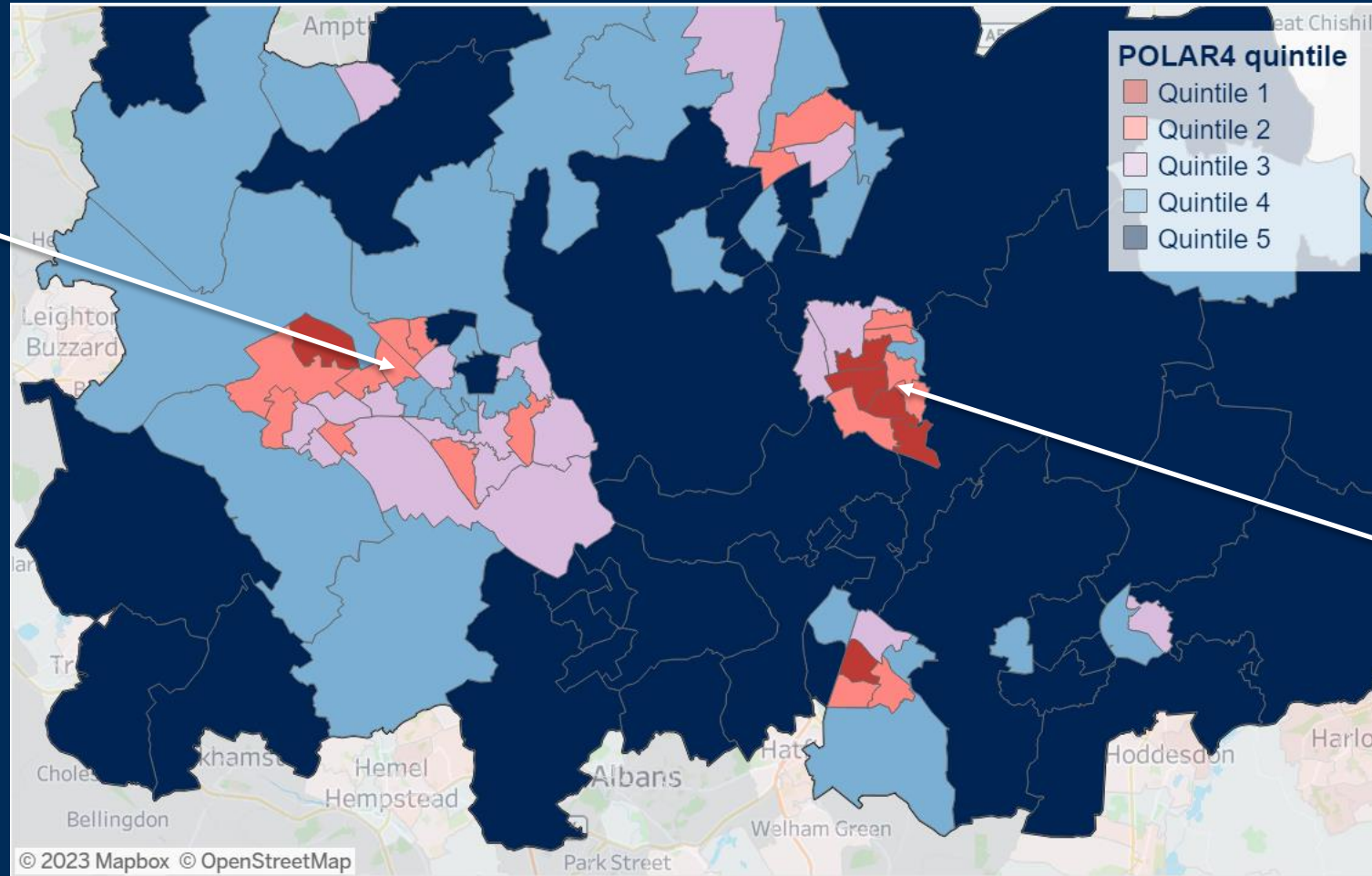
Things are moving in the right direction... slowly

Table 5: Trends in mobility rates from the 2002 to 2017 GCSE cohorts

	2002-04			2010-12 projection		2017 projection	
	Access (%)	Success (%)	Mobility (%)	Access (%)	Mobility (%)	Access (%)	Mobility (%)
University type							
Elite Russell	1.7	59.0	1.0	1.8	1.0	2.2	1.3
Russell Group	2.6	38.4	1.0	3.4	1.3	3.7	1.4
Old universities	5.3	27.8	1.5	7.0	2.0	7.2	2.0
Other (more selective)	4.9	17.7	0.9	6.3	1.1	6.6	1.2
Other (least selective)	10.7	18.5	2.0	12.4	2.3	11.9	2.2
High mobility unis (2002-04)							
Low selectivity	10.0	19.3	1.9	11.6	2.2	11.3	2.2
High selectivity	6.6	32.7	2.1	8.0	2.6	8.1	2.6
Low mobility unis (2002-04)							
Low selectivity	4.2	14.9	0.6	5.6	0.8	5.9	0.9
High selectivity	1.7	34.2	0.6	2.6	0.9	2.8	1.0
Subject type							
LEM	7.8	23.6	1.8	8.9	2.1	-	-
STEM	5.6	27.1	1.5	6.7	1.8	-	-
Other	4.3	17.1	0.7	6.1	1.0	-	-
All	5.6	22.3	1.3	7.0	1.6	7.1	1.6

Local Variation

Luton



Stevenage

There are barriers – but they aren't intractable

Attainment

Moving away
(+ cost of
living)

Choosing correctly
(incl. apprenticeships)

Sutton Trust Programmes



50% of Sutton Trust students are on FSM, 80% would be first in family to attend university

93% of Sutton Trust students from the lowest socio-economic group move to the highest after finishing university

Thank You