UK
Social
Mobility
Awards™

In association with

Capita

Leading the Charge

How leading UK organisations are supporting social mobility in 2019
A report by Exogeny Consulting

Making the Leap.

Increasing social mobility is about creating prosperous and thriving local communities throughout Great Britain.

With over 55,000 people spread across the country, Capita has the resources and talent to help make this happen.

Jon Lewis, CEO, Capita

A global employer with a local heart

At Capita we work with our clients to solve complex challenges, increase productivity, enhance their use of technology and harness the power of data to improve customer and public services. To do this, we rely on talented individuals from all areas where we live and work.

We are a global company, with a local heart, keen to play our part in creating prosperous and thriving communities. We will work together with the public, private and third sectors to close the gap between the different social strata in society and make sure that everyone has a fair chance of fulfilling their potential.

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About the UK Social Mobility Awards

The UK Social Mobility Awards (SOMOs) are designed to make the advancement of social mobility a key part of how organisations are run in this country. They are a unique set of awards that have been specifically established to recognise and encourage action that will promote and increase social mobility within Britain's companies and institutions. These awards recognise best practice and innovation, celebrate excellence and achievement and elevate social mobility as a cause equal to the level of other diversity issues.

The organisers of the SOMOs firmly believe that, by raising awareness and celebrating the people and organisations that are committed to bringing about change, together we can year-on-year advance the cause of social mobility in this country. There are eleven award categories – three individual and eight organisational – that have been chosen in order to focus on those areas where a real difference can be made by taking the right actions.

About Making The Leap

Making The Leap is a London-based charity, founded in 1993, that improves social mobility by raising the aspirations of, and increasing opportunities for, young people between the ages of 11 and 25. Their vision is that every young person in our country will have the chance to succeed; and every company, organisation and institution will have a part to play in making it happen. Each month, Making the Leap equip hundreds of young people with the soft skills they need to succeed. Every year they raise aspirations and access to opportunities for over 10,000 young people.

About the Author

Stephen Hogan grew up in London in a working-class family, the son of factory workers from Ireland. He went to a comprehensive school, was the first generation of his family to go to university and has a deep understanding of the issues and barriers faced by those seeking to advance social mobility at both a personal and organisational level.

His career to date has seen him work across the public and private sectors and civil society. He was PwC's first Head of Social Mobility, developing their first corporate social mobility strategy, and now works as an independent corporate responsibility and social impact consultant through his company **Exogeny Consulting** (www.exogenyconsulting.com).

Introduction

The need for increased social mobility is clear. Talent is everywhere but opportunity is not. In recent years, report after report has highlighted the scale of the challenge. Across all levels of education, government, industry, the arts and sport, in every facet of British society the message has come across loud and clear, that a privilege past leads to a privileged future.

But a thriving, dynamic economy needs a meritocratic society, where opportunities are available to all. And this is not just a British problem – think of the 'American Dream' where everyone can be a success, regardless of where they come from. That's what we mean when we talk about social mobility – the chance for anyone, whatever their background, to progress as far in their life, and in their career, as their dreams, their talent and their determination will take them.

For that to happen, doors need to be opened and the playing field needs to be levelled. Young people should be in good nurseries and schools wherever they grow up, with educational opportunities that do not depend on income; university options should be fair and open, and not pre-determined by family wealth or the type of school that someone attended; routes into employment should be unbiased, open and meritocratic; and progress within a career should be based on talent, rather than abstract concepts such as 'fit' or 'polish'.

All of these things are possible. And all of these things are happening. Little by little, across the country, change is coming. From schools, to universities, to employers of all sizes, social inclusion is taking a leading role. And why? Because more and more organisations have realised that diversity of background and thought is a good thing. That businesses are stronger, more innovative and more profitable when they reflect the populations they serve. That social mobility can unlock the key to a pool of talent that has often gone unnoticed, and unfulfilled, with benefits that are economic, political and social. More needs to happen, in both education and business, but these organisations are showing what can be possible.

This report charts organisations that are leading the charge in social mobility – organisations who, between them, employ around 1 million people and submitted entries for the eleven categories that comprise the 2019 UK Social Mobility Awards. Not all have won the awards they entered, but all should be lauded and celebrated for the positive action they are taking to ensure a brighter, fairer future for everyone in this country.

Stephen Hogan
October 2019

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Organisations collectively employing over 1 million people entered the 2019 UK Social Mobility Awards. Many of them entered for the first time and a significant number of entries were from smaller organisations, illustrating that organisations of all sizes are supporting social mobility.

Many reports from government and elsewhere tell us that a lack of social mobility is a significant problem in this country. That where you're born, and the circumstances you're born into, play a dominant role in shaping your education, your work opportunities, your life chances. That can't be right, and an increasing number of individuals and organisations are stepping up to try and do something to level the playing field. The entries for this year's awards contain some great examples of organisations and individuals that are going above and beyond, thinking differently to help solve what may seem an intractable problem.

Some organisations are embracing the challenge at an overall, holistic level and stand out in a number of areas, and these are represented in the Organisation of the Year category. These organisations realise that social mobility considerations are not an add-on to their everyday activities but are instead an integral part of the way the organisation operates. They're supporting social mobility across a range of activities, both inside and outside the organisation, and are charting their progress in how they are making a tangible difference to the lives of others.

Others are trying to think about how they can do things differently. If social mobility is such a longstanding problem, perhaps new ways of working are required? The Innovation category recognises those organisations that are challenging the status quo and are thinking differently about how they work with their colleagues, communities and wider society. The entries in this category are working with a wide range of beneficiary groups and are developing new approaches to reach different audiences.

Social mobility is too great a challenge for any one organisation to successfully tackle alone. Some organisations have seized the opportunity to lead change that goes beyond organisational or sectoral boundaries, reaching new audiences to speak up for social mobility. The Leadership of the Year category recognises those organisations that are looking beyond their borders to effect systemic change. Many of the entries in this category are from consortia who have come together to achieve something greater collectively than they could deliver on their own.

Recruitment is a huge part of social mobility. Providing fair and open opportunities for people from all backgrounds is a key part of ensuring that organisations are truly open and that career opportunities are available to everyone. The Recruitment of the Year category features a number of organisations that are using their recruitment practices and programmes to tackle social mobility issues head on.

But of course, getting into an organisation is only part of the story. What happens when you get there determines whether you stay, develop and progress. The organisations represented in the Progression of the Year category are supporting a huge range of people – from schoolchildren to older workers in their sixties – through programmes that support the development and progression of people right across the age spectrum, showing that you're never too young, or too old, to make progress. However, this is an area where there is still a long way to go. Many organisations acknowledge that this is an area where they are relatively weaker, and it's an area where we need to see more activity from the organisations involved in the social mobility movement, in order for the gains made in other categories to be fully embedded.

For many organisations, social mobility starts with their local community. And it is perhaps for this reason that the Community Programme of the Year category is once again the one that has received the most entries. This category recognises the work that organisations are doing to raise people's aspirations, introduce them to industries they didn't know about, develop their business skills or help them get a better understanding of their future education and employment opportunities. The work outlined in this category is helping to break down barriers and open people's eyes to what might be possible. It's also helping the organisations themselves to get a better understanding of the communities they operate in.

This year there are two new education categories – School/College of the Year and University of the Year. The evidence shows that social background can play a big part in determining educational outcomes, so these institutions play a vital role in giving young people the skills, qualifications and experiences they need to succeed in life. The entries for School/College of the Year have come from both selective and non-selective schools, which are supporting social mobility in different ways. Non-selective schools have been working to raise attainment levels and enable students to access wider education and employment opportunities, whereas selective schools have been trying to diversify their intake, support local communities and enable a wider range of students to experience selective education.

In Higher Education, the entries for University of the Year indicate that many universities are focusing their social mobility efforts on supporting specific groups of students. There is a recognition that some groups will need particular support to encourage them to see university as a place for them, to apply and, crucially, to stay. Many of the universities represented in this category are offering targeted intervention and support and are closely monitoring the effects their activities have on retention and attainment.

In the individual categories there are many examples of people going the extra mile to provide advice, guidance and inspiration, acting as role models and helping to change people's perceptions about what could be possible. The Champion of the Year category highlights those who have driven positive change, both within their organisations and outside in the wider academic or business world; the Mentor of the Year category highlights those who have given their time to guide and support others, both inside and outside their organisations, and who play such a huge part in attracting and retaining diverse talent; and the Rising Star category illustrates how age should not be a barrier – there are many people in the early stages of their career who have already seized the opportunity to make a tangible difference to advancing social mobility.

All who have entered these awards, whether they win or not, should be applauded for the work they're doing and for leading the charge towards a fairer society for all.

40 lessons from the 2019 award entries

Each category is unique in its own way and takes a slightly different perspective on how to best support social mobility. The forty lessons identified from the different categories are collected here, to provide an overall summary for organisations that want to learn from others and do more.

Organisation

1. Plan ahead. Leading organisations have a clearly defined plan for how their organisation is going to support social mobility across the full spectrum of their activities.

2. Lead from the front. Support from senior leadership enables change to happen further and faster but for social mobility to truly take hold, leadership has to come from people right across the organisation.

3. Measure progress. Collecting data – on applicants, employees and community outreach beneficiaries – enables organisations to understand what's happening, measure the change and adjust their plans and activities as needed.

4. Think big. Leading organisations are thinking about how they can support a wide range of beneficiary groups, both within and outside the organisation, and are often collaborating with other organisations to achieve the desired change.

Innovation

5. Be bold. Innovation means different things to organisations in different sectors but whatever the industry, innovation is not about making incremental change. Leading organisations are innovating to genuinely try to do things very differently.

6. Make it relevant. For innovation to take hold, it must relate to the organisation's day-to-day business – that way, innovation can drive business growth and development. If that's not the case, new ideas won't be seen as relevant, they won't engage beneficiaries and stakeholders and they will ultimately fail.

7. Capture the change. Innovation can be hard to measure but measurement can in itself be an innovation and can drive an organisation to think very differently about how it operates.

Leadership

8. You can't do it all yourself. Effective leadership to support social mobility means realising that you can't solve this problem on your own.

9. Work together. The best organisations realise that leadership involves collaborating with others to achieve common goals, whether within sectors, across sectors or within a locality. It can mean putting competitive rivalries to one side, to focus on a greater good that is in the interest of all.

10. Stay with it. Leading change takes time, patience and perseverance. The leading entries in this category have long-term plans and strategies and have worked for several years to build their programmes, layer upon layer.

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Recruitment

11. Think differently. Skills shortages and a willingness to broaden horizons are leading businesses to re-think their recruitment strategies and search for talent in different places.

12. Be strong. This takes courage and commitment, because there may well be internal resistance to doing things differently – senior support and a clear strategy helps to focus minds.

13. Show doubters the evidence. Collecting data to measure the impact of new programmes can help to overcome negative perceptions – the entries in this category show that those recruited from 'non-traditional' routes are performing well and are often more committed than their peers.

14. Provide opportunities for all. Social mobility is more than recruiting young people into 'elite' professions – it's about providing opportunities to people at all stages of their career, in whatever profession they feel is right for them.

Progression

15. Progression means learning and growing. The best progression programmes give their employees opportunities to get out of their comfort zone and support them to develop new skills and experiences, to give them the best chance of long-term success.

16. Everyone is different. A good progression programme supports its people and treats them as individuals, recognising that one size does not fit all. Whether that's in the design of the programme or the nature of the support given, a programme that fits the needs of the person will have the best chance of succeeding.

17. Progression programmes pay off. Good employer progression programmes drive increased employee loyalty and retention, enabling individuals to make the progress their talent deserves. They also have the potential to save employers significant sums in recruitment costs.

18. You're never too old to progress! Although progression programmes for younger people are important, programmes that support people throughout their career are essential for driving social mobility across the population.

19. We need more progress on progression. In the coming years we want to see more organisations putting meaningful, effective programmes in place that help people from less privileged backgrounds to make sustained progress. In the long term, that is the only way that the gains made in other categories will be fully embedded.

Community

20. Community outreach should not be a standalone activity. It can be a way in to establishing deeper relationships with local stakeholders and can help organisations to understand more about local needs and the role they can play in meeting them.

21. Impacts will be strongest when they're strategic. Organisations of all sizes can make a significant positive difference to the communities they serve – this is not the preserve of big companies – but whatever the organisation and whatever its size, a programme that is helping solve a clearly-defined problem and is working towards a clear objective is likely to have stronger, more sustainable outcomes.

22. Community activity helps employees to feel more connected to their communities. Activities that help employees to share their skills are great for increasing organisational reputation and employee engagement and are likely to have the most strategic impact. Skilled activities also give individual beneficiaries the best insight into the world of work and can help charities and smaller businesses to access the kind of skills and support they would struggle to afford commercially.

23. Join the dots. To maximise its effectiveness, community outreach should be an integrated part of a wider social inclusion strategy. That way, the people who are engaged in these programmes can see a pathway from community work through to wider activities such as attraction, recruitment, advocacy and procurement, maximising the business and social impacts of such activities.

Schools/colleges

24. Schools start their social mobility journey from very different places. For non-selective State schools, ensuring good levels of academic achievement is their minimum requirement, but enhancing students' social and cultural capital and opening their eyes to new possibilities enables students to be more rounded and to be more inspired by their potential future;

25. Being inclusive means opening doors to others. The best selective educators, be they grammar schools or independent schools, understand their privileged position and seek opportunities to open their doors. Whether that's through their student recruitment pipeline or through their broader community outreach, they feel a responsibility to be integrated with their communities, rather than aloof from them, and they seek to make their schools places of inclusion.

26. Just as starting points are different, so are end points. Entrance to the most selective universities is seen by many in this sector as the critical mark of success. Almost every entry in this category mentions how many students made it to Russell Group universities or to Oxbridge. Whilst it's true that elite universities have for too long been the preserve of the wealthy and privileged, it is important for the sector to consider broader measures of success, rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all measure of progression. Not all students want to, or should go to, the most selective universities.

Universities

27. Mind the gap. There are significant differences in student attainment and retention levels between different population segments. Leading universities are tackling this head-on by thinking about how to make their outreach, attraction and student support strategies as inclusive as possible.

28. Data can play a leading role. Some universities have developed activity monitoring that helps them to understand when and where students may be in need of additional support. Student support services that provide this kind of targeted, bespoke support are helping to demonstrably improve student engagement and performance.

29. Outreach is important. Community activities can make universities feel more real and accessible and can enhance application rates from under-represented groups. Universities should try to ensure that this activity takes place in the communities where it is most needed, as it is proving to be successful in improving participation rates.

30. Social mobility is about inclusion. At university inclusion is physical, cultural, educational and social. Leading universities are designing inclusion into their strategies, buildings and teaching, thereby providing opportunities for learners from different backgrounds and geographies to make the most of their academic potential.

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Champions

31. Champions drive change. Senior leaders don't have to be social mobility champions, and social mobility champions don't have to be senior leaders. But senior leaders who are social mobility champions have the opportunity to drive significant positive change, both within and outside their organisations.

32. Where champions lead, others follow. Many of the initiatives that have been established by these social mobility champions have been adopted more broadly, whether that's within industries, sectors or geographies – the visibility and leadership of these champions is a great way to embed learning across a wide range of organisations and ensure that their pioneering work can move into the mainstream.

33. Champions need support. Supporting social mobility activities can take a significant investment of time, energy and patience, which may already be in short supply as a result of the champion's day job. The support, understanding and buy-in of internal colleagues helps to ensure that the champion's efforts are recognised and embedded throughout their organisation, and support from external partners can help to ensure that the benefits of their hard work are felt more widely.

Mentors

34. Successful mentors give a lot of themselves. They give their time and their energy but they also give their experiences, their empathy and their determination to see others succeed. That effort is noticed and it helps to propel the people they support on to greater educational and career achievement.

35. Mentoring is not just for students or for those early in their careers. Mentoring can support people at all stages of their career – it can help people learn from others who have been through similar experiences, and in the case of reverse mentoring it can also help people learn from others who have been through experiences that are completely different.

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36. The power of mentoring is enduring. Many people who have been encouraged and inspired as children or in their early careers have never forgotten the support they received and are determined to pass that same level of encouragement on to the next generation, creating a virtuous circle of empathy, challenge and guidance that can help to sustain people along their social mobility journey.

37. We need more mentoring. Everyone needs someone in their workplace to listen to them, support them and advise them. But if you're from a less privileged background that is under-represented in your workplace, you need a good mentor even more. A good mentor can help not just to guide but to reassure; they can be a role model and an inspiration. Good mentors will support progression and retention, which is good for the individual and the organisation. We need more organisations to recognise the power of mentoring and to provide mentors with the training, support and recognition they deserve.

Rising Stars

38. Rising stars don't wait. They see things from a different angle to their more experienced colleagues and have the ambition, energy and determination to make the changes they think are needed.

39. Responsibility is not a problem. Younger staff members are sometimes overlooked for leadership opportunities due to their perceived inexperience, but getting involved in community and inclusion activities can be a great way for younger professionals to demonstrate their leadership and organising skills, which will stand them in good stead for their careers. These rising stars have relished their opportunity to lead change.

40. Everyone needs to be listened to, regardless of their background or their situation. Listening to the fears, hopes and dreams of beneficiaries has helped these rising stars to develop programmes that support and nurture communities; being listened to themselves, and supported by senior leaders, has given these rising stars the confidence to drive programmes that are supporting people from all backgrounds, both inside and outside the workplace.
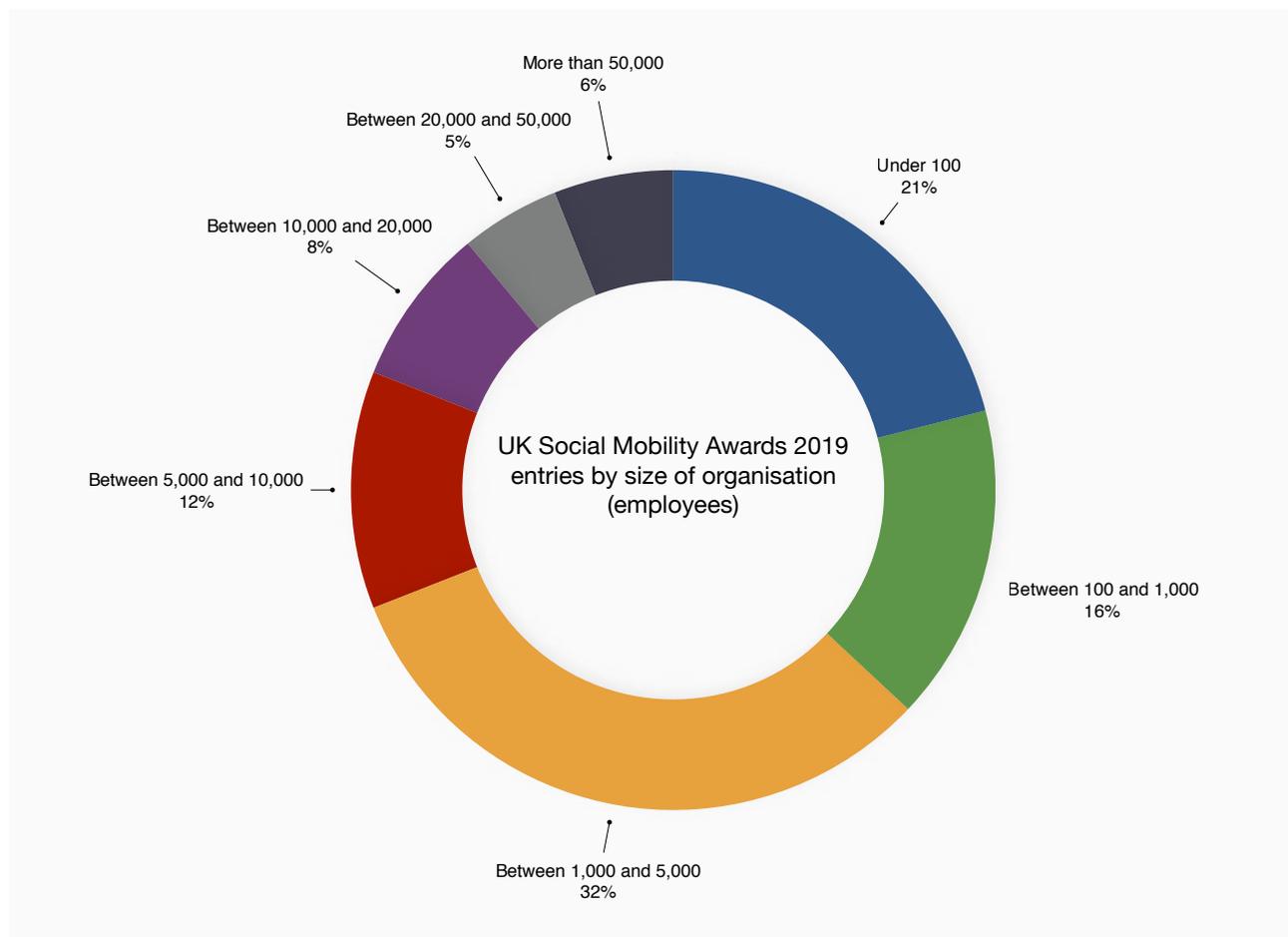
Breakdown of the 2019 entrants

Before we get into the categories themselves, we'll briefly review the breadth and volume of entries this year.

Entries by organisational size

The organisations that submitted entries this year collectively employ an estimated 950,000 people in this country. But that overall figure masks some significant differences between the sizes of organisations that have entered.

Awards and indices can sometimes be dominated by larger organisations. And this is understandable, since many of them do great work and have the resources to not only do the work, but to talk about it too. However, one of the encouraging things about the entries for this year's UK Social Mobility Awards is that they come from organisations of all shapes and sizes, and a significant number of entries were received from smaller organisations.

It's great to see that around a third of all entries were from organisations with less than 1,000 employees, and 21% were from organisations with less than 100.It's not possible to be entirely sure, as lists of entrants for other awards are not published, but it seems that these awards may be attracting entries from several organisations that have not taken part in other social mobility awards or indices.
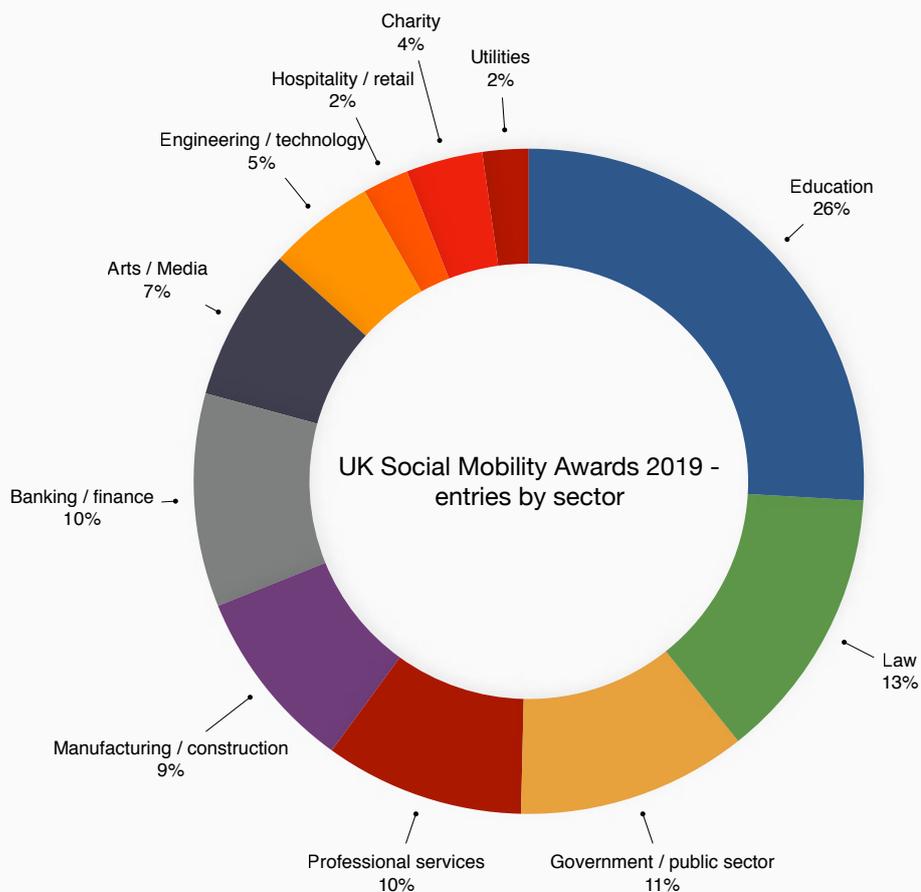
More than 50,000
6%

Between 20,000 and 50,000
5%

Between 10,000 and 20,000
8%

Between 5,000 and 10,000
12%

UK Social Mobility Awards 2019 entries by size of organisation (employees)

Under 100
21%

Between 100 and 1,000
16%

Between 1,000 and 5,000
32%

Breakdown of the 2019 entrants

Entries by sector

The UK Social Mobility Awards received a record level of entries this year across its eleven categories. With specific categories added this year for schools/colleges and universities, it is perhaps not surprising that the education sector submitted 26% of entries, the highest proportion of any individual sector. Law and professional services also submitted around a quarter of all entries between them.

The other half of the entries was provided by a diverse mix of organisations. Entries from the public sector covered around 10% of all submissions, with a similar proportion coming from businesses working in the finance industry. Encouragingly, around a quarter of all entries came from sectors that are very important to the social mobility debate but which are not represented as often in social mobility awards and indices – businesses in sectors such
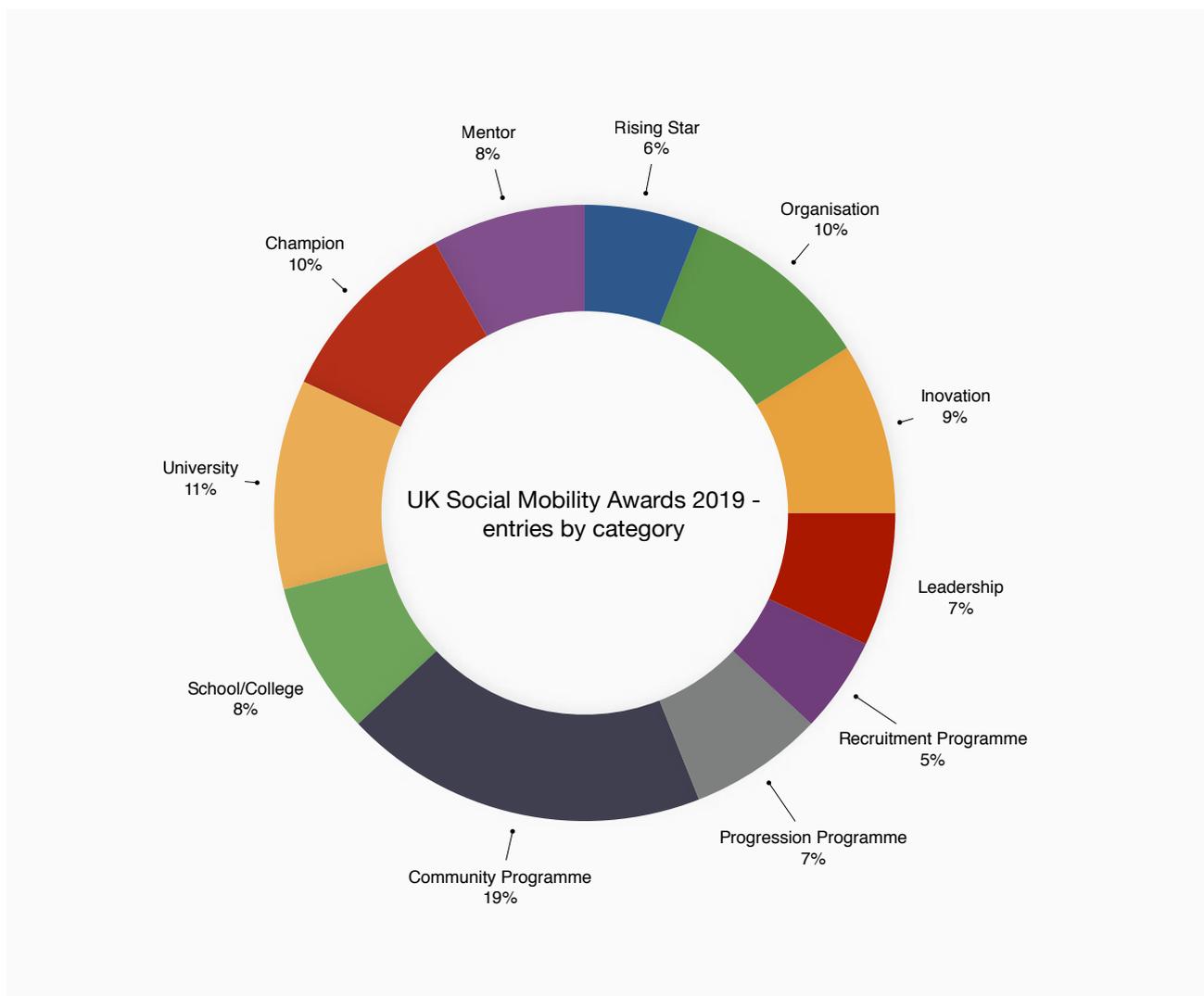
as manufacturing, engineering, hospitality and the media were proud enough of the work they have been doing to submit an entry to this year's awards.

UK Social Mobility Awards 2019 - entries by sector

- Charity 4%
- Utilities 2%
- Hospitality / retail 2%
- Engineering / technology 5%
- Arts / Media 7%
- Banking / finance 10%
- Manufacturing / construction 9%
- Professional services 10%
- Government / public sector 11%
- Law 13%
- Education 26%

Entries by category

The entries to this year's awards were relatively evenly spread across ten of the eleven categories. The Community Programme of the Year award continued its tradition of being the most hotly-contested category, with entries here comprising almost 20% of all submissions. Interestingly, many of the organisations that entered for the Community award did not enter any other category, which may indicate that this is where many organisations start their social mobility journey.

Other observations are that there were more entries this year for organisations' progression programmes than there were for their recruitment programmes, which is a little surprising but could perhaps be explained by this year's entrants becoming slightly more mature in their social mobility approaches, moving from a focus on recruitment towards a focus on retention, development and progression. In addition, the new categories recognising excellence in education have proven popular, with schools, colleges and universities all taking the opportunity to outline the important part they are playing in improving social mobility.

Mentor
8%

Rising Star
6%

Organisation
10%

Champion
10%

Inovation
9%

University
11%

UK Social Mobility Awards 2019 -
entries by category

Leadership
7%

School/College
8%

Recruitment Programme
5%

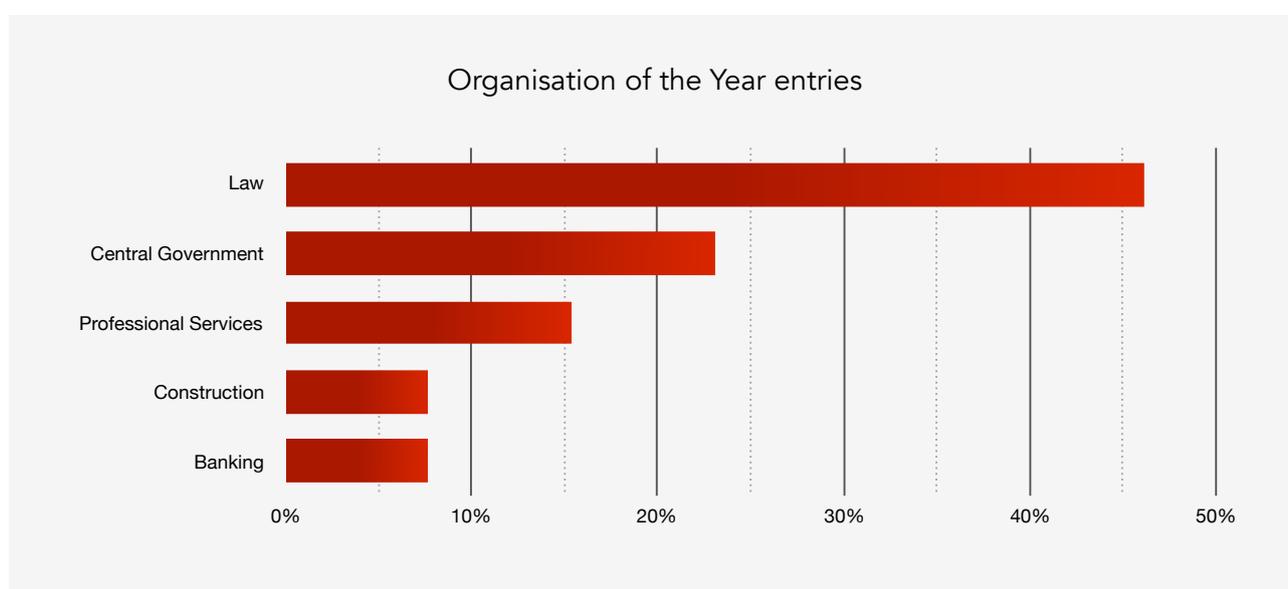Progression Programme
7%

Community Programme
19%

Organisation of the Year

An organisation that is successfully leading the charge on social mobility will be putting its commitment to equality, opportunity and inclusion at the heart of everything it does. It will recognise that this is not a nice-to-have add on to its day-to-day activities – these are its day-to-day activities. Social mobility is a business imperative for these organisations and these leaders have embedded social inclusion across a range of their activities, showing the progress in a number of areas that entitles them to be considered as the leading organisation for advancing social mobility this year. This category recognises organisations that are looking to the future and realising that their approach to social mobility is something that can, and will, set them apart from others.

The organisations represented in this category have made a wide-ranging commitment to embedding social mobility across their activities, both inside and outside the organisation. They are leading the way, inspiring others to join them and are charting their progress in how they are making a tangible difference.

Entries in the category this year were led by legal, government and professional services organisations, sectors that have been standard bearers for their approaches to social mobility in recent years.

Organisation of the Year entries

Sector	Percentage
Law	~46%
Central Government	~23%
Professional Services	~15%
Construction	~8%
Banking	~8%

Key findings

The leaders in this category are pushing the boundaries of social inclusion across the breadth of their organisations and often well beyond. **Grant Thornton** led the way on removing academic requirements for their recruitment programmes in 2013 and have put an end to work experience through family connections, which sends a powerful message to the rest of their industry. They've also created an online community for applicants, enabling them to access their peers during the process. The **Ministry of Justice** was the first government department to publish a social mobility strategic plan and they have championed changes to recruitment and outreach practices across central government. **KPMG** have collected a significant amount of social demographic data on their employees and are using that information to help them weave social mobility into their employee lifecycle. They've also been active supporters of external initiatives

such as National Numeracy Day and the government's Opportunity Areas programme.

Around half of the organisations entering this category have developed a social mobility plan of some description. **Willmott Dixon** have taken that idea a step further, by enabling local offices to develop their own social mobility plans, to enable them to meet local priorities. The best organisations in this category are developing integrated, joined-up plans that link outreach to attraction and recruitment, including the provision of work experience, and are monitoring how that affects employee retention.

This type of measurement and reporting features strongly in the best entries. The leading companies in this space don't just want to say they're doing the right thing – they

want to know what's really happening, so that they can understand progress, correct course where necessary and celebrate successes. Organisations such as **KPMG**, the **Ministry of Justice** and **Grant Thornton** monitor the social make-up of their workforce and report regularly to senior leadership on their progress; **Civil Service Fast Stream and Early Talent** have reviewed the results of over 100,000 applications to ensure they develop an evidence-led approach to support their interventions; and **Willmott Dixon** are routinely measuring the social return on investment of their work, to help them understand where they are generating the biggest impacts.

Many of the organisations in this category are also leading wider sectoral change. The **Ministry of Justice** lead the cross-government social mobility network and have led Social Mobility Live events across the country; **KPMG** provide the secretariat for the sector's Access Accountancy initiative and have also helped to establish campaigns such as National Numeracy Day; **Grant Thornton**'s removal of academic requirements in the recruitment process has now been adopted by many of their peers; and **DWP**'s Movement to Work programme has enabled a wide range of businesses to offer work experience opportunities to young people from a range of disadvantaged backgrounds.

All the entrants in this category are conducting significant levels of outreach in their communities and many talk about the involvement of senior leadership in their programmes, such as **RBS Legal**'s staff taking part in mock trials, **Co-operative Bank**'s senior managers speaking at local Careers Fairs and RPC's involvement with local schools in London and Bristol, which has led to one of their senior partners becoming a school governor.

There are some really interesting examples of how organisations in this category are working with a range of beneficiary groups. For example, **Grant Thornton** are supporting the development of refugees, through training and work placements; **Herbert Smith Freehills** sponsor a school therapist, to support students' mental health; **Willmott Dixon** are supporting a number of beneficiary groups, notably prisoners and ex-offenders, which has resulted in some significant social impacts and a marked reduction in beneficiaries' re-offending rates; and **DWP** are one of several organisations that are supporting the development and integration of care leavers. Many of these leaders conduct their activities with the support of external partners, including clients and suppliers.

Support from senior leadership is a consistent theme throughout the entries from these leading organisations, with senior champions providing the clear, visible leadership and encouragement that has enabled these organisations to make significant progress in their ambitions.

Lessons

- Plan ahead. Leading organisations have a clearly defined plan for how their organisation is going to support social mobility across the full spectrum of their activities;

- Lead from the front. Support from senior leadership enables change to happen further and faster but for social mobility to truly take hold, leadership has to come from people right across the organisation;

- Measure progress. Collecting data – on applicants, employees and community outreach beneficiaries – enables organisations to understand what's happening, measure the change and adjust their plans and activities if needed;

- Think big. Leading organisations are thinking about how they can support a wide range of beneficiary groups, both within and outside the organisation, and are often collaborating with other organisations to achieve the desired change.

Innovation

The challenges of social mobility are longstanding, so doing things 'in the way they've always been done' may not be the best way to improve the situation of the people we're trying to support. This category therefore recognises those organisations that are thinking differently about the work they do with their colleagues, communities and wider society. The leaders in this category have found new ways to think, act and influence, inspiring others along the way. They are challenging the status quo and are supporting social mobility in new and innovative ways.

Entries in the Innovation category this year have come from a wide variety of sectors, which suggests that organisations across a broad spectrum of industries are thinking about how they can do things differently to support social mobility.

Innovation entries
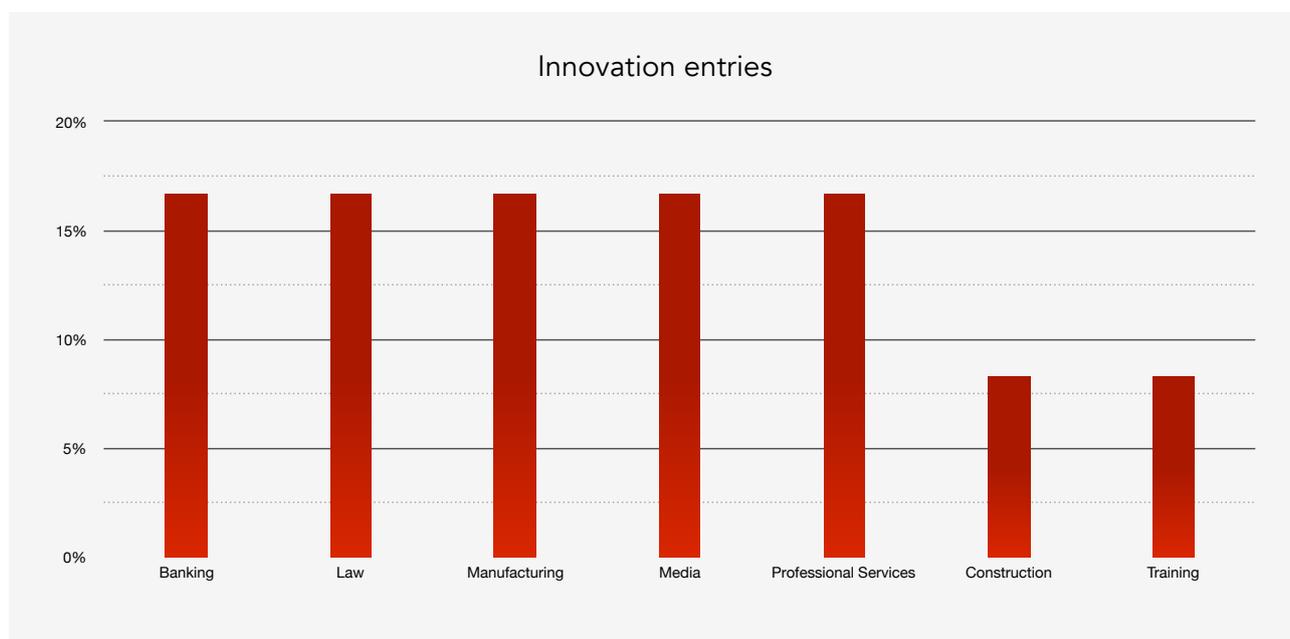
Key findings

As you might expect, in a category with a wide range of representation, innovation has taken a wide variety of forms. However, the best entries in this category are breaking away from the norm and are genuinely trying to do things differently. Sometimes that's in the activities that they undertake; sometimes that's in the people they work with, or the beneficiary groups they support; and for some, innovation has been about taking a completely different approach to how they do things.

Some organisations have innovated by providing opportunities for new groups of people to engage with their business. For example, **Mayer Brown** have developed a social mobility action plan that has encouraged them to reach out to more diverse groups of beneficiaries, developing activities to encourage young people from a wide range of backgrounds to consider working in law. **PwC** have expanded their office network

as a result of their support for the Bradford Opportunity Area. As part of their commitment to the city they have opened the first ever PwC office in Bradford, which could create up to 200 jobs in one of the country's youngest and most socially diverse cities. They've also been working with the city's thirty-three mainstream secondary schools, helping students become more familiar with the world of work. **Deutsche Bank** have opened up opportunities for young people to access pathways into banking and finance, with 300 high-achieving young people from socially excluded backgrounds taking part in a two-year programme that covers workshops, mentoring and work experience.

Other entrants in this category have come up with new ways of working. **Rothschild & Co** have brought their corporate responsibility programme into line with their usual business activities – instead of seeing CSR as being different to their business-as-usual, CSR has become business-as-usual. The firm has committed to supporting community partners in the same way they would traditional clients, with their agreed focus areas based on significant engagement with community partners about where the skills of Rothschild's employees can be put to best use. **Accenture** on the other hand have developed something very different – an augmented reality iPad game that aims to generate interest and curiosity in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), by encouraging the user to learn about new technologies and ways of working as a 'DevOps Knight' that travels between islands solving problems. And STEM is also the focus of Siemens' SeeWomen programme, which aims to change girls' perceptions of STEM and raise their aspirations. **Siemens** have worked with a TV science presenter to develop a stage show that links to the national curriculum and showcases female STEM role models, with follow-up classroom materials to embed those messages amongst girls in Years 7 to 9.

It's perhaps not surprising that data and measurement feature less in this category but one notable exception to that is **Kier**, who have developed a bespoke impact measurement tool that enables the organisation to focus its resources most effectively by understanding, measuring and articulating its social impacts. They have developed a social impact strategy to maximise their investments and are quantifying their impact through their Shaping Our Communities calculator, which is enabling them to work more effectively across their employees, communities, clients and supply chain. By 2020, Kier believe they will deliver the equivalent to 10% of their revenue in additional positive social impact outcomes per year.

The media industry is well represented in this category, as a result of some innovative ideas to widen representation in an industry that is sometimes criticised for its lack of diversity. **Fremantle Media**'s Access All Areas programme has gone out to social mobility coldspots to educate young people about what working in the television industry is like and has followed up by introducing a new work placement programme, with mentoring from a senior industry figure and with the opportunity to experience life in the media and inspire people from different backgrounds towards a career in TV. And developing a

career in the media is also the focus of the **Bauer Group**'s Bauer Academy, which is operating a government-registered training provider inside a real-life business. The Academy is trying to increase the supply of talent into the creative industries, blending traditional training and qualifications with a range of work-based learning across radio, television, fashion, magazines and digital. Bauer have created an industry model for Apprenticeship standards and are providing young people with experience and opportunities in creative industries, seeking to overcome barriers to employment for young people who are not in employment, education or training.

Lessons

* Be bold. Innovation means different things to organisations in different sectors but whatever the industry, innovation is not about making incremental change. Leading organisations are innovating to genuinely try to do things very differently;

* Make it relevant. For innovation to take hold, it must relate to the organisation's day-to-day business – that way, innovation can drive business growth and development. If that's not the case, new ideas won't be seen as relevant, they won't engage beneficiaries and stakeholders and they will ultimately fail;

* Capture the change. Innovation can be hard to measure but measurement can in itself be an innovation, and can drive an organisation to think very differently about how it operates.

Leadership of the Year

Many organisations are doing great things to support social mobility. But for social mobility to take hold it needs to be a real movement that transcends organisational boundaries. This category recognises those organisations that have gone beyond the boundaries of their organisation to speak up for social mobility. They have sought to reach new audiences and meet new stakeholders, building alliances to demonstrate the benefits of tackling social mobility in society.

The organisations that are recognised in this category have taken their commitment to social mobility to new places in unexpected ways, effecting systemic change along the way.

A broad range of sectors are represented in this category. There are several consortia, which illustrates that effective leadership often comes from reaching out to others with common interests and common goals, to deliver a shared objective. This is the first category in which education is represented, but it is certainly not the last time this report will mention the power of education as a force for improving social mobility.

Leadership of the Year entries
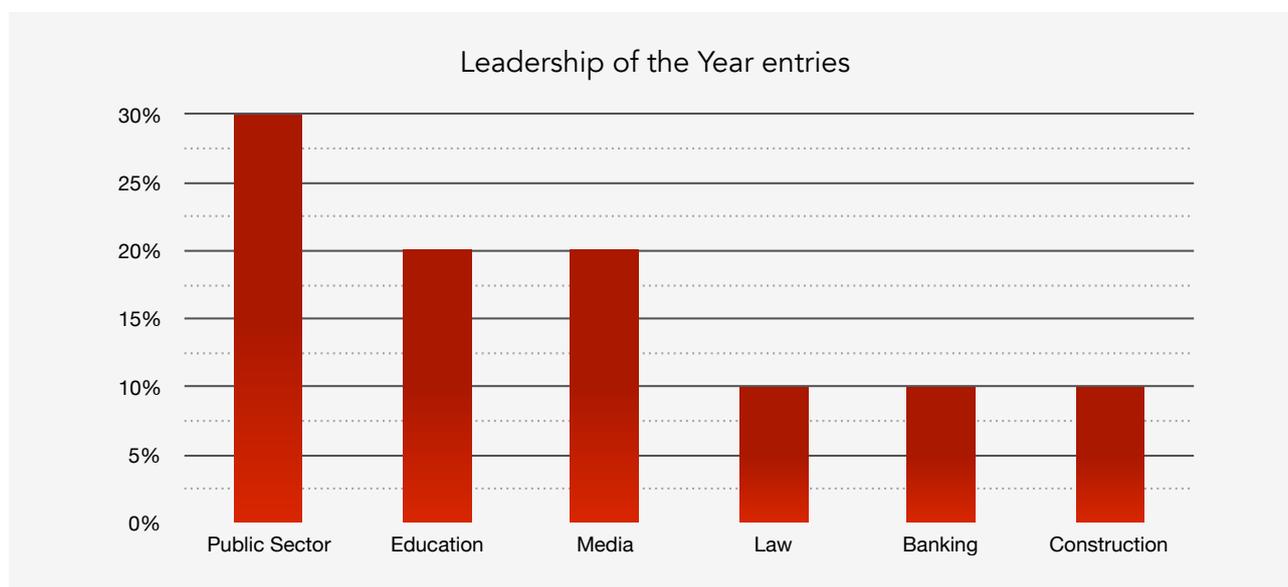
Key findings

Social mobility is too great a challenge for any one organisation to successfully tackle alone. And the prizes of increased social mobility are so large, organisations of all types can share the benefits. This may explain why so many of the entries in this category have recognised, and displayed, the power of collaboration. A range of sectors are covered but the key lesson that shines through is that organisations can achieve so much more when they work in partnership to solve a common problem in their industry, or in their geography.

There are several examples in this category of collaborative programmes that are seeking to change the demographic of a particular sector, especially those with a perception of being elitist. The Pathways to Law programme has supported 4,500 students since 2006 through a two-year programme that brings together

universities and law firms to widen access to the legal profession, with programme participants three times more likely to go to a high-tariff university as a result. BPP University's Law Ambassador Programme has brought together schools and law firms in Leeds to help Sixth Form students learn about the law, develop their skills and have their perceptions about the legal industry challenged, with students who've participated indicating a greater interest and confidence in applying to law firms.

In the banking sector, Bank of America Merrill Lynch has championed a network of partnerships to increase young people's access to the bank, supporting 25,000 young people through mentoring, volunteering and contact events, whilst Stafford Long's Diversity Solutions initiative gives high-performing students from poorer backgrounds the opportunity to engage with leading banks and a

range of positive role models, to help them see banking as an industry for them. It also enables financial institutions to encounter young people they may not otherwise have been aware of, and consequently around a quarter of programme participants have received job offers from the companies involved.

In the media industry, more than a dozen organisations have come together to create the **Brixton Finishing School**, working with a group of young Londoners from under-represented gender, social and ethnic backgrounds over a twelve-week training and development programme that has opened up a range of opportunities for young people in the industry, with more than half of the first cohort landing roles in the sponsoring companies.

In construction, **BuildForce** is a programme that was launched by six organisations in 2012 to provide a range of development and work experience opportunities for ex-military personnel. The programme has provided opportunities for trained, experienced people who have left the Armed Forces to use their transferable skills in a new industry, and at the same time has helped the construction industry to meet some of the skills gaps that it faces. The collaboration now involves more than 100 organisations and has supported over 1,000 people since its launch.

This category has several instances of organisations successfully coming together to support social inclusion within an industry. **DWP**'s Movement to Work programme is slightly different, in that it has linked employers together across industries to provide work experience for thousands of young people not in employment, education or training, with a particular emphasis on opening up opportunities for young people to experience the Civil Service. The programme has delivered more than 20,000 Civil Service work experience placements in the last five years and DWP has sought to be an exemplar in this regard, offering thousands of placements to young people under the age of 30.

The **Ministry of Justice** has also played a key role in encouraging government and industry to support social mobility more broadly. It has worked internally to put in place its own social mobility action plan and externally it has played a leading role in the cross-government social mobility network, sharing good practice across the public and private sectors, presenting at internal and external conferences and seeking to support and influence a broader social mobility movement, recognising the

importance of bringing others along on the journey. **Sheffield Hallam University** on the other hand has led the development of a solution to help solve a regional problem. The Yorkshire and Humber region has the lowest proportion of children reaching the expected levels in English, mathematics and reading in the country, and 10 out of 14 constituencies in South Yorkshire have low social mobility. The university has formed an alliance with the region's four local authorities to develop a social mobility partnership called South Yorkshire Futures, with a shared vision to increase attainment and aspiration through supporting Early Years development, teacher retention and skills progression, securing significant additional resource from other parts of the public sector in the process.

Lessons

- You can't do it all yourself. Effective leadership to support social mobility means realising that you can't solve this problem on your own;

- Work together. The best organisations realise that leadership involves collaborating with others to achieve common goals, whether within sectors, across sectors or within a locality. It can mean putting competitive rivalries to one side, to focus on a greater good that is in the interest of all;

- Stay with it. Leading change takes time, patience and perseverance. The leading entries in this category have long-term plans and strategies and have worked for several years to build their programmes, layer upon layer.

Recruitment Programme of the Year

This category recognises the organisations that have led the way in using their recruitment practices and programmes to tackle social mobility issues head on. From finding prospective employees in unexpected places, to providing meaningful support as they begin their careers, these firms are leading the way in undertaking recruitment that underpins their commitment to improving social mobility.

Recruitment Programme of the Year entries
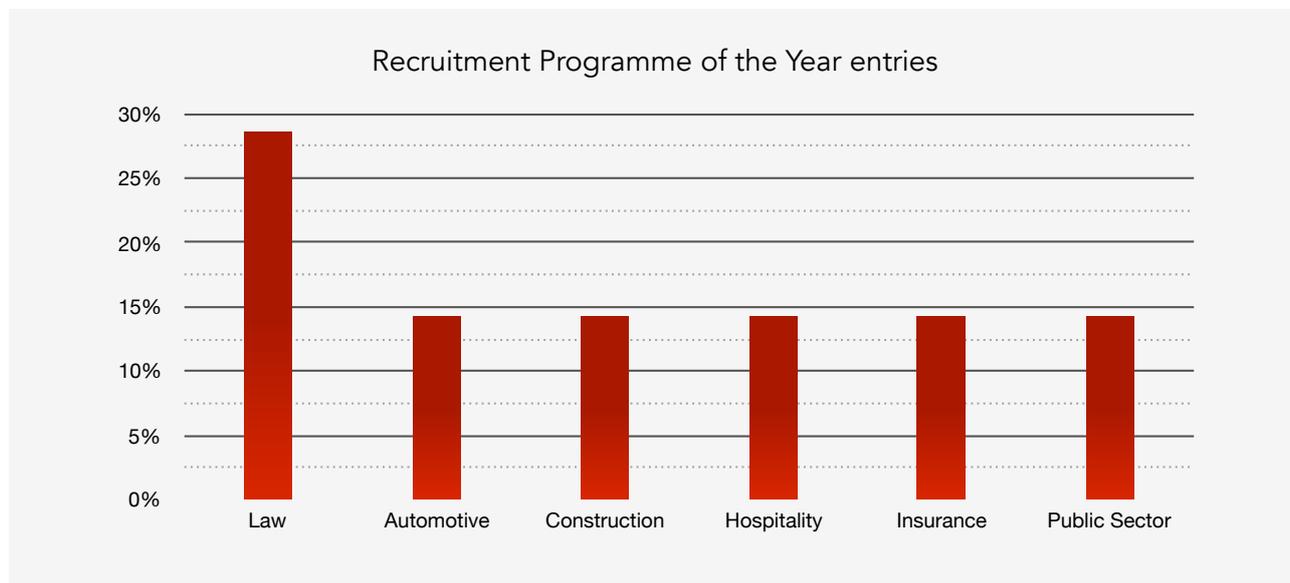
Key findings

A broad range of sectors are represented but it's noticeable that this category received the fewest entries this year. There are likely to be multiple reasons for this, but one possibility is that some organisations who have entered this category in previous years may feel that they've made significant progress in this area and feel that their work to support social mobility was therefore better suited to some of the other award categories this year.

Nevertheless, there are some very encouraging findings from the organisations that have submitted. The range of industries represented is significant. Social mobility is often talked about in terms of getting young people into so-called 'elite' professions and whereas that's one important aspect of social mobility, it's by no means the only one. It's great to see that the entries this year cover beneficiary groups and industries of differing types. This is really important because social mobility is not just about young people and it's not just about 'elite' professions – it's about providing opportunities for people to progress in whatever direction they feel is right for them.

The organisations that have entered this year have demonstrated a range of interesting approaches to supporting recruitment, in both their own organisations and in the broader sectors they operate in. And the beneficiary groups that are supported through these approaches are also diverse. For example, Greene King and VGC Group have both developed programmes to support ex-offenders. As part of a strategy to drive increased recruitment from diverse groups, Greene King have identified an opportunity to meet an industry shortage of skilled workers in hospitality by utilising a potential additional talent pool from the prison population. Many offenders develop relevant skills working in prison kitchens and, in conjunction with their delivery partner, Greene King now engage, assess and recruit offenders on to their Releasing Potential programme, which offers development support, a work trial and the potential for a permanent role. As a result, sixteen ex-offenders are now employed within the Greene King group. In the construction industry, the recruitment company VGC Group has developed its Go Beyond The Gates programme, which places ex-offenders with VGC's clients in the industry through a scheme that identifies eligible candidates in prisons, understands their support needs and matches them to suitable work opportunities, alongside the provision of in-role support. The initiative has had the additional benefit of encouraging VGC to develop its own volunteering offering, as their employees have become involved in delivering the programme.

In a similar vein of recruiting candidates from non-traditional backgrounds, the **Office of the Public Guardian** this year ran their first sector-based work academy in conjunction with DWP, a five-week programme in the West Midlands to train and develop long-term unemployed people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and recruit them into the organisation. The programme came about as a result of OPG's first social mobility plan and has led to a high conversion rate, with around 60% of the first cohort of participants now employed by OPG. The programme is now being rolled out across the organisation and OPG are seeking to make it part of their business-as-usual activities. In the insurance sector, **Aon** have been working with people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Their Step Up programme has supported young NEETs in Chelmsford and Manchester through classroom training and work experience, to help participants build their business and life skills and equip them for a role in the organisation. They've successfully recruited a number of new people into their industry, with almost 90% of participants completing the six-week programme and 60% going on to secure roles with Aon.

Some of the entrants in this category have focused more on their overall approaches to recruitment. For example, **Enterprise Rent-a-Car** have overhauled their recruitment practices – excluding UCAS points from their assessment criteria, working in social mobility coldspots, developing attraction programmes with a range of universities and setting a target to achieve 40% of hires from a lower socio-economic background. They report their progress to their Board quarterly via their diversity scorecard and their recruitment tracking indicates that their workforce is diversifying, with 85% of hires this year from non-Russell Group universities and 68% of their senior management team being first generation graduates.

In the legal sector, **Mayer Brown** and **Ashurst** have been working to attract and recruit more diverse candidates into their recruitment pipeline. **Mayer Brown** have developed a social mobility plan and have developed programmes for secondary school students to raise aspirations and promote opportunities. One of the interesting things about Mayer Brown's programme is that it is not focusing on high achievers, as so many programmes do; instead, they are focusing on what they call 'middle to low achievers', to try and change their attainment and future career trajectory. And completing the theme of recruiting people from less traditional backgrounds, **Ashurst** have developed a wide-ranging strategy for diversifying their workforce that has considered where they can best play a role in supporting increased social inclusion, whether that's through 'pure' social mobility programmes or through broader diversity and inclusion initiatives that develop

a social mobility element. Their programme is covering recruitment, retention and attitudes. Piloting new gamification techniques in their recruitment processes, adopting contextualised recruitment and initiating a successful reverse mentoring programme has helped to increase their proportion of recruits from social mobility backgrounds, and the performance of those recruits has helped to show that diversifying their intake has not adversely affected the standard of employees recruited.

This last point is hugely important. For too long, biased views have masqueraded under the notion of maintaining standards, as if only people from certain backgrounds could possibly be 'good enough'. It's a challenge that anyone who is not from a white, male and privileged background can identify with only too well, regardless of which industry you're in, and data can play a key role in overcoming these misguided perceptions.

Lessons

- Think differently. Skills shortages and a willingness to broaden horizons are leading businesses to re-think their recruitment strategies and search for talent in different places;

- Be strong. This takes courage and commitment, because there may well be internal resistance to doing things differently – senior support and a clear strategy helps to focus minds;

- Show doubters the evidence. Collecting data to measure the impact of new programmes can help to overcome negative perceptions – the entries in this category show that those recruited from 'non-traditional' routes are performing well and are often more committed than their peers;

- Provide opportunities for all. Social mobility is more than recruiting young people into 'elite' professions – it's about providing opportunities to people at all stages of their career, in whatever profession they feel is right for them.
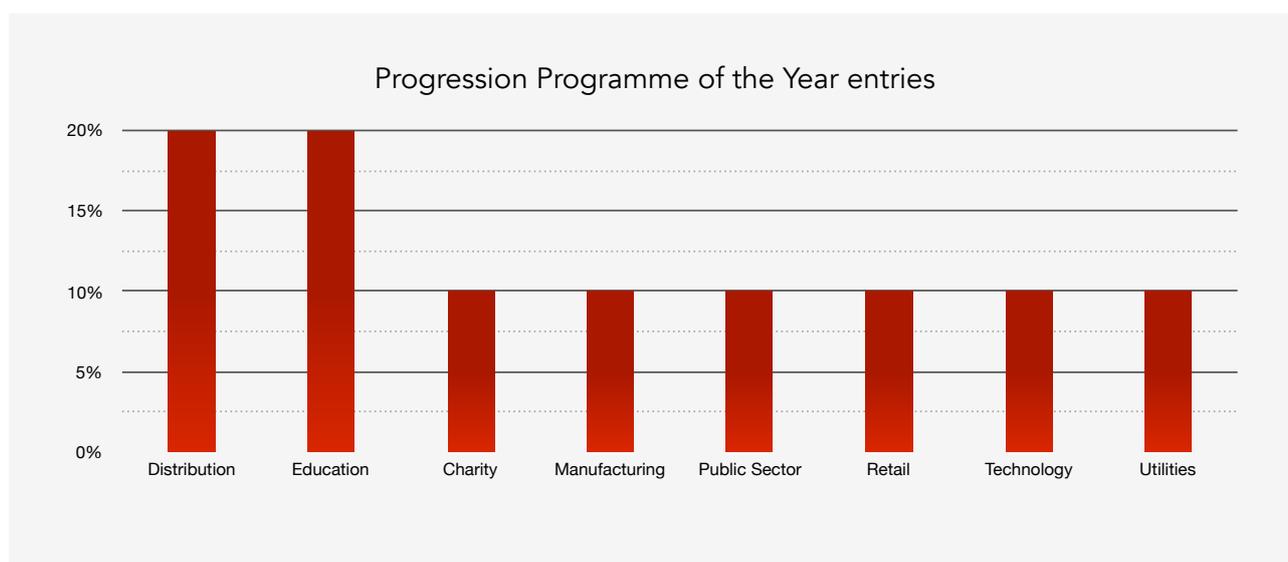
Progression Programme of the Year

Recruitment is incredibly important but on its own, it's not enough. Getting people into an organisation is one thing – providing an environment that will help them to stay, develop and succeed is quite another.

This category recognises the organisations that are demonstrating a commitment to support the development of people from all backgrounds, giving them the ability to climb as high as their talent will take them and enabling them to become the leaders of tomorrow.

The entrants in this category are from a wide range of sectors but, interestingly, a narrow range of geographies – the north west of England was clearly the place where organisations were proudest of their progression initiatives this year, as half of all this year's entries in this category were from programmes operating solely in the north west.

Progression Programme of the Year entries

Sector	Percentage
Distribution	20%
Education	20%
Charity	10%
Manufacturing	10%
Public Sector	10%
Retail	10%
Technology	10%
Utilities	10%

Key findings

One of the most striking things about the entries in this category is the range of beneficiary groups that are covered – from schoolchildren to workers in their sixties, the organisations represented have been implementing programmes to support the development and progression of people right across the age spectrum, which is to be applauded.

The **Pankhurst Trust** and **Siemens** have developed programmes to support the development of women and girls. The **Pankhurst Trust**'s Some Women Coach initiative provides free coaching to women in Greater Manchester who don't have their own networks but who have demonstrated leadership in their roles in civil and community organisations. **Siemens**' SeeWomen programme aims to change the perceptions of girls in Years 7 to 9 about STEM and raise their aspirations through a stage show that links to the national curriculum and showcases female STEM role models, with follow-up classroom materials to embed the messages.

Continuing on the theme of education, two programmes in the north of England have been supporting the academic progression of young people. The **Cumbria Collaborative Outreach Programme**'s Hello Future initiative supports schoolchildren in Years 9 to 13 in disadvantaged wards who have the potential to progress to Higher Education, giving them practical support and inspirational experiences to build their confidence and independence, as well as giving them the information, advice and guidance they need to make informed decisions on their future. In Yorkshire and the north east, **Linacre Institute**'s Reach Higher programme has helped around 100 state school students to go to some of the UK's leading universities in the last five years through a mix of inspirational residential events and practical academic support, focusing on students' achievement whilst also giving them an insight into life at a top university.

Organisations of various sizes are represented in this category but many of the entries from larger organisations have demonstrated how they are seeking to build a pathway from attraction through to recruitment, development and in-work progression.

The electrical distributor **Rexel** has developed a bespoke Trade Supplier apprenticeship programme, offering young people who are NEET a pathway into work and a support network once they're there. The programme was designed specifically for their industry and has supported around 80 apprentices so far, with encouraging levels of retention and progression in the organisation. The apprenticeships that **Google** have developed has enabled them to develop a pathway from their schools engagement work through to three in-house programmes related to software, infrastructure and marketing. Aligned with a formal support network of management and buddying, and the opportunity to access Google's internal learning and development programme, the apprenticeship has enabled the firm to engage and retain more people from under-represented backgrounds. At the end of their first apprentice programme everyone in the cohort was either employed by Google, found a job elsewhere in the industry or continued their apprenticeship for a third year.

In the north west, **United Utilities**' Youth Programme has supported beneficiary groups that are mentioned all too infrequently in the social mobility conversation – those who are disabled or who suffer from long-term health conditions. United say that the main attributes needed for their programme are potential and motivation, rather than qualifications or experience. As a result, 90% of the 18 to 24-year-old NEETs on their programme have a disability or a long-term condition. As well as employability training and development, United also provide reasonable work adjustments to support the integration of participants, tailored to the individual's needs. The programme's results are encouraging, with 78% of participants going on to work for United or one of their supply chain partners.

The retailer **Morrisons** has been running its Craft Apprenticeship Programme since 1997 and over 2,000 people have now completed the 18-month programme, which supports their maths and English development and gives them an in-store mentor and an external development coach. The programme offers internal progression routes for their hourly-paid workers, with a promotion on successful completion into being a qualified baker, butcher or fishmonger, along with a pay rise, an industry-recognised qualification and the potential to progress further into their management pathway programmes. Their apprentices range hugely in age, illustrating that apprenticeships are not just for the youngest members of the workforce, and hundreds of their employees progress their career in this way every year.

In the public sector, **HMRC**'s Nurturing Internal Talent programme supports the organisation's social mobility vision of fostering an inclusive workplace where everyone has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their background. They run four Accelerated Development programmes for people at different grades, helping them learn and develop the skills needed to succeed at higher levels of the organisation. They've provided a wide range of development opportunities for people at all grades and have provided opportunities for different segments of their population. The programmes' results show that up to 55% of participants successfully achieve promotion within two years.
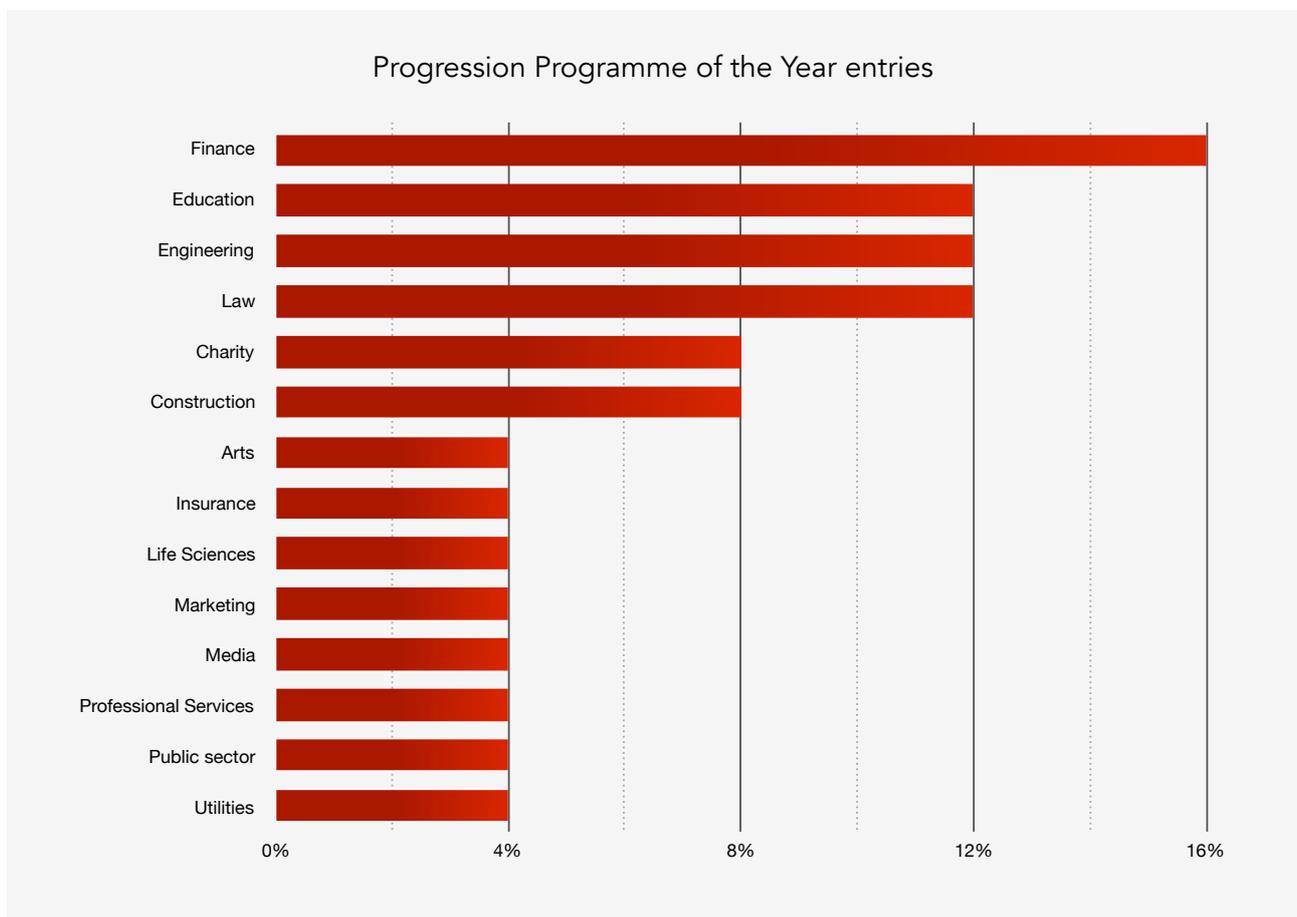
Lessons

- Progression means learning and growing. The best progression programmes give their employees opportunities to get out of their comfort zone and support them to develop new skills and experiences, to give them the best chance of long-term success;

- Everyone is different. A good progression programme supports its people and treats them as individuals, recognising that one size does not fit all. Whether that's in the design of the programme or the nature of the support given, a programme that fits the needs of the person will have the best chance of succeeding;

- Progression programmes pay off. Good employer progression programmes drive increased employee loyalty and retention, enabling individuals to make the progress their talent deserves. They also have the potential to save employers significant sums in recruitment costs;

- You're never too old to progress! Although progression programmes for younger people are important, programmes that support people throughout their career are essential for driving social mobility across the population;

- We need more progress on progression. In the coming years we want to see more organisations putting meaningful, effective programmes in place that help people from less privileged backgrounds to make sustained progress. In the long term, that is the only way that the gains made in other categories will be fully embedded.

Community Programme of the Year

For social inclusion to truly take hold, organisations need to be an integral part of the communities they serve. This award therefore recognises the organisations that are running programmes that make a tangible difference to our communities. These programmes may be raising local people's aspirations, introducing them to industries they weren't aware of, developing their business skills or helping them get a better understanding of their future education and employment opportunities. Whatever the activity, these organisations are helping people in their local communities to be more prepared for the world of work and more successful within it, boosting life chances and employment opportunities along the way.

For the third year in a row this category has been the most popular. There was a bumper crop of entries, most of which are from organisations that did not enter any other category. This could be interpreted in a number of ways but perhaps it indicates that community activity is often where organisations start their social mobility journey – through supporting their local communities, organisations get to understand more about local issues, which can help influence their wider recruitment and operational activities.

Progression Programme of the Year entries

Sector	Percentage
Finance	16%
Education	12%
Engineering	12%
Law	12%
Charity	8%
Construction	8%
Arts	4%
Insurance	4%
Life Sciences	4%
Marketing	4%
Media	4%
Professional Services	4%
Public sector	4%
Utilities	4%

Key findings

The diverse organisations and sectors represented in this category all have their unique ways of working with communities, but the activities they're undertaking can be broadly categorised as supporting schools and students; raising awareness of business; providing employment opportunities; supporting community organisations; and developing skills. Some are working in a defined geographical area, whilst others are working right across the UK; some are working with targeted beneficiary groups, whilst others have a broader approach. None of these approaches are right or wrong but it's noticeable that the strongest entries in this category have a clear rationale for how they're working with communities and a defined strategy for what they're hoping to achieve.

KPMG provide wide-ranging support to communities across the country to help people increase their skills, confidence and career aspirations. They've helped tens

of thousands of people develop the building blocks of literacy and numeracy through the Vision for Literacy Business Pledge, which they launched with the National Literacy Trust in 2014, and more recently through National Numeracy Day, which they developed to celebrate the importance of numbers in everyday life. Their target of boosting the skills of 65,000 people from lower socio-economic backgrounds by 2022 has also seen them work on development, attainment and recruitment programmes in numerous areas of deprivation across the country, including several of the government's Opportunity Areas.

Many programmes are seeking to increase access to a particular industry. **Reed Smith**'s community programme works with primary schools through to universities, making students aware of the legal profession and the opportunities within it. It also gives Reed Smith the opportunity to engage with potential diverse talent and has resulted in them hiring more trainees from lower socio-economic backgrounds. **DLA Piper**'s Head Start Programme supports students who want to get into law but who face social or economic barriers. They support students in social mobility coldspots for up to five years, providing skills development, mentoring and work opportunities along with financial assistance, recognising that finances can also be a significant barrier to accessing opportunity. **AXA**'s community programme has expanded from its origins in Tunbridge Wells to support young people across its UK office network, breaking down barriers with local young people and giving them an introduction to the roles and skills involved in a successful workplace. The engineering company **Sweco** have been improving accessibility to jobs and training for people in communities across the country, with the aim of making engineering more accessible. In addition to providing skills and employment opportunities, Sweco are also focusing on communities' physical environment and wellbeing, by monitoring air quality in deprived neighbourhoods and by using their design skills to improve accessibility in local community buildings.

Many of the entries in this category are carrying out their community activities in London. London may be the wealthiest city in the country, and sometimes disregarded from a national social mobility perspective, but the city's broader wealth masks significant inequalities – the need to connect people from less affluent backgrounds with the undoubted opportunities that exist in the capital is very real.

The Old Vic theatre offers sixteen free projects a year to support employability and social mobility, including its Front Line programme to give 16-25 year-olds front of house experience and its Take The Lead programme, which uses theatrical techniques and creative workshops to help 16-18 year-olds develop their communication, teamworking and business skills. The digital marketing agency **Positive** provides work experience and business skills development for young people in West London, which is also enabling their employees to connect more with the local community and understand their issues. **London Youth Rowing**'s Breaking Barriers programme is using rowing and mentoring to support students in disadvantaged London communities and increase their access to further education and employment. The **London Business School's Youth** Enrichment Programme is giving lectures to state school students on subjects that don't usually appear on the school curriculum, helping them to see the bigger picture and make more informed choices about their future. **Moody**'s and **Bank of America Merrill Lynch** have long-term partnerships with schools and community partners to support London students' academic development and prepare them for careers in finance; and the **Costain Skanska Joint Venture**, **North Kent College** and Broadway Malyan are all engaging with local communities in and around London to provide employment and development opportunities related to the construction industry. These organisations are trying to raise the awareness, skills and aspirations of young people, helping them overcome social or educational barriers and enabling them to develop meaningful careers in construction.

Of course, there is a need for this kind of support all over the country. In Yorkshire, the life sciences company **Covance** has developed a supported internship programme that has provided a different route into the organisation for disadvantaged local people and enabled the company to ensure they are not just hiring 'the same type of person' for their roles. In the north west, **United Utilities**' Youth Employment Programme supports young people who are NEET through a six-week programme of training and work experience, with almost 80% of the first cohort transitioning into employment with United or one of their suppliers. In Bristol, **UWE Bristol**'s Future Quest programme is helping to get more bright young people from under-represented groups into Higher Education. And in the Opportunity Areas of Ipswich, Bradford and Oldham, the **Barclays** LifeSkills programme is helping to raise the skills, aspirations and business awareness of white, working-class boys, an often overlooked demographic in the social mobility debate.

Community Programme of the Year

Meanwhile, in the Midlands and north east of England, **Nissan** is using its position as a major local employer to play a leading role in raising aspirations and opportunity, giving young people the chance to learn about manufacturing and engage with STEM subjects from an early age. They've engaged with 50,000 schoolchildren in the North East since developing their Nissan Skills Foundation in 2014. The Foundation was developed in response to their analysis of applications to the company, which showed low levels of applications from women and indicated that local young people from disadvantaged backgrounds were not applying for their technical jobs. They now run more than a dozen programmes, engaging with local communities by generating interest in STEM, raising aspirations for careers in engineering and heightening awareness of the opportunities available at Nissan. Their large-scale engagement across a less privileged community also includes working with two special schools for excluded children.

And supporting and integrating excluded young people has also been the purpose of **HMRC**'s project with Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in Nottingham. This is a beneficiary group on the very margins of education and employment but in keeping with HMRC's social mobility vision of being a welcoming place where people from all backgrounds will want to work, HMRC have piloted a programme with 240 vulnerable young people aged 15 and 16 to give them the same opportunities as their mainstream peers – the chance to learn about government, HMRC and the working world, the opportunity for training and work experience and the chance to ultimately work for HMRC. This is the first time that PRUs in Nottingham had been given the chance to access non-vocational work experience placements and the feedback from students and teachers indicates how welcomed this opportunity has been. Students felt cared and supported, their motivation and academic performance improved and HMRC's staff reported increased awareness of social mobility issues and pride in their employer. The programme has required patience and care to implement but has helped to turn around the lives of some vulnerable people and place them on a path to improved educational and employment outcomes in the future.

Lessons

- Community outreach should not be a standalone activity. It can be a way in to establishing deeper relationships with local stakeholders and can help organisations to understand more about local needs and the role they can play in meeting them;

- Impacts will be strongest when they're strategic. Organisations of all sizes can make a significant positive difference to the communities they serve – this is not the preserve of big companies – but whatever the organisation and whatever its size, a programme that is helping solve a clearly-defined problem and is working towards a clear objective is likely to have stronger, more sustainable outcomes;

- Community activity helps employees to feel more connected to their communities. Activities that help employees to share their skills are great for increasing organisational reputation and employee engagement and are likely to have the most strategic impact. Skilled activities also give individual beneficiaries the best insight into the world of work and can help charities and smaller businesses to access the kind of skills and support they would struggle to afford commercially;

- Join the dots. To maximise its effectiveness, community outreach should be an integrated part of a wider social inclusion strategy. That way, the people who are engaged in these programmes can see a pathway from community work through to wider activities such as attraction, recruitment, advocacy and procurement, maximising the business and social impacts of such activities.

Making the Leap.

School/College of the Year

Education is the bedrock of social mobility. Early Years and primary education are the foundations for secondary school, where a good educational experience will set young people up with the skills and qualifications they need to go out into the world.

Secondary education can have a dramatic effect on how a child will do in later life, particularly for those who come from less privileged backgrounds. This category recognises the schools that embrace this responsibility and seek to raise everyone up, levelling the playing field for those from lower-income families. Whether through achieving academic success for their own pupils, equipping their children with employability and life skills, developing innovative community partnerships or through their wider advocacy of social mobility issues, the schools in this category give children from all backgrounds the best possible chance to succeed in education and employment.

This category is new to the Awards this year and it is interesting to see the range of education providers and geographies represented. More than half of the entries came from non-selective state schools and the vast majority of entries came from schools in London and the south east. Given how much work schools have done with organisations in other areas of the country, as outlined in many of the entries for other categories, this should be a category where there is hopefully a broader geographical spread of entries next year.

School/College of the Year entries - school type

School/College of the Year entries - location
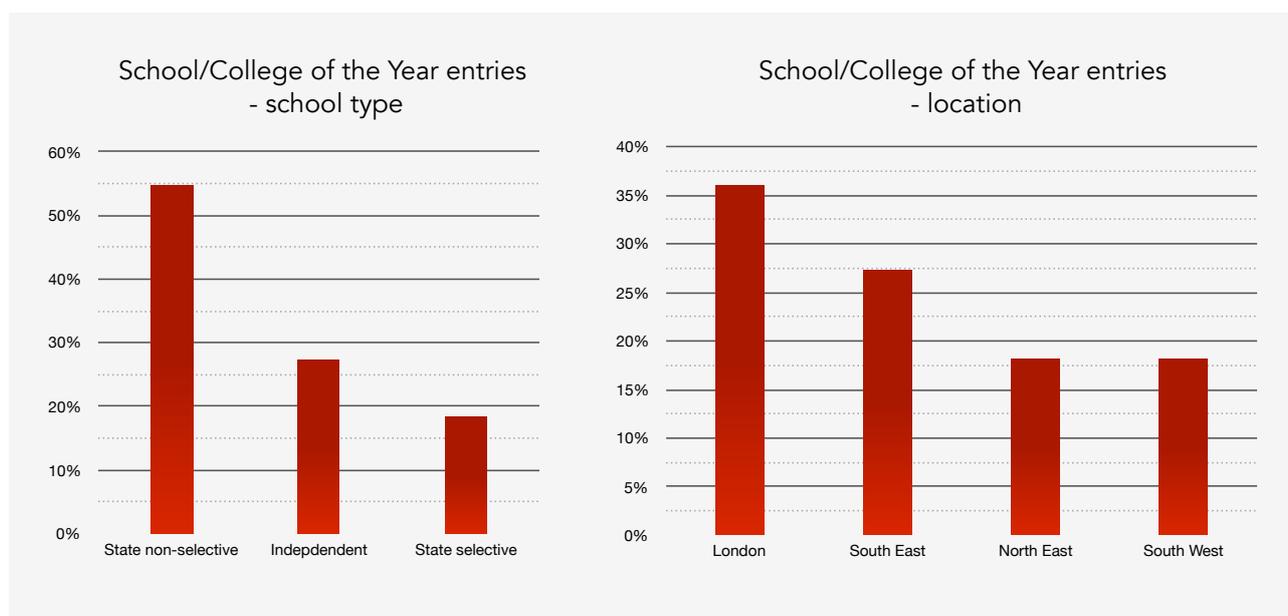
Key findings

It's widely understood that there are big disparities in education outcomes for students from different social and economic backgrounds. Most of the entries in this category are from schools that are trying to bridge that gap in support of increased social mobility. For the state non-selective schools that have entered, that is being done by ensuring attainment levels are high and that students are aware of and can experience wider business and Higher Education opportunities; for the state selective schools that have entered, it's about trying to widen their intake, work with local primary schools and inspire students to aim high; and for the independent schools

that have entered, it's about providing financial and curricular support that enables students from less privileged families to experience the benefits of independent education.

In the state non-selective sector, **Southmoor School** in the north east and **Bodmin College** in the south west have both recruited an Aspirations Co-ordinator. **Southmoor** has developed a ten-year Aspirations Programme, working with students from age 8 to 18 to change attitudes, attainment and destinations. From raising curiosity in Year 4, through an introduction to university,

summer schools, academic support and a programme with Oxford and Durham universities, the programme works to raise awareness of broader possibilities and support the academic attainment needed to get there. Early results are positive, with the school now the highest performing post-16 institution in Sunderland and with increased numbers of students getting into Higher Education, including Russell Group universities. **Bodmin**'s Aspirations Co-ordinator has developed the William Clift Academy for the Sixth Form. Formed in 2014, the Academy seeks to raise aspirations and connect students to opportunities in Higher Education or employment, in an area which struggles with low aspiration, a lack of cultural opportunity and above-average numbers of students on Free School Meals. They support students with applications to more selective universities; have developed 15 career pathway groups covering a range of vocations, from sport to law; have created an alumni network to share experiences from past students; and have engaged with local universities to ensure that the college's students are aware of relevant engagement and application opportunities. As a result, the numbers of students going to university summer schools and entering Higher Education has increased significantly.

Some of the other state non-selective entries in this category have demonstrated how strong leadership and a clear programme of action have enabled schools to overcome barriers to learning and achieve great levels of attainment. **Mossbourne Community Academy** in London has worked to transform educational outcomes for its students and now has results in the top 1% of schools in the UK, as well as promoting Oxbridge as an option for students who are unlikely to have considered this before; **Grangefield Academy** in the north east has gone from being in Special Measures in 2012 to now being in the top 3% of schools in the country for its Progress 8 score, thanks to a new school improvement model; and **Harris Boys' Academy East Dulwich** in London has been ranked in the top 5% of schools for student progress for the last four years, which is particularly notable when considering the school's high level of students with Special Educational Needs or who have English as an Additional Language.

Across schools with a more selective intake, there has been a significant amount of activity to ensure that the benefits of those schools' resources are widely shared. **Latymer Upper School** in west London is seeking to raise £40 million by 2024 to ensure that 1 in 4 of its students

are supported by bursaries. Since the current Head took charge in 2012, bursary numbers have doubled and their wide-ranging outreach programme has extensive student and teacher involvement, supporting 50 local schools and over 1,000 pupils, which is creating a pipeline of future bursary recipients, raising the skills and aspirations of local students and giving local state school pupils the opportunity to be challenged, inspired and connected with the school. Last year the school spent more than £2.5 million on providing bursaries and currently has 15% of students on a means-tested place, far above the sector average. **Reigate Grammar School** also has an extensive bursary programme, with 170 current pupils in receipt of bursaries and an ambition for 50 pupils a year to be supported this way by 2025. In addition, they run an early admission programme with local primary schools, share facilities and resources with local schools, work extensively with local charities and invite 3,000 local students to university entry and careers advice sessions at the school. Bursaries are also an important feature of **Christ's Hospital** school. Founded as a charitable school in 1522, the school currently has 73% of students in receipt of bursary support and, as a boarding school, has recognised the need to provide students with extensive pastoral care to support their broader wellbeing, alongside the delivery of a curriculum that broadens their horizons.

In central London, **Harris Westminster Sixth Form** is a collaboration between the Harris Federation of academies and the Westminster School, which is seeking to support academically able children from disadvantaged backgrounds into the most selective universities at both home and abroad. Disadvantaged students are prioritised for admissions, which results in almost 40% of their students falling into this category. In addition, 80% of students are non-white British. Students' experiences are tailored to try and put them on an equal footing with students from more privileged backgrounds, including academic societies to hone presentation skills and entrance exams and interviews that are modelled on the Oxbridge application process. Since it opened in 2014, increasing numbers of students have reached Russell Group universities and its students now have a 1 in 12 chance of going to Oxbridge.

School/College of the Year

Lessons

- Schools start their social mobility journey from very different places. For non-selective state schools, ensuring good levels of academic achievement is their minimum requirement, but enhancing students' social and cultural capital and opening their eyes to new possibilities enables students to be more rounded and to be more inspired by their potential future;

- Being inclusive means opening doors to others. The best selective educators, be they grammar schools or independent schools, understand their privileged position and seek opportunities to open their doors. Whether that's through their student recruitment pipeline or through their broader community outreach, they feel a responsibility to be integrated with their communities, rather than aloof from them, and they seek to make their schools places of inclusion;

- Just as starting points are different, so are end points. Entrance to the most selective universities is seen by many in this sector as the critical mark of success. Almost every entry in this category mentions how many students made it to Russell Group universities or to Oxbridge. Whilst it's true that elite universities have for too long been the preserve of the wealthy and privileged, it is important for the sector to consider broader measures of success, rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all measure of progression. Not all students want to, or should go to, the most selective universities.

Making the Leap.

University of the Year

From secondary school on to Higher Education. University is often where students get their first encounter of mixing with people from a broad range of economic, social and cultural backgrounds. Universities can play a pivotal role in cementing academic and social capital, often setting participants up for a career that is more lucrative and successful than had they not gone into Higher Education.

This category recognises those institutions that are making a real commitment to social mobility issues. This may be through their initiatives to widen access, provide pastoral and academic support, through their links with schools and employers or through the design of their courses. The leading universities in this category are enabling talented young people to thrive in a supportive environment, giving them the platform to pursue successful careers.

Universities from a broad range of geographies submitted entries for this category, which is running for the first time. However, only one of the entries in this category is from a Russell Group university.

Progression Programme of the Year entries
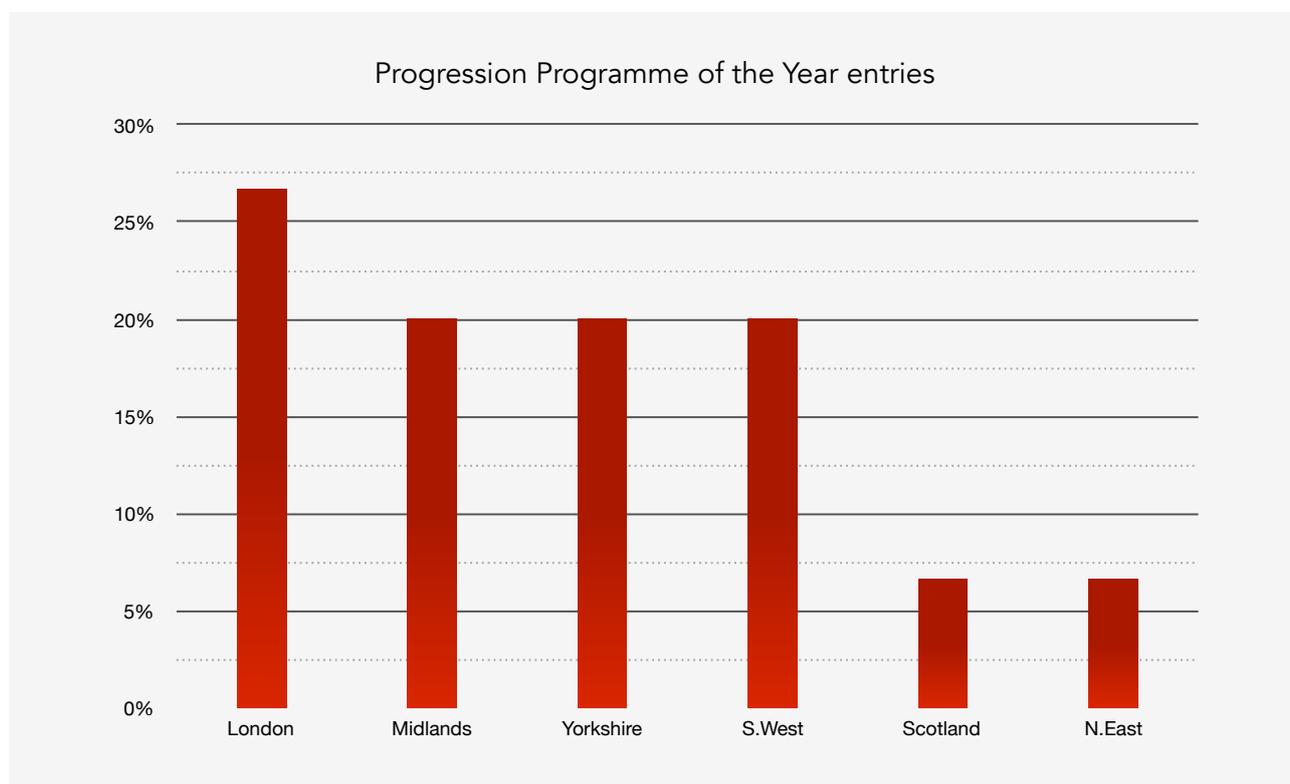
Key findings

Some of the entries in this category are from universities that are taking a broader approach to supporting social mobility and some are from organisations that have decided to focus their efforts on one or more specific groups. In most cases, regardless of who the university's focus is on, there is a recognition that some groups will need particular support to encourage them to see university as a place for them, to apply and, crucially, to stay. University dropout rates are higher for those from poorer backgrounds and it is encouraging to see many of the universities represented in this category are offering targeted intervention and support.

At **Solent University**, their student base (97% from state education and 71% first generation university) is largely taken from groups that have a higher propensity to dropout of their studies. Solent have taken a data-driven approach to their student support, analysing who historically has dropped out of studying with them, when and why, and this has enabled them to build a profile of those most at risk and a successful programme of support that is enabling large numbers of their students to stay on track. In London, **Kingston University** have a Student Achievement Officer in each faculty who helps to identify struggling students and give them the

interventions they need to stay and progress. And in the Midlands, **Nottingham Trent University** have developed a Student Dashboard that monitors student engagement levels such as attendance at seminars, tutor appointments and the university's learning facilities, in order to identify when a student may be at risk and to enable them to provide the support that the student needs to stay engaged.

Nottingham Trent are one of the universities that has engaged in significant community outreach. They are based in an area that contains many of the social mobility coldspots identified by the Social Mobility Commission and this has driven much of their outreach work, where they support 30,000 local pupils through 700 activities such as placing undergraduates to work in classrooms and supporting students with their GCSE English and maths through their Raising the Grade programme.

The University of Bradford is another institution based in a social mobility coldspot, and their local outreach work helps to raise awareness of Higher Education and encourage increased participation from students in some of the country's poorest and least engaged neighbourhoods. In a similar vein, **London Metropolitan University** recognises its student catchment lives in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country and runs a wide range of outreach services with local teachers and students, as well as providing success coaches for first-year students and specialised support services such as their Disabilities and Dyslexia Service.

The **Open University**'s programmes are open to all, and both their qualifications threshold and method of teaching enables them to support the learning of students from a wide range of backgrounds in a way that many other institutions cannot. As a result, they are currently supporting the learning of 16,500 students who live in coastal areas, who often find it harder to access mainstream Higher Education, and they're also supporting the learning of 1,800 inmates in 150 prisons, providing a vital part of their reintegration into society.

Glasgow Caledonian University delivers its outreach activities in five of the most economically and socially disadvantaged areas of Glasgow, as well as in Tower Hamlets in London through its GCU London campus, starting with beneficiaries as young as three to help local people from all backgrounds to raise their educational aspirations, feel more comfortable with a university environment and to see it as a place for them. And the statistics indicate that their work is paying off, with around half of their undergraduates being the first in their family to enter Higher Education.

One of **Glasgow Caledonian**'s other programmes is supporting the children of those serving in the Armed Forces, with whom they have a learning partnership. This is a theme across several entries, with **York St John University** seeking to increase participation from local children of military families as part of its engagement programme and the **University of Winchester** leading the development of a collaborative national framework to support military personnel and their families. **York St John**'s initiative with military families is part of a range of support they provide for their diverse student base, such as an annual Sanctuary Scholarship for an asylum-seeking student, subsidised overnight accommodation for commuter students who want to engage in the university's evening social or academic activities and the provision of a free money education tool to support students' financial competency.

Some universities have developed an explicit strategy around inclusion. **Middlesex University**'s five-year strategy recognises the diversity of their student base (87% have at least one Widening Participation characteristic) and they have developed a series of action plans to increase retention and close the attainment gap between different groups. They established a Diversity Advisory Board in 2017 and have developed a Diversity Toolkit that has helped their academic and careers staff to support improved outcomes for diverse candidates – as a result, the university has closed the employment progression gap for black males (who now have the same post-university employment outcomes as their white counterparts) and their Retention Action Plan has led to a 4% increase in retention rates.

Across London at **Kingston University**, their Inclusive Curriculum Framework supports inclusivity and belonging in the way subjects are taught, as part of their plan to widen access to Higher Education, enable students to fulfil their potential and close gaps in retention and attainment in their student population, of whom a higher proportion than average were eligible for Free School Meals. Their Head Start programme seeks to familiarise non-traditional students with the campus environment before they start their studies and they provide support programmes for different segments of their student body, such as the KU Cares programme for those who have spent time in care or are carers themselves. As a result of these programmes, their attainment gap has significantly reduced and there has been an increase in care-experienced students who have gone on to successful employment or further study. At the **University of Worcester**, the development of their curriculum and university estate has been driven by the principles of inclusivity by design. Their strategy is based on the Sustainable Development Goal for Quality

University of the Year

Education, which is to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. The university makes every effort to reach out to communities and individuals that would not typically engage with Higher Education and 97% of their students were state educated. They educate hundreds of teachers, early years professionals, nurses, midwives and paramedics every year and try to offer flexibility in timetabling and course locations, to ensure diversity of applications. They also provide extensive mental health and wellbeing support, have a suicide prevention strategy and were one of the first universities to appoint specialist mental health advisors. In addition, they educate 40% more students with a disability than the national average.

Several universities have developed strong links with employers to boost students' post-academic employment prospects. The Micro Placements Programme developed by **City, University of London** gives students a work placement of up to five weeks, working in a project-based environment that allows them to explore their skills in a practical and commercial setting, with an application process which mirrors that of large companies and a programme that gives students the chance to experience the workplace and develop relationships with employers. In a similar vein, **Solent University**'s Solent Futures programme helps its students, many of whom study part-time and have no business experience, to gain employability skills and undertake a work experience placement. **Middlesex University** have developed a partnership with the Ministry of Justice, who provide experience days, mentoring and training; and **Newcastle University** link their students with a range of employers across the north east through projects and work experience opportunities.

Newcastle University's work with employers is just one part of their strategy to improve social mobility. They work extensively with local schools, colleges, universities, the community sector and employers to improve access, participation and outcomes. They also support a range of wider initiatives that support social mobility, such as initiating their own cross-sector Social Justice Advisory Group, hosting the North East Child Poverty Commission and their recent accreditation as a Living Wage employer for their 5,000 staff.

Lessons

- Mind the gap. There are significant differences in student attainment and retention levels between different population segments. Leading universities are tackling this head-on by thinking about how to make their outreach, attraction and student support strategies as inclusive as possible;

- Data can play a leading role. Some universities have developed activity monitoring that helps them to understand when and where students may be in need of additional support. Student support services that provide this kind of targeted, bespoke support are helping to demonstrably improve student engagement and performance;

- Outreach is important. Community activities can make universities feel more real and accessible and can enhance application rates from under-represented groups. Universities should try to ensure that this activity takes place in the communities where it is most needed, as it is proving to be successful in improving participation rates;

- Social mobility is about inclusion. At university inclusion is physical, cultural, educational and social. Leading universities are designing inclusion into their strategies, buildings and teaching, thereby providing opportunities for learners from different backgrounds and geographies to make the most of their academic potential.

Champion of the Year

The categories so far have focused on the great work that has been done by a range of organisations. But organisations are led by people, and the final categories in these awards rightly acknowledge the individuals who have made a tangible difference to driving social mobility in their organisations.

The Champion of the Year category recognises senior leaders who have had the imagination to think differently and who have worked to embed and promote social mobility initiatives across their organisation, helping to

make change happen by being a visible, pioneering voice for improving the life chances of people from less privileged backgrounds.

The entries to this category represent a wide range of industries and sectors, illustrating that social mobility is being championed across diverse areas of society.

Champion of the Year entries
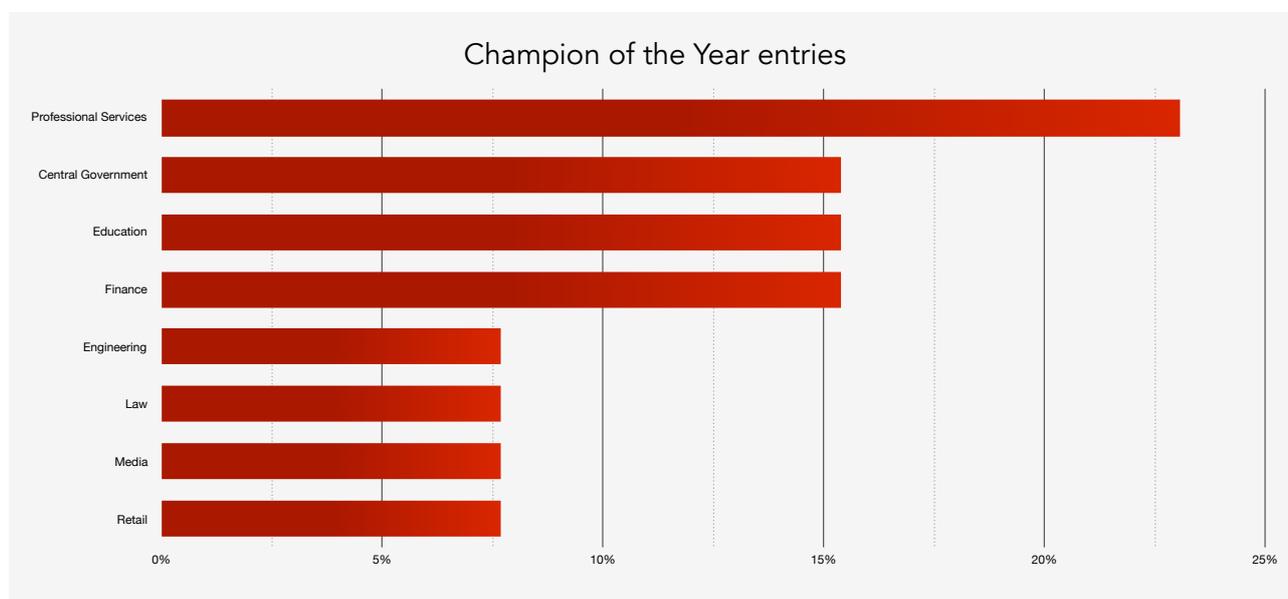
Key findings

The entrants in this category work in disparate sectors and operate at different levels within the organisations they work for, but they are united in their belief that education and business must be more open to people from all social backgrounds and they have gone out of their way to try and create a level playing field. **Malcolm Gomersall** was a key driver in Grant Thornton's move away from academic requirements in their recruitment processes. As Head of People & Culture at GT he focused their diversity agenda on six strands, including social mobility, and ensured that Board members worked closely with each strand. He also arranged unconscious bias training for the Board and ensured that the firm's community work supported schools and universities that had students with more diverse social needs. At DLA Piper, **Sandra Wallace** has championed greater diversity and inclusion within the firm, being a senior ambassador for the firm's community and social mobility programmes and a role model for people inside and outside the firm. Her work to improve access and promote equality of opportunity has seen her become one of the Commissioners on the government's Social

Mobility Commission. In Scotland, **David Bates** has led the work of Marks & Spencer Scotland to ensure that social mobility considerations are at the heart of their business and community activities. He's led their work to embed social mobility in their operations and has empowered his team to engage with their local communities, which has led them to set up programmes of support for local mothers and schoolchildren in Easterhouse, one of the most deprived areas of Glasgow. **Claire-Marie Roche** has played a key role in supporting diversity and inclusion within Coutts, including running a coaching programme for staff from lower socio-economic backgrounds and founding Coutts Unlocked, a programme to attract young talent to the bank.

In the education sector, **Professor Pamela Gillies** has used Glasgow Caledonian University's motto – For the Common Good – as the inspiration to re-define and reinvigorate the university's activities and mission. Their Caledonian Club programme works with children from age three and their families in nurseries and schools, to raise their aspirations towards taking part in Higher Education. They've also enabled around 100 students to take part in international community projects and an above-average 40% of the professors at GCU are women. At the University of Worcester, **Professor David Green** has been a longstanding advocate of change and has led the university to be an institution that champions inclusion and social mobility. Under his leadership the university developed the University of Worcester arena, designed specifically for disabled athletes, and The Hive, the first completely integrated academic and public library in Europe and one of the Top 10 most visited libraries in Britain.

Some of the champions have particularly supported social mobility initiatives within local communities. **Aruna Patel** has used Barclays' Digital Eagles programme to support the work of the charity Second Half Foundation and help the over-50s develop online skills; **Claire Valentine** has established Sweco's STEM programme in Scotland, recruiting, training, mentoring and overseeing a network of 60 STEM ambassadors for the firm; **Andy Boucher** has led PwC's social mobility activity within its tax practice and has supported a wide range of community and social mobility initiatives, working to increase collaboration between business and education; and **Tia Castagno** has played a key role in helping to establish the social mobility initiatives Brixton Finishing School (a digital accelerator programme for Londoners from under-represented groups) and Flourish (which supports people from BAME and lower socio-economic backgrounds into the media industry), as part of her mission to 'burst the bubble' that many people from more privileged backgrounds find themselves living in.

In Yorkshire, PwC Leeds senior partner **Will Richardson** has championed cross-sector working to improve the lives of young people in Bradford. He's the only business sector representative on the Bradford Opportunity Area Partnership Board and has brought local partners from all sectors together to try and achieve meaningful, long-lasting change. He's made a significant personal investment to the programme and has been instrumental in securing the opening of a new PwC office in Bradford, which will create more than 200 jobs in one of the country's youngest, poorest and most socially diverse cities.

And in government, **Geraldine Clement** and **Drew Morris** have been leading efforts to promote and improve social inclusion within the Civil Service. **Geraldine** established the Civil Service Cross-Government Social Mobility Network in 2014 and has co-chaired it ever since, raising awareness of and interest in social mobility from across government and leading to more recruitment of, and support for, civil servants from lower socio-economic backgrounds. **Drew** has developed the Ministry of Justice's annual social mobility strategy and plans since 2017, which have delivered a step-change in their support for communities and employees. Their programmes have delivered hundreds of inreach mentoring interventions, supported more than 50,000 students through outreach programmes and have enabled applicants from more diverse backgrounds to work for the MoJ, as a result of updated attraction and recruitment practices.

Lessons

- Champions drive change. Senior leaders don't have to be social mobility champions, and social mobility champions don't have to be senior leaders. But senior leaders who are social mobility champions have the opportunity to drive significant positive change, both within and outside their organisations;

- Where champions lead, others follow. Many of the initiatives that have been established by these social mobility champions have been adopted more broadly, whether that's within industries, sectors or geographies – the visibility and leadership of these champions is a great way to embed learning across a wide range of organisations and ensure that their pioneering work can move into the mainstream;

- Champions need support. Supporting social mobility activities can take a significant investment of time, energy and patience, which may already be in short supply as a result of the champion's day job. The support, understanding and buy-in of internal colleagues helps to ensure that the champion's efforts are recognised and embedded throughout their organisation, and support from external partners can help to ensure that the benefits of their hard work are felt more widely

Mentor of the Year

Lots of organisations talk about the valuable mentoring work that they do. But mentoring is a personal journey, often for both mentor and mentee. A good mentor can be a powerful role model, guide and advocate, taking someone under their wing and helping them navigate challenges relating to education or employment. And effective mentoring can be a critical part of supporting the retention of employees from under-represented groups, ensuring that they are listened to, guided and supported when they need it. From providing inspiration to just providing a calm word at the right time, this category recognises those who provide wisdom, advice and support to help the development of those within or outside their organisation from less privileged backgrounds.

This year's entries have come from a relatively narrow range of industries. There are likely to be a myriad of reasons why this is so, but one reason may be that the industries represented have more of a culture of undertaking, valuing and talking about mentoring, and may therefore have more mature and more celebrated mentoring programmes.

Mentor of the Year entries
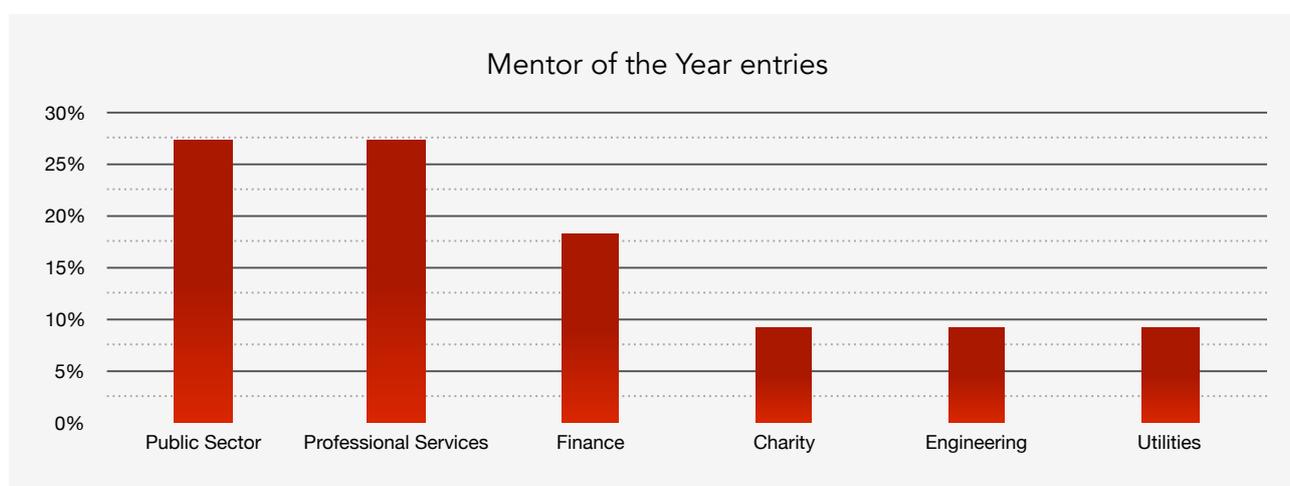
Key findings

The mentors who have entered this category operate at different levels of seniority within the organisations they work for. But whatever level they are at, all of them take time out of their busy schedules to support the needs of others and are seen by their colleagues as inspirational role models.

Franklin Asante has been supporting the development of diverse staff at Coutts for more than ten years. In 2011 he helped to establish the Coutts Young Leaders Forum, a society aimed at supporting the future leaders of the bank. Since then, he's helped initiate and develop a programme that connects Coutts staff members with school students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, mentors staff from the Bank and the local community and is estimated to have trained, mentored or presented to over 1,000 people in the last year. He has also designed a twelve-month sponsorship programme for BAME members of staff, enabling them to be supported by senior leaders in the Bank. **Julie Lindsay** has also helped to advance the development of BAME staff members in her work at the Office of the Public Guardian. On top of her role as OPG's Chief Operating Officer, Julie founded an in-house development programme for BAME future leaders called Bridges, which helps participants to prepare for more senior roles and develop the skills, self-awareness and self-belief that they will need to progress. Julie has also been a leading supporter of the Ministry of Justice's Catapult mentoring scheme for staff from lower socio-economic backgrounds, sharing her own experiences to help support colleagues across the organisation. **Lerato Marema** has used the opportunity of being a participant in Deloitte's Reverse Mentoring programme to raise senior leaders' awareness of the challenges of being a black woman in the real estate sector she works in. This has led to her becoming a change agent for the firm's wider recruitment, retention and promotion activities – she has subsequently engaged with Deloitte's recruitment teams to support attraction campaigns and to help the firm engage with a wide pool of diverse talent.

In a similar vein of encouraging diverse talent to flourish, **Claire Preston** at ENGIE has been a champion for providing employment opportunities to people from marginalised groups, such as those who have disabilities or are care leavers. She led the firm's signing of the Disability Charter and has made it far easier for care leavers to access ENGIE's employment opportunities, making sure vacancies are advertised on the Care Leavers Covenant website and supporting care-leaver applicants through the recruitment process. Claire has also supported and encouraged her team to put social value at the heart of all they do.

Many of these mentors have supported their mentees to raise their aspirations and reconsider their education, employment or career choices, encouraging them to aim high and not to be scared of dreaming big. And they've often been able to use their own experiences to show others what could be possible. **Geraldine Clement** is the co-founder and co-Chair of the Civil Service Cross-Government Social Mobility Network and takes the time to mentor a wide range of people, both inside the civil service and outside with a number of students. Her open and supportive approach and her willingness to share her own experiences has raised the belief of her mentees and has helped to guide them through their choices related to employment and education – challenging them to find the right path for them and supporting them in their journey. **Hannah Leggatt** at HS2 has used her experience of growing up in a working-class family to mentor girls from disadvantaged backgrounds with the charity The Girls Network. Remembering the support and encouragement she received from inspirational teachers when she was young, Hannah wanted to ensure that she created the same supportive environment for the girls she mentored. The support she has provided has helped her mentees to believe in themselves and to push themselves forward for developmental opportunities, both inside and outside school.

At PwC, **Meryem Ertac** has used her life experience to provide support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds on the PwC Mentoring Programme. Meryem has mentored secondary school students for six years, helping them to overcome barriers to progression, giving them the confidence and belief to help them succeed and providing them with opportunities to broaden their horizons about their future education and employment possibilities. One student Meryem supported was a part-time carer and from a low-income family but with her support, the student received the guidance she needed to progress with her studies and is now a law graduate working in the legal profession. And at the private equity firm Ardian, Chief Financial Officer **Matt Thornton** has

championed a partnership with the charity ThinkForward to mentor a number of disadvantaged young people in London. He manages the programme, as well as being one of its mentors, and has enabled the charity to receive significant additional funding that has allowed it to expand its reach in different parts of the country. Matt's involvement has enabled a number of teenagers to be encouraged, inspired and guided as they navigate crucial education and career choices.

Lessons

- Successful mentors give a lot of themselves. They give their time and their energy but they also give their experiences, their empathy and their determination to see others succeed. That effort is noticed and it helps to propel the people they support on to greater educational and career achievement;

- Mentoring is not just for students or for those early in their careers. Mentoring can support people at all stages of their career – it can help people learn from others who have been through similar experiences, and in the case of reverse mentoring it can also help people learn from others who have been through experiences that are completely different;

- The power of mentoring is enduring. Many people who have been encouraged and inspired as children or in their early careers have never forgotten the support they received and are determined to pass that same level of encouragement on to the next generation, creating a virtuous circle of empathy, challenge and guidance that can help to sustain people along their social mobility journey;

- We need more mentoring. Everyone needs someone in their workplace to listen to them, support them and advise them. But if you're from a less privileged background that is under-represented in your workplace, you need a good mentor even more. A good mentor can help not just to guide but to reassure; they can be a role model and an inspiration. Good mentors will support progression and retention, which is good for the individual and the organisation. We need more organisations to recognise the power of mentoring and to provide mentors with the training, support and recognition they deserve.

Rising Star

The people that have been recognised throughout this report are at varying stages of their careers. However, this final category is designed to recognise those who have made a significant difference to social mobility in the early stages of their career. They are natural leaders, who have a vision of the world they want to see and the drive and determination to turn their vision into reality. They make a positive impression on those around them, displaying exceptional qualities that inspire others to follow their lead. This category recognises those who are aged 30 or under who, through their actions, have already made a significant contribution to advancing the cause of social mobility, becoming the role models of the future but making a difference right now.

Entries for this category have been received from across the public, private and charitable sectors, which indicates that social mobility's rising stars can be found in industries right across the spectrum.

Rising Star entries
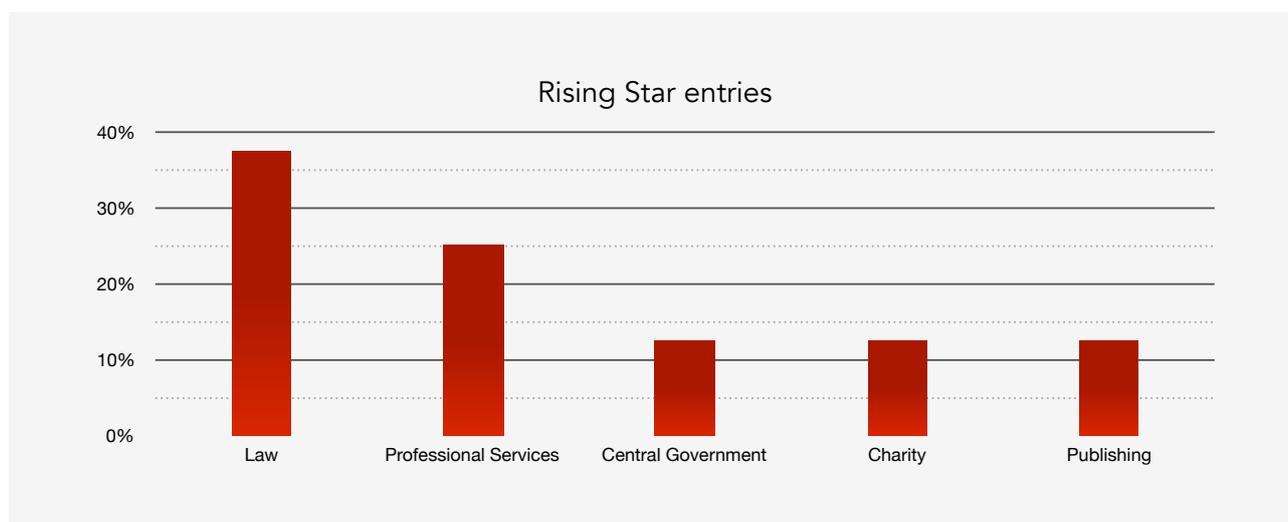
Key findings

The amount of positive influence that these young people have had, so early on in their careers, is inspirational, and they have a great story to tell. **Leticia Nascimento** came to England from Brazil at the age of 13, speaking very little English. Since joining KPMG as an apprentice in 2015 she has become heavily involved in the firm's social mobility activities, making a particular effort to mentor other girls who have English as an Additional Language and who need support with decisions around their education and career choices. As well as being a mentor, she has also been a student recruitment ambassador and is now the co-ordinator for Access Accountancy (AA), the industry-wide initiative that is seeking to improve the social diversity of the accounting profession and which is organised by KPMG. Whilst running the AA secretariat Leticia has proactively co-ordinated a group of senior stakeholders and has also delivered a campaign to promote AA to Year 12s in social mobility coldspots. Thousands of young students from lower socio-economic backgrounds have been engaged by the AA campaign.

Louisa Burden-Garabedian has been reaching students from similar backgrounds with a very different kind of campaign. She joined Penguin Random House in 2017 as a Corporate Responsibility intern and has been instrumental in developing their new Start Your Story initiative, an interactive careers workshop that encourages young people from under-represented backgrounds to consider a career in publishing. The programme aims to break down barriers to the publishing industry by connecting with young people who wouldn't typically consider the industry to be a place for them. Louisa conducted a survey and focus group with young students to ensure the content and style of the workshop was most applicable to them, consulted with external stakeholders to understand what would work best for this beneficiary group and then designed an interactive one-hour workshop that mimics the stages of a book's production and can be delivered by anyone within the business. The programme has now been delivered to more than 1,000 students nationwide, including as a company-wide initiative to support World Book Day.

Nadia Mensah and Ashley Daniells have also helped to develop and deliver initiatives that are changing young people's perceptions of the industries they work in. At PwC, Nadia is co-Chair of their Multicultural Business Network and the leader of their Diversity Mentoring Scheme. She was the first person in her family to go to university and land a corporate job, and she is determined to repay the support that she had by providing positive guidance and influence to the next generation. Both inside and outside PwC, Nadia gives up her time to make young people more aware of the corporate world and of PwC, helping them to see that they have the talent to thrive in the corporate environment. More than 400 young people have been mentored by the PwC Mentoring Scheme in the last four years and many of them have gone on to get jobs at PwC or other large corporate firms. At RPC, Ashley has reached hundreds of students through his mentoring and development initiatives. He joined RPC as a newly-qualified solicitor in January 2018 and quickly established himself in many of the firm's diversity and inclusion workstreams. On top of that, Ashley developed the first social mobility mentoring programme in the RPC Bristol office. Building on RPC's work in London, Ashley developed a mentoring programme at his old school in Bristol, where only 6% of the students go on to university, to help support their transition from school into further education or employment. He now leads a team of 18 local mentors and has developed further local social mobility activities that have reached more than 200 students and which have resulted in 30% of the Bristol office engaging in volunteering activity.

The final two featured entrants are both making their mark in the legal profession. Matthew Campling joined Linklaters in 2013 as a trainee solicitor and experienced feelings of exclusion from the rest of his cohort that made him determined to do all he could to make the firm feel as inclusive as possible for everybody. Since then he's been a founding member of his department's diversity and inclusion champions group, identifying local initiatives for his team; he works with other departments within Linklaters, to encourage them to establish similar groups; he's developed a networking event for Linklaters' junior lawyers to get together with their contemporaries at a range of clients, which is now a regular feature of the Dispute Resolution calendar; and he's become a reverse mentor to a Board member, enabling them to see the firm through a different lens and giving them a better sense of some of the barriers to progression felt by people from different social backgrounds. Meanwhile Milambo Makani, who has just started as a trainee solicitor at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, has taken inspiration from his own difficult upbringing to provide hope and opportunity for

other young people who face barriers in their own lives. Milambo moved to the UK from Zambia at the age of nine and grew up in a family which was, in his own words, dysfunctional. He has experienced being taken into care and being homeless, but drove himself on to study for his A-Levels whilst working regular nightshifts. He studied for his A-Levels at one of the lowest-performing colleges in the country and, despite performing strongly himself, realised that many of his peers were seeing their talents go unfulfilled. He subsequently founded the social enterprise W.A.N. (Widening Access Network), to try and raise the aspirations of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by providing role models, skills workshops and presentations at schools across London. He has also helped numerous students interested in the legal profession to secure internships and graduate roles.

Lessons

- Rising stars don't wait. They see things from a different angle to their more experienced colleagues and have the ambition, energy and determination to make the changes they think are needed;

- Responsibility is not a problem. Younger staff members are sometimes overlooked for leadership opportunities due to their perceived inexperience, but getting involved in community and inclusion activities can be a great way for younger professionals to demonstrate their leadership and organising skills, which will stand them in good stead for their careers. These rising stars have relished their opportunity to lead change;

- Everyone needs to be listened to, regardless of their background or their situation. Listening to the fears, hopes and dreams of beneficiaries has helped these rising stars to develop programmes that support and nurture communities; being listened to themselves, and supported by senior leaders, has given these rising stars the confidence to drive programmes that are supporting people from all backgrounds, both inside and outside the workplace.

Final thoughts

The amount of work that is going on to support social mobility is truly inspiring, and every individual and organisation that has contributed to the entries for this year's UK Social Mobility Awards should be strongly commended for their hard work and dedication. But still, studies into social mobility in this country paint a troubling picture of stagnation and inequality.

So, what can be done?

Firstly, keep going. As the entries submitted for these awards show, the social mobility programmes that are taking place are touching thousands of people's lives and are genuinely making a difference to their life chances. Please keep on doing what you're doing!

Secondly, if you can, try to do more. The work you're doing to raise people's aspirations, to give them hope and to connect them to opportunity is needed by so many people in so many parts of the country. Think about whether you can do more with other beneficiary groups and/or in other locations, or if you can perhaps do more in terms of social procurement to support a wider range of beneficiaries.

Thirdly, bring other organisations along on the journey. Whilst we know that not every organisation that's working to support social mobility has entered these awards, most of you may be able to think of other organisations in your industry or in your region that are not currently involved in social mobility activities. Let's find a way to get more organisations of all sizes involved, and amplify our efforts for the good of the millions of people from less privileged backgrounds who want to aim higher.

On a final, positive note, a word tree of the contents of this report show the words that appear the most throughout this publication. This includes several words that you might expect, such as people, support, schools, students and community, but another that unexpectedly jumps out is the word 'can'. And, in a nutshell, that is what we mean when we talk about improving social mobility – it's about enabling people, whoever they are, wherever they're from, to aim high, dream big and to believe that 'I can'.