



Character and Resilience Manifesto

The all-party
parliamentary
group on
Social Mobility



With
CENTREFORUM
and
**CHARACTER
COUNTS**

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Chris Paterson, Claire Tyler
and Jen Lexmond

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ISBN: 978-1-909274-14-3

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■ Foreword by Baroness Claire Tyler for the all-party parliamentary group on Social Mobility

Over the last year, the all party parliamentary group (APPG) on Social Mobility has taken a look at one of the most knotty and seemingly intractable social policy challenges we face as a country. Why do some talented children grow up to fulfil their ambitions and become leaders in any number of fields, while others never realise their full potential? What can be done to help more people succeed in life? How do we create a UK in which a person's life chances are determined by their talent, not the circumstances of their birth? These are some of the difficult questions that this Character and Resilience Manifesto aims to answer.

There is a growing body of research linking social mobility to social and emotional skills, which range from empathy and the ability to make and maintain relationships to application, mental toughness, delayed gratification and self-control. These research findings all point to the same conclusion: character counts. People who overcome adversity and realise their full potential tend to exhibit many of these traits. In simple terms, these traits can be thought of as a belief in one's ability to achieve, an understanding of the relationship between effort and reward, the patience to pursue long-term goals, the perseverance to stick with the task at hand, and the ability to bounce back from life's inevitable setbacks. These various attributes all fall under the broad heading of "Character and Resilience."

Last February, the APPG on Social Mobility held a Character and Resilience Summit in Admiralty House involving practitioners, academics and opinion-formers from the worlds of education,

employment, politics and the voluntary sector, as well as young people themselves who have had to cope with personal adversity. We heard from an incredibly diverse range of speakers, including the Headmaster of Eton, Tony Little, who explained how he teaches his pupils about failing and picking themselves up again, and Camila Batmanghelidjh – founder of Kids Company – who described her work with some of the most deeply traumatised children in the country to rebuild their basic self-worth and faith in life.

The Summit looked at the growing body of research highlighting how character traits and resilience are directly linked to being able to do well both at school and in the workplace. We also heard how working with young people with low self esteem on building resilience to setbacks and developing an increased sense of control over their lives had led to improved literacy and numeracy results. So these so-called “soft skills” can lead to hard results. Increasingly, some schools in both state and independent sectors are saying that developing these traits is part of their “core business”. For employers, these more intangible skills of sticking at it, not accepting second best, empathy and teamwork are precisely what they are looking for in potential recruits. To summarise what we heard from academics, head teachers, employers and charity leaders alike, “whatever qualifications you might have, where you are on the character scale will have a big impact on what you can achieve in life”.

The evidence also makes clear that people are not just born with or without Character and Resilience traits. Rather, a person learns to develop and use these abilities throughout their life. They can be taught and learnt at all stages of life. This means that policymakers and practitioners have a key role to play in encouraging the development of Character and Resilience throughout the population.

In the year since the Summit, we have been examining the available evidence in more detail. The research base around Character and Resilience must continue to develop and this must be a key area of focus. However, we – as a cross-party group – now believe it is sufficiently compelling that policy makers must act. This document therefore puts forward a set of policies across the early years, school years, out of school

activities and transition to work and adulthood that will help people develop these essential Character and Resilience traits. In short, this manifesto identifies what we as a group believe to be the best policies for improving Character and Resilience at all stages of life.

When we talk about education in this country, our first thoughts often turn exclusively to exam results and academic achievement. The APPG on Social Mobility believes that if our education system also focussed more on these so-called “soft skills”, young people would leave school and university much better equipped to face life and its challenges. Indeed, even talking about “soft skills” is something of a misnomer because these aren’t fluffy or superficial skills we’re talking about – this is about having the fundamental drive, tenacity and perseverance needed to make the most of opportunities and to succeed whatever obstacles life puts in your way.

Character and Resilience are major factors in social mobility but are often overlooked in favour of things which are more tangible and easier to measure. We believe Britain needs a ‘national conversation’ about the role that developing Character and Resilience can play in narrowing the unacceptably wide gap in life chances between children from different backgrounds. It is our hope that this manifesto and the recommendations it contains will help spark that conversation. This will require a shift in thinking in relation to policy goals and outcomes. We know that permanently closing the opportunity gap between the affluent and the disadvantaged will require more than raising test scores, important though that undeniably is. Rather, it will require inspiring people from all backgrounds to change their perceptions of themselves, what they can achieve and their relationship to society at large.

Bringing about such significant social change will not be easy work. This manifesto is therefore a “call to arms” to politicians across all parties, policy makers and practitioners to think seriously about what they can do to help people from every walk of life to realise their full potential.

It is not, however, a call for immediate increases in funding for various programmes. It is no secret that money is still tight right now. We believe that by prioritising policies that work and by

weaving together existing sources of funding, policymakers can have a more effective impact on social mobility in the current climate. Beyond that, funding decisions will be a matter of future policy directions and priorities for 2015 onwards which all political parties will wish to spell out in their election manifestos, including the balance of spending between early years, primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Our 18 specific policy recommendations that constitute this manifesto are listed below. The remainder of the document – developed in collaboration with the think tank CentreForum and the organisation Character Counts – will elaborate on these and support them with relevant evidence and case studies.

The APPG look forward to hearing from the Government how it proposes to respond to this challenge and to the specific recommendations we make. We also urge all political parties to think about these issues seriously and set out their own policy response in their election manifestos. The life chances of current and future generations of children, young people and adults are at stake. They deserve the very best that the country can offer and our unstinting support.

: Character and Resilience manifesto

In the early years, the APPG calls on government to:

1. Introduce an Early Years Premium, extending the Pupil Premium into early years education;
2. Support development of a best practice tool-kit for the early years focussing on interventions that aid development of the crucial non-cognitive base in early child development;
3. Roll out evidence based parenting initiatives nationwide;
4. Encourage the development and implementation of an innovative campaign to convey simple but crucial child development messages to parents; AND
5. Develop a robust school readiness measure at reception that includes Character and Resilience.

In school, the APPG calls on government to:

1. Ask Ofsted to determine how to factor Character and Resilience and 'extra'-curricular activities more explicitly into the inspection framework;
2. Make participation in 'extra'-curricular activities a formal aspect of teachers' contracts of employment;
3. Create a respected, official 'School Leaving Certificate' that reflects a child's achievement across a broad range of activities rather than just exam outcomes;
4. Incorporate Character and Resilience into initial teacher training and CPD programmes;
5. Support development of a best practice tool-kit for interventions that aid Character and Resilience for specific use in conjunction with the Pupil Premium; AND
6. Encourage all private schools to share their professional expertise and facilities that promote Character and Resilience with schools in the state sector, in keeping with private schools' charitable status.

In the transition to adulthood and employment, the APPG calls on government to:

1. Encourage the growth of the National Citizenship Service and ensure that this has the explicit purpose of building Character and Resilience at its heart;
2. Establish an officially recognised and valued National Volunteering Award Scheme to give adult volunteers formal recognition of their contribution to the lives of young people;
3. Seize the opportunity of the raising education participation age to use Character and Resilience programmes to re-engage the most disengaged 16 and 17 year olds back into learning; AND
4. Make Character and Resilience a key focus of the National Careers Service.

In this area the APPG also calls on employers to:

5. Actively encourage staff to participate in CSR activities that develop Character and Resilience in young people;
6. Implement internal training programmes that help develop the Character and Resilience capabilities of staff; AND
7. Develop alternative routes into advanced professional positions that reflect the importance of Character and Resilience skills rather than raw academic achievements.

■ Part 1: Character, resilience and social mobility

Introduction

Despite concerted efforts, Britain remains a society characterised by glaring discrepancies in the life chances of children from different backgrounds. As a recent ‘state of the nation’ review has demonstrated, “too often demography is destiny in our country. Being poor often leads to a lifetime of poverty”.¹ Thus, while improving social mobility has been identified as the ‘principal goal’ of government social policy, the problem is deep-seated and will prove intractable without concerted and sustained cross-party commitment.

In May 2012, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Social Mobility published a report highlighting ‘seven key truths about social mobility’.² After reviewing evidence across all stages of the life cycle, the report concluded that “personal resilience and emotional wellbeing are the missing link in the chain”. This in turn raised a key challenge to policy makers: to “recognise that social and emotional ‘skills’ underpin academic and other success – and can be taught”.

The purpose of this document is to begin to address this challenge by outlining a series of practical policy recommendations to advance the development of Character and Resilience across the life course. Taken as a whole, these recommendations are an attempt to place the hard evidence about so-called ‘soft’ skills at the very heart of the drive to improve social mobility.

1 Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. ‘State of the Nation 2013: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain’. October, 2013

2 All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility. ‘Seven Key Truths about Social Mobility’ Interim Report. May, 2012

What is 'Character and Resilience'?

'Character and Resilience' is used here as an umbrella term for a range of concepts variously categorised as aspects of social and emotional development and as 'non-cognitive' or – somewhat incongruously – 'soft' skills. In basic terms, these are the attributes that enable individuals to make the most of opportunities that present themselves, to stick with things when the going gets tough, to bounce back from adversity and to forge and maintain meaningful relationships.

In 2011, a panel of experts from developmental psychology, neuroscience, child psychiatry, and youth development brought together in Demos' Character Inquiry sought to break this down into the following key 'character capabilities':

- Application – the ability to stick with tasks and see things through.
- Self-direction – the ability to see one's life as under one's control and to effectively shape its future course; the ability to understand one's strengths and weaknesses accurately; the ability to recognise one's responsibilities towards others.
- Self-control – the ability to monitor and regulate one's emotions appropriately.
- Empathy – the ability to put oneself in other people's shoes and be sensitive to their needs and views.

Other studies have expanded this to highlight the importance of further overlapping attributes including conscientiousness, perseverance, commitment, the ability to collaborate, self-efficacy, self-control, the ability to defer gratification and the concepts of 'mental toughness' and 'grit'.³

The increasing recognition of the relationship between these character-based skills and desirable life outcomes has been hailed by David Cameron as a "new law for social mobility" and "one of the most important findings in a generation for those who care about fairness and inequality".⁴ However, as a recent study funded by the Cabinet Office and the Education

3 For a comprehensive literature review of the academic research on non-cognitive skills see the recent report, 'The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people', Gutman and Schoon, 2013

4 Cameron. 'Supporting Parents'. Demos, 2010

Endowment Foundation (EEF) has highlighted, there is no one single 'non-cognitive' skill that acts as a predictive 'silver bullet'.⁵ Instead, many of these key skills are inter-related and are developed in combination with each other.

Why do Character and Resilience matter for social mobility?

There is now a well established body of literature outlining a clear link between non-cognitive attributes and a range of desirable life outcomes.⁶ As Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman puts it, "Character matters"⁷:

*"for many outcomes, personality measures are just as predictive as cognitive measures, even after controlling for family background and cognition. Moreover, standard measures of cognition are heavily influenced by personality traits."*⁸

This reality has been vividly documented by journalist Paul Tough in his book 'How Children Succeed'.⁹ Indeed, the evidence suggests that the importance of non-cognitive skills is increasing in line with a changing economy. One recent study of life outcomes for those in the 1958 and 1970 British cohort studies suggested that in just over a decade the influence of personal and social skills on relative life chances had increased dramatically.¹⁰ At the same time, "young people from less affluent backgrounds became less likely than their more fortunate peers to develop these skills".¹¹

Educational attainment

The first important area of impact of Character and Resilience on social mobility is in the underpinning of educational attainment. In short, cognitive skills do not develop in a vacuum. Instead, they develop alongside crucial character attributes in what can be seen as a mutually reinforcing process. A child will not benefit

5 Gutman and Schoon, 'The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people'. Institute of Education, 2013

6 Ibid

7 Heckman. 'Creating a More Equal and Productive Britain'. Young Foundation Lecture, 2011

8 Heckman. 'Integrating Personality Psychology into Economics'. Working paper. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2011

9 Paul Tough, 'How Children Succeed', 2013

10 Pearce, Dixon, Reed and Margo. 'Freedom's Orphans: Raising Youth in a Changing World'. IPPR, 2006

11 Ibid

from ‘academic’ learning unless they are in a position to be able to access this learning and such a position is directly linked to a base of skills including motivation, curiosity, conscientiousness and application to task. Indeed, a growing body of evidence suggests that so-called ‘soft’ skills may often be as closely associated with levels of educational attainment as IQ scores.

One such study – also looking at later outcomes for those in the 1958 and 1970 cohort studies – found that social mobility in the UK had fallen between these groups.¹² Importantly, however, although cognitive abilities did not vary significantly between the cohorts, levels of educational attainment did and were identified as the key driver of reduced mobility. These findings led the authors to stress the “increasingly important” role of personal attributes in facilitating social mobility through educational attainment, concluding that programmes seeking to improve educational performance should not be focussed “exclusively on cognitive abilities but also towards self-esteem, personal efficacy and concentration.”¹³

Labour market outcomes

Educational outcomes underpinned by non-cognitive development clearly impact on levels of social mobility. However, Character and Resilience have also been shown to have a further positive relationship with direct labour market outcomes.

A 2006 study by Heckman, Stixrud and Urzua modelled the impact of both cognitive and non-cognitive skills on earnings.¹⁴ This demonstrated a clear link between non-cognitive ability and increased wages not only through the indirect effects on schooling and work experience, but also through direct effects on productivity (including reliability and persistence) and skill acquisition. Indeed, as determinants of economic success, the study concluded that “non-cognitive skills are about equally strong in many outcomes and are stronger for some outcomes”. Similarly, in a UK context, Professor Leon Feinstein, Director of Evidence at the Early Intervention Foundation, has demonstrated

¹² Blanden, Gregg & Macmillan. ‘Accounting for intergenerational income persistence: non-cognitive skills, ability and education’. *Economic Journal*, Vol. 177: September, 2006

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ Heckman, Stixrud and Urzua. ‘The effects of cognitive and noncognitive abilities on labor market outcomes and social behavior’. *Journal of Labor Economics*, July 2006

“substantial labour market returns to non-academic human capital”, highlighting the importance of behavioural and psychological factors in the intergenerational transmission of inequality.¹⁵

Other studies have also identified groups for whom adverse non-cognitive skills (such as poor discipline and a lack of persistence) can outweigh significant advantages in cognitive abilities in terms of labour market outcomes.¹⁶ Importantly, in the context of an increasingly high-skilled economy, research also suggests that the predictive impact of non-cognitive skills may be greater in more ‘complex’ jobs. It is no surprise, therefore, that this evidence is now being directly echoed by employers, with the CBI calling for the development of key character capabilities and ‘employment skills’ as an urgent priority.¹⁷

Other life outcomes

Beyond these direct labour market outcomes, Character and Resilience have a further impact through their relationship to other desirable life outcomes. Studies have identified a clear link between non-cognitive abilities and school truancy and absenteeism, anti-social behaviour, vandalism, illegal drug use and general crime (including theft / robbery).¹⁸

Can character and resilience be learnt?

The growing strength of the evidence base around Character and Resilience is only of real use to policy makers, however, if it points towards attributes that policy can in fact influence. An instinctive reaction from some might be to question whether these key non-cognitive abilities are simply inherent or genetic and therefore out of reach for any initiatives intended to develop them.

Importantly, the evidence indicates that this is not the case. Indeed, it indicates that – just as with cognitive skills – Character

15 Feinstein. ‘The Relative Economic Importance of Academic, Psychological and Behavioural Attributes Developed in Childhood’. CEP, University of Sussex: 2000

16 Heckman and Rubinstein. ‘The Importance of Non-cognitive Skills: Lessons from the GED Testing Program.’ American Economic Review, 2001

17 CBI. ‘Learning to Grow: What Employers Need from Education and Skills’. June, 2012

18 Heckman and Rubinstein. ‘The Importance of Non-cognitive Skills: Lessons from the GED Testing Program.’ American Economic Review, 2001; John, Caspi, Robins, Moffitt and Southamer-Loeber. ‘The “Little Five”: Exploring the Nomological Network of the Five-Factor Model of Personality in Adolescent Boys’. Child Development, 1994

and Resilience can be positively developed throughout the life course.¹⁹ As will be outlined in detail in Part 2, opportunities are strongest in the early years (in keeping with the focus of much recent work on early intervention) – with a particular premium on parenting and the home learning environment – and continue throughout school and into later life.

As discussed below, the evidence base is still developing. However, interestingly, analysis of high profile initiatives in the USA indicates not only that non-cognitive traits can be enhanced with positive results, but also that they may in some instances be more readily cultivated and sustained than enhancements in cognitive traits (at least as measured by IQ).²⁰ This finding was echoed in a 2007 UK study which concluded that – at certain periods at least – non-cognitive skills may in fact be more ‘mobile’ than their cognitive counterparts.²¹ That is, individuals studied over a period of time were more likely to exhibit a change in the relative strength of their non-cognitive skills than of their cognitive skills.

Excitingly, this evidence suggests that concerted endeavours to enhance Character and Resilience could provide particularly fruitful ground for policy makers grappling with the stubborn blight of social immobility in Britain.

The challenge for evidence based policy making

However, a significant challenge remains. As Heckman himself identifies, despite the clear link to later positive life outcomes, the impact of interventions on non-cognitive skills has too often been neglected in the evaluation process due to the (mistaken) belief that they are too hard to measure.²² There is, in fact, a growing body of reliable measures for social and emotional capacities.²³ However, these are not yet as developed and established in practice as those designed to identify cognitive

19 The academic literature suggests that the precise degree of malleability may vary in relation to different ‘non-cognitive’ skills – Gutman and Schoon, ‘The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people’. Institute of Education, 2013

20 Heckman, Stixrud & Urzua ‘The Effects of Cognitive and Non-cognitive Abilities on Labor Market Outcomes and Social Behavior’. NBER Working Paper No. 12006, 2006

21 Carneiro, Crawford and Goodman. ‘The Impact of Early Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Skills on Later Outcomes’. CEE, 2007

22 See Heckman and Rubinstein. ‘The Importance of Noncognitive Skills: Lessons from the GED Testing Program’. AEA, 2001

23 Gutman and Schoon. ‘The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people’. Institute of Education, 2013

outcomes, due to both the traditional focus of academic study and also the nature of the skills themselves. As Gutman and Schoon highlight, this can lead to a particular difficulty in some studies when it comes to disaggregating cause and effect in relation to the link between non-cognitive skills and desirable outcomes.²⁴

In the context of the drive towards evidence based policy making – entirely positive in itself, particularly in the context of restricted resources – this poses a challenge. However, it is not a challenge that should be shirked. It is important that the evidence ‘cart’ should not be allowed to drive the policy ‘horse’ to such an extent that areas of focus are directed simply on the grounds that interventions in a particular area are easiest to measure. Instead, the challenge for those working in policy areas that affect social mobility – particularly the important ‘what works’ bodies such as the Early Intervention Foundation and the Education Endowment Fund – is to further develop robust mechanisms to capture the impact of particular strategies for improving non-cognitive skills. These can then be used to build the evidence base around the interventions that have the most significant impact in this area. This could be supported by incorporating an explicit focus on non-cognitive development into data gathering initiatives like the Millenium Cohort Study. This development of the evidence base is perhaps the most important overarching next step.

However, from its extensive review, the APPG on Social Mobility feel that the existing evidence is now sufficiently compelling that government and others must start to engage directly with the question of how policy can actively enhance these key social and emotional competencies. The remainder of the document will therefore begin to do precisely this, outlining specific policy proposals – supported by relevant case studies – to enhance Character and Resilience at each stage in the life course. In doing so, it is hoped that efforts in this area can become an increasingly central aspect of the struggle to provide fairer life opportunities and greater social mobility in our country.

24 Ibid

- **Part 2:**
Policy proposals for
Character and Resilience

Early years

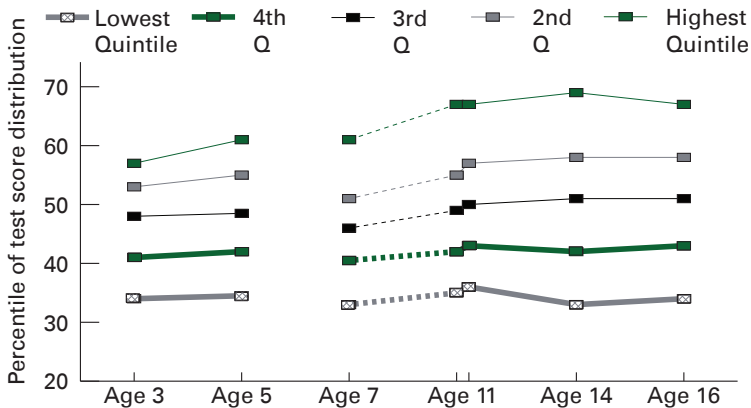
“Investing in the early years and putting parents and families centre stage is the key to children’s development.”²⁵

Government Social Mobility Strategy

Introduction

At the heart of efforts to enhance social mobility is a recognition of the importance of early intervention strategies. In particular, Frank Field MP, Graham Allen MP and Clare Tickell DBE have written powerful reports to government emphasising the profound impact of the earliest years of child development on later life chances.²⁶ In social mobility terms, the ‘gap’ emerges early and persists.

Figure 1: Cognitive outcomes by socio-economic quintile across age groups



Source: Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister’s Office. ‘Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility’. April, 2011

25 Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister’s Office. ‘Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility’. April, 2011

26 Field. ‘The Foundation Years: Preventing Poor Children becoming Poor Adults’. Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances, 2010; Allen. ‘Early Intervention: The Next Steps’. Independent Report, 2011; Tickell. ‘The Early Years: Foundations for Life, Health and Learning’. Independent Review, 2011

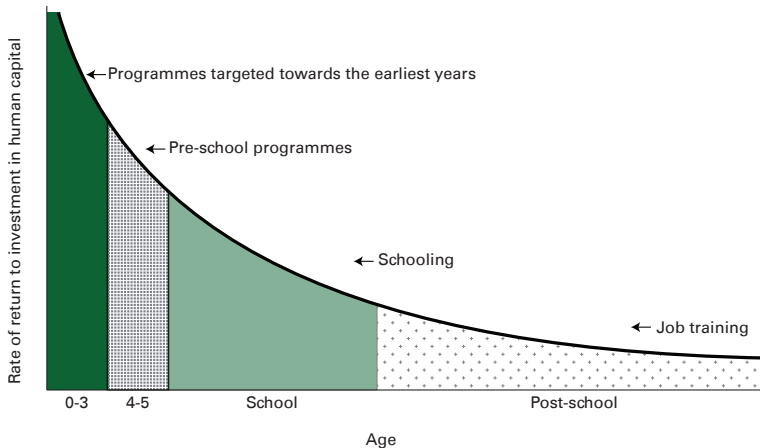
Simply put, therefore, prevention is better than cure:

“Investment and interventions in the early years are generally more cost effective in improving outcomes than investments and interventions later in life. Particularly those preventive programmes aimed at disadvantaged children.”²⁷

As the APPG on Social Mobility has therefore previously concluded, the point of greatest leverage for social mobility is in these earliest years.²⁸

These points have also been made particularly strongly by Nobel Prize winning economist, James Heckman.²⁹ At the heart of Heckman’s work, however, is the recognition that interventions in the early years must be targeted not only at cognitive outcomes but also at non-cognitive development. Indeed, he finds a clear and significant economic return for investing in character capabilities early, particularly for disadvantaged children.³⁰

Figure 2: Relative efficiency of interventions



Source: J Heckman, 'The American family in black and white: a post-racial strategy for improving skills to promote equality', 2011.

27 Doyle et al, 'Early childhood intervention: rationale, timing and efficacy', 2007
 28 APPG on Social Mobility. 'Seven Key Truths about Social Mobility' Interim Report. May, 2012
 29 Heckman and Krueger. Inequality in America: What role for human capital policies? 2005
 30 Heckman. 'The Case for Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children' in Big Ideas for Children: Investing in Our Nation's Future, 2009

In this context, the impact of high-quality early years education is vital. Important policy advancements have been made in this area and there is scope for this to continue (Recommendations 1 and 2).

However, the single most important factor influencing a child's overall life chances is parenting, which, despite its significance, "remains the Cinderella of early years and public service provision".³¹ Indeed, the impact of early parenting is especially pronounced in relation to the development of social and emotional capabilities, going to the very foundations of character development. As Clare Tickell puts it:

"children's attainment, wellbeing, happiness and resilience are profoundly affected by the quality of the guidance, love and care they receive during the first few years of their lives."³²

Studies of early personality development show that the relationships a young child shares with caregivers are crucial to the development of self-regulation, self-awareness, and social understanding.³³ For this reason, this is a period of great opportunity or vulnerability, depending on the quality and stability of these relationships.³⁴ Thus, for Heckman, "the true measure of child affluence and poverty is the quality of parenting".³⁵ This must therefore become an area of increasing focus (Recommendations 3 and 4).

Policy Recommendation – Early Years

The APPG calls on the government to:

1. Introduce an Early Years Premium, extending the Pupil Premium into early years education; AND
2. Support development of a best practice tool-kit for the early years focussing on interventions that aid development of the crucial non-cognitive base in early child development.

31 Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. 'State of the Nation 2013: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain'. October, 2013

32 Tickell. 'The Early Years: Foundations for Life, Health and Learning'. Independent Review, 2011

33 Thompson. 'Development in the First Years of Life' in Caring for Infants and Toddlers. Volume 11 Number 1, 2001

34 Thompson. 'Early sociopersonality development' in Damon and Eisenberg eds Handbook of Child

35 J Heckman, 'The American family in black and white: A post-racial strategy for improving skills to promote equality', 2011

Detail and rationale

Perhaps the flagship social mobility policy of this government has been the introduction of the Pupil Premium, with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds attracting additional targeted funding in each year of their school based education. From 2014 the Pupil Premium will be set at £1300 for each disadvantaged primary school pupil and £935 for each disadvantaged secondary school pupil. The dual rationale for this policy is both to make disadvantaged pupils more attractive to schools and also to provide additional resources to directly benefit the pupils in question and thus ‘close the gap’ in attainment terms.

The government has also introduced an implicit premium in terms of the free childcare entitlement for disadvantaged two year olds. Disadvantaged three and four year olds benefit from the universal free service provided to children at that age, although there is no specific additional weighting. Thus, there remains an opportunity to enhance social mobility at this key developmental stage. Indeed, as outlined in detail below, the social gradient in access to early years services for three and four year olds – with take-up among more affluent families exceeding that of poorer families – is in danger of perpetuating and even exacerbating the problem.

As such, the government should introduce an early years premium for disadvantaged three and four year olds. This could be achieved by extending the Pupil Premium into the early years. As the children’s charity Barnardo’s puts it:

“Investment in early years is crucial; it can help children advance, catch up, and overcome disadvantage. It’s one of the most important and powerful factors in determining a child’s future. The Government needs to put its money where its mouth is and ensure the most vulnerable three and four-year-olds get the same additional support as school children.”³⁶

If at all possible, this should be funded through additional resources. However, if not, it should still be implemented by stretching the existing pupil premium allocation to allow increased spending in the early years as a key area where social mobility gains can be made.

36 Carrie. Barnardo’s Chief Executive, September, 2012

Perhaps the biggest strength of this proposal would be the potential to address the damaging discrepancy in uptake of early years provision. A key dilemma for government is how to ensure that the provision of early years education is sufficiently targeted to reach those with most to gain but without introducing counterproductive stigmatising effects. Attaching additional funding directly to disadvantaged children at this age would have the potential to help with this. These children would become more attractive to children's centres, creating a strong incentive for centres to engage in targeted outreach activities. Such activities would, in effect, more than pay for themselves through the additional funding recouped but would not discourage participation among higher income families (and therefore reduce the beneficial impact of social mixing).

As with the Pupil Premium in schools, however, the benefit of these resources will only be truly felt if the funding is matched with accessible best practice guidance. As such, a best practice tool-kit should be developed for early years settings with a particular focus on interventions that aid development of the crucial non-cognitive base in early child development.

As a repository for evidence on 'what works' in early intervention strategies, the newly established Early Intervention Foundation could be well placed to aid the development of this (playing a role akin to that taken up by the Sutton Trust / EEF in relation to its tool-kit of school based interventions). It may be that this can build on work being carried out by the Dartington Social Research Unit discussed below. However, as discussed above, this will require not only collating existing evidence, but building on it with appropriately designed trials and evaluations.

The combination of additional funding (flowing most heavily into the most disadvantaged areas) and best practice guidance would therefore also enable early years settings to invest in staff quality, interventions and child development activities. This would in turn begin to counterbalance the further existing problem (identified below) that quality of early years provision is generally poorest in more disadvantaged areas.

Case studies and evidence

Uneven take-up and quality of early years services

As the IPPR publication 'Parents at the Centre' sharply puts it:

"Despite a great deal of expansion and investment in early years provision over the last decade in the UK, it is children from disadvantaged backgrounds – arguably with the most to gain – who use these services least."³⁷

At the heart of the effort to tackle disadvantage and social exclusion under the previous government was the flagship early years policy, Sure Start. However, while successful in many respects, questions have repeatedly been raised over the success of the initiative in reaching those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Perhaps the most substantial evaluation of the scheme concluded that "our findings reinforce the concern that the poorest families in our society are not accessing the full range of educational opportunities and resources designed to help them."³⁸ Instead, the take-up has often been higher among more affluent – and supposedly 'sharp-elbowed' – middle-class families.

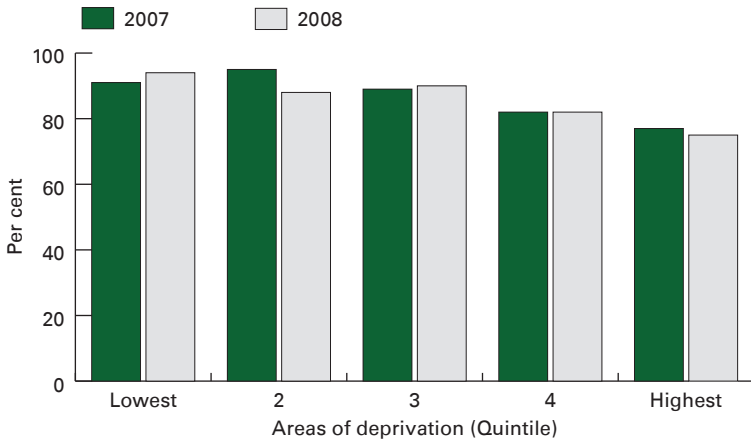
These findings have been reiterated in numerous studies, including those by Frank Field and the Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission as well as the Department for Education's 2011 report on 'Supporting Families in the Foundation Years'.³⁹

³⁷ Ben-Galim. 'Parents at the Centre'. IPPR report. April, 2011

³⁸ www.dur.ac.uk/news/newsitem/?itemno=11251

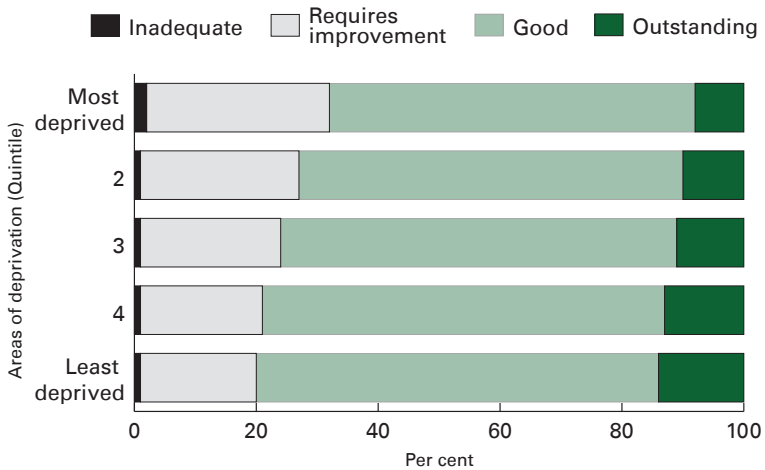
³⁹ Field. 'The Foundation Years: Preventing Poor Children becoming Poor Adults'. Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances, 2010; Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. 'State of the Nation 2013: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain'. October 2013; Department for Education. 'Supporting Families in the Foundation Years', 2011

Figure 3 - Take up of free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds by area of deprivation (2007-2008)



Source: Department for Education, 'Supporting Families in the Foundation Years', 2011

Figure 4 - Quality of early years provision (as rated by Ofsted inspections) by area of deprivation in England as at 31 March 2013



Source: Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. 'State of the Nation 2013: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain'.

The impact of this social gradient in participation is then compounded by a further gradient in the quality of provision. In short, there is a clear correlation between poorer services and poorer areas (see Figure 4). This is particularly significant given evidence that child development outcomes for disadvantaged children do not improve where childcare is anything other than high quality.⁴⁰

The Dartington Social Research Unit

The Dartington Social Research Unit has been pioneering a Cost & Benefits analysis programme for interventions in early years and education called Investing in Children designed to put useful evidence into the hands of policy makers, commissioners, and practitioners.⁴¹ This was launched in September 2013 at the House of Commons at an event cosponsored by the Early Intervention Foundation. It currently holds over 100 programmes in its bank. The interventions covered focus on children's health, emotional wellbeing, educational attainment, and relationships for ages 0-22. It is based on Dartington's work to adapt the economic model for cost/benefit analysis originally devised by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP). The model focuses on being consistent across policy areas, cautious in estimates and relevant to real world investment in children's health and wellbeing in public and private sector contexts.

This existing tool-kit currently contains 17 interventions aimed at age group zero to two, and over 30 (many overlapping) for the three to five age group. These include the Parent Child Home Programme, SafeCare, Perry Preschool programme, Triple P Positive Parenting Programme, Abecedarian, Incredible Years and Family Nurse Partnership. For each programme there is additional information on costs, benefits, rates of return to investors and a quality marker rating the standards of the evaluative evidence base.

40 Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. 'State of the Nation 2013: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain'. October, 2013

41 www.investinginchildren.eu/

Policy Recommendation – Early Years

The APPG calls on the government to:

3. Roll out evidence based parenting initiatives nationwide; AND
4. Encourage the development and implementation of an innovative campaign to convey simple but crucial child development messages to parents.

Detail and rationale

The clear evidence on early child development points to an important finding for social mobility: it is what parents and carers do with their children not who they are that matters.⁴² Parents from all social and educational backgrounds can and do provide highly conducive home learning environments. However, the evidence also suggests that “children from poorer backgrounds are much less likely to experience a rich home learning environment than children from better-off backgrounds”.⁴³ This is one of the crucial factors perpetuating the pervasive discrepancies in life opportunities that mark the invisible and pernicious barriers of social immobility.

In particular, evidence shows that parental style is the strongest independent factor in shaping children’s early character development. Parenting that combines consistency and warmth is associated with the strongest social and emotional development in children by age five.⁴⁴

As the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission highlight, parenting style is a learned behaviour – it is “a product of parents’ own experiences and education”.⁴⁵ In effect, information as to the behaviours most likely to aid child development is unevenly distributed and, as such, these behaviours are unevenly practised. Children from poorer households are, for example, around half as likely to be read to every day (42 per cent) as those from the most affluent homes (79 per cent).⁴⁶

42 K Sylva, et al, ‘Effective pre-school and primary education 3-11 project (EPPE 3-11). Report from the primary phase: pre-school, school and family influences on children’s development during key stage 2 (age 7-11)’, 2008. Hereafter referenced as ‘EPPE, 2008’

43 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, ‘The importance of attitudes and behaviour for poorer children’s educational attainment’, 2010

44 Lexmond and Reeves. ‘Building Character’. Demos, 2009

45 Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. ‘State of the Nation 2013: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain’. October, 2013

46 Ibid

Recognising this, the government has committed to “support[ing] a culture where the key aspects of good parenting are widely understood and where all parents can benefit from advice and support” – “we want parenting advice and support to be considered the norm.”⁴⁷

This must remain and develop as a key focal point of government policy on social mobility. Trials of evidence based parenting support classes should continue and develop with a view to rolling out such parenting support across the country. In doing so, particular focus should be given to the models of parenting support shown to be particularly effective in aiding children’s social and emotional development. Appropriate non-stigmatising targeting mechanisms should also be considered to prevent the problem of a social gradient in participation discussed above and thus ensure that the initiative has a significant impact from a social mobility perspective.

These efforts could be supplemented by an innovative and wide reaching parenting campaign, as has now been recommended by a series of reports concerned with social mobility.⁴⁸ Such a campaign would have a twofold purpose. Firstly, it would help support the more direct parenting initiatives by generating a cultural acceptance of the notion of parenting as a learned skill in which all can improve. Secondly, it would be well placed to communicate simple but crucial messages on child development to parents to begin to redress the imbalances in information and behaviour discussed above.

Case studies and evidence

*Leksand parenting intervention*⁴⁹

One particular Swedish practice – initially operated in the community of Leksand and now being extended across the country – is worthy of particular attention in view of the UK government’s stated desire to make “parenting advice and support [...] the norm – just as many new parents choose to access ante-natal education”.⁵⁰

47 Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister’s Office. ‘Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility’. April, 2011

48 Including G Allen, F Field, APPG ‘7 key’, Milburn / Soc Mob commission, CentreForum

49 See Paterson. ‘Parenting Matters: Early Years and Social Mobility’. CentreForum, 2011

50 Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister’s Office. ‘Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility’. April, 2011

Under the Leksand model, expectant parents are invited antenatally to join a group within their local community and this group provides the hub for everything that follows. A specially trained midwife is then generally invited to run an antenatal class for this group of parents. However, rather than being disbanded at the point of childbirth (ie. the end of the antenatal course), the group itself continues to meet over the first few years of the children's lives (up even to the age of five) to provide a platform for parenting education programmes as well as a network for mutual support and advice.

The results of this model have been particularly impressive. Attendance at the parenting groups is high across all social groups. In 1999-2000, parents from 91 Leksand families took part in parent group activities during pregnancy. In 2004, when the children were between three and five years old, around half of the parents were still continuing (46 women and 46 men).

Notably, it was found that fathers participate to about the same degree as mothers – which is not the case in relation to other forms of parenting programmes elsewhere in Sweden – suggesting a particular potential merit of the Leksand model. This may be of interest to the government in light of its expressed commitment to always “consider the needs and perspective of both parents” and to “think about how better to engage fathers in all aspects of their child's development”.⁵¹

In terms of easing a general attitudinal shift towards normalising parenting education, the model has the significant benefit of flowing directly out of, and building on, the degree of social acceptance already attained by antenatal classes. This is an advantage that should be given serious consideration in a UK context.

'Five to Thrive' parenting campaign - Hertfordshire

In 2011, the CentreForum publication 'Parenting matters: early years and social mobility' called for a public health style parenting campaign to convey simple and clear messages on activities that aid child development. This would be valuable to all parents, but particularly important in terms of redressing the information imbalances discussed above in relation to key

51 Department for Education. 'Supporting Families in the Foundation Years'. August, 2011

issues such as reading. This call has also been made strongly by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission:

“The focus should be on ensuring accessible information is made available to low income parents and on bringing together third and private sector organisations to develop a new parenting campaign focusing on the basics of child development.”⁵²

The CentreForum report argued that the established ‘5-a-day’ concept could provide an effective vehicle for this kind of campaign. Such a ‘5-a-day for child development’ style campaign could identify a series of manageable steps based on easily graspable and readily packageable ‘hooks’ that would enable the key messages to take hold in parents’ minds. It might also lend itself well to third and private sector engagement that would enable any such campaign to spread (for example, children’s book companies might want to be associated with a strand of such a campaign headed by the keyword ‘Read’). This specific recommendation was endorsed by Graham Allen MP, Trustee of the Early Intervention Foundation, whose Early Intervention reports to Government had also expressly called for a national parenting campaign.

Following these reports, in Hertfordshire – one of the pathfinder Early Intervention local authorities – a child development initiative based directly on the ‘5-a-day’ idea has been successfully trialled and implemented. Under the name ‘Five to Thrive’, materials for parents (and training for practitioners) were created, providing information structured and packaged under 5 key activities (in this instance, ‘Talk’, ‘Play’, ‘Relax’, ‘Cuddle’, ‘Respond’). These materials were provided to parents through children’s centres, health visitors and other early years settings.

A 2012 evaluation of the ‘Five to Thrive’ initiative found a statistically significant positive impact on parents’ knowledge and confidence.⁵³ Parents in particular reported a positive response to the simplicity and clarity of the messages. The programme has therefore now been successfully rolled out across the whole local authority (including around 80 children’s centres), with this roll out again receiving a positive evaluation.

52 Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission Next steps on Social Mobility, 2013

53 www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/earlyyears/vlpdetails.aspx?lpeid=461; www.fivetothrive.org.uk/

The 'Five to Thrive' initiative has now also been taken up in some form in at least ten other local authorities.⁵⁴

Policy Recommendation – Early Years

The APPG calls on the government to:

5. Develop a robust school readiness measure at reception that includes Character and Resilience.

Detail and rationale

Building the evidence base around early years interventions will require reliable measures that can gauge development at this age. Indeed, despite the increasing recognition of the centrality of early years to social mobility, there is often a perceived reluctance among policy makers to shift hard money into the area at the expense of later funding. This is in part due to institutional inertia – the common perception that 'education' is something that happens predominantly (or even exclusively) in schools is heavily entrenched. However, it is also a result of a perceived lack of depth as to the evidence of 'what works' in interventions targeted at the earliest years.

The Department for Education is currently consulting on whether to develop a baseline test for pupils on entry to primary school to allow institutions to be fairly judged on the degree of progress they enable children to make.⁵⁵ Valid concerns exist that measures being used for formal accountability purposes can become warped by the pressure this inevitably brings. However, if this issue can be surmounted, such a measure capturing development at entry to primary school could help to strengthen the evidence base in the early years, complementing and building on the information provided by the EYFS. It might in turn serve as a valuable link between the early years and school sectors.⁵⁶

As such, if the proposed policy is implemented, it is important that any such baseline measure should not be based solely on narrow cognitive ability. Instead, given the links between

54 The development of the 'Five to Thrive' initiative has been led by the provider Kate Cairns Associates - www.fivetothrive.org.uk

55 Department for Education. 'Primary Assessment and Accountability under the New National Curriculum'. July, 2013

56 Although the issue of how the assessment of non-cognitive skills – likely to be teacher based – could be factored into a test being used for the 'hard' purpose of summative school accountability would need serious consideration.

Character and Resilience and educational outcomes, it should also encompass a broader assessment of the key predictive social and emotional skills identified by Heckman and others.

Case studies and evidence

*Maryland Model for School Readiness*⁵⁷

Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) provides a framework for early assessment and accountability regarding child development based on both cognitive and non-cognitive skills. The Maryland General Assembly made the annual evaluation of kindergarten children's level of school readiness a legal requirement and the MMSR is currently used in all 24 of Maryland's Local Schools systems. The Maryland State Department of Education defines 'school readiness' as the stage of human development that enables a child to engage in, and benefit from, early learning experiences. Evaluated criteria include children's social adjustment, emotional security and communication.

MMSR is largely conducted through the Work Sampling System. Teachers and early childhood providers appraise students two or three times a year, using developmental assessment guidelines and three performance ratings of 'proficient', 'in process', or 'needs development'. Degrees of school readiness are determined not only according to academic criteria such as language and literacy development, but also non-cognitive domains such as 'personal and social development'. The MMSR recognises a child's healthy personal and social development as manifested through 'respectful interpersonal relationships, responsible actions, accountability for those actions, and motivated learning'. Consequently, the measure assesses child development through behaviours and interpersonal interaction, as well as knowledge and understanding.

Distinct advantages of the MMSR appear to be its clarity and accountability in relation to 'soft' skills: parents, teachers and early childhood providers are supplied with a shared vocabulary regarding non-cognitive child development. Assessment

⁵⁷ Maryland Model for School Readiness: Framework and Standards - Personal and Social Development www.mdck12.org/share/vsc/vsc_social_personal_grk.pdf

information is shared with parents and reported to teachers at the next grade level. Parent-teacher conferences and report cards are used to clearly communicate a child's preparedness for school success and social emotional development. Broadly, the MMSR seems to have been a highly successful initiative with particular gains in a social mobility context, demonstrating a two-fold increase in school readiness among those on the federally-subsidised school meals programme since 2001-2.

: School

Introduction

A major theme emerging from a focus group of Teach First graduates conducted by Character Counts to coincide with this report was that, while the teachers felt that building character should be a central aspect of their role, they did not see this as a core element of their school's strategy. With greater school freedoms, more schools are now in a position to innovate and some interesting examples are emerging. However, all too often, the development of attributes associated with Character and Resilience – that is, the development of the pupil as a rounded individual – are neglected or, at best, given second billing. The very language used is illustrative – they are 'soft' skills developed through 'extra'-curricular activities.

The evidence outlined in Part 1, however, indicates that these so-called 'soft' skills are not only central to the demands of employers and therefore directly linked to labour market outcomes, they are also instrumental, underpinning the very academic attainment that schools are encouraged to prioritise.

The recent annual report from the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission states that "schools need to do more to prepare students broadly for work including assisting with work experience and promoting 'character' skills. Schools need to focus on developing those skills alongside improving their pupils' academic attainment. It is not a question of either/or. Schools need to be doing both."⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. 'State of the Nation 2013: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain'. October, 2013

As such, the general thrust of this section is to encourage a refocusing of schools' policy to ensure that the development of Character and Resilience and associated skills move from the periphery to become, as it were, the 'core business' for all schools. In doing so, we would be following the example set by those at the cutting edge of educational advancement.

Education in Singapore

Perhaps no education system in the world is as feted at present among UK policy makers as that of Singapore. Identified by the OECD as "at or near the top of most education ranking systems", it took centre stage among the admiring glances cast at other high performing jurisdictions in the 2010 White Paper, 'The Importance of Teaching':

"Even the best school systems in the world are constantly striving to get better – Singapore is looking again at further improving its curriculum."⁵⁹

It is the thrust and content of this improved curriculum in Singapore that is particularly noteworthy however. After a half-century of relentless education reform, Singapore is effectively entering the fourth phase of the development of its approach to education policy. At the core of this will be a new curriculum of Character and Citizenship Education which is being introduced into all primary and secondary schools in Singapore from 2014.⁶⁰ As Minister of Education Mr Heng Swee Keat puts it, the basis for this significant change is the recognition that "we must put character development at the core of our education system". Outlining the thrust of this new, Mr Keat continues:

"We want to make our education system even more student-centric, and sharpen our focus in holistic education – centred on values and character development [...] Character development is about developing social emotional competencies, and the habits and inner disposition based on sound values to act in a consistent way. Personal values such as grit, determination and resilience enable the individual to realise his or her potential [...] These values are intertwined, and are critical to the success of the individual and the society. Hence, values and character

59 OECD. 'Singapore: Rapid Improvement Followed by Strong Performance', 2010; Department for Education. 'The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper 2010', November 2010

60 www.moe.gov.sg/media/press/2012/11/new-syllabus-and-textbook-titl.php

development must form the core of our student-centric, holistic education.”⁶¹

International and UK pathfinders

*KIPP schools*⁶²

KIPP (the Knowledge Is Power Program) is a network of free, open-enrolment, public charter schools in the US, aimed at preparing students for college and later life. There are currently 50,000 students in the 141 KIPP schools across 20 states. Over 86% of students are from low-income families and eligible for the federally-subsidised meals program; 95% are African-American or Latino. Nationally, over 80% of KIPP alumni have gone on to college, with 90% having graduated high school.

The KIPP ethos is to value character development as highly as academic preparation and as equally integral to future attainment. Derived from the psychological research of Dr. Martin Seligman (University of Pennsylvania) and Dr. Chris Peterson (University of Michigan), KIPP pedagogy focuses on seven ‘highly predictive’ strengths:

Zest (approaching life with excitement and energy; feeling alive and activated)

Self-Control (regulating what one feels and does; being self-disciplined)

Gratitude (being aware of and thankful for opportunities that one has and for good things that happen)

Curiosity (taking an interest in experience and learning new things for its own sake; finding things fascinating)

Optimism (expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it)

Grit (finishing what one starts; completing something despite obstacles; a combination of persistence and resilience)

Social Intelligence (being aware of motives and feelings of other people and oneself, including the ability to reason within large and small groups)

⁶¹ Singapore Ministry of Education. Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Education. Opening Address at the Ministry of Education Work Plan Seminar. Ngee Ann Polytechnic Convention Centre, 22 September 2011

⁶² www.kipp.org/about-kipp

Character education is therefore central to KIPP school culture with character strengths conceived as teachable skills, which can be institutionally cultivated and appraised. Lessons are coordinated so as to exemplify and promote these strengths, whether through the 'curiosity' called for during a scientific experiment, the 'grit' necessary for success in exams, or the 'social intelligence' required to manage group exercises.

In turn, in some KIPP schools, pupils are now also provided with a 'character growth card', used to accredit character strengths and personal development. Rather than prescribe what 'good' character is, these cards are intended to supply a nuanced vocabulary and foster a meaningful conversation around character development. The card lists 24 behaviours, each corresponding to one of KIPP's seven monitored character strengths, which are assessed by teachers. 'Zest', for example, is measured through three criteria: 'actively participates', 'shows enthusiasm', and 'invigorates others'. 'Optimism', meanwhile, has two associated behaviours: 'gets over frustrations and setbacks quickly', and 'believes that effort will improve his or her future'.

KIPP pupils typically spend 60% more time in schools than public school children, with hours extended to 7.30 am to 5.00 pm weekdays, and 8.30 am to 1.30 pm on select Saturdays. As well as providing extra tuition time, these longer hours are designed to facilitate a broader range of extra-curricular activities. Annual week long field trips are also provided, with the aim of broadening pupils' horizons and raising social aspiration.

*School 21*⁶³

School 21 – a new free school in Stratford, East London – operates according to its headmaster Peter Hyman's conviction that "character education needs to be taught painstakingly, sensitively and systematically". A former strategist for Tony Blair, Hyman founded the school in 2012, along with Edward Fidoe, an education reformer and advisor, and Oli de Botton, a Teach First alumnus and education consultant. Hyman argues that 'resilience is [the] key' to successful learning and

63 Hyman. 'We need a new schools model for the 21st century'. Evening Standard, 7th October 2013 www.standard.co.uk/comment/peter-hyman-we-need-a-new-schools-model-for-the-21st-century-8864049.html

that schools must actively work to strengthen students' mental robustness and attitudinal resources.

School 21 subscribes to a holistic approach to education, geared towards developing the whole child. Arguing that "it's not enough to teach subjects; we need to teach character", Hyman warns against viewing children's exam results as the sole metric of success, stressing the importance of fostering social and emotional wellbeing as well as academic attainment. School 21 enshrines non-cognitive qualities such as 'grit' and 'spark' as attributes of a successful student and adheres to the principle that 'character matters as much as knowledge'. The school provides leadership and debating classes alongside traditional subjects in an effort to enhance pupils' self-confidence, assertiveness and oracy. Lessons are also conducted discursively and interactively in order to combat a dominant classroom culture in which, according to Hyman, "teachers do 90% of any talking, with individual children saying an average of four words in a typical lesson".

Place2Be⁶⁴

Place2Be is a leading provider of mental health support within UK primary and secondary schools. Founded in 1994, the charity provides access to emotional and therapeutic services in schools, with the aim of increasing the wellbeing and prospects of children and decreasing the likelihood of their suffering from serious mental health difficulties in later life. Place2Be has placed clinicians and counsellors in over 200 schools, supporting 75,000 children.

Place2Be serves some of the UK's most deprived communities: in 2011-12 over half the children using its services were eligible for free school meals. Moreover, 53% of those supported by the charity had pre-existing emotional and behavioural difficulties and 49% had some degree of special educational needs. Eric Taylor, Emeritus Professor of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry and Place2Be trustee, emphasises that many of the social factors which contribute to children's low educational attainment – deprived or conflict-ridden households, parents who suffer from mental illnesses or addictions – also increase their risk of

64 www.place2be.org.uk/what-we-do/

suffering from mental health problems in later life. Place2Be therefore aims to improve children's prospects by helping them to flourish in school, whilst also enhancing their longer term mental wellbeing.

Resilience-building is central to Place2Be's therapeutic approach. The charity aims to equip school children with the emotional resources to tackle adversity. Jonathan Wood, Place2Be's National Manager in Scotland, defines resilience as an individual's "bounce-back-ability; their recovery time" from stressful or traumatic experiences. Wood stresses the importance of cultivating resilience among those children lacking in the essential building blocks of psychological wellbeing, such as adequate shelter and nutrition, secure attachment to a loving parent or carer and appropriate stimulation. Place2Be uses individual and group counselling to promote qualities such as resilience, perseverance and self-esteem and to help pupils manage their inner state. Parental engagement is also a key element of the Place2Be model: the parents of children in one-to-one counselling are notified and offered guidance. In some regions, Parent Counsellors are employed to help the parents of referred pupils support their child's wellbeing. In 2011/2, two-thirds of children supported by Place2Be had improved emotional and mental wellbeing according to their teachers.

Extra-curricular activities

In a 2012 literature review, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found a strong and consistent correlation between involvement in school sport and educational attainment.⁶⁵ Studies also point towards a clear link between participation in 'extra'-curricular sport and positive social and emotional outcomes – including student wellbeing, stress management and interpersonal interaction.⁶⁶

Prominent recent studies at the University of South Carolina and Pennsylvania State University found that team sports made a "significant and consistent difference to students' academic grades".⁶⁷ Studying data from 9,700 high school students

65 Cummings, Laing, Law, McLaughlin, Papps, Todd, Woolner. 'Can Changing Aspirations and Attitudes Impact on Educational Attainment? A Review of Interventions'. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012

66 Ibid

67 See Bloom. 'School sport puts the 'A' in team, study finds'. TES. May, 2013

aged 14-18, academics found that those students belonging to extracurricular sports clubs were more likely than their peers to complete their school education and go on to university. Authors suggested that team sports cultivated skills such as time-management, organisation and initiative which proved transferable to academic endeavours. The enhancement of self-belief and self-esteem involved in sports participation was also highlighted as an influence on academic performance. As Eileen Marchant, of the UK's Association for Physical Education, puts it "there's an absolute correlation between believing in yourself and what happens in other areas of the curriculum".⁶⁸

Similarly, 2007 research by German academics found a clear relationship between playing sport and academic achievement amongst adolescents, concluding that "the effect of sport on educational attainment is statistically strong and positive".⁶⁹ 'Extra'-curricula sport was found to have a beneficial effect on educational productivity, even when accounting for the time commitment involved. The authors therefore explicitly recommend that political bodies strengthen sports activities and promote participation, both inside and outside schools.

Other studies have found participation in sport to be particularly associated with increased educational aspiration and increased identification with/commitment to the school, providing a gateway to enhanced academic outcomes.⁷⁰ Interestingly, this work also suggests that the positive impact of 'extra'-curricular sport may be particularly pronounced for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.⁷¹

There is also evidence of positive impacts relating to other forms of extra-curricular activities, including music. A recent Scottish government funded evaluation of the Big Noise orchestra initiative found a "positive impact on children's personal and social development, including increased confidence, self-esteem, team working skills and expanded social networks".⁷² Review evidence by Sue Hallam also points to a positive relationship

68 See Sarah Harris. 'Why team sports really do improve grades: Link between self-esteem and better performance in the classroom'. Daily Mail, 24th May 2013

69 Cornelißen and Pfeifer. 'The Impact of Participation in Sports on Educational Attainment: New Evidence from Germany'. Institute for the Study of Labor, November 2007

70 Marsh and Kleitman. 'Extracurricular School Activities: The Good, the Bad, and the Nonlinear'. Harvard Educational Review, 72: 4, 2002

71 Ibid

72 Scottish Government Social Research. 'Evaluation of Big Noise, Sistema Scotland', 2011

between active engagement with music and improved social and personal development.⁷³

Policy Recommendation – Schools

The APPG calls on the government to:

1. Ask Ofsted to determine how to factor Character and Resilience and 'extra'-curricular activities more explicitly into the inspection framework.

Detail and rationale

The primary lever policy makers hold over school behaviour is the school accountability framework. Increasingly, the English system is shifting towards a model where high levels of school autonomy are met with high levels of accountability. As such, schools are highly reactive to the demands of this accountability system and it is therefore necessary to exercise caution when making changes.

However, if the development of Character and Resilience is – as we recommend – to become part of the 'core business' of schools, this will need to play a more central role in how schools are assessed and held to account. As such, consideration should be given as to how the Ofsted framework against which schools are inspected can be modified to take more express account of the efforts and activities offered in a school that develop these key non-cognitive skills. A central aspect of this could be the extent and quality of the 'extra'-curricular activities offered by the school. More efforts to factor the development of Character and Resilience directly into school lessons and the school ethos could also be assessed and rewarded (such as those outlined at School 21 above and in the character education programmes discussed below).

In effect, school accountability systems make a judgement about what a good school is and does. These systems then hold individual institutions to account for the extent to which they match up to this definition. The evidence of the clear relationship between Character and Resilience and positive life outcomes indicates that the development of these skills should play an enhanced role within this model of the 'good' school.

73 Hallam. 'The power of music: its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people'. *International Journal of Music Education*, 2012

The nature of assessment is also relevant to the development of key Character and Resilience skills, potentially pointing towards a balance between high stakes exams (developing the ability to cope with and perform well under pressure) and continuously assessed coursework (developing persistence, time management, application over a prolonged period and the ability to defer gratification).

Policy Recommendation – Schools

The APPG calls on the government to:

2. Make participation in ‘extra’-curricular activities a formal aspect of teachers’ contracts of employment.

Detail and rationale

A further step towards removing the sense that the development of Character and Resilience is something of an afterthought for many schools would be to remove the connotations of additionality in the term ‘extra’-curricular activities by ensuring that these activities become a more central aspect of schools’ purpose and a teacher’s job. This could be addressed by making a requirement to participate in ‘extra’-curricular activities a formal aspect of teacher’s contract of employment.

However, this *cannot* be simply a mechanism for asking teachers to work longer hours without reward. This additional responsibility would either need to be met by a corresponding financial reward/incentive or by schools allowing more time for these activities within the regular school day.

Policy Recommendation – Schools

The APPG calls on the government to:

3. Create a respected, official ‘School Leaving Certificate’ that reflects a child’s achievement across a broad range of activities rather than just exam outcomes.

Detail and rationale

To accompany a greater focus on Character and Resilience – and with it a more holistic approach to pupil development – alternative mechanisms for reporting pupil outcomes should be developed to sit alongside raw exam outcomes. One such

mechanism could be an official School Leaving Certificate that provides evidence of the breadth of a pupil's achievements across a wide range of activities and competencies. This could include details of extra-curricular participation and achievements as well as their attainment of the employability skills and attributes valued in the labour market. It could also explicitly break down and reference particular Character and Resilience competencies drawing on the model of the KIPP report card discussed above.

Policy Recommendation – Schools

The APPG calls on the government to:

4. Incorporate Character and Resilience into initial teacher training and ongoing development programmes; AND
5. Encourage development of a best practice tool-kit for interventions that aid Character and Resilience for specific use in conjunction with the Pupil Premium.

Detail and rationale

If schools are to give a prominent role to the development of Character and Resilience, then a crucial step will be developing clear guidance on best practice for teachers and providing a working vehicle for getting this guidance into schools.

As such, an explicit focus should be placed on developing the evidence base around specific interventions at school age that aid the development of Character and Resilience. This could be led by the Education Endowment Foundation, which is already taking very positive steps in this area, having commissioned the full scale academic literature review discussed above.⁷⁴ As that report concludes, given the “areas of promise” it identifies, further (long term) studies are needed “to build the case for investing in the development of non-cognitive skills and improving outcomes for young people”.⁷⁵ This could give rise to either an increased prominence within the existing EEF toolkit for such interventions or the creation of a separate best practice Character and Resilience tool-kit, of particular use for schools planning their Pupil Premium expenditure.

⁷⁴ Gutman and Schoon. ‘The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people’. Institute of Education, 2013

⁷⁵ Ibid

The development of this evidence base will need to be combined with a greater focus on ensuring that it is then conveyed to those who can do something about it: schools and, more specifically, teachers. This should begin with a greater focus on the importance of Character and Resilience for pupil life chances as part of initial teacher training. However, new teachers will only ever contribute a small proportion (generally around 8%) of the overall profession.⁷⁶ As such, the developing best practice evidence on Character and Resilience interventions must also be factored into programmes of continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers.

Indeed, given the evidence on the importance of high quality teaching for disadvantaged pupils, improving both the quality and quantity of teachers' CPD generally would be a very positive step in a social mobility context.⁷⁷

Case study / relevant evidence

Character education programmes

There are a wide range of examples of character-based approaches to education to draw from, ranging from specific interventions to school wide strategies and approaches.

Overall, as the EEF funded review highlights, there is "a wealth of causal evidence" relating to the positive impacts of well constructed and delivered so-called social and emotional learning (SEL) programmes.⁷⁸ The evidence suggests that SEL programmes "are not only successful at increasing children's socio-emotional and language skills, but are also effective at fostering positive outcomes and preventing negative ones".⁷⁹ There remains, however, need for further longitudinal analysis.

In the US, programmes like Penn Resiliency focus on building resilience in adolescents aged 10-12 years. Evaluation has found that it successfully reduces and prevents symptoms of

76 Kempton. 'To teach, to learn: more effective continuous professional development for teachers' CentreForum, 2013

77 Ibid

78 Gutman and Schoon, 'The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people'. Institute of Education, 2013

79 Ibid

depression, hopelessness, and anxiety.⁸⁰ Martin Seligman's Positive Psychology programmes have also been found to have many positive effects on high school students including increased reports of wellbeing and engagement at school.⁸¹ PATHS – Promotion of Alternative Thinking Strategies – aimed at teaching problem solving and social awareness to young people has also reduced anxiety and depression in evaluations.⁸²

Beyond those cited above, an example of the ethos approach from Australia is the Geelong Grammar School, where positive education principles are embedded across the school through direct teaching of Character and Resilience strengths, embedding positive education into the curriculum and by supporting experiential learning in daily practice.⁸³

Policy Recommendation – Schools

The APPG calls on the government to:

6. Encourage all private schools to share their professional expertise and facilities that promote Character and Resilience with schools in the state sector, in keeping with private schools' charitable status.

Detail and rationale

The thrust of the policy recommendations in this section has been to try to ensure that the development of Character and Resilience becomes part of the 'core business' of all schools. However, there are some schools where this has long been the case. Indeed, in the private sector, the development of particular character capabilities or personal qualities goes to the very core of the rationale behind many of the schools themselves.

At the Character and Resilience summit hosted by the APPG last year, Tony Little, Headmaster of Eton, discussed the explicit

80 Gillham, Brunwasser and Freres. 'Preventing depression in early adolescence: The Penn Resiliency Program' in Abela & Hankin eds. *Handbook of Depression in Children and Adolescents*, 2008

81 Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich and Linkins, 'Positive education: Positive psychology and classroom interventions'. *Oxford Review of Education*, 2009

82 Greenberg, Kusche and Riggs. 'The PATHS curriculum: Theory and research on neuro-cognitive development and school success' in Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg eds. *Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning: What Does the Research Say? 2004*

83 Seligman; Ernst, Gillham, Reivich and Linkins, 'Positive education: Positive psychology and classroom interventions'. *Oxford Review of Education*, 2009

focus on ‘building character’ at the heart of his school’s ethos.⁸⁴ There – as in many private schools – much of this takes place by exposing pupils to a broad range of experience through out of school activities and trips. The range and quality of these experiences are in turn often heavily aided by access to significant resources, both financial and physical (e.g. playing fields and facilities).

At present, private schools benefit from significant tax advantages as a result of being granted charitable status. In recent months, prominent figures such as Sir Michael Wilshaw and Sir Peter Lampl have urged private schools to do far more to justify their position as charitable organisations by doing significantly more to benefit pupils in the state sector.⁸⁵ Indeed, as the Sutton Trust has illustrated, such schools are at present far more of a barrier to improving social mobility than they are a vehicle to help tackle it.⁸⁶ This balance needs to begin to be redressed.

‘Extra’-curricular activities and trips that help develop Character and Resilience could provide an ideal opportunity to do this. It is an area where many private schools traditionally excel; it is an area where many state schools struggle. It is an area where many private schools have a wealth of resources and facilities to use; it is an area where many state schools do not.

As such, private schools should be actively encouraged (and potentially incentivised) to enter into a partnership with one or more state sector schools (particularly those with disadvantaged intakes) and to expose pupils at the partner school to the kind of experiences and activities the private institution uses to develop character in its own pupils.

84 www.theguardian.com/education/2013/feb/09/eton-headmaster-tony-little-interview

85 www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-23003988; www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmmeduski/58/3111004.htm

86 The Sutton Trust. ‘The Educational Backgrounds of the Nation’s Leading People’, November 2012

■ Transition to adulthood and employment

Introduction

As outlined in Part 1, even beyond the relationship with educational outcomes, there is a further positive link between Character and Resilience and desirable results in the labour market. This will come as no surprise. Numerous surveys and research findings point to the fact that employers place a high premium on ‘employability skills’ over and above raw attainment. The CBI cites a broad range of character capabilities as key to employability, including self-reliance, teamwork and resilience.⁸⁷

However, the evidence also suggests that employers do not feel that new recruits have these skills. In a recent survey, more than 60% said that they did not feel school or college leavers are developing the self-management skills they need for work.⁸⁸

In its initial report, ‘7 key truths about social mobility’, the APPG emphasised the point that social mobility is not in fact a singular, monolithic concept.⁸⁹ Instead, it can usefully be broken down into three aspects: ‘breaking out’ (from a troubled background), ‘moving on up’ (making sure all can reach their potential) and ‘stars to shine’ (nurturing outstanding talent).

Rightly in many instances, the last element tends to receive significant attention, particularly in relation to (elite) university access. For the first two groups however – ultimately, by far the largest number – the core of the social mobility challenge is

87 CBI. ‘Learning to Grow: What Employers Need from Education and Skills’. June, 2012

88 Ibid

89 All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility. ‘Seven Key Truths about Social Mobility’ Interim Report. May, 2012

enabling individuals to find first a foothold and then desirable progression in the labour market. As such, when it comes to policy initiatives at this stage in the life course, helping individuals to develop the Character and Resilience skills so valued by employers is vital. In the context of the combination of high levels of youth unemployment and businesses lamenting the lack of 'employability' skills among the young, this is doubly so.

Again, there are steps here that government can and should take. But, with the reduction in policy levers available beyond the end of formal schooling, this is an area where some of the initiative must also be taken up by employers themselves as well as other elements of civil society. This is partly reflected in the recommendations that follow.

Policy Recommendation – Adulthood and Employment

The APPG calls on the government to:

1. Encourage the growth of the National Citizenship Service and ensure that this has the explicit purpose of building Character and Resilience at its heart.

Detail and rationale

The National Citizen's Service (NCS) aims to support young people in developing the skills and attitudes they need to become more active and responsible citizens and more engaged in their communities. The NCS consists of a voluntary eight-week summer programme for 16/17 year olds, in which they take part in a range of outdoor activities and undertake challenging physical tasks. The programme also aims to promote social cohesion by mixing participants of different backgrounds.

As Minister for Civil Society Nick Hurd puts it, the NCS provides "activities that give young people the opportunity to stretch themselves, raise their levels of confidence and develop key employability skills."⁹⁰ As Hurd puts it:

⁹⁰ Nick Hurd. 'Young people need more than just GCSEs in the workplace'. Guardian, 22nd August 2013

“I have spoken to many NCS graduates over the years and I am always struck by the similarity of what they say, usually “I never thought I could do that” or “I never thought I’d meet people like this”. In my experience it can transform how a young person sees themselves, and it is hard to put a value on that.”⁹¹

In this light, the NCS is ideally placed to take on an explicit role in developing Character and Resilience among young people ahead of their entry into the world of work. As the CBI puts it:

“Community volunteer work helps builds the skills and habits that all young people need for success in work and life – like teamwork, enthusiasm and resilience.”⁹²

Thus far, over 30,000 young people have taken part in the NCS scheme with the intention to increase this significantly over the coming years. This intention should be encouraged through both formal and informal support with the potential for targets to be set in both the short and medium term for the growth of the scheme.

However, ensuring maximum effectiveness for the scheme will require a clear and consistent focus in how its results are assessed. One difficulty for policy makers in this area can be the lack of established evidence on how youth programmes and volunteering build Character and Resilience.⁹³ Starting with national schemes like the National Citizens Service, building character should become an explicit part of the programme goals and relevant tools should be included in evaluations to explore and assess distance travelled and skill development.

As discussed above, there is a growing range of reliable tools that could be included in programme evaluations. For example, The Young Foundation, in partnership with the National Youth Agency and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services, has put together a Matrix of Tools as part of a suite of resources in their development programme to create a Framework of Outcomes for Young People.⁹⁴

91 Ibid

92 www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25019567

93 Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. ‘State of the Nation 2013: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain’. October, 2013

94 The Young Foundation. ‘Framework of Outcomes for Young People’, July 2012 <http://youngfoundation.org/publications/framework-of-outcomes-for-young-people>

Case study / relevant evidence

A 2012 NatCen evaluation of NCS concluded that:

- ⋮ The monetary benefits to society are estimated to be up to 2.8 times the cost of delivery;
- ⋮ NCS improved communication, teamwork and leadership and had a positive impact on young people’s willingness to help out in the community;
- ⋮ 88% of summer participants and 86% of autumn participants said they would definitely recommend NCS to a friend.⁹⁵

The NCS is also closely associated with the volunteering/activity based Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) scheme. For example, time spent on the NCS can be accredited as voluntary and residential hours for those working towards DofE awards. A 2009 evaluation of DofE also found overwhelming indications that young people felt DofE had improved their confidence, self-esteem and personal development.⁹⁶

These findings are supported by the overview assessment carried out by Gutman and Schoon for the EEF and the Cabinet Office. This suggested that participation in forms of outdoor adventure/volunteering programmes can have positive effects on “the psychological, behavioural, physical and academic outcomes of young people” and are, as such, “a promising tool to promote health and wellbeing of young people”.⁹⁷

Policy Recommendation – Adulthood and Employment

The APPG calls on the government to:

2. Establish an officially recognised and valued National Volunteering Award Scheme to give adult volunteers formal recognition of their contribution to the lives of young people.

⁹⁵ NatCen Social Research. ‘Evaluation of National Citizen Service Pilots’. May, 2012

⁹⁶ Campbell, Bell, Armstrong, Horton, Mansukhani, Matthews and Pilkington. ‘The Impact of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award on Young People’. University of Northampton, 2009

⁹⁷ Gutman and Schoon, ‘The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people’. Institute of Education, 2013

Detail and rationale

Valuable schemes like the NCS and the organisations that contribute to it can only flourish however if they are supported by the invaluable adult volunteers that make them possible. This is particularly true of key youth organisations – notably those often referred to as the ‘uniformed’ services such as Cubs, Scouts, Brownies, Guides, The Boys Brigade and the Cadets.

However, in 2012, a report commissioned by David Cameron revealed that an estimated 80,000 young people were waiting to get involved in social projects but were being held back because of a shortage of adult volunteers at organisations like the Scouts, Guides and DofE.⁹⁸ Indeed, in that year alone, the national waiting list for the scouting movement reached 35,000 young people, with many parents placing their children on the list at birth in order to secure a place in later life.⁹⁹

Thus, at a recent event to launch the Step Up 2 Serve social action programme, Prince Charles voiced his concern over the recruitment crisis facing uniformed groups, lamenting that “many of the youth organisations which so ably provide [for young people] are hampered in their growth by a lack of adult volunteers”.¹⁰⁰

It is vital therefore to begin to address this problem and government should consider commissioning a further review into how this can be achieved. One possible step would be to enhance the prestige attached to adult volunteering (and thus encourage individuals to offer their time/overcome some of the bureaucratic hurdles). This could be advanced by introducing an officially recognised and valued National Volunteering Award Scheme. This could operate by awarding different levels of volunteering ‘status’ to adults involved in volunteering activities to benefit young people – possibly using ‘gold’, ‘silver’ and ‘bronze’ level awards.

Thus, for example, gold status might be awarded to an individual who dedicates themselves to leading a large Scout troop. A bronze level volunteering award might go to someone who

98 www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25019567

99 See Martin. ‘Waiting list to join the Scouts hits 35,000: Compensation culture puts off would-be leaders, insists MP’. Daily Mail, 19th May 2012

100 See Paton. ‘Prince of Wales: Scouts and Guides suffering over lack of volunteers’ Daily Telegraph, 21st November 2013

participates for an extended period in a weekly scheme reading to children in primary schools.

These awards could be accompanied by an official certificate presented to the adult volunteer. Under the NCS, young people themselves are awarded a certificate signed by the Prime Minister. Something similar could be considered in relation to such a National Volunteering Award Scheme. Indeed, if sufficient prestige became attached to such a scheme, volunteering award levels could become something adult volunteers might wish to demonstrate on their CV, with the potential to impact on their own labour market outcomes.

Policy Recommendation – Adulthood and Employment

The APPG calls on the government and local authorities to:

3. Seize the opportunity of the raising education participation age to use Character and Resilience programmes to re-engage the most disengaged 16 and 17 year olds back into learning.

Detail and rationale

From summer 2013 all young people are required to participate in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From 2015, young people will be required to participate until their 18th birthday.

Consequently, schools and colleges are now expected to work with a cohort of disengaged 16-17 year olds. Local authorities will be expected to use 're-engagement provision' to cater to those young people not in education, training or employment. Re-engagement programmes are a feature of local authorities' statutory responsibility to support young people into learning.

Guidance to local authorities states: "re-engagement providers may want to consider how best to develop the social and emotional capabilities of the young person, whilst maintaining a focus on their sustained engagement in education or training."

This presents a real opportunity. Local authorities should be further encouraged to make extensive use of initiatives intended

to develop Character and Resilience to look to build the key non-cognitive base that could be vital in enabling young people to 're-engage' with education. As discussed above, an individual is only likely to benefit from 'academic' learning if other factors are in place that will enable them to be in a position to access this learning.

Again, this will require significant efforts to ensure that local authorities are kept informed of the developing evidence base on 'what works' in terms of Character and Resilience related interventions. This further supports the need to develop the best practice 'tool kit' discussed above and potentially extend it to include specific interventions targeted at this at risk group.

Case study / relevant evidence

Team – The Prince's Trust

The Prince's Trust Team programme is a personal development programme which increases the confidence, motivation and skills of 16-25 year olds.¹⁰¹ Participants develop a range of personal and employability skills over a 12-week period. Of the almost 12,000 young people in the UK who went on the Team programme in 2012/13, 71% progressed onto employment, further education or training. The young people on the programme will have experienced some form of disadvantage: 23% have a disability, 19% are homeless, 10% are in or leaving care and 19% are offenders or ex-offenders

The programme is intended to build Character and Resilience in disadvantaged young people by challenging them in new ways in unfamiliar surroundings:

- the week spent undertaking adventurous and other team-building activities at a residential centre will often be the first time they have spent time away from their local area;
- the mock job interview sessions will often be the first time they have had to present themselves to a professional audience;
- the work placement will often be the young person's first experience of a workplace;

101 www.princes-trust.org.uk/about_the_trust/what_we_do/programmes/team_programme.aspx

- a final presentation will often be the first time they have had to speak publicly; and
- through its broad team mix, to include a mixture of ages, genders, ethnicities, as well as employed participants from the uniformed services or the business community, Team exposes young people to sets of views and behaviours outside their norm.

By being encouraged to take increasing ownership over the activities on the programme and to continually reflect on their personal development, young people become aware of their growing confidence and abilities, but also have an opportunity to recognise and work on their weaknesses.

In addition, The Prince’s Trust has a partnership with Help for Heroes which enables wounded, injured and sick military personnel to support the young people on the programme while they are themselves overcoming adversity in life. The Prince’s Trust believe that resilience skills can often be passed on best by those who have experienced great setbacks themselves and this is a strong example of this in action.

Policy Recommendation – Adulthood and Employment

The APPG calls on the government to:

4. Make Character and Resilience a key focus of the National Careers Service.

Detail and rationale

As a result of coalition reforms, the responsibility for providing careers guidance to pupils is now held by schools themselves. However, as part of a wider vision calling on employers, schools and colleges to work more closely together, Skills Minister Matthew Hancock has called for concerted efforts “to help build the confidence and character needed to ensure a successful career”.¹⁰² The Minister has asked the National Careers Service to play a key part in making these links and in bringing in partners who work with schools, colleges and employers to enable this to happen.

¹⁰² Hancock. ‘Inspiration Vision Statement’, September 2013

Similarly, at the heart of the National Careers Council's first report – 'An Aspirational Nation: Creating a Culture Change in Careers Provision' – is the recommendation that the National Careers Service launch "a new initiative to bring together a range of organisations to explore and highlight the importance of 'character' and 'resilience' in a successful working life and identify realistic and effective options for addressing this issue."¹⁰³ The APPG echo this recommendation – the importance of Character and Resilience to a successful career support the idea that these concepts should be integral to the work of the National Careers Service.

Indeed, in a changed economy in which individuals are increasingly likely to have multiple job changes across their working life – often requiring significant re-location, upheaval and re-training – character, resilience and careers advice may be seen to be inextricably linked.

An important role in the provision of careers advice is played by the increasing prominence of mentoring schemes. By providing exposure to valuable adult role models, these initiatives are potentially well placed to aid the development of character and resilience in young people, particularly at the stage in life when they are seeking to make the transition to employment.

In this context, a further important aspect of careers advice throughout life should be to point aspiring adults in the direction of potential retraining and development opportunities (with a specific need to provide clear guidance on the funding options available to pursue them). The Open University in particular provide a particularly strong example here, as discussed below.

Case study / relevant evidence

Mentoring

A 2012 review by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation concluded that "there is promising evidence of mentoring having an impact on both educational attainment and on attitudes

¹⁰³ National Careers Council. 'An Aspirational Nation: Creating a culture change in careers provision'. June, 2013

and aspirations".¹⁰⁴ It also noted that a particular appeal of mentoring in a social mobility context is that it can enable less advantaged young people to develop relationships with older, more experienced people, in the way that more affluent children are often able to do informally. Mentoring, therein, was seen to increase the social capital of disadvantaged children by enhancing their social network and experience. As such, there are indications that mentoring has a relatively favourable impact on children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and therefore the potential to help narrow the gap.¹⁰⁵

Importantly, in their wide ranging academic review, Gutman and Schoon highlight that the positive impact of mentoring programmes can depend heavily on the design and implementation of the initiative in question, with a particular premium on the strength of the relationship formed between the young person and the mentor.¹⁰⁶

Open University

The Open University (OU) promotes educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential – regardless of their background or prior qualifications (62% of its students have 2 A Levels or fewer). These adults are able to substantially improve their value in the labour market by earning a credible university degree.

One example of such an adult is Claire Chambers, a 44-year old mother of two from Nottingham. Claire, who was working at a supermarket prior to the birth of her second child, decided to study with the OU from home. She ended up earning a 2:1 in her degree and is now working at the University of Nottingham while also studying for a Masters degree. For Claire, character development was as important a part of her university experience as any single component of her degree curriculum. "Studying had a hugely positive impact," she said, "on both me and my career, in fact my career is underpinned completely by

104 Cummings, Laing, Law, McLaughlin, Papps, Todd, Woolner. 'Can Changing Aspirations and Attitudes Impact on Educational Attainment? A Review of Interventions'. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012

105 Ibid

106 Gutman and Schoon. 'The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people: Literature review'. Institute of Education, November 2013

the knowledge and confidence I gained during my studies.” Her story is a clear example of how a flexible means of access to higher education can be a key driver of social mobility.

Policy Recommendation – Adulthood and Employment

The APPG calls on employers to:

5. Actively encourage staff to participate in CSR activities that develop Character and Resilience in young people;
6. Implement internal training programmes that help develop the Character and Resilience capabilities of staff; AND
7. Develop alternative routes into advanced professional positions that reflect the importance of Character and Resilience skills rather than just raw academic achievements.

Detail and rationale

As discussed above, prominent employers are increasingly concerned about the lack of ‘employability skills’ among those entering the labour market, even among those with necessary academic qualifications. While not identical, there is significant overlap between these employability skills and the character capabilities that are the focus of this document.

As the preceding sections have shown, there is much that government can and should do to begin to help develop these skills. But employers too have a role that they can play. Indeed, given the potential economic benefits that enhancing these qualities within the workforce could bring, it is in their direct interests to do so.

The first step is to direct efforts outwards to help raise the general Character and Resilience competencies of the young people who will make up their future talent. For many companies – particularly larger organisations – community or ‘corporate social responsibility’ (CSR) activities are an integral element of their business model. By encouraging staff to participate in some of the activities and programmes discussed above that develop Character and Resilience in young people, businesses can both

‘give something back’ in a general sense while simultaneously contributing to the improvement of the ‘employability’ skills of the future workforce (see National Grid example below).

Secondly, employers can – as many do – recognise the importance of Character and Resilience related skills and specifically factor these into their own training programmes for staff (see BT example below).

Thirdly, if – as many employers suggest – the ‘employability’ skills that have Character and Resilience at their heart are just as important to future success as academic outcomes, there may be advantages to be gained by considering recruitment processes that explicitly recognise this. That is, parallel but alternative non-graduate routes into advanced professional positions for those who exhibit strong employability skills despite not following the traditional ‘academic’ route may increase the pool of high performing individuals that employers can choose from (see PwC example below).

Case study / relevant evidence

National Grid

National Grid, in partnership with Community Service Volunteers UK, has an active programme for integrating volunteering and character building into its Human Resources practice at all levels of employment. This is a priority from the top down. CEO Steven Holliday is an enthusiastic supporter of the company’s volunteer programme and its goal that employees will continue to volunteer throughout their professional life.

When making hiring decisions, the company views candidates favourably who have a history of volunteering. Most importantly, it also requires every graduate trainee and apprentice to participate in social action work during their traineeship. This is specifically intended to create a habit of volunteering in individuals early in their career.

For its current employees, National Grid and CSV organised 29 ‘Community Action Days’ between April 2012 and March 2013. National Grid develops a day of targeted volunteering in a selected institution such as a community centre, school,

or early years' education centre. In one 12 month period, 408 employees undertook 2,562 volunteer hours, with an estimated 72,304 people benefiting. Nearly all National Grid employees said they wanted to volunteer again and every organisation National Grid worked with said they would like to work with National Grid again.

*BT*¹⁰⁷

Drawing of the evidence on social and emotional skills, BT has chosen to explicitly factor resilience-building into their wellbeing programme for staff. Working in partnership with Action for Happiness, it has also introduced two-day courses in positive psychology for people managers. Of employees taking part in these pilot schemes, one hundred percent reported having learned skills to maintain and build wellbeing and resilience, and a majority found that their new skills have had an impact both at and outside of work. BT is now examining how to build resilience into leadership training more generally, especially for frontline leaders and human resources.

*PwC*¹⁰⁸

PwC's Higher Apprenticeships programme provides an alternative route into careers in accountancy, finance or consulting for school and college leavers. This is specifically targeted at individuals felt to display strong employability skills despite not following the traditional 'academic' route into these professions. Apprentices earn a wage, whilst working towards a range of qualifications designed to meet employers' needs at a level equivalent to Higher Education. They are placed on a track that merges with the graduate scheme at the point when those recruited from university join the company.

107 www.bitc.org.uk/our-resources/case-studies/bt-work-fit-programme

108 www.pwc.co.uk/careers/schools/index.jhtml

■ Annex A - Summit Attendees

As stated in the introduction, the launching point for this manifesto was the Character and Resilience Summit, a full-day of discussion on the topic of Character and Resilience held in February 2013. In virtue of both their involvement in that summit and their ongoing work in their respective fields, each of the following attendees played a part in making this manifesto possible:

Dr. Stephen Adams-Langley, Regional Manager at Place2Be

Baroness Hilary Jane Armstrong of Top Hill, House of Lords

Kim Atkins, APPG on Social Mobility

Tom Attwood, Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation

Genevieve Bach, Public Affairs Manager at CIPD

Irena Barker, Times Educational Supplement

Camila Batmanghelidji, Director and Founder of Kids Company

Julie Bentley, Chief Executive of Girl Guiding UK

Fiona Blacke, Chief Executive of National Youth Agency

Simon Blake, Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission

Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP, Vice-Chair of the APPG on Social Mobility

Laura Burley, The Open University

Dr JohnButcher, The Open University

Dr Rachel Carr, IntoUniversity

Paul Cleal, Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission

Peter Clough, Professor of Psychology at Hull University

Claire Crawford, Programme Director at the Institute for Fiscal Studies

Matt Dickson, University of Bath

Mark Easton, Home Editor for BBC News Broadcasting

Hilary Emery, National Childrens Bureau

Mhairi Fraser, Office of Damian Hinds MP

Maggie Galliers, Association of Colleges

David Gold, Head of Public Affairs at Royal Mail Group

Dr Mike Grenier, Eton College

Mike Griffiths, Association of School and College Leaders

Christian Guy, Managing Director at the Centre for Social Justice

Duncan Hames MP, Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister

Tom Harrison, Jubilee Centre for Character and Values

Susan Hazledine, Allen and Overy

Diane Herbert, Channel 4

Meg Hillier MP, Vice-Chair of the APPG on Social Mobility

Damian Hinds MP, Chair of the APPG on Social Mobility

Corinne Jenkinson, Office of Damian Hinds MP

David Johnston, Social Mobility Foundation

Baroness Judith Jolly of Congdon's Shop, House of Lords

Matt Jones, Globe Academy

James Kempton, Associate Director Centre Forum

Dr. Catherine Kilfedder, Group Health Advisor for BT

Lucy Lee, Policy Exchange

Jen Lexmond, Social Researcher and Founder of Character Counts

Tony Little, Headmaster of Eton College

Christine Longworth, Office of Julian Huppert MP

Nina Mguni, Young Foundation
Rt Hon Alan Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility Commission
Henry Morris, Upreach
Rajay Naik, The Open University
Mike Nicholson, University of Oxford
David Nicholson, Office of Hazel Blears MP
Eric Ollerenshaw MP, Vice-Chair of Social Mobility APPG
Shivangee Patel, London Youth
Chris Paterson, Senior Researcher at Centre Forum
Jonathan Refoy, CH2M Hill
Benita Refson OBE, Chief Executive of Place2Be
Richard Rigby, The Prince's Trust
Chris Russell, Headmaster at the Duke of York Military School
Terry Ryal, vInspired
Alex Shapland-Howes, Future First
Rosa Sinclair-Wilson, Office of Baroness Claire Tyler
Amanda Spielman, Ofqual
Doug Strycharczyk, Managing Director of the Association for Qualitative Research
Dame Clare Tickell, Action for Children
Baroness Claire Tyler of Enfield, Vice-Chair of the APPG on Social Mobility
Rosemary Watt-Wyness, Director of Policy and Strategy at the Prince's Trust
Chris Wellings, Save The Children
Ben Westaway, Videographer
Chris Wright, Catch 22