

Written evidence submitted by Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation (TFEB 06)

Technical and Further Education Bill

Recommendation: To amend the Technical and Further Education Bill to insert a ‘**Social Mobility Clause**’ which mandates the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education to monitor and report on the gap in *access, completion and progression* between disadvantaged young people and their peers entering technical routes and apprenticeships, and to pay due regard to closing this gap throughout the Institute’s work.

1. The Ambition

“High-quality technical and further education is not only vital in opening up doors to young people in some of the hardest to reach areas of the country, it also helps local businesses get the skilled workforce they need to drive up the productivity and economic growth that our economy needs.”

Rt. Hon Robert Halfon, Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships

1.1 We welcome the Minister’s commitment to ensuring that changes to technical and further education consider the needs of disadvantaged young people and appreciate the potential they possess to improve social mobility and address the national skills gap.

1.2 All young people, irrespective of their background, should be able to access high-quality education and skills which enrich their lives and their long term prospects. But too few students from disadvantaged backgrounds transition from Level 2 to higher levels of study, limiting their potential and further embedding disadvantage and inequality.

1.3 High-quality technical education and work-based training has the ability to act as a vehicle for social mobility. We believe that this should be explicit in the remit of the new Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

2. The Evidence

2.1 Apprenticeships

2.1.1 The Institute is responsible for meeting the government’s target of 3 million apprenticeship starts and with overseeing the standard of these apprenticeships. This is a positive ambition and one we support.

2.1.2 In addition, we believe that it is vital that the Institute has a strategy for addressing the current gaps in access and quality of apprenticeships on offer to young people:

- In 2015/16, there were 503,700 apprenticeship starts in England:
 - Only 26% of these were started by under 19s
 - The majority (57%) of apprenticeship starts were at a Level 2.¹
- Apprenticeships tend to be started at a level *the same or below* that of a young person’s highest level of prior attainment,² meaning they are not acting as a progression tool.
- The 2016 Social Mobility Commission State of the Nation report found that there is a stark inequality in access to Level 3 and above pathways for disadvantaged young people. **Nationally, FSM students are half as likely to start and complete an apprenticeship than their better off peers.**³

¹ <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06113#fullreport>

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522969/bis-16-192a-prior-qualifications-adult-survey-apprentices-2013-14.pdf

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-nation-2016>

2.2 Post-16 progression

2.2.1 Earlier this year, Impetus-PEF published a report titled: [*The road most travelled? The 16-19 journey through education and training*](#). The report sought to understand the journey taken by the significant number of low attaining 16 year olds once they finish school.

Our research found that:

- There has been a consistent gap in the attainment of five A*-C GCSEs, including in English and maths, between FSM and non-FSM young people. It is currently 28 percentage points⁴.
- **Just under 50% of FSM students attain a Level 2 in English and maths by 19, versus 74% of their better off peers.**
- **Only 36% of FSM students attain a Level 3 qualification, versus 60% of their better off peers.**

2.2.2 **Too few disadvantaged students transition from Level 2 to Level 3 study.** Disproportionate numbers of FSM students end up in Further Education Colleges where they are most likely to be studying catch up provision in English and maths. The majority study a Level 2 vocational subject alongside these courses but fail to progress to a higher level.

2.2.3 The Post-16 Skills plan has proposed the creation of 15 high-quality routes. Presently, very few young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are gaining the qualifications to enable them to enrol in and complete such routes. The potential of a 'transition year', also proposed in the skills plan, is encouraging, but more information regarding who it is for and what kind of provision it will include is critically required.

3. Our Proposed Social Mobility Clause

3.1 We support the streamlining of technical education and believe that post-16 education should, particularly for disadvantaged young people, be about more than just catch up provision. It must offer high-quality education which enables all young people to progress and develop skills which allow them to succeed in life. Therefore, the Institute should be held accountable for monitoring and enabling equality of opportunity and progression.

3.2 In practice, a 'Social Mobility Clause' would require the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to collect and publish data on the gap between disadvantaged young people and their peers in:

- Achievement of Level 2 English and maths by 19
- Enrolment in Level 3 Technical Education routes
- Entry to Advanced Apprenticeships
- Progression and completion rates of all technical routes and apprenticeships

We recommend that the Institute publish its findings annually. This report should be supported by documentation which outlines how all relevant government bodies (Ofsted, Ofqual, DfE) are addressing these gaps and what action is being taken to close them.

4. About Us

Impetus-PEF transforms the lives of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed in education, employment and life. We do this by finding, funding and building the most promising charities providing effective support to these young people; and by influencing, through robust research and policy advocacy, the decisions and resources that impact young people's lives.

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⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/494073/SFR01_2016.pdf