

**All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility meeting in conversation with Alun Francis OBE,
Interim Chair, Social Mobility Commission**

Thursday 27 April 2023

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Social Mobility was pleased to host a meeting on the work and priorities of the Social Mobility Commission, hearing from Alun Francis OBE, Interim Chair, Social Mobility Commission.

Chair of the APPG David Johnston MP introduced the session and was joined by co-chair Baroness Tyler of Enfield, Justin Madders MP and Lord Mountevans.

INTRODUCTORY SPEECH

Alun Francis OBE

Alun gave an overview of the Social Mobility Commission's recent work and expanded on the organisation's thematic priorities of nurturing talent, developing and distributing talent, and growing opportunities. These priorities will inform the SMC's upcoming work on the role of parents and families in children's attainment, understanding the role of qualifications and employers in developing skills and providing opportunities, and the regional disparities in economic growth and the availability of opportunities.

Alun also offered a preview of the SMC's *State of the Nation 2023* report, which will focus on 'people and places' by breaking down social mobility indicators by region and protected characteristics such as gender, ethnicity and disability status. The analysis in the report will also offer a more nuanced picture of social mobility by dividing socio-economic background into five parts: higher and lower professional, intermediate, and higher and lower working class.

Q&A

Following Alun's presentation, David Johnston MP opened the meeting up to questions.

Questions were first asked by the Chair and Co-Chair of the group, who covered a number of topics including barriers to social mobility presented by 'vested interests', the importance of financial inclusion in promoting social mobility, the potential impact of current government policy (such as the Levelling Up agenda and compulsory maths to age 18) on social mobility measures, and the future impact of artificial intelligence.

Other areas covered in the discussion included the usefulness of having a social mobility strategy across government, the widening gap in opportunities and outcomes between graduate and non-graduate families, the importance of research into the role of 'soft' skills in promoting social mobility, and whether it would be useful to class social mobility as a protected characteristic.

The discussion ended with a question on the importance of good-quality impact evaluation in building an evidence base for policy promoting social mobility.

David Johnston MP then thanked Alun and guests for attending and closed the meeting.