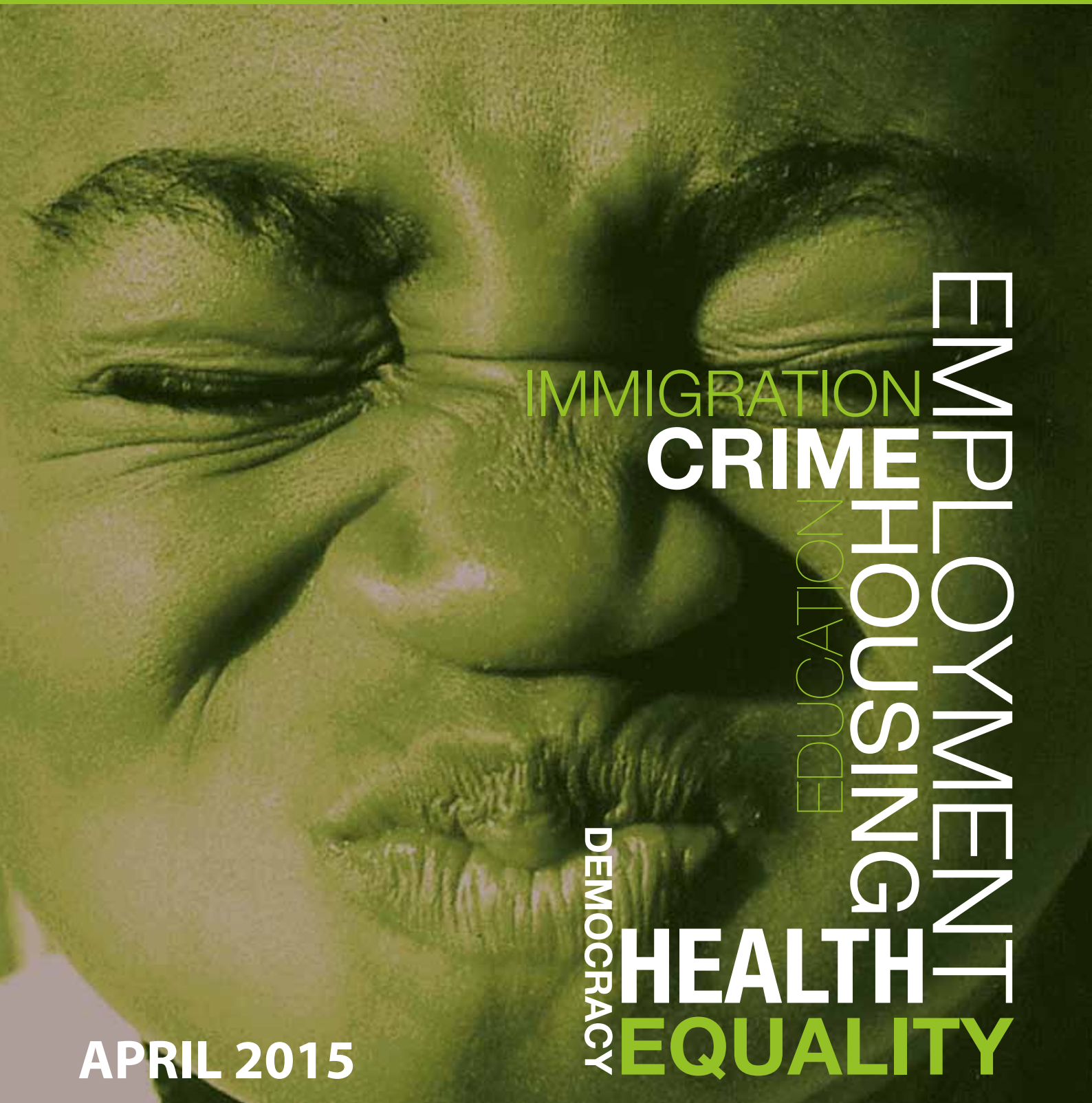


The Kenny Report



The Kenny Report III: "Personalised Politics"



EMPLOYMENT
CRIME
HOUSING
HEALTH
EQUALITY
IMMIGRATION
EDUCATION
DEMOCRACY

APRIL 2015

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD



In a matter of days from now, on May 7th 2015, we will be having a general election. This is not the type of news that will excite many young voters aged 18-24, or even news that many young people are aware of. However, it is certainly news that is of great importance to us all. Politics and voting may not be something you want to involve yourselves with, but I am confident that after reading the various chapters in the Kenny Report 3, you may want to change your mind.

The last general election in 2010 saw less than 25% of young voters going to the polling station to vote. As a result, we have had to carry the financial burdens of generations before us and under our current government, we have undoubtedly and unfortunately also had to face the biggest share of cuts to the services that matter most to us.

But this time around, on 7th May, we need to play smarter and start using the power we have as a collective. There are more than 3 million first-time voters who have the opportunity to take part in this election and a further 2 million more young voters, who could also vote. There are also 6 main political parties, Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, Labour, UKIP, Greens and Scottish Nationalist Party, who will be canvassing like never before to win our votes.

If you have been told that young people cannot change politics or shake up the establishment, then you have been deceived! Imagine if all 5.6 million of us registered and turned out to vote in this election. We could decide who wins almost 200 of the 650 parliamentary seats being contested in May this year. The youth vote, could be the difference between which of the party leaders gets the keys to No.10 Downing Street.

We have a once in a 5-year opportunity to burst the Westminster bubble and agitate the system for change. This is our chance to make sure our politicians understand that we are votes worth winning. It is our chance to send a resounding message to all political parties, that if they have nothing credible or substantial to offer us on issues we care about then we will not vote for their party.

The Kenny Report 3 entitled "Personalised Politics" is similar to the style of the previous two reports. The language used is accessible; it raises awareness of the key issues affecting young people in the UK, which need to be addressed and provides solutions to those problems. However, unlike the last two reports, the

Kenny Report 3 is very different in its approach and scope. Firstly, a diverse group of 24 young people aged between 18-25 have all come together to produce this report. Secondly, this report covers 8 policy areas that are of the biggest concern to young people, such as education, housing, health and employment & enterprise. The report explains how issues in these policy areas directly affect young people. Lastly, this report shows that young people will campaign on issues they care about, if they are provided with genuine opportunities and resources. The co-authors of this report are perfect examples of this.

The authors of this report were selected solely on their interest and passion for change, not because of their skills or expertise. Many of the authors had very limited expertise on report writing or had never been involved in the process of producing a report. The authors ranged from personal friends who have supported me during Kenny Reports 1 & 2, to people signposted to me by others who recognised their passion and potential. After selection, the authors were split into 8 different groups and allocated a designated mentor and a pool of expert advisors to guide them through producing their chapters. It has been a great pleasure to edit this report and to use the third instalment of the Kenny Report series, as a platform for the genuine voices of other young people.

Politics dominates the world in which we live. Yet many of us are not aware of how political decisions made by the people we entrust to represent us, truly shape our reality. The title of this report represents an ethos that I believe politics in the 21st century needs to adopt. Politics in this day and age, is neither accessible nor is it easily understood. We need to start engaging people about politics from the premise that everyone is already political and holds political views on different sets of issues. We need to give people the knowledge about how the political process works and empower them with the tools to influence the changes they wish to see. We need to make politics more about people, all people! Not just for the understanding and participation of the elite few.

"Personalised Politics" enables people, particularly younger people, to engage with and understand politics in a format that is accessible to them. We can personalise our country's politics by making it more available, inclusive, diverse and transparent. This would then help young people, as well as the general population to be more easily informed. We need to ensure that people understand that politics is important and that "if they don't do politics, then politics will do them!"

This ambitious project is the first of its kind. No other group of young people have come together in the history of British politics to create something of this magnitude. For the record, the views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect my own views.

Kenny Imafidon is a political commentator and the author of the Kenny Reports 1 & 2. He is also the editor of The Kenny Report 3: "Personalised Politics"

FOREWORD



Michael Sani – Co-founder of Bite The Ballot

Our democracy is under threat. We are stuck in a cycle where politicians write policies for those who participate - those that are registered to vote and those that vote. This means that younger, less active citizens are all too often ignored and rarely considered.

It is crucial that we nurture a generation who understand that change can happen when you participate. When we achieve this, we will create a fairer and more representative democracy. The key to our success is to focus on the 'issues' affecting our lives and how we can influence those issues. Everyone cares deeply about one issue or another, but what he or she doesn't necessarily understand is that most issues are influenced by politics. If we never take the time to explain the links between our day-to-day lives and politics in a relatable and engaging way, we can't be surprised when people say 'politics doesn't affect me.'

This is why Bite The Ballot supports the Kenny Report 3. Young people have written this report, for and on behalf of young people, led by Kenny. A man that has dedicated endless hours to inspire those most marginalised and all too often disproportionally affected, to believe in better and know that through their actions change will come. Through Kenny's leadership, better is what people will have and they will be pioneers because they demanded it for themselves – not waited for others to do so on their behalf. This report is not written by academics who have passed the age demographic that state what young people should care about. It details key issues currently affecting young people and provides innovative and creative solutions. This is all done in a language that is engaging and accessible to all. Making politics bold and inclusive.

We are witnessing a change within our youth demographic. Young people are engaging on new platforms in ways that many of us never imagined could be possible. With traditional media becoming an old-fashioned method of communication, Bite The Ballot is working to find fresh ways of engaging young people in our democratic system. We are taking democracy to them, on platforms they regularly use and opening the channels of communication between decision-makers and young people. Projects such as #LeadersLive and National Voter Registration Day show that young people are passionate, mobilised and ready to show decision-makers that their vote is a vote worth winning.

That's why the work of the Kenny report is so crucial. Once engaged, young people need accessible information such as included in the Kenny Report 3, so that they can educate and inform themselves on the issues they are passionate about. Challenging common misconceptions will be a big part of this, confronting things we regularly hear from our friends, family and the media, which are ill-informed and often misleading. Further, the report raises awareness around issues with our 'democracy' that are not heavily publicised in the media and that young people in the UK may not be aware of. An educated youth will lead to generations of confident, active and energetic citizens.

With the 2015 General Election only a few weeks away, Bite The Ballot hopes to make history by inspiring the largest turnout of young voters. By voting in their millions, young people are sending the strongest message possible to politicians - that they expect their voices to be heard. Politicians will then be forced to respond by writing policies that consider their concerns and improve the lives of young people across the UK. Whilst this process continues, a more engaged generation will be picking apart the current system that serves the few and will demand changes so that they can live in a society where injustice is challenged, never accepted and above all people will always come before profit. The evolution of our democracy is moving at an incredible pace – big up Kenny and all the authors involved, you guys are trailblazers.

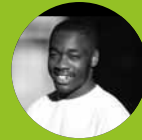
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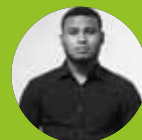


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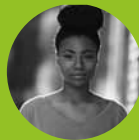


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I would like to thank all my family and friends for their moral support and inspiration, especially my mother, Sodiq Adejo and David Nyamupfukudza.

Lastly and most importantly, to the almighty **God**, for everything He has done for me and is yet to do for me.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kenny Report 3 is the most innovative, thought provoking and revolutionary report in the Kenny Report series so far. It is a report written by young people for young people

This report offers a detailed analysis of the key issues affecting young people in eight policy areas; **crime & punishment, democracy, education, employment & enterprise, equality & gender, health, housing and immigration.**

Usually, authors of reports concerning youth policy and the lives of young people are not of the age demographic discussed. However, this report breaks the mould and ensures that the reader looks at these issues from the lens of young people who know what they're talking about in their relevant policy areas.

The chapter discussing **"crime and punishment"** explores the topic of joint enterprise, evaluates the effectiveness of prisons in rehabilitating offenders and examines the unfair stigmatisation of young people by police and the media.

With great considerations given to the upcoming elections, the chapter on **"democracy"** discusses the accessibility of our democracy to its citizens. This chapter highlights the role organisations play in ensuring young people are politically engaged. It showcases the need for a digital democracy where politicians are accessible via social media and outlines important lessons to be learnt from the Scottish referendum.

Issues such as why students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds do not perform as well as their counterparts from more affluent backgrounds, and issues about how free schools can be developed and alternative routes other than university are questioned in the **"education"** chapter. These are educational topics that are often swept under the carpet.

The chapter written on **"employment & enterprise"** discusses the possibility of entrepreneurship education in schools, the incorporation of technology and coding into the school syllabus. This chapter also explores the issues surrounding our current unemployment crisis.

The **"Equality & Gender"** chapter looks into the lack of female representation across the political spectrum, as well as leadership roles within business and the corporate arena. Additionally, this chapter looks at topics such as the gender pay gap and various ways women are discriminated against in the workplace.

The **"health"** chapter explores the key health issues amongst young people, which have been identified by Public Health England, as mental health, sexual health and obesity.

Issues regarding youth homelessness and measures that could be taken to reduce this are outlined in the **"housing"** chapter. Shortages of housing stock and the lack of affordable housing are also examined, alongside the matter of rogue landlords.

The challenges and complex issues faced by undocumented children growing up in the UK are discussed in the **"immigration"** chapter.

The Kenny Report 3 offers many recommendations in these respective policy areas.

1. CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

This chapter focuses on young people, criminality and punishment and the impact of crime on poor communities. We discuss how young people are unfairly stigmatised by the police and media; the increasing use of 'joint enterprise'; whether prison is really the answer for rehabilitating offenders and deterring crime; and finally the consequences of having a criminal record.

Recommendations

1. The government should invest more funding into frontline youth services and early intervention programmes
2. Tackle the root causes of poverty in order to reduce crime
3. Reform 'Joint enterprise' and prevent its disproportional use against young people living in deprived areas and from black and ethnic minority communities
4. Start a new governmental campaign educating young people on the consequences of crime starting at 8 years old
5. Provide people leaving prison with a mentor and effective resettlement package

Young people - unfairly Stigmatised by the Police and Media

Knife crime is a major issue in our country today, particularly in London. Between July 2013 and July 2014, there was a monthly average of 818 reported knife crime incidents in London, with an average of 270 resulting in injury.¹ Notably, there was a monthly average of 117 ambulance call outs for knife victims within the same period.² The victims of knife crime are largely young people aged between 10 and 25 years old. Given the fact that people aged 16-24 are most likely to be the victims of personal crime³, why is it that young people are more likely to be perceived as perpetrators rather than the victims?

An Ipsos Mori study in 2004 found that in one week, 71% of media stories about young people were negative and a third of them concerned the issue of crime.⁴ Research conducted in 2007 found that most media stories about young people are negative.⁵ It stated that negative media could influence society's perception of young people and therefore place an unwarranted stigma upon them.⁶

The Evening Standard exemplified this crude stereotyping, when a photograph of young males in hoodies covering their faces was used during a sensible discussion about gang culture. This was particularly ironic, given that the press campaign was intended to highlight the achievements of those who had turned over a new leaf.⁷ As Lee Jasper observed, *"post the 2011 riots, the language towards young people,*

especially young disadvantaged people, has headed towards dehumanising these members of society and almost portraying the perception that young people are inherently criminal or prone to criminality.”

In terms of prevention, youth services play an important part in keeping young people out of crime. Yet these services have been decimated by Local Authority cuts, which have reduced spending on youth services by an average of 27% between 2010 and 2012.⁸ With less youth services available or virtually non-existent in certain parts of the country, young people hardly have much to do with their time. As quoted in the Kenny Report 1 *“one of the main reasons people commit crime is due to boredom. Far too many young people today struggle to find constructive things to do with their time, which is compounded by the lack of opportunity affecting our most vulnerable communities.”*⁹

The Independent Police Complaints Commission’s Confidence Report 2011 found that ‘satisfaction levels for 15-24 year olds are consistently lower than for any other age groups’ in relation to police contact.¹⁰ However, young people are also less likely to complain,¹¹ as they have little confidence in the value of a complaint.

As early as 1829, former Home Secretary Sir Robert Peel stated that successful policing should be defined, not by the numbers of arrests but by the prevention of crime. This should be at the forefront of police training and police officers should be more focused on creating positive relationships with all members of the community, especially young people. If young people feel a constant threat from the police, then it can be no surprise when aggression escalates on both sides, which may lead to another riot; a viewpoint held by 81% of those interviewed for a study by The Guardian & LSE.¹²

The Rise and Danger of the use of Joint Enterprise

Joint enterprise is a legal principle said to be over 300 years old and was originally conceived to combat illegal duelling between aristocrats. Now, joint enterprise is being used by the Crime Prosecution Service (CPS) to combat offences committed by gangs or groups of people and can be established generally in three instances:

- i. Where two or more people join in committing a single crime, in circumstances where they are, in effect, all joint principals or;
- ii. Where the defendant assists or encourages the main perpetrator or perpetrators to commit a single crime or;
- iii. Where the main perpetrator or perpetrators and the defendant participate together in one crime and in the course of it, the main perpetrator or perpetrators commit a second crime, which the defendant had foresaw the main perpetrator or perpetrators might commit.¹³

However, in practice the instances will overlap, hence why there are several cases of injustice. Also, this is not the first time that old legal principles or old Acts of Parliament have been used to tackle modern issues and caused an outcry. For example, the use of the stop-and-search laws or sus laws, originated from the Vagrancy Act 1824, to combat homelessness and begging of poor people following the Napoleonic wars. It was heavily used in Operation Swamp '81, which resulted in 120 police officers stopping 943 people in the space of four days. The prejudice in its application was highlighted by the fact more than 50% of the 118 people arrested after being stopped were black and was the trigger for the Brixton Riots at the time.¹⁴

Similar to the sus laws in the 1980s, the application of joint enterprise in relation to homicide has caused a lot of critical commentary from lawyers, academics, MPs and campaigners. However, most advocate for joint enterprise to be reformed rather than scrapped. There is also a web of complexity and confusion as to how joint enterprise is being applied, or argued in court. This is highlighted by the fact that the percentage of appeals involving joint enterprise doubled from 11% in 2008 to 22% in 2013.¹⁵

Normally, in order to convict a person of murder, the prosecution must prove the defendant intended to kill or intended to inflict grievous bodily harm to the victim.¹⁶ However, in order to convict a person of murder through joint enterprise, the prosecution must prove that the defendant foresaw that the other defendant or defendants might kill and that the other defendant or defendants might have intended to kill or inflict grievous bodily harm to the victim.¹⁷

Between 2012 and 2013, there were 260 murder and manslaughter cases involving multiple defendants. 81% of these cases had two or more defendants jointly charged with murder, with a statistical average of 3 defendants to one case.¹⁸ A serious question must therefore be raised about the numbers of people convicted of offences under joint enterprise; and whether its rising use is drawing more young people into the criminal justice system, when they have no reason to be there?¹⁹

Reform is needed because although joint enterprise allows for those criminally responsible to be convicted, in more complex cases, wrongful convictions can also occur. Moreover, the stigmatisation and label of being involved with the criminal justice system will adversely affect young people who in some cases spend substantial periods of time remanded in custody, away from family and friends.²⁰

It is often suggested that history always finds a way of repeating itself. If no-one learns from it, therefore it would be wise to note that just as the disproportionate application of the sus laws was the trigger for the Brixton Riots in 1981, will the disproportionate application of joint enterprise trigger a riot if not addressed?

Is prison the answer for rehabilitating offenders and deterring crime?

Prisons exist for four fundamental reasons: to deter people from committing crimes; to punish criminals; to lock up dangerous offenders; and to rehabilitate prisoners into law-abiding citizens. However, it has long been advocated that the prison system is not fit for purpose, prompting the observation of Jerry Brown that *"prisons don't rehabilitate, they do not punish, they do not protect, so what the hell do they do?"*²¹

Prison, has not proven to be an effective deterrent of crime in the UK, as the prison population in England and Wales alone has increased by 41,800 between the years 1993 to 2012.²² Figures published by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) show that this policy of increasing incarceration resulting in rising prison populations has caused 77 of the 119 prisons in England and Wales to be severely overcrowded.²³ At the same time, cuts to the prison service budgets are leading to low staffing levels in most prisons. This inevitably means that prison staff spend less time focussing on purposeful activities that could rehabilitate inmates.²⁴

We now have over 85,000 people in prison and young offender Institutions in England and Wales, with women accounting for just 4000 of all those in prison.²⁵ Currently the UK has more prisoners serving life sentences than the rest of Europe put together, with more than 12,000 inmates on either life terms or indeterminate sentences.²⁶ It costs £40,000 a year to 'look after' a prisoner in England and Wales.²⁷ This figure could pay the tuition fees for someone to go to university and finish a four-year degree!

A key purpose of prison is to rehabilitate inmates, but the prison system is failing to deliver on this. Re-offenders cost the country £9.5 billion to £13 billion a year.²⁸ MOJ figures show that 47% of adults re-offend within one year of release. For those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 58%. It also shows that nearly three quarters, of under 18 year olds re-offend within a year of release.²⁹ This evidence makes a straightforward case that there needs to be a greater emphasis on the rehabilitation of prisoners because if not, re-offenders will cost our society even more money.

Furthermore, the criminal justice system can be said to be institutionally racist and prejudiced. This is demonstrated by the fact that black and ethnic minority groups are over-represented in the prison system and are more likely to be sentenced to prison than other ethnic groups. Looked after children are also over-represented in the prison system.

A lot of people coming from care or from BME backgrounds tend to grow up in the most deprived communities, some facing undiagnosed mental health issues. They tend to live in communities where violence is prevalent and where being unemployed or growing up in an overcrowded home is considered normal. The daily issues they face in their communities are not being effectively tackled, which leaves them more vulnerable to the temptation of a criminal lifestyle.

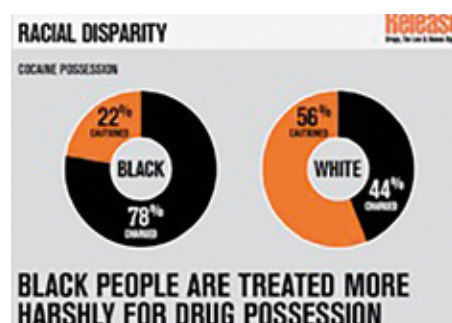
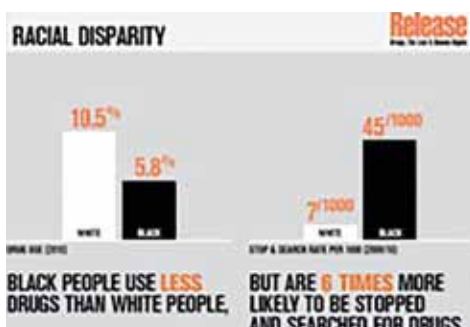
Fact file on prison population

- 23% of the adult prison population has been in care and almost 40% of prisoners under 21 were in care as children³⁰
- Fewer than 1% of all children in England are in care but looked after children make up 33% of boys and 61% of girls in custody³¹
- BMEs make up 13% of the UK population but make up 26.1 per cent of the prison population. This means that more than one in four prisoners declare themselves to be BME.³² In YOI BMEs make up a staggering 41% of the prison population³³
- Almost half of the prison population cannot read or write or count to the standard expected of an 11 year old³⁴
- Almost half of the prison population have been excluded from school³⁵
- More than two-thirds of prisoners were unemployed before they were sent to prison³⁶
- 15% of newly sentenced prisoners reported being homeless before custody. 9% were sleeping rough.³⁷

Once in prison, being in a cell, for up to 23 hours a day; or participating in under resourced rehabilitation schemes or being sent to a prison hundreds of miles away from your family; all makes it hard for all but the most focused of minds to rehabilitate. Prisoners inevitably leave prison with a criminal record, which will make their chances of employability slimmer. This is further compounded by the fact that they lack a range of skills necessary for employment. This situation results in too many prisoners going on to re-offend and the cycle simply continues.

We need to provide people who leave prison with a mentor and an effective resettlement package and identify high-risk offenders, ensuring they have access to the necessary skills and knowledge to deter them away from criminality. We need to create a criminal justice system that does not become a breeding ground for re-offending, but one that provide offenders with the skills and support in and post-prison to live like a civilised citizen. All available research evidence suggests that early intervention and reducing poverty are both crucial to achieving this important goal.

Ethnic disparities in policing



Robust rehabilitation programmes are the key to creating safe, secure societies. In addition, eliminating bias, racism and discrimination from the criminal justice system is an extremely important goal in ensuring equal rights and justice is available to all citizens. The fair application of laws and powers, ensuring that justice is dispensed equally to all are the important cornerstones of any modern democracy.

The Untold Consequences of Crime

A simple error in judgement in your teenage years or early twenties may cause you to have a minor or major conviction on your criminal record. Then 5, 15, or even 25 years later you find that, employers still skip past your application, your insurance quotes are still higher than the average person's, if you are lucky enough to get a quote, and that it is harder to secure a mortgage. If you have a criminal record you may also be denied access to places such as America, for the all-important holiday with your family and friends.³⁸

A fifth of the population have a criminal record (e.g. convictions, whether spent or unspent, cautions, final warnings and reprimands)?³⁹ Many people hold the belief that a spent conviction is a forgotten conviction, however, this could not be any further than the truth. The truth is, a spent conviction is a conviction that you are not obliged to disclose, but will be revealed to a potential employer, bank or relevant organisation that require a criminal record check.⁴⁰

A criminal record check can reveal a conviction that was spent over 20 years ago, which may not represent your character anymore, but can still taint your reputation. Criminal record checks do not also provide any context as to how and why the crime was committed. Therefore, people tend use their perception to prejudge a person.

The consequences of having a criminal record can also extend to family members. In 2011, Wandsworth Council were the first council to make an application for an eviction of a mother whose son was convicted of being involved in the London riots.⁴¹ Even though, this was a first, it shows the powers that councils hold and will use to deter individuals from being a part of criminal activity in their area. If other councils take similar action in the future, there could be more cases where family members are forced to move out due to actions of another family member. This type of policy would be most unfair on those who rely on social housing to afford somewhere to live

2. DEMOCRACY

Democracy in the Kenny Reports is a recurring theme because democracy is central to our concept of a just, fair and equal society. The Kenny Report 2 explicitly highlights the problematic disillusionment between young people and our modern political system.

The long running British Election Study's data for the past half a century, clearly shows a continuing decline in voter turnout for 18-24 year olds. From a high of over 76% voter turnout in 1964, to a depressing 44% in 2010 of those registered to vote.⁴² Repairing the link between the youth electorate and Westminster seems more than ever to be a vital task. The national government is not doing nearly enough to tackle the growing disenfranchisement of young people in the political system.

The most fundamental aspect of any working democracy is its accessibility to citizens and we believe that this is what politicians have failed to improve in the UK.

Recommendations

1. Include political education into the national curriculum as a compulsory subject
2. Parliament needs to become fully digital and all politicians should be accessible on social media platforms that young people use
3. Parliament should introduce online voting in elections
4. The voting age should be lowered to 16 years old
5. Youth organisations need to engage with the 18-25 year olds as well as those aged 11-18
6. Target more outreach towards young people from ethnic minority groups to ensure they utilise the youth schemes in place for them.
7. Local councillors and MPs need to dedicate more time to engaging and consulting with groups of young people in their local areas.
8. Youth council members should be co-opted onto all council committees as full voting members or as observers.

"Apathetic" or alienated voters?

In spite of many parliamentary and electoral reforms over the decades, we still had a voter turnout of 65% in the last general election and less than 15%⁴³ in the Police and Crime Commissioners election.⁴⁴ There is a clear disconnect and

disinterest in politics for many. As future generations are born into a disengaged society, they themselves will not engage in politics, therefore leaving a lasting legacy of uninterested voters. The current decline in democratic engagement poses a fundamental threat to democratic traditions in society and can lead to the promotion of extremism and terrorism and deeper alienation. Democratic youth disengagement is not a peripheral issue; it is central to and a core foundation of any effectively run modern democracy and the maintenance of a free and open democratic society.

Research shows that in the last general election, over 75% of young people aged 18-24 did not turn out to vote. This has led to the branding of the young electorate of the 21st century as 'politically apathetic'. For instance, only 45% of young people believed it was everyone's duty to vote when polled in the most recent NatCen 'Younger Electorate' report (2011).⁴⁵ Aside from signing petitions, less than 10% of 18-29 year olds polled had undertaken some form of 'political activity'.⁴⁶

Yet, over 80% of those under 18 who could vote in Scotland and 110,000 16 and 17 year olds⁴⁷ - registered to vote, seizing the chance for their voices to be heard in the Scottish referendum. It's clear – young people DO want to get involved in national politics and alter the image of them being seen as 'apathetic'. We just need to be engaged. However, most young people feel that they are not adequately taught about our democratic tradition or how to effectively engage with the political and policy process. This is one of the core reasons why people have advocated for compulsory political education in schools, in particular John Rimmer, the President of the National Association of Schoolmasters. Mr Rimmer is calling for compulsory lessons in political education to give young people a "*grounding in democracy*" and "*encourage them to vote in later life*".⁴⁸

Organisations working with young voters

Organisations such as Bite The Ballot, British Youth Council, My Life My Say and Uprising exist to encourage greater numbers of young people to use their democratic power and develop an understanding of how much politics plays a part in their life. Bite The Ballot, for example, also seeks to ensure that young people have better access to our country's politicians by providing platforms such as #LeadersLive. For the first-time ever, this unique opportunity gave young people the platform to ask questions via Twitter, on issues they cared about, to all the four main political party leaders.

Many youth organisations are predominantly engaging young people from the ages of 13-18, but not 18-25 year olds who are able to vote and influence political decisions now. They are also undemocratically organising national campaigns that fail to take proper account of regional differences. This makes young people disillusioned with politics, as they cannot engage or campaign on issues that do not directly affect them.

Local dimensions

The accessibility to political institutions has an important local dimension. Many youth schemes have a national focus and run blanket campaigns which are urban centric and do not address the issues in local or rural areas.

Many local councils try to ensure accessibility for young people through the establishment of youth councils in their areas. This introduces young people to a grassroots level of democracy, as they can see firsthand the changes they are helping to make in their local areas. However this approach is under threat as youth services across the UK are currently in the firing line for funding cuts and because youth councils have no statutory status, they are likely to suffer the most.

Important lessons from Scotland;

The outcome of the Scottish referendum aside, the UK government have been taught an important lesson on how to inspire the next generation of voters to make their voices heard, as well as being shown how important the youth vote can be if mobilised. In preparation for the Scottish Independence referendum, which saw a historically high percentage of the electorate turn out, to cast their vote,⁴⁹ the electoral commission produced several resources to aid political literacy⁵⁰ – directly targeting young people through education. If these resources were not created, many young people may have felt reluctant to get involved in the political discussions and the election because they feel too uninformed about how the outcomes will affect them.



***'TO CARE ABOUT
POLITICS YOU
NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT IT'***

DITDE YOUNG PEOPLE

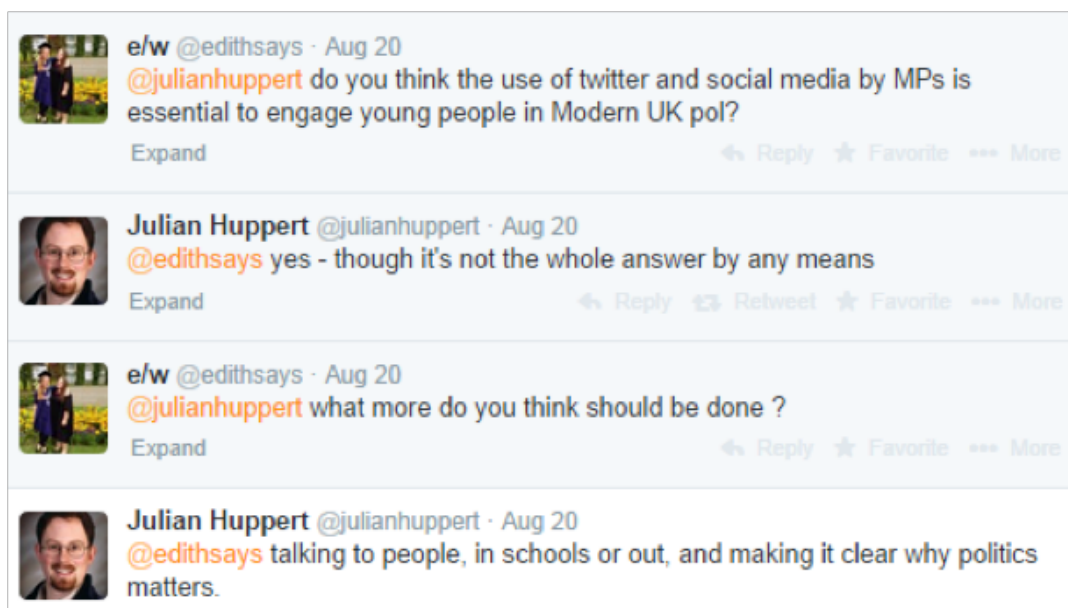
The Scottish referendum made it crystal clear why 16 and 17 year olds should be allowed to vote in all future elections across the UK. Many of them were registered to vote prior to the election, many of them took part in events, debates, campaigning, as well as voting "yes" or "no" at the ballot box. This time round, if we do not allow 16 and 17 year olds in Scotland to vote in this election, the UK will be the first democracy to enfranchise a group of voters, then take away their right to vote, for no logical reason.

The European Union

In 2010, there were an estimated 61 million young people aged 15 to 24 making up one eighth of the entire population of the European Union (EU).⁵¹ However, across the 28 member states that make up the Union, only 29% of 18-24 year olds participated in the 2009 European Elections and only 20% of the UK's young people voted.⁵² The statistics for the EU parliamentary elections that were held in May 2014 are even worse, with only one in ten young people stating that they voted in the elections.⁵³

In 2008, the European Parliament formulated a Written Declaration (33/2008) on devoting more attention to youth empowerment in EU policies, pointing out the need for a 'mainstream' approach to politics. In 2010 came the decision to dedicate one of the Europe 2020 Strategy flagship initiatives to youth, education and training. The European Youth Event (EYE) was a high profile example of how the EU parliament actively recognises the importance of the voice of young people⁵⁴

Digital democracy



409 MPs are currently on Twitter, and the rise of social media use has improved some engagement with constituents and MPs, as well as with government and young people.⁵⁵ The 'best MP on Twitter' – Cambridge's Julian Huppert,⁵⁶ recognises the importance of using social media to connect with his constituents, but makes it clear that social media cannot be solely relied upon as a platform for engagement.

Social media and the use of technology have made political issues more accessible. However, in order to have a greater impact, mandatory political education, and increasing communication is required between members of Parliament and young people both on and offline.

We should also allow people to vote online in this technological age. We can now use the Internet to do almost everything that we previously had to do physically. We can do our banking online, watch movies online, do our food and clothes shopping online, talk with our friends and family online, and can even order our passport or driving licenses online. Despite being able to achieve all of these tasks online including many others, in this modern age; we still cannot vote on issues or for our politicians online. Studies have clearly shown that more people would vote if it were easier to do so. Online voting would encourage those who are least likely to engage in democratic elections to take part at their own convenience.

Conclusion:

In terms of creating youth-involved solutions, there needs to be a far more information-driven approach to making young people aware of how they can affect politics on a local, national and EU level.

Research suggests that ethnic minorities are not as involved in the democratic process as is believed. It is vital that organisations understand the importance of representing not only those of ethnic minority backgrounds but other underrepresented groups. Although there are some youth organisations specialising in this area to try and make democracy accessible for ethnic minorities, more still needs to be done to ensure that all young people are properly represented.

3. EDUCATION

In this chapter, we examine the evidence that suggests our background strongly dictates our life chances via our educational achievements. We highlight research that shows that a student's educational achievement is affected by social class, race, gender⁵⁷ as well as, the attainment gaps between ethnic and disadvantaged groups and the rest of the school population. We highlight that young people in the UK are not doing as well as their peers in many other countries and make suggestions for raising the standards of free schools and for more information to be available showing young people the alternatives to university.

Recommendations

1. Improve the leadership and governance within pupil premium schools in order to close the achievement gap between pupils from different economic, social and ethnic background
2. Set up local authority run School Inspectorates, independent of political parties, which are accountable to parents
3. All young people should have access to a trained career advisor and mentor
4. More funding of schemes like the Amos Bursary to help under represented pupils gain places at top universities
5. Introduce innovative and radical techniques to address the socioeconomic polarisation that schools perpetuate
6. Give young people access to opportunities that are a viable alternative to University while still at school.

What is educational inequality and the achievement gap?

*"Educational inequality in the UK is real. It's happening here, it's happening now and it's preventing too many children from living the lives they could and should".*⁵⁸

Children growing up in the lowest income families, who are eligible for free school meals (FSM), are half as likely to achieve five A*-C grades at GCSE in comparison to those from higher income backgrounds. Additionally, 50% of these children on FSM achieve no GCSE passes above a D grade.⁵⁹

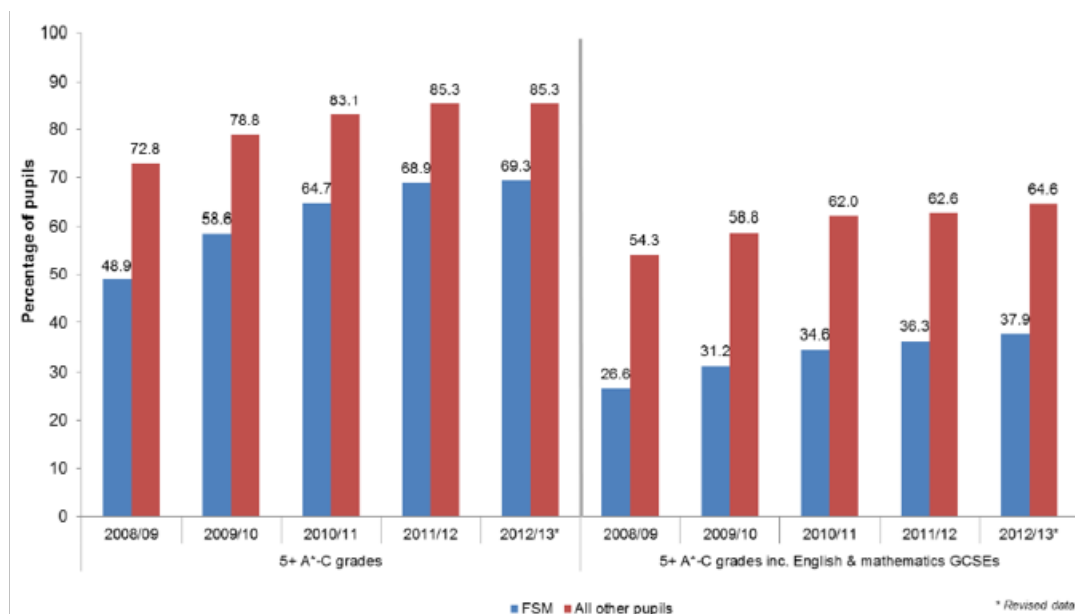
The term 'attainment gap' essentially means the difference between levels of progress and exam results for young people who belong to a disadvantaged group, compared to the rest of the school population.

Below are some findings in relation to educational attainment in state schools:⁶⁰

- Girls continue to outperform boys at GCSE level;
- The highest attaining ethnic group are still Chinese pupils; (see Figure 2)
- Pupils from any black background are still the lowest-attaining ethnic group although the percentage making expected progress is above the national average;
- Pupils whose first language is not English and pupils with special educational needs, still perform worse than their peers.

The graph below (Figure 1) illustrates the percentage of FSM pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C or equivalent, including English and maths from 2008/09 to 2012/13.⁶¹ This graph shows that FSM pupils are almost half as likely to achieve 5 or more A* to Cs when key subjects such as English and maths are considered. FSM pupils not achieving 5 or more A* to Cs including English and maths will not be prepared for their next life stage. In most cases, they will not possess the GCSE entry requirements or basic skills to gain entry into college or higher education.

Figure 1

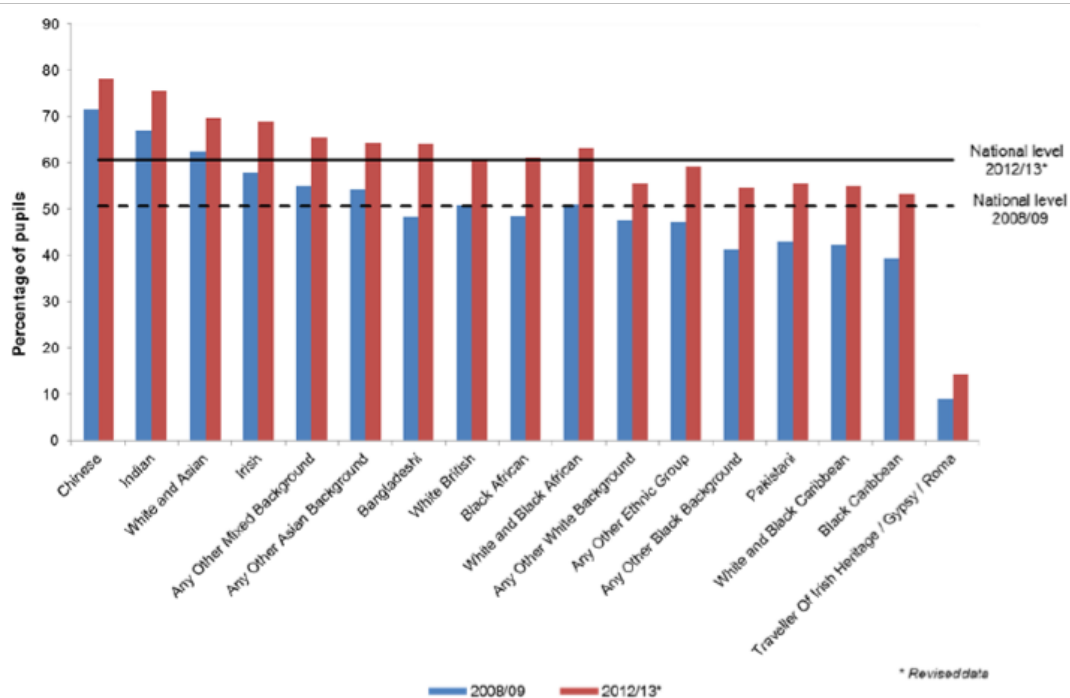


Ofsted research further demonstrates that poor white males are significant underachievers, attaining even less GCSE grades than underprivileged black pupils.⁶² According to the Chief Schools Inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw, these poor white males are growing up without the prospects of a decent career or education due to an 'anti-school culture'.⁶³

Figure 2 below shows the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C or equivalent including English and mathematics, in 2008/09 and 2012/13*

broken down according to different ethnic groups.⁶⁴ Figure 2 shows that children of black Caribbean heritage and Roma children are underachieving the most out of all ethnic groups.

Figure 2

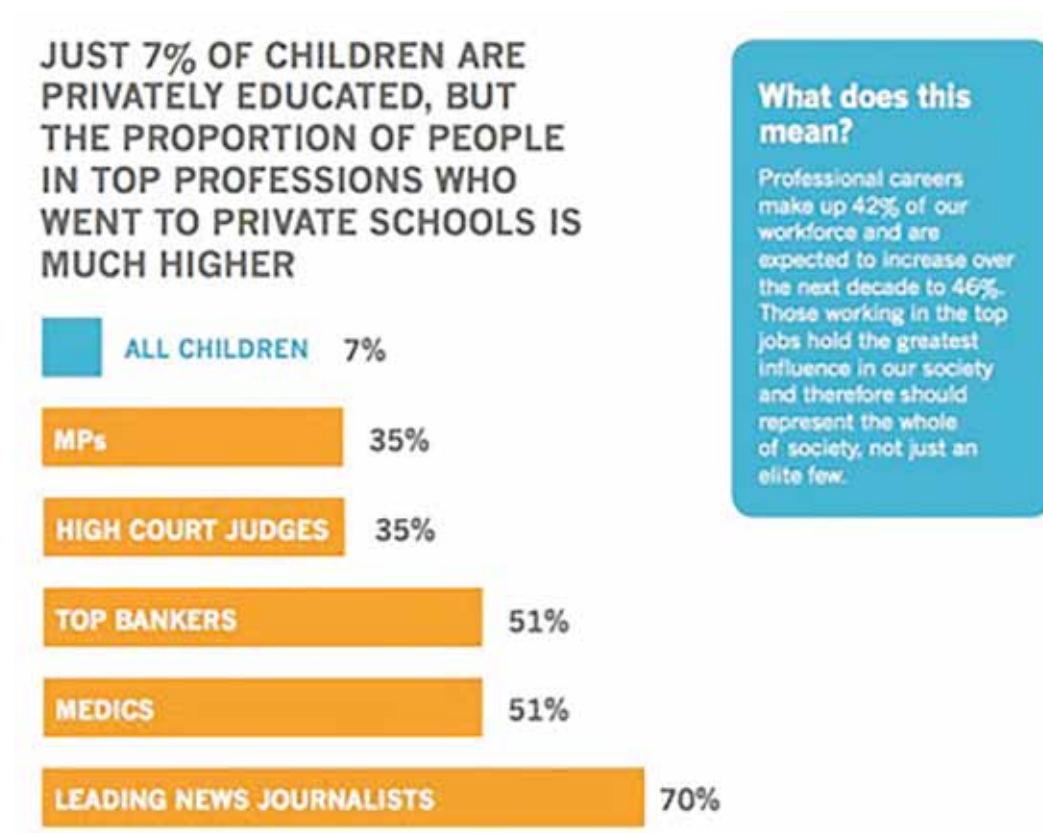


The UK has one of the largest attainment gap problems in the world. A recent OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) study based on tests in reading, maths and science sat by 15 year olds in 65 developed nations, ranked the UK at just 26th for maths, 23rd for reading and 21st for science. These results show that even children from poor factory workers in China outperform children of professionals, such as lawyers and doctors in the UK.⁶⁵

Social mobility and education

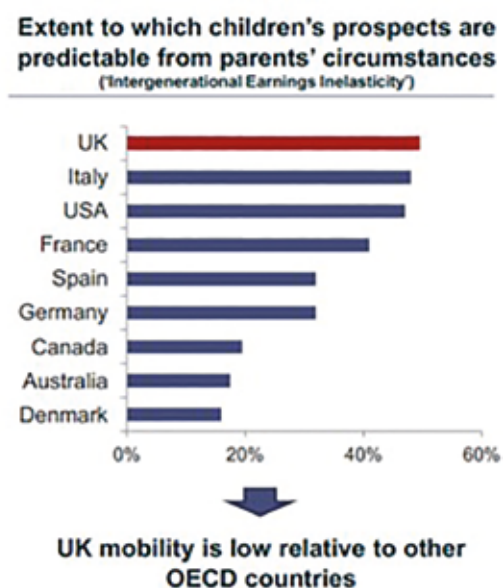
While there is no dispute that the economy is showing signs of improvement from the recession, the relative decline in social mobility rates in comparison with our international counterparts represents the strength of class divisions in British society (see figures 3 and 4 below). Our education system, in particular, should not lock children into the circumstances into which they were born; or have the very few 7% over-represented in careers such as politics, the judiciary and medicine. People should be able, as John Major rightly said, *"to fly as high as their luck, their ability and their sheer hard graft can actually take them."*⁶⁶

Figure 3



*Source: European Committee of Social Cohesion *accessed at:
<http://www.raeng.org.uk/publications/other/7-key-truths-about-social-mobility>

Figure 4



The pupil premium

The pupil premium was initiated with the aim of raising the attainment levels of disadvantaged pupils. In 2011, the government allocated £625 million and during 2012-2013, £1.5 billion was allocated to schools to spend on children from low-income families.⁶⁷ The government has also committed to investing £2.5 billion for the school year of 2014-2015.⁶⁸ This is enough funding to take on roughly five full-time teachers per school to help students who need the most help with their education.⁶⁹ Despite this high level of funding, the achievement gap problem still continues to exist.

The 2014 Ofsted Report, mentioned progress in closing the gap, was often due to changes at senior leadership level.⁷⁰ Their findings conclude that weak leadership and governance is a direct obstacle in many pupil premium schools. The report also highlighted that the schools that used the money effectively, saw greater results and the schools using robust tracking systems, displayed the highest rate of improvements.

As successful as this programme is, the government can still do more by funding more outside of school schemes, such as the Amos Bursary. This scheme supports high achieving pupils from disadvantaged African and Caribbean backgrounds who lack the social capital and skills their peers from privileged backgrounds are more likely to have.⁷¹

Improving standards of free schools

The government's structural reforms in education that led to the setting up of 'free schools' had a clear central goal; simply to take schools out of local authority control. Free schools are funded directly from central government and have been set up and run increasingly by private academy chains, rather than parents or charitable organisations, to expand choice for parents wanting better local schools and to raise the attainment of disadvantaged students.

They are similar to charter schools in the US, an example being the Promise Academy in Harlem Children's zone in New York. Here, they provide an extended school day and year, with coordinated after-school tutoring and additional Saturday classes for children struggling in maths or English. They also recruit and keep high quality teachers, who are incentivised and evaluated based on their success in raising students' test scores. Unlike free schools in the UK, the Harlem Promise Academy also provides the parents of their pupils with meals, bus fare, and other benefits.⁷²

The Trojan Horse Crisis in early 2014, where certain Birmingham free schools were inspected and investigated over religious extremism⁷³ also raised the problems surrounding accountability of free schools, as they are not subject to the same level of scrutiny from the local authorities. They are free to follow their own curriculum, as well as employ unqualified teachers. We believe that free schools will not be able to perform and keep up to the standards of mainstream schools if

they do not employ qualified teachers. International evidence makes it clear that it is the quality of teaching that drives a schools performance and standards not an obsessive focus on the type of school.

In order to improve school standards across all schools, including free schools, we recommend setting up a Local Inspectorate of schools, that is independent of political parties. Though the inspection system would be free from political interference it would be run by the local authority. The organisation could be called The Schools Standards and Accountability Association (SSAA). The SSAA would liaise with schools that have not been rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding and create partnerships between schools facing similar problems and issues.

The roles of the local authority run inspectors would be similar to that of Ofsted, but the local inspector would regularly be expected to: ensure there is no mismanagement of school budgets; agree an action plan of improvement for the head teacher and create a head teachers partnership in order that all schools can share best practice. Most importantly, such an inspectorate would be accountable to the concerns raised by parents.

Alternatives to University

Considering the £9000 tuition fee and extra loans for maintenance, going to university is an option young people have to consider more carefully now than ever before. No one really wants to take on debt or make a wasted investment.

School leaver programmes, apprenticeships, employment or self-employment are some of the available options if you do not wish to go to university - but information on such schemes need to be more visible and accessible to young people. Non-governmental organisations such as, Not Going to Uni⁷⁴ and All About School Leavers⁷⁵ provide a database of possibilities on their easy-to-use websites about options young people have outside of going to university. It is essential for young people to have access to such sites, while still at school. This will enable them to make informed choices concerning their next step upon leaving full-time education. In addition, all young people should have access to a trained career advisor and mentor, who can assist them with the decision-making process affecting their future professional lives.

4 EMPLOYMENT & ENTERPRISE

The UK is entering an era now coined as an 'entrepreneurial revolution'. In this chapter, we examine positive examples of what can be done to encourage young people in deprived areas to establish start-ups and social enterprises. In this chapter, we also take a forensic look to see that although the national unemployment figures are declining, unemployment levels remains disproportionately high for some groups of young people.

Recommendations

1. More government and local authority funding and support for small businesses and social enterprises for young people
2. Encourage schools to teach 15 and 16 year-old pupils about how business works and how they could set up their own business
3. Time limited VAT tax free zones in traditionally deprived areas
4. Introduce entrepreneurship education into schools, including teaching young people how to code, from as young as 7 years old
5. Universities should offer degree programs that specifically relate to current and/or forecasted shortages in the job market
6. Stronger enforcement of equality legislation in recruitment and employment to prevent the under employment of qualified people from ethnic minorities.
7. Government released unemployment figures be broken down across demographics, including race, gender and age.
8. Monitor on an annual basis the aspirations of students and investigate why they fall out of education and employment.
9. Significantly raise the standards of vocational training and education, to aid all young people transitioning from higher education to work.
10. Targeted support to get black graduates into employment

The Entrepreneur revolution

Over the last decade, trends show that we are in what seems to be an 'entrepreneur revolution'. Thousands of occupational roles have shifted from the service sector to the start-up sector. There has also been a massive growth of the UK's answer to Silicon Valley: East London's Tech City aka the Silicon Roundabout, with the number of tech/digital companies in London alone increasing by 76%, between 2009 and 2012.⁷⁶

Supportive programmes set up by government to get more people into employment and enterprise, include the Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS), Seed Enterprise and the creation of the High Growth Segment on the London Stock Exchange.⁷⁷ At a time when funding to local authorities is declining another strategy that could be adopted, is for the Treasury to allow for the establishment for local, time limited VAT free zones in traditionally deprived areas. This sort of policy could help boost the number of people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds setting up businesses.

Southwark Council's 'mind your own business' scheme is a fantastic example of a local authority attempting to boost the numbers of locals involved in enterprise. This scheme financially supports start-ups run by young people living in the borough. Although such schemes clearly have their benefits in contributing to enterprise and employment growth, given severe council budget cuts - a £20.6m drop in government funding for Southwark council in 2014/2015⁷⁸ - the benefits are likely to be short lived.

It is important to also recognise that some young people are not 'job ready'. Training courses like *Barclays Life Skills* vastly improve a young person's ability to successfully recognise and grasp work opportunities and become 'job ready' through personal development session.

In order to encourage and stimulate the growth of young people setting up businesses, all schools should teach entrepreneurship education from an earlier stage. Ideally, 7 year olds should be taught how to code. Website programming initiatives like Code Academy and HowToCodeIO teach people how to code for free and need to be implemented into the national curriculum. Coding, as a core subject, alongside the likes of mathematics and sciences, will equip our future workers to not only survive in the changing dynamics of the marketplace, but to also conquer it.

'Unemployment is decreasing'...but amongst which groups?

There is the common consensus that the unemployment rate is falling. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) stated there were 2.02 million people unemployed; this represents the largest annual fall in unemployment since 1988.⁷⁹

However, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) raises concerns that despite steady falls in unemployment, there are still 868,000 out-of-work 16-24 year olds.⁸⁰ Although the youth unemployment rate has fallen from 20.9% a year ago to 17.8%, the IPPR says that of this 868,000 unemployed young people, 247,000 of them have been looking for work for more than a year, while about 700,000 young people have never had a job.⁸¹

Historically, unemployment among ethnic minorities has been consistently higher than that of the UK as a whole.⁸² The ONS says unemployment for young black male job seekers rose from 28.8% in 2008 to 55.9% in the last three months of

2011, twice the rate for young white people.⁸³ The figures also reveal that the youth unemployment rate for black people has increased at almost twice the rate for white 16-24 year olds since the start of the recession in 2008. Data released by the House of Commons library in 2013 also showed the unemployment rate for young black 16-24 year olds to be at 47%, the highest of all ethnic minorities.⁸⁴ As of 2014, this figure has only managed to fall to 45% for young black people, compared to 19% for their white counterparts.⁸⁵ Considering that black and ethnic minorities could make up a third of the UK population by 2050,⁸⁶ it could prove costly to ignore this issue because the problem can only get worse. Many young black people have become trapped in the cycle of unemployment without a voice that is heard.

Moreover, many young people are gaining an education and qualifications for jobs that simply do not exist. According to the Local Government Authority (LGA), 94,000 people were trained in beauty and hair for just 18,000 jobs, while only 123,000 were trained in the construction and engineering sectors for an advertised 275,000 jobs.⁸⁷

With regards to the employment of women, women have hardly seen any employment growth in STEM jobs (jobs in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths fields) since 2000.⁸⁸

We need our government to ensure there is equality of opportunity for ethnic minorities and gender equality, as this creates a level playing field and promotes successes among women and marginalised groups.

Impact on young people and what needs to be done

High youth unemployment has a continuously adverse effect on our young people from all ethnic backgrounds. Nearly 1 million or 13.1% of young people were NEET in 2014 (Not in Education, Employment or Training).⁸⁹ In terms of the personal cost to young people themselves, early experience of being NEET is linked to poor health, depression, substance dependence, erratic lifetime employment, lower lifetime income, criminality and early death.⁹⁰ London School of Economics research estimates the social cost of NEET's at £3.65 billion a year.⁹¹

Economic exclusion is one of the worst forms of social alienation producing disgruntled cynical young people. Being excluded from employment opportunities leaves young people more vulnerable to being seduced into crime or extremism. Discrimination in employment is one of the major recruiting sergeants for criminals and extremists alike.

Universities in the UK should offer degree programs that specifically relate to current and/or forecasted shortages in the job market. By doing so, skill-specific jobs could be filled where there is high demand. As things currently stand, we still see that some people are increasingly overqualified and yet remain underemployed.

Breaking down the barriers

Black graduates are three times more likely to be unemployed than white graduates within six months of graduation, and should they find employment, black graduates are expected to earn up to 9% less for the same work within five years.⁹² This reality needs to change. 47% of black undergraduates believe the Government discriminates in its graduate recruitment. 60% of black students also do not expect to be in work within 6 months of graduating.⁹³ Approaching that critical stage of employment with a brighter outlook, without a negative preconceived view as to what is achievable, is key for our young people.

It is also important to understand what causes the decline in numbers from being in education to being in employment. Many youths become disillusioned as they soon realise the majority of the curriculum learnt in school is not applicable in the work place. As a result, they are left feeling as though the 'odds are stacked against them' and that many jobs are 'above' them.

Without stronger enforcement of equality legislation the current situation of being overqualified and underemployed will undoubtedly continue. Improving educational outcomes alone without tackling the obvious discrimination in recruitment could exacerbate the issue.

Putting our youth at the centre of the solution

Young people can be involved in initiatives to combat unemployment by simply including them in the processes. In quotas and research, there must be a concerted effort to make our young people's voices as loud as possible. Annual monitoring of the aspirations of students in school will help to highlight areas where there is a lack in future mapping of careers, while also identifying the factors that lead to a fallout from education to employment. Far greater emphasis must also be placed on our teachers to ensure there is a desire to create and foster an environment of high attainment not only in private schools, but also in our state schools.

5. EQUALITY AND GENDER

Equality is a cross-cutting theme of this report: the Employment and Enterprise chapter highlights inequality of opportunity in the job market, in particular for young people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds; the lack of equality of access to information and political education is raised in the Democracy chapter; lastly the lack of equality in outcomes in the education system and criminal justice system are examined in their respective chapters. In this chapter, we examine equality mainly from the point of view of gender and we look at; the lack of female representation in certain professions, the low number of women sitting on FTSE 100 boards and the effect it has on business and the economy, as well as the gender pay gap issue.

Recommendations

1. Promote participation and leadership of women and ethnic minorities in careers, particularly politics and engineering where they are hugely under-represented
2. Stop the undervaluing of women's work and address the gender pay gap, both in the UK and globally
3. Challenge stereotypes within our education system and careers advice services
4. Boost the economy and create a fairer workforce in the UK by harnessing women's skills and talents from the storeroom to the boardroom
5. More funding to support organisations mentoring girls and women
6. Reward employers who practice equal pay and heavily fine employers who do not.

Defining equality

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) defines equality as follows:

*"Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, what or whom they were born, what they believe, or whether they have a disability. Equality recognises that historically, certain groups of people with particular characteristics e.g. race, disability, sex and sexuality, have experienced discrimination."*⁹⁴

The EHRC wrote the review, "How Fair is Britain?" from which the following statistics have been taken:⁹⁵

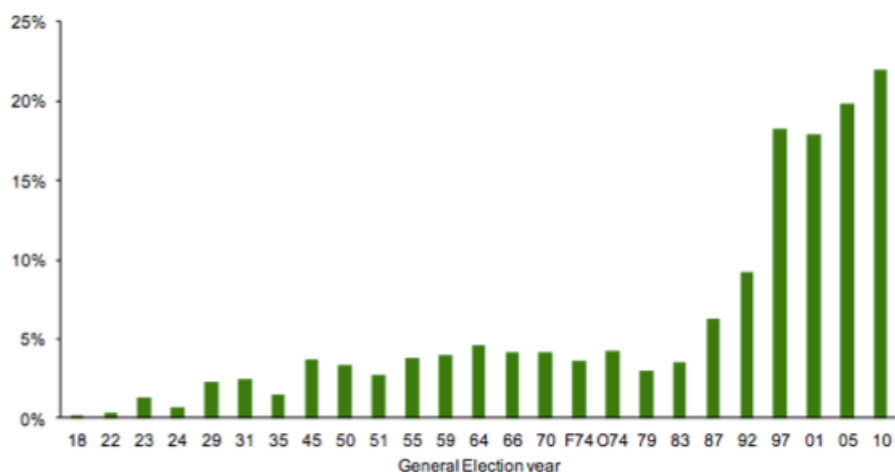
- In England and Wales, men and women living in the most deprived areas are twice as likely to commit suicide as those in the least deprived.
- Black African women who are asylum seekers are estimated to have a mortality rate 7 times higher than white women, partly due to problems in accessing maternal healthcare
- There is greater disproportionality in the number of black people in prisons in Britain than in the USA
- Domestic violence has a higher rate of repeat-victimisation than any other violent or acquisitive crime. It is under-reported in general, particularly amongst women from ethnic and religious minority communities

Lack of female representation in politics

*"Gender equality recognises that there are social, political and economic differences between women and men which are less to do with genetics and biology and more to do with how society is organized. We need to look at who holds the power that runs society and ultimately frames what girls and boys grow up to be later in life."*⁹⁷

Women make up 51% of the UK's population and 46% of the UK's workforce.⁹⁷ One of the biggest inequalities in our society today is linked to the lack of female representation in various careers and at senior levels of employment or leadership. Despite the fact that since 1918, women were given the right to vote through the Representation of the People Act, our Parliament almost 100 years later, has only just over one-fifth of MPs who are women. Of the 23% of female parliamentarians, only 1.2% of them are from minority ethnic groups, even though this group makes up 4% of the UK population.⁹⁸ Women involved in politics at a local government level still only make up a maximum of 31% of councillors in our country's boroughs.⁹⁹

Figure 1: Women MPs as a percentage of total 1918-2010



In the international rankings of gender-representative Parliaments, the UK are lagging far behind many other democracies and has fallen from 59th prior to the 2010 general election to 64th.¹⁰⁰ However, it is important to note that women are not just disproportionately represented as elected politicians but across all of the political professions, as the next table illustrates:



*Table taken from Sex & Power 2014: Who Runs Britain report

Women and STEM careers

In 2012, women occupied 13% of all STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) jobs in the UK.¹⁰¹ STEM careers, similar to politics are male dominated professions. For example *“only 8% of British engineers are women. This is the lowest proportion in Europe, and it is well behind Germany (15%), Sweden (25%) and Latvia (30%)”*.¹⁰² The root of this problem stems from the lack of females studying STEM subjects at university. Schools and careers services have a considerable part to play in this as they often encourage girls and boys into traditionally gender stereotyped occupations. This is despite the fact that girls are generally higher achievers in examinations in almost all subjects (including those considered to be male preserved, such as maths and physics) at all levels.¹⁰³

A World Bank report published in 2012 states that in order to regain the gender-balance of women and men in STEM careers the *“stereotypes within the education system, norms governing gender roles in the household that constrain a woman’s choice of occupation, and employers’ attitudes toward family formation and childbearing”*¹⁰⁴ need to be challenged and broken down.

There are organisations such as STEMNET and WiseT, which are working with schools, universities and STEM employers to boost the number of women going into STEM careers. These organisations offer mentoring programmes and networking events; to help young women build up their confidence and nurture their skills to study STEM subjects at university.

Women in leadership roles

In the last six months there has also been an accelerated rate of change of FTSE 100 boards, with women comprising 35.5% of new board appointments.¹⁰⁵ Although, on the surface, this may seem like a very impressive statistic this is still a distressing figure in the bigger scale of things. This is because despite the growth of women on boards, women only make up 20.7 % of FSTE 100 boards.¹⁰⁶ Across Europe women make up 17% of board members in the biggest publicly listed companies and around 4% of chairs on boards¹⁰⁷ These statistics strengthen the point that women are extremely marginalized compared to their male counterparts for executive board positions and that they are less likely to be placed in executive positions, as opposed to non-executive positions, due to the nature of their gender.

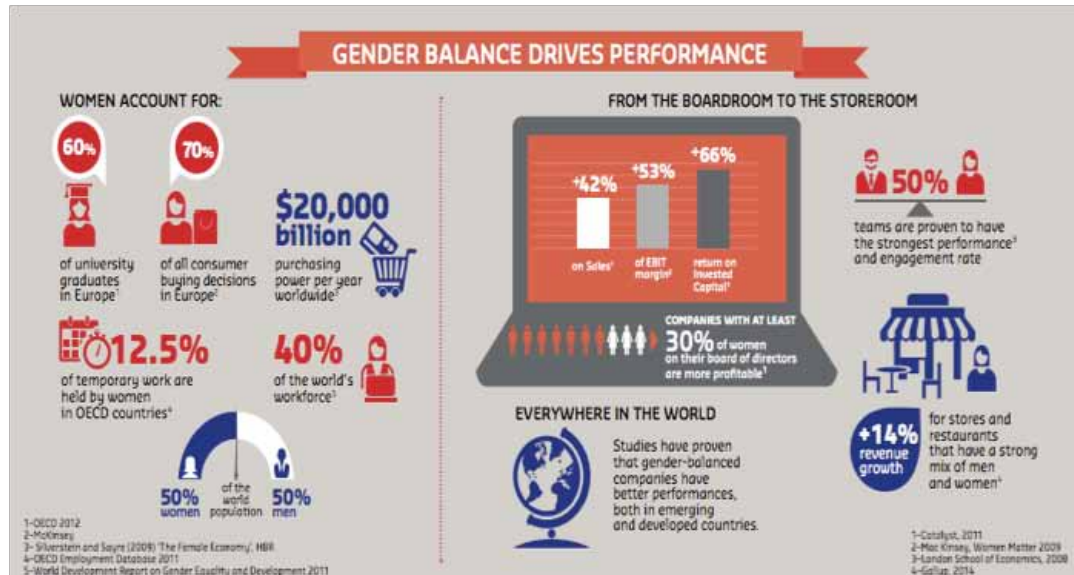
There is also a diversity deficit in the number of black and minority ethnics on the FTSE 100. A study by Green Park Consultancy showed that *“just 10 people from ethnic and cultural minorities hold the top posts of chairman, chief executive or finance director – equivalent to 3.5 per cent of the 289 jobs at that level.”*¹⁰⁸ The study also showed shockingly that *“more than half of FTSE 100 firms had no non-whites at board level, and two-thirds had no full-time minority executive directors.”*¹⁰⁹

More female representation makes business sense

The Women on Boards Davies Review Annual Report 2014 also makes it clear that it makes perfect business sense, to have more women represented at board level, for the following reasons:¹¹⁰

- Improve performance at Board and business levels through input and challenge from a range of perspectives;
- Access and attract talent from the widest pool available;
- Be more responsive to markets by aligning with a diverse customer base, many of whom are women; and
- Achieve better corporate governance, increase innovation and avoid the risks of ‘groupthink’.

The figure below shows further details of research by Catalyst on the effects of gender diversity on company profits.¹¹¹



*source:http://www.sodexo.com/en/Images/SODEXOGenderBalanceBusiness-News_EN342-767666.pdf

If the UK had a fairer workforce “it is estimated that the UK would gain up to £23 billion the equivalent to 2% of GDP by better harnessing women’s skills in employment.”¹¹²

Gender Pay Gap

The Equality Act (2010) entitles women to be paid the equivalent to that of a man carrying out the same level of work in the same employment.¹¹³ The gender pay gap is a reflection of the direct discrimination women are still facing in the workplace today by their employers, private or public. In 2013, the gender pay gap widened for the first time in five years, reverting a period of steady progress on bridging the wage gap between men and women.¹¹⁴ The Office for National Statistics found that in 32 of the 35 major occupations they classified, women earn less than men.¹¹⁵

In addition to these statistics, the International Business Times found that the gender pay gap is even worse in the private sector. Their research shows that “gender pay gap across the private sector is 19.9%, far higher than the 13.6% pay gap in the public sector”.¹¹⁶ Research also shows that the gender pay gap is almost an outrageous 34% gap when you compare women’s part time hourly rate to men’s full time hourly rate.¹¹⁷

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) also revealed some interesting facts in relation to the gender pay gap, such as, “female health professionals have the biggest pay gap at 31%, which works out at £16,000 a year. Top male professionals in health earn nearly £50 an hour, twice as much as top earning women who earn £24.67 an hour, according to the TUC”.¹¹⁸

The gender pay gap is not the only pay gap that exists. There is also a gender racial pay gap in the UK. For example, there is racial pay gap for solicitors, with *“white men having the highest average earnings – 29% more than their white female counterparts and 25% more than male solicitors from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background.”*¹¹⁹

Occupation	Hourly pay, men	Hourly pay, women	Gender pay gap (per cent)	Gender pay gap (per hour)	Gender pay gap (per year)
Health professionals	£26.54	£18.32	31.0%	£8.22	£16,029
Culture, media and sports occupations	£18.62	£13.50	27.5%	£5.12	£9,984
Process, plant and machine operatives	£10.79	£8.23	23.7%	£2.56	£4,992
Managers, directors and senior officials	£26.14	£20.21	22.7%	£5.93	£11,564
Business and public service associate professionals	£20.39	£16.05	21.3%	£4.34	£8,463
Corporate managers and directors	£27.51	£21.78	20.8%	£5.73	£11,174
Process, plant and machine operatives	£10.53	£8.56	18.7%	£1.97	£3,842
Skilled trades occupations	£12.03	£10.00	16.9%	£2.03	£3,959
Associate professional and technical occupations	£18.12	£15.20	16.1%	£2.92	£5,694
All employees	£16.50	£14.05	14.8%	£2.45	£4,778

The gender pay gap can also affect the long-term individual outcomes of women in the following ways:¹²⁰

- A woman earning less income is at a higher risk of poverty compared to men and it also contributes to their feeling of disempowerment.
- Women who have children are discouraged from going back to work as they do not feel they will be paid fairly enough for their labour.
- Women's poverty is closely linked to child poverty.
- Women's poverty impacts not only on their own well-being but also on their parenting capacity and thereby on their children's well-being.

The gender pay gap is not just a UK-wide issue but is global issue. The UK is one of the top 20 countries with the highest gender pay gap in the world.¹²¹ Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum said that, *“Low gender gaps are directly correlated with high economic competitiveness. Women and girls must be treated equally if a country is to grow and prosper.”*¹²²

Nordic countries such as Iceland, Sweden and Norway, where the gender pay gap is amongst the lowest in the world and nearly non-existent, are great exemplars of how the gender pay gap can be reduced.¹²³ In these countries unlike many others across the globe, women have been found to have almost achieved full equality to men in five critical areas: economic participation, economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment and health and well-being.¹²⁴ Hence, why it has been easier to reduce the gender pay gap in these countries, as they have been striving to give women full equality with men, in all aspects of their lives.

In Iceland, which has the lowest gender pay gap in the world, the government has partnered up with employers and trade unions to reduce the pay gap and raise awareness about how the gender pay gap is bad for business and the economy. They have created a certificate system, which has been developed by the government, private companies and various stakeholders.¹²⁵ This means that businesses that offer equal pay can be voluntarily audited in relation to how they pay their staff and whether they are equally paying women and men. Businesses, which have chosen to take part in the programme, have been seen to be actively marketing their certification in their job advertisements. A measure like this makes women or minority groups feel able to be more productive at work because they know they are being paid equally if they work for an accredited employer. This measure also attracts more talent to companies that voluntarily participate in the certificate system to show they are an equal pay employer.

Other countries such as Norway however have tried to make this measure compulsory. However, enforcement is not enough to tackle the gender pay gap. We need a paradigm shift in the attitudes that employers and males have about women in relation to many areas of a woman's personal and work life. Maybe the UK should follow Iceland or Norway's approach in order to tackle the pay gap issue in the UK. But the key is to raise awareness about this issue with employers. It is about time we start to name and shame the employers who do not pay male and female employees fairly and place heavy fines on those who are not complying with the law. We should also award employers with an accredited certificate for being an equal pay employer.

Conclusion

Despite girls outperforming boys in school exams, this is not translating into women getting their fair share of jobs in many professions, senior-managerial or board level positions. Women are also being paid less than men in the lower level jobs that they do get. Women's work should not be under-valued and women deserve to be earning the same amount of pay and bonuses as men regardless of their gender.

6. HEALTH

“Health is a fundamental human right and access to quality health care is vital in ensuring improved levels of well-being in the lives of young people and the economic prosperity of the nation.” - Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25, para. 1)

Young people are the future of the nation and it is important to take an interest in their present and future health and well-being. In this chapter, we identify issues affecting the health of young people, including adolescence. We believe these issues must be tackled strategically for better health outcomes.

Recommendations

1. An investment approach should be taken regarding the health needs of young people. One that helps young people develop skills to make good decisions about their own health.
2. In a time of reduced budgets and having to deal with health issues of an ageing population, politicians and the NHS need to focus on the bigger picture. Investing in the health issues of young people today will ensure they will not be a financial burden for the NHS in the future.
3. Local data should be regularly monitored to ensure young peoples' health interventions are provided in the correct quantities in the correct areas.
4. Clinical Commission Groups should consult with young people regarding health services provided for them.
5. Healthcare professionals should be trained to work with young people to ensure health issues are communicated effectively and health needs addressed adequately.

Health equality or inequality?

Poverty is all about socioeconomics, which is defined by different standards of household income, occupational level, National Statistics Socioeconomic classification (NS-SEC) and educational attainment among others.¹²⁶

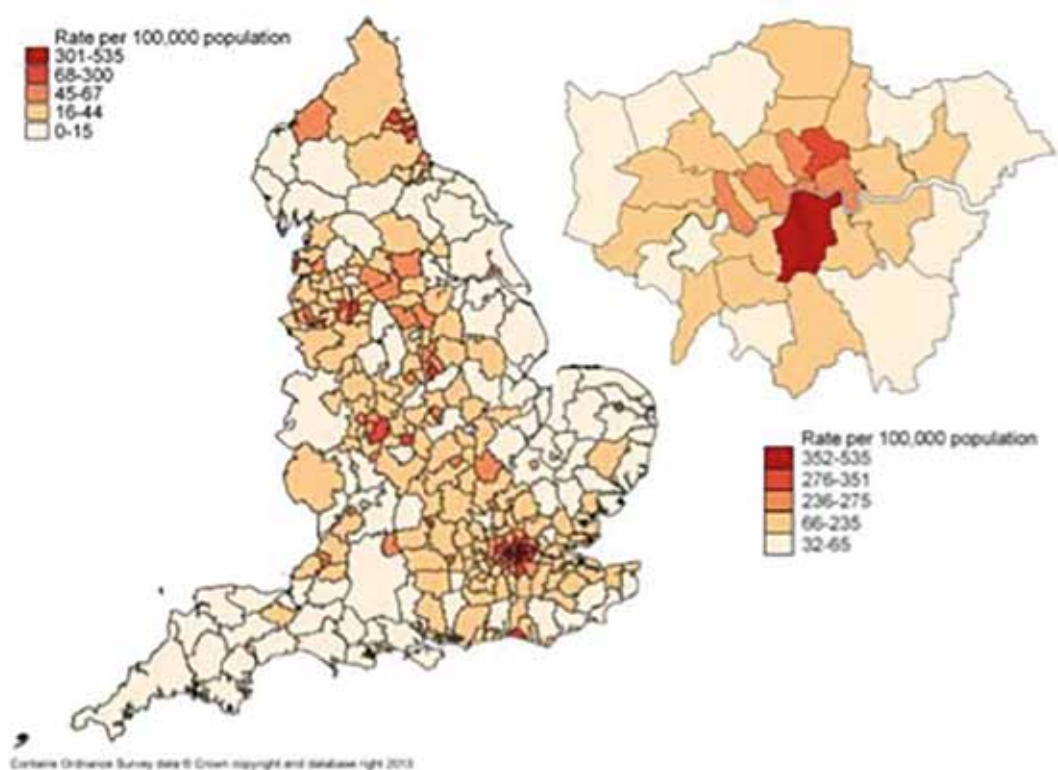
Even though the NHS provides free health care when needed at the point of delivery to all UK citizens, inequality to the accessibility of these services remains. The Marmot review highlighted “in England today people from different socio-economic groups experience avoidable differences in health, well-being and length of life, which is quite simply, unfair and unacceptable”.¹²⁷

Sexual health

Statistics show that the younger population (under 25s) were significantly more affected than other age groups by sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in 2013.¹²⁸

Chlamydia can lead to infertility. In 2013 of the 1.7million chlamydia tests in England among young people aged 15 to 24 years.¹²⁹ 139,237 were positive for chlamydia (2,016 per 100,000 young people).¹³⁰

The rate of sexually transmitted diseases is higher in urban areas, with an overlap between the populations at greatest risk of infection in areas of higher deprivation.¹³¹



There is also a link between deprivation and poorer reproductive health. Moreover, it has been found that poverty is a risk factor for promiscuous behaviour.¹³² Young people on lower incomes may lack the knowledge and resources to access appropriate health services to know how to maintain sexual and reproductive health. This concern must be addressed.

Mental health

Mental health is a major area for concern when discussing the health of young people because the top cause of mortality amongst both young females and males in Britain is suicide.

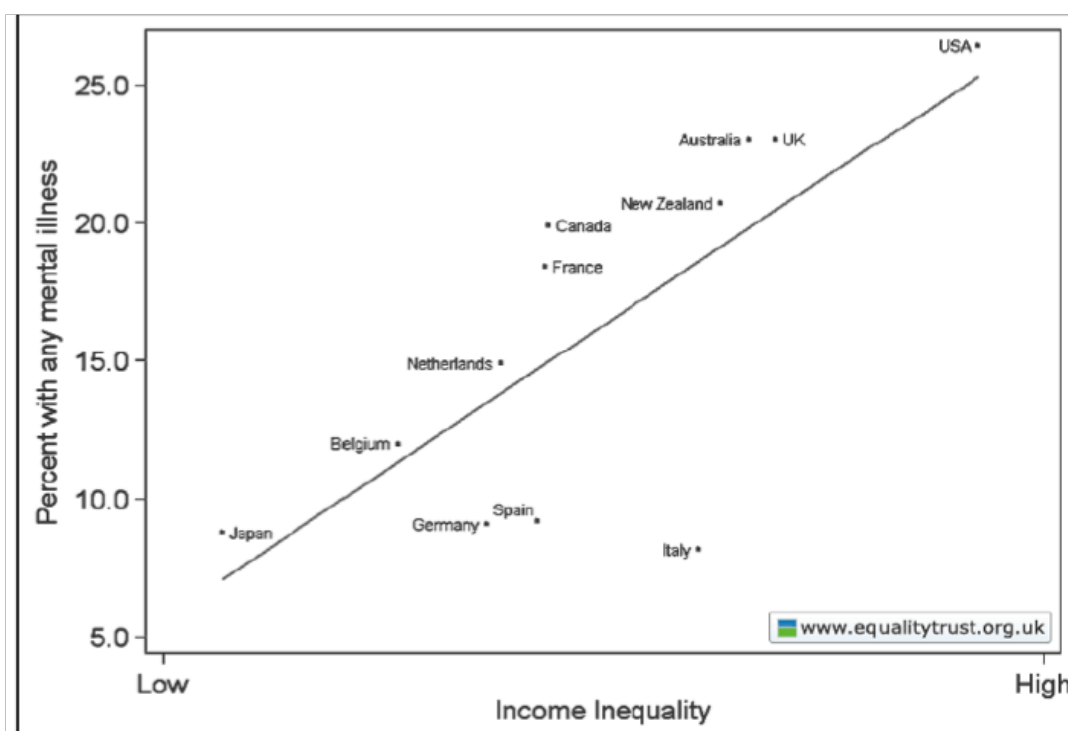
According to the Mental Health Foundation, “approximately 90% of suicide victims suffer from a psychiatric disorder at the time”¹³³ and there are significant levels of mental

health problems experienced by 16-24 year olds including: depression (2.2%);¹³⁴ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (4.7%);¹³⁵ neurotic symptoms (16.4%);¹³⁶ psychotic disorder (0.2%);¹³⁷ personality disorder (1.9%);¹³⁸ generalised anxiety disorder (3.6%);¹³⁹ and obsessive compulsive disorder (2.3%).¹⁴⁰ 6.2% of 16-24 year olds have attempted suicide¹⁴¹ and 8.9% have self-harmed once during their lifetime.¹⁴²

In 2011, 194 15-19 year olds and 427 20-24 year olds committed suicide.¹⁴³ Yet in 2014 the BBC reported, *"in terms of NHS spending, mental health accounts for only 13% of the budget despite causing 28% of illnesses."*¹⁴⁴ More funding needs to be made to mental health services for young people, as this could be a likely factor in reducing the percentage of young people suffering and committing suicide.

It is important to recognise that mental health encompasses negative states (mental illness or disorder) and positive states of mental well-being.

Evidence is clear that certain risk factors increase the likelihood of mental illness in children and young people. Maltreatment of a child (child abuse) can have a long- term impact on a child's mental health, intellectual development and mental well-being, as well as a negative effect on their functioning in adulthood.¹⁴⁵ Cultural issues can also drive mental health inequality if people do not look or behave in a way that is accepted. Internationally, mental illnesses are more common, in poorer countries with low employment rates or countries with high rates of income inequality.¹⁴⁶



*Wilkinson RG& Pickett KE(2009) The Spirit Level. Penguin

Mental health is not evenly distributed: those who experience the highest levels of social disadvantage also experience poorer mental health than those who experience lower levels of social disadvantage.¹⁴⁷

*"Poor mental health contributes to socio-economic and health problems such as higher levels of physical morbidity and mortality, lower levels of educational attainment, poorer work performance/productivity, greater incidence of addictions, higher crime rates and poor community and societal cohesion"*¹⁴⁸

Therefore, poverty is a key factor that predisposes young people to poorer mental health. It is an engine for all three of the inequalities mentioned in this chapter. The less well off a person is, the less access they will have to resources that help to ensure a sense of well-being e.g. health club membership or healthy foods. McCulloch and Goldie illustrated that the majority of factors that determine mental health also determine a person's socioeconomic status. Therefore, it can be argued that socioeconomic status drives mental health.

Table 1 Examples of determinants of mental health (McCulloch and Goldie, 2010)

Society	Community	Family	Individual
Equality versus discrimination	Personal Safety	Family Structure	Lifestyle factors (diet, exercise, alcohol intake)
Unemployment Levels	Housing and access to open space	Family dynamics (eg. High/low expressed emotion)	Attributional style (ie. How events are understood)
Social Coherence	Economic status of the community	Genetic Makeup	Debt versus financial security
Education	Isolation	Intergenerational Contact	Physical Health
Health Care Provision	Neighbourliness	Parenting	Individual relationships and responses to these

*Table 1: McCulloch & Goldie (2010) Public Mental Health Today

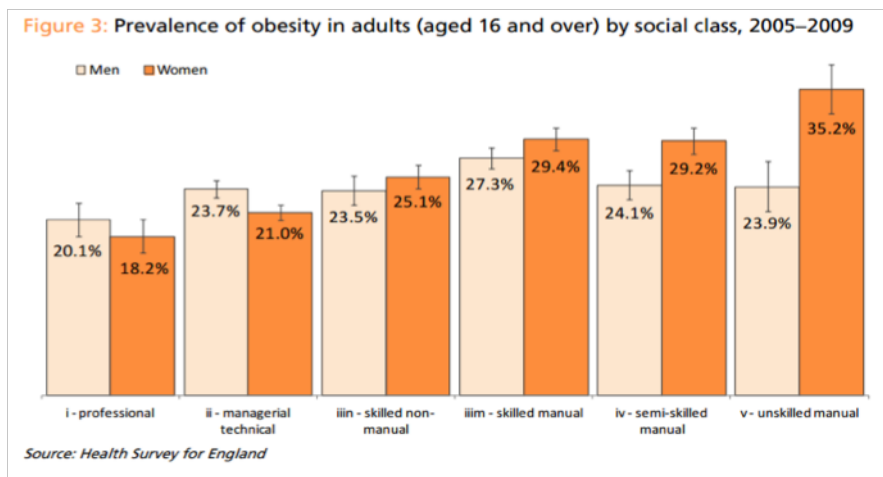
There is a very clear linear relationship, that the more unequal a society is (income-based), the greater the prevalence of mental illnesses. In other words, the wider the gap between rich and poor, the likelihood of an individual experiencing a mental illness increases. Also poor mental health is further linked to fewer opportunities in the labour market. Those that do find employment are more likely to be in lower paid unskilled roles.

Obesity

Obesity is another big problem impacting young people and young adults that should not be overlooked. For women, there is direct relationship between obesity and lower household incomes and lower socio-economic status.

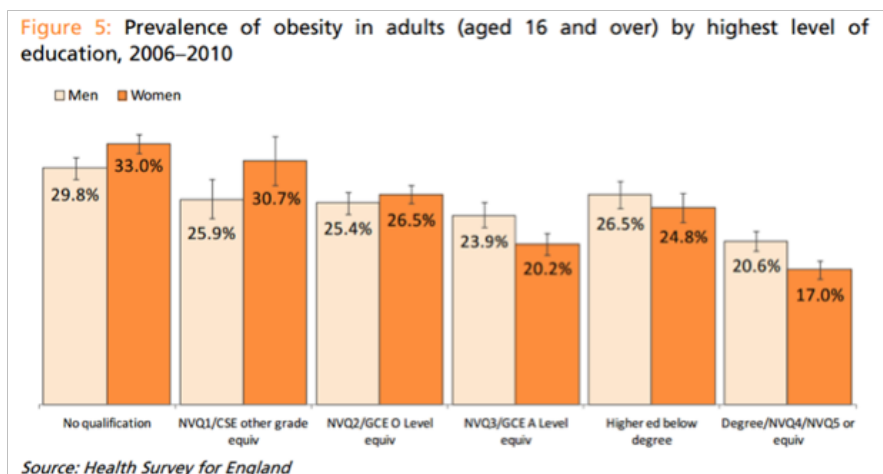
Women in unskilled manual occupations are twice as likely (35.2%) to be obese than women in professional occupations (18.2%).¹⁴⁹ Similarly, men in professional occupations have lower obesity prevalence (20.1%) than men in other occupational groups, but the differences are smaller compared to women.¹⁵⁰ Obesity prevalence is significantly higher in manual occupational groups for both men and women than non-manual occupational groups.

[Figure 1: National Obesity Observatory \(2012\) Adult Obesity and Socioeconomic status](#)



[Figure 3: National Obesity Observatory \(2012\) Adult Obesity and Socioeconomic Status](#)

Obesity prevalence also varies with levels of educational attainment. Figure 5 below shows men and women with a degree-level qualification have the lowest rates of obesity and those with no qualifications have the highest rates.



[Figure 5: National Obesity Observatory \(2012\) Adult Obesity and Socioeconomic Status](#)

The link between socio-economic status and obesity levels is also very clear to see amongst young people. However, the reasons behind this phenomenon are more complex as they are multifactorial. Firstly, a young person at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale is more likely to have less money available, especially disposable funds. Therefore, they are more likely to make food purchases that are cheaper. In some cases, this option includes food that has high levels of fat and sugar and may even be lower in quality. Secondly, they may lack the financial resources to gain access to health clubs; as a consequence, this group are at a higher risk of becoming obese.

Political Influence

"We need to stop thinking of what is spent on healthcare for children and young people and instead think of investing in the health of children and young people as a route to improving the economic health of our nation." - Dame Sally Davis¹⁵¹

NHS England is responsible for overseeing the budget and planning, as well as delivering and commissioning for the NHS. Its main objective is to improve the health outcomes for people in England.¹⁵²

The total funding allocation for the NHS is around £96 billion, the allocated funding for children and young people alone is not clear.¹⁵³ Children and young people receive a significantly lower priority than adults where management, delivery and funding are concerned.¹⁵⁴ Even though, adolescence and early adulthood can be a fragile time for health risks to increase because of peer pressure, personal vulnerability, or lack of information.¹⁵⁵ There is evidence that money spent on services for adolescents has fallen by 36% in the past two years. The reduction in funding has been described as "disproportionate" by many key figures in health.¹⁵⁶

The government has opened up community health services¹⁵⁷ to competitive funding, which enables private companies and charities to apply to run these services as well as NHS services. The government believe that through competition, healthcare quality will improve and promote patient choice. However, the effectiveness of the 'competitive' approach is questionable. Burgess et al, one of the few researchers to investigate the impact of competition on quality of care, found that competition can have a negative impact. His study found that "the impact of competition is to reduce quality of care".¹⁵⁸

The reforms of the NHS could cause difficulties including: a reduction in the NHS services and an increase in private services; GPs having financial interests rather than the health and well-being of patients; and patients not having sufficient time to make informed decisions. The roles of GPs as both businesses and trying to improve the health of local populations could become conflicted.

Surveys of young people aged 11 to 19¹⁵⁹ showed that over a quarter said they did not feel comfortable communicating their needs to their GP.¹⁶⁰ It is questionable whether the NHS reforms favour young people. Since GPs play a major role in the

NHS reforms, it could be possible that the health of young people deteriorate as statistics show many young people have difficulty in communicating with their GP. If over a quarter of 11-19 year olds feel uncomfortable visiting GPs - they are less likely to visit. This implies that GPs are not accurately informed about the health and well-being of young people and are unable to provide accurate statistics to rationalise their choices. However, of recent, NHS England and the Royal College of GPs have teamed up together to sign to a pledge to improve child health outcomes.¹⁶¹

A more long term 'investment approach' should be taken when addressing the health of young people. Politicians and the NHS should not solely focus on the needs of an ageing population. This investment in young people must not be in healthcare alone but include an investment to increase learning opportunities for young people, in order to help them develop skills to assist them with making good decisions for their own health.

7. HOUSING

This chapter examines the reasons for the housing crisis and homelessness. Statistical evidence shows that young people are suffering as a result of the housing crisis. An overwhelming 52% of people seeking help for homelessness in England are under 25, as well as, half of those living in homelessness hostels.¹⁶² This chapter also explains how the shortage of affordable housing stock is at the centre of the housing problem in the UK.

Recommendations

1. Increase regulation of private landlords and offer 'student rent discounts'
2. Tax overseas owners of properties in Britain much more heavily
3. Implement a national programme using refurbished shipping containers to provide low cost, quick and flexible housing for young people
4. Create new garden cities as an essential step towards building the homes we need
5. Allow all local councils in England and Wales to spend their capital receipts on house building schemes
6. Help young people to get on the property ladder by providing more housing schemes and government grants
7. Allow for local residents to purchase empty homes in their communities
8. Free courses should be available to all young people to raise their awareness of their housing rights.

Lack of housing stock

The *Barker Review*¹⁶³ in 2004 stated that just to meet the needs of social housing, 17,000 more homes needed to be made available each year.¹⁶⁴ To make a real difference to the backlog of housing need, it suggested, 23,000 additional affordable homes a year.¹⁶⁵

The government has tried to address the housing need in the UK by focusing on stimulating demand for home ownership ('Help to Buy' schemes)¹⁶⁶ rather than subsidising the supply of social housing to rent.¹⁶⁷ Home ownership is a concept increasingly out of reach for young people, which mean that recent policies have not adequately addressed their housing needs.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation says that we could face a shortage of over one million homes by 2022 unless the rate of house building increases substantially.¹⁶⁸

Self-building and Garden Cities

Nick Boles, a Conservative MP and former Planning Minister, suggested that, *“Young people who cannot afford to buy somewhere to live should be handed plots of state-owned land so they can build homes of their own”*. The building of your own home is very popular in various countries. For example, in Austria 80% of all homes are self-built. In Germany, France and Italy the figure is 60%. In the US and Australia it is over 40%. By contrast the figure for the UK is about 10%.¹⁶⁹

If the UK government were to invest more money in self-build schemes and encouraged young people to work on the building and development of these houses – numerous project and employability skills could be acquired. These include planning skills, management skills and building skills. Additionally, a greater number of homes would become available, helping tackle the problem of the housing shortage.

We believe that the building of garden cities is an excellent idea, and so do much of the general public. Garden cities are a residential suburb or community planned so as to provide a pleasant environment with low-density housing and open public land.¹⁷⁰ 74% of those asked in a recent survey supported the idea of garden cities, with only 13% disagreeing.¹⁷¹ Garden Cities also have support from housing charities such as Shelter.¹⁷² In addition to this, Deputy PM Nick Clegg supports garden cities, along with Planning Minister Nick Boles and Labour leader Ed Milliband (who promised to build a generation of garden cities in his conference speech).¹⁷³ It must however be remembered that Garden Cities are a long-term strategy and will not address the housing need adequately in the short-term.

Another low cost alternative is converting shipping containers into homes for the homeless. This is quick, substantially cheaper than conventional house building and the nature of the structures mean councils can increase or relocate homes very easily, providing a flexible response to local housing need. This idea should be explored as a low cost alternative for housing young people. Costing around twenty thousands pounds per container and a rent on average of seventy five pounds per week, such a scheme could solve the housing crisis if taken up by all Councils and funded by Government.

Political promises

All major parties are agreed on the need for an increase in new homes.¹⁷⁴ In terms of increasing the supply of housing, the Labour party have pledged to build 200,000 homes a year by 2020.¹⁷⁵ Ed Milliband, the Labour party leader had set up a review, led by Sir Michael Lyons, to research how to reach this target.¹⁷⁶ This review was scheduled for release in September 2014, but (as of date of writing) has still not been released. If the Labour government were able to deliver on their promise, it would act as a major inroad in tackling the problem of housing shortage.¹⁷⁷ If Labour were to get in to government in 2015, 200,000 homes a year for 5 years would equate to one million homes. This would nearly match the number of homes that the Joseph Roundtree foundation believes must be built to fix the housing shortage crisis.¹⁷⁸

The Conservative government have promised first time buyers under age 40 up to 20% off of the market rate when buying a house.¹⁷⁹ David Cameron, the Conservative party leader, has continued to say that 100,000 homes will be built for such people, and these homes would be built on Brownfield land 'already identified and for development and exempt from some taxes'.¹⁸⁰ If the Conservative party get in to government, and David Cameron fulfils his promise, we believe that this could be a very beneficial policy, particularly for young people.

The Liberal Democrats state that they will bring 70,000 empty homes back in to use.¹⁸¹ Statistics suggest that there are 300,000 long-term empty homes in the UK (meaning they have been empty for more than 6 months).¹⁸² The Liberal Democrats promise of bringing back in to use these empty homes does not therefore appear that significant, as it accounts for only 23% of the long term empty homes in the UK.

Homelessness

It is important to realise that 'homelessness' is usually extended to include more than just so-called 'rough sleepers' and includes those living in temporary accommodation such as bed and breakfast hotels.¹⁸³ Research indicates that experiencing homelessness significantly increases your chance of having long-term physical health problems or being diagnosed with a mental health condition.¹⁸⁴

Young homeless people are more vulnerable than the overall homeless population.¹⁸⁵ Shelters, a well-known homeless charity, have stated homelessness can adversely affect a child's performance at school.¹⁸⁶ Even more worrying, Crisis, another well-known homeless charity state that in the last three years, the number of young people sleeping on London's streets has more than doubled and new figures show 8% of 16-24 year olds report recently being homeless.¹⁸⁷

In the 'Valuable Lives' Crisis report it highlights that 51% of the young homeless population have been excluded from school, 40% have experienced abuse at home and 33% self-harm.¹⁸⁸ The report also makes clear that young homeless people go to desperate measures to avoid sleeping rough, including committing a crime or resorting to sex work to get a roof over their heads.¹⁸⁹

An alarming statistic from the report shows that of the young homeless population, 30% have been in care,¹⁹⁰ which raises serious questions in relation to whether our care system is offering these young and often vulnerable young people the support that they need.

Hidden homelessness is loosely defined, as those provisionally homeless and so specific figures can be hard to ascertain.¹⁹¹ Isla Haigh of Depal UK, a charity set up in response to the growing number of young people sleeping rough on the streets says that there are a lot more young people becoming 'hidden homeless'.¹⁹² She argues that many young people don't have housing options available to them if they choose to leave or are kicked out from their family home.¹⁹³

Affordability and the 'clipped wing' generation

The affordability element of housing is one of the biggest problems being faced by young people in Britain. It is ironic that the generation least responsible for causing this huge problem are the ones who have to bear the burden of it.¹⁹⁴ Rents, particularly in London are unaffordable for young people.¹⁹⁵

The 2013 census showed that there were over 3.3 million adults in the UK aged between 20 and 34 living with a parent or parents, which amounts to 26% of this age group.¹⁹⁶ The Money Charity showed that the average young person would have to save for 22 years to acquire enough money for a house deposit.¹⁹⁷ This problem is not just producing a generation of young people unable to fly the nest, but it will have a crippling effect on them leading independent lives and will inevitably have an impact on their social lives and mental health. The chief executive of Shelter, Campbell Robb has coined this as the 'clipped wing generation'¹⁹⁸

The 'help to buy' scheme recently implemented by the government theoretically looked an excellent proposal, however, with the average age of a first time homebuyers in the UK being 37, young people for the foreseeable future will be reliant on renting.¹⁹⁹ Help to buy therefore fails to address the housing needs of young people.

A solution better tailored toward young people would be a 'help to rent' scheme, where the government subsidises the rent costs of young people making active contributions to our society, such as those in education, work or training. This sort of scheme in particular, would be very beneficial for young people who are renting in places where renting prices are very high, such as London.

A lot of young people are heavily reliant on housing benefit, and arguably through little fault of their own, given the youth unemployment crisis. 380,000 people aged under 25 claim housing benefit, and 204,000 (53%) of these people have children dependant on them.²⁰⁰ The problem for many young people is that housing benefit is so low 'it often won't even cover the cost of a room in a cheap shared house, leaving people to sleep where they can – on the floors of friends or family or, at worst, the streets.'²⁰¹ Therefore, the scrapping or reduction of housing benefits for under 25's by this government or the next would really affect young people. In a time of some of the worst youth unemployment levels in history,²⁰² government should be supporting young people the best they can, not making their life harder.

Ministers have said that one third of the cheapest properties in the UK should be available and affordable for young people whereas research done by the Crisis has found that fewer than 2% of properties fit this criterion.²⁰³ On the Shelter Policy Blog, Pete Jefferys argues that many young renters are paying more than older homeowners for the roof over their heads.²⁰⁴ In an era of high youth unemployment, tripled university fees and slashed EMA, the question must be asked of how fair this truly can be?

More regulation needed in the private housing market

Of the 8.3 million households renting, 4.2 million of them rent from social landlords and 4.1 million privately.²⁰⁵ The government introduced the affordable houses programme regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). However, as landlords can still charge up to 80% of the market rent, this idea of 'affordable rent' remains inaccessible to young people

Furthermore, there is no regulation preventing greedy landlords exploiting tenants by charging excessively high rents, in order to make huge profit margins on their properties. To site an example, a recent article in the Guardian revealed a multi-millionaire landlord was charging £225 per week for 'studio apartments' as small as three metres by three metres, which tenants claimed are worse than prison cells. These tiny studio flats were earning the landlord and the subletting company an estimated £400,000 a year in rent.²⁰⁶

In addition, an increasing number of wealthy overseas investors are being attracted by the profit margins available to private landlords in the UK, and are also beginning to take part in these exploitative practices. This explains why two-thirds of homes bought by people from overseas were not purchased for owner-occupation but as investments. Unless a strong, firm, unequivocal message, reinforced by the law is given to these landlords; tenants in the UK will continue to be exploited.

8. IMMIGRATION

Immigration is one of the most current and emotive topics being currently discussed in British politics. Some people are saying this single issue could be a deciding factor for votes in this coming election in 2015. This chapter looks at complex issues to do with undocumented migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. We also highlight the problems that the media fails to discuss.

Recommendations

1. The government should provide an integration process of about 1 month to help asylum-seeking children/young people adjust to the UK society and lifestyle.
2. Special access programmes that allow for young undocumented migrants; refugees and asylum seekers to go on to further education after school
3. Grant amnesty for irregular migrants who have been here for more than five years.
4. Grant amnesty to children and young people of migrants; refugees and asylum seekers if they meet certain criteria, e.g. certain school grades at school and have no criminal record.
5. Grant access to legal aid, protect and safeguard the rights, health and well-being of children (i.e. under 18s) of migrants, refugee and asylum seekers.
6. Free health care coverage for children under the age of 18, whether they are refugees, undocumented migrants or asylum seekers.

Immigration bill and the state of children's rights

According to the UK Visas and Immigration website, the new immigration bill (2014) makes way for a series of reforms which will ensure our immigration system is fairer to British citizens, legitimate migrants and tougher on those with no right to be here (UK).²⁰⁷

However, our research presented in this chapter, make it clear that everyone does not support the purposes of this new bill. The Children's Rights Alliance for England in a recent report, *'The state of children's rights in England'*, say that the Immigration Bill undermines the rights of migrant and asylum seeking children to family life, health care, housing, protection from harm and the right to have their best interests taken into account in decisions that affect their lives.

'Illegal' (sometimes termed irregular) immigrants is a blanket term covering those who have entered the UK without authority; entered with false documents; overstayed their visas; worked or studied on a tourist visa/non-immigrant visa

waiver; or entered into a forced or fraudulent marriage. However, according to the BBC, the word 'illegal immigrant' a term widely used by the media and public does not seem to exist officially and is not defined anywhere in UK law.

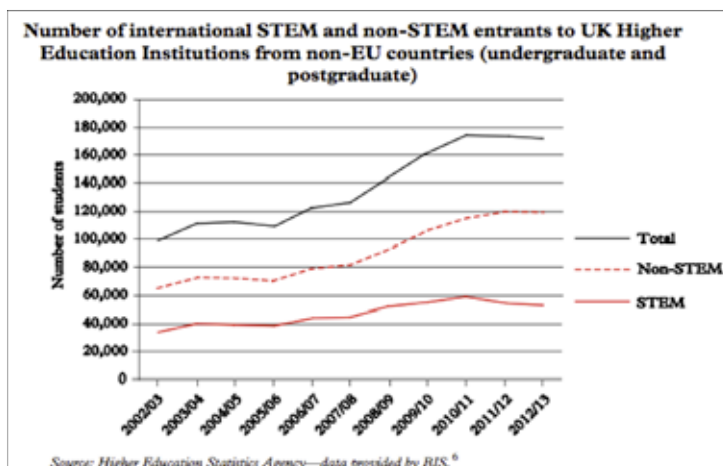
The government is creating an increasingly hostile environment for undocumented children and eroding their rights through recent changes. For example, through the implementation of the 2014 Immigration Bill, it has curbed entitlement to health care, housing and very importantly legal aid which is no longer available to those with immigration (as opposed to asylum) issues and even when they are regularised they still face difficulties.

According to a senior migrant advocacy worker, who works with around 1500 young refugees and migrants every year for The Children's Society *"the government have also imposed restrictions on working and claiming benefits and have placed a 'no recourse to public funds condition on those granted some form of limited leave to remain, unless they are destitute"*. For example, those with limited leave to remain can apply to university, but they cannot apply for a loan from student finance as home students. They will be classified as international students. This means that their chances of going university are significantly reduced.²⁰⁸

When asked about the challenges faced by children and young people who migrate to the UK, another senior worker for Praxis community UK said, *"that they face and live in a condition that no child should experience."* Praxis has dealt with around 300 cases concerning families and young people in the last two years, but the resources provided to them are very limited, as they are getting an increasing number of young people seeking for help.²⁰⁹

Education and Housing

UK university fees were capped at £9000 for home and European Union (EU) students and increased to £11,000 for international students in 2012, along with tougher new visa rules. This has resulted in the number of international students enrolling into universities in the UK decreasing, for the first time in nearly 30 years and also includes those presently living within the UK but classed as 'undocumented'.



Many families experiencing this situation of not having the appropriate documentation to remain in the UK have to face the difficulty of constantly moving from one low-standard accommodation to another. In an interview conducted by the Daily Mail, a young mother named Ruth (Ruth is not her real name) describes how she tries to cope with this situation. *“Moving is a part of me now,”* she says. With no access to benefits that could top up their income, even child benefit, sometimes Ruth and Dyanna (her daughter) are malnourished. Ruth recently had to turn down a new and better-paid job because again she would need to provide her passport. This is the life for many mothers and children, if their status is not regulated. Ruth herself was trafficked here from Ghana aged 14 and was used as a slave by the people she lived with.

Health, Economic and Social life

Overall, the situation of most undocumented migrant or refugee and asylum seeking families is quite desperate. Although they may be granted leave to remain, in the meantime many are not allowed to work nor claim benefits to supplement their income.

Asylum Seekers are currently not allowed to work in the UK, although refugees are. However, very few people are awarded refugee status in the UK and around 75% of applicants for refugee status fail.²¹⁰ Every patient will soon be asked to prove their immigration status when accessing health services. This would mean that undocumented people may not even be able to see a doctor if they are sick. It is already hard for some of them to be registered with a GP because they don't have proof of address.²¹¹

We believe that there should also be a process by which young undocumented people can become documented if they meet certain criteria, e.g. get a certain grade at school and have no criminal record. The recent immigration amnesty decision of Barack Obama under the DREAM Act is a major example to follow here in the UI.

According to the Coram Children's Legal Centre's report, many undocumented young migrants currently living in the UK have very strong legal claims to remain, but face obstacles to regularising their immigration status. These obstacles include:

lack of awareness of their legal rights; the inability to understand the extremely complex immigration rules; misinformation about legal rights and routes to regularisation; lack of access to legal advice and representation, including the absence of legal aid for non-protection immigration cases; and being deceived and exploited by unregulated immigration solicitors. The report calls for these issues to be addressed with great urgency and effectiveness, if the UK is to fulfil its national and international legal obligations towards children. According to the report, a recent estimate put the number of undocumented migrant children in the UK at 120,000, with over half born here in the UK.²¹²

Conclusion

In conclusion, we want to reframe the problem, as we strongly believe that those who define the situation are distorting the reality. Ideally, we argue that the policies governing children and young people who are classified as 'undocumented migrants' requires change and that our recommendations be taken into serious consideration.

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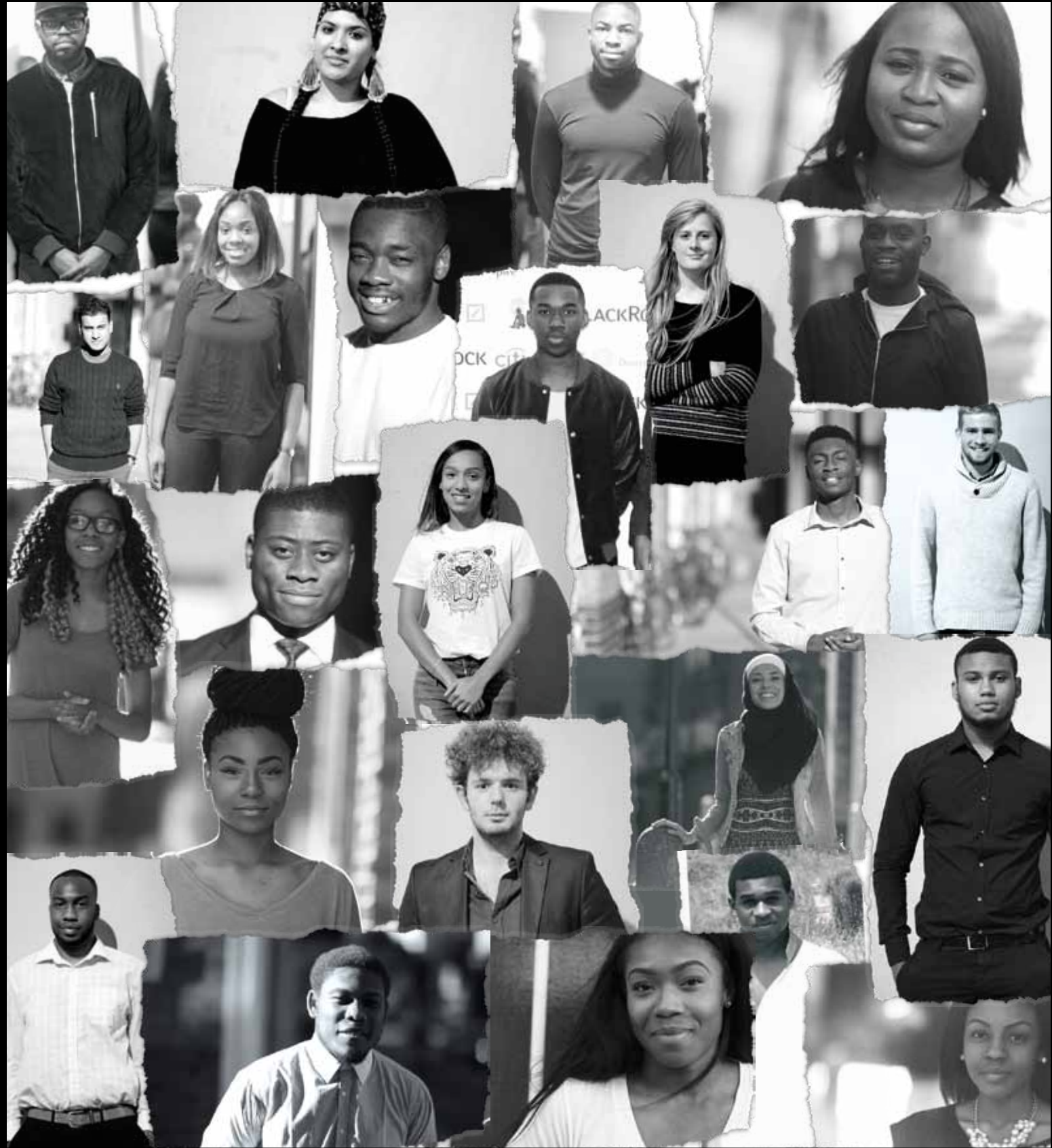
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