



Unleashing Aspiration:

The Government Response to the Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions

Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for
Business, Innovation and Skills
By Command of Her Majesty
January 2010

Government works closely with the Devolved Administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, recognising their particular and varying responsibilities. While many of the Government responses to the recommendations of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions are specific to England, the challenges are common across the four countries of the United Kingdom. Each will consider the most appropriate arrangements in those areas for which they have devolved responsibility, to address the issues in ways that best meet their own circumstances and needs.

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Foreword

There is nothing more tragic than someone having the ability or the talent, but not the encouragement or opportunity to realise their potential. A high level of social mobility matters because it is the means by which people become what they can be. It is about ensuring ability rather than background is the key determinant of what it takes to get on in modern Britain. Social mobility is something this Government is passionately committed to. It's about giving everyone a fair chance. It's about removing the barriers that stop people from fulfilling their potential.

The Final Report from the Panel on Fair Access shows that, when it comes to social mobility, we've raised the glass ceiling in Britain. The exam achievements of school children have improved significantly, more people are on apprenticeship programmes, far more people from less well off backgrounds are now going to university. The gender pay gap has narrowed. But we still have some way to go because, for too many, the door to the professions is still closed and while they may have the talent, they don't get the chance.

The report showed that 75% of judges, 70% of finance directors, 45% of top civil servants and 32% of MPs were independently schooled, and yet only 7% of our children go to a private school. The great talent and ability of Britain's children is not limited to the few, or concentrated in private schools, but evident in the many. We must do more to nurture, encourage and realise that potential or, on current trajectory, tomorrow's professionals will be drawn almost entirely from the better-off 30% of families in this country. That is not fair, and it cannot be good enough for us.

So we have to not only raise but break through the glass ceiling. And this isn't just about individual opportunity, it's about simple economics. We're emerging from the largest global financial crisis and deepest international downturn for almost a century. Swift government action has meant that Britain will emerge from the recession with its capacity for long term growth largely intact. Now we have to make sure all available talent is used as we support the recovery.

What we already know about that future is that, as knowledge based services become ever more central to the UK economy, so too will the role of the professions, and jobs rooted in specialist skills. Whether it's the traditional sectors like science, medicine, education and law, or the emerging creative industries, there will be new opportunities and new jobs for those with the application and ability to master these complex jobs.

The reality is that, as a country, we won't be able to take advantage of those opportunities if people with talent fall by the wayside because they never had the chance or got the encouragement.

That is why we commissioned Alan Milburn and the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions to recommend how we could open up the professions and ensure they are no longer the sole preserve of the well-off or those with the right social connections. I want to thank Alan Milburn MP and the Panel for their excellent work in producing the report. It has already made a significant impact on the Government's policy programme since its publication and many of our policy responses have been announced in recent months. We back the vast majority of the Panel's conclusions and the work to address their recommendations is already underway.

With the help of employers, we have set up a Graduate Talent Pool so that more graduates can take advantage of the opportunities offered by internships. These are vital in accessing powerful networks. This document includes plans to develop the Pool further and turn it into an online National Internship Service. And at the Pre Budget Report we announced £8m for 10,000 undergraduate internships.

Through *Quality, Choice and Aspiration*, our strategy for young people's information advice and guidance we are modernising careers education and making it easier for today's generation of young people and their parents to access the quality advice and guidance which is so crucial in informing them of the options for their lives' next steps.

Too many able and talented young people from low income backgrounds are not progressing from school on to college and university. The Milburn report showed that in many cases this was because young children lacked any knowledge or experience of university or access to the quality support and advice needed to make an informed choice about their academic or vocational options post 16.

To tackle this problem we are today setting out a guarantee, building on the New Opportunities White Paper published last year, for around 130,000 of the brightest young people from low-income backgrounds to benefit from a package of structured assistance at secondary school beginning in 2012. This should include experience of higher education, mentoring and access to high quality information, advice and guidance.

We have published *Higher Ambitions* which looks at the ways of stopping talented people slipping through the net and, in *Skills for Growth*, we set out how we will empower people by developing skills accounts and committed to an apprenticeship scholarship programme to help 1,000 of our best apprentices go on to higher education if they wish.

Lord Browne is also leading an Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance which has as part of its remit the task of ensuring that the system caters for full and part time students and that finance is not a barrier to access to higher education. We've made it clear to British universities, especially our very best, that social mobility must remain at the heart of their missions and have accepted the Panel's recommendation on asking universities to take into account the context of educational achievement in their admissions process.

But this is only the start. If we really want to improve social mobility in the long term we have to change people's aspirations. We have to give people hope to aim for something higher. Very often, the difference between someone taking up the opportunity or not is one inspiring person saying 'you can do it', whether that's a parent or a teacher.

So this response includes our plans to raise aspirations by focusing on four factors that have an impact on people's life chances: the care and development of children in their early years, the quality of our schools, continued and high quality education and training post 16 and the skills of our workforce.

Partnership is the crucial ingredient in all this work. Government working with schools, colleges and universities, and, in particular, the professions themselves. The relaunched Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum will be instrumental in driving this work across all the professions. Our commitment to social mobility has to be long term. So in this response we also set out our intention to set up a Social Mobility Commission to report annually on our progress towards a fairer more mobile society.

A decent society is about ensuring everyone gets a fair chance in life. A dynamic economy is about extending opportunity to those with the ambition and drive to grasp it. We must achieve both goals. Not simply because wasting the potential of any one in Britain would be a tragedy. But also because our future success as a country depends upon it.



Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP

Co-ordinator of the Government response to the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions and Minister of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Executive Summary

Social Mobility – the context for the Government response

1. Promoting greater social mobility must be a fundamental ambition for our society. It means creating fair chances for all and removing the barriers some people face getting on in life. It means promoting a more equal society, which is based on merit regardless of background. Equality of opportunity is important for individuals – to ensure they have the greatest possibility to succeed and flourish in life; for society – as fairer, open and dynamic societies are happier, better educated, and more cohesive; and for the economy – because successful, dynamic economies need to draw on the talents and efforts of everyone, not just the few.
2. The current economic slowdown has sparked fears for the future of the global economy within which we all live and work, and the Government has a central role in ensuring the UK economy responds to the challenges of the future. Beyond the downturn lies tremendous opportunity – particularly in terms of new jobs, including those that will be created by the expansion of digital and green industries. As individuals, as employers, as a society – we must raise our sights and grasp that opportunity.
3. This Government has a good record on increasing social mobility in the UK. Between 2002/03 and 2007/08 the gap in participation in higher education between higher and lower socio-economic classes has narrowed by 7% points and long term youth unemployment claimant numbers have fallen since 1997, even despite the current economic climate. The Government's drive to increase levels of social mobility was set out in the *New Opportunities White Paper* (January 2009)¹ which included commitments to continuing to improve early years services, raising school standards, providing access to training for school leavers as well as adults, and supporting families and communities.
4. The Final Report from the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions² was very clear that a socially mobile society was a necessity for the UK to prosper – both economically as well as socially. As the report identified, there is not a single definition of the professions. But they do have a number of common aspects – such as occupations with recognisable entry points based on education and/or experience; a code of conduct or guidance for members regarding their professional work; systems to maintain standards and quality within the profession; and a commitment to continuing professional development.
5. We cannot afford to let anyone's background hold them back from fulfilling their potential. If a society is prosperous, there is more chance that successive generations will get better jobs and lead more fulfilling lives. People from all different backgrounds and ages need the chance to get on and get the information, advice and qualifications they need to open up opportunities. Raising aspirations, especially for children and young people, through high quality advice and the encouragement of and exposure to role models will increase motivation and a

¹ New Opportunities White Paper – Fair Chances for the Future (January 2009).

Available at: www.hmg.gov.uk/newopportunities.

² Unleashing Aspiration: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions (July 2009).

Available at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/publications.aspx.

sense of ambition. Anyone with ability and motivation must be able to get the best education and training they need, including at our most prestigious universities. This is not about dumbing down, but securing fairness of access. The quality of all provision – information, advice and guidance, education and training – must not be compromised, so that everyone with the merit has the opportunity to gain qualifications that increase their life chances and gain fair access to the professions.

6. Government has a critical role to play. Government action to invest in early years care and learning, the reform of and investment in our school system, the very significant increase in higher education capacity and choice and the huge expansion of apprenticeships has meant we are in a stronger position to benefit from the economic recovery and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential.

7. That work continues and last autumn we published strategies on information, advice and guidance, higher education, and skills. But this is not just a task for Government, schools, colleges and universities – the professions themselves have one of the most important tasks. They must review their recruitment and career progression procedures and open up opportunities. The Final Report from the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions made recommendations for us all and the relaunched Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum will have an important remit to drive and co-ordinate changes and actions throughout the professions.

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Progress to date

8. We have made real and credible progress to remove barriers, boost educational achievement, promote second chances and encourage people to progress as far and as fast as their abilities allow. Since 1997, we have transformed the life chances of many children, young people and adults. Over 3,000 Sure Start Children's Centres are offering services to over 2.4 million young children and their families. Since its establishment in 2006, the Social Exclusion Taskforce has championed the needs of the most disadvantaged members of society and made significant progress in dealing with social exclusion issues. Over 2,000 families have benefited from Family Intervention Projects leading to intensive support to tackle issues like substance misuse, domestic violence, poverty, anti-social behaviour, crime and truancy.

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We have raised the exam performance and achievements of school-age children so that over 60% achieve five good A*-Cs at GCSE, compared with 45% in 1997. Last year's GCSE results were the best ever and showed the biggest year-on-year improvement. Over 76% of young people reach this and equivalent standards by 19, up more than 10% from 2004. And we now have effective mechanisms for dealing with failing schools.

9. We know that gaining post-16 qualifications is critical to personal social mobility. Over half of our young people from all social classes now aspire to go to university and we have given increasing numbers the opportunity and the financial support to do so – with more than 1 million studying at university in 2007/08, compared to 747,000 in 1997. In addition the Government's actions to widen participation in higher education have been successful. There were almost 10,000 more UK-domiciled young first degree entrants to universities from lower socio-economic groups in 2007/08 compared to 2002/03 and about 21,000 more entrants from state schools in 2007/08 compared to 2002/03. And we

have substantially improved and increased apprenticeships – an important route for those whose preference is to work and learn at the same time; almost 113,000 now complete compared to just 39,000 in 2001/2. Since 2001, over 5.7 million adults have taken literacy, language or numeracy courses, with over 2.8 million achieving a national qualification. We have also taken action to promote access to learning and skills and support for people who are the most disadvantaged.

10. We have taken steps to encourage people off benefits and into work – introduced the national minimum wage; proposed legislation on the right of employees to request time to train; and greatly improved opportunities for parental leave and flexible working. These policies are designed to give adults opportunities to work, develop and get on in work, whilst still balancing the needs of their families.

11. And we are shaping our economy over the medium and long term. We are encouraging enterprise and using government interventions – through support for research and innovation; through the levers of procurement, planning and regulation; through our support to businesses to train their employees – to promote the industries where we can be globally competitive in the future and the new jobs that will flow as a result.

The Government Response

12. The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions made a number of powerful recommendations. While we have responded to each of the recommendations in the second part of this response, it is the central challenge that is the most important – that there is still a need to do more to promote social mobility. We must do more to support those critical early years in life; to address underperformance in some schools; to remove the remaining barriers to accessing the most selective universities; to lift ambition; and to stop opportunities being lost through lack of networks, financial support, advice or the soft skills increasingly necessary to succeed in the world of work.

13. Our response is ambitious, co-ordinating action across Government. Central to our response is:

- establishing a Social Mobility Commission which will provide expert evidence on trends and policy on social mobility; and produce an annual report on progress against the Panel's recommendations.
- introducing a new duty on key public bodies to tackle socio-economic inequalities – a key barrier to social mobility.
- pushing forward a challenging programme of work with the professions themselves to transform the life chances and job opportunities of the next generation of young people. A reformed Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum is being launched to do this, in line with the Panel's recommendation. A number of the main professions have already agreed to be a part of the Collaborative Forum. We will ask them to agree and promote focused solutions that address the issues and barriers identified by the Fair Access to the Professions Panel's recommendations. We also want to draw on the professions' membership knowledge and experience in providing advice on how policies and practices can best be shared and implemented.
- improving the way in which information, advice and guidance is offered to young people and the way this improves their employability skills and life chances. Our plans are set out in a new and demanding Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) strategy³, published on 26 October 2009. This included a review of the quality and effectiveness of local authorities' delivery of IAG within two years; committed to a range of measures to increase mentoring and work experience opportunities; and launched a campaign to take forward the aims of the Milburn Panel.
- ensuring that access to the life-changing opportunities offered by a university education are based on talent and potential, not birth or background. Our plans are set out in the Higher Education Framework, published on 3 November 2009⁴. It describes our vision for the future and how we can improve the opportunities for talented people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access the most challenging and rewarding courses at our most selective universities. This includes incentivising programmes that open up new routes into higher education; improving partnership arrangements between universities and schools; and considering, through the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance, how we ensure finance is not a barrier to higher education and how we cater to part time as well as full time students. We announced further

³ Quality, Choice and Aspiration: A strategy for young people's information, advice and guidance (October 2009). Available at: <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk>.

⁴ Higher Ambitions: The future of universities in a knowledge economy (November 2009). Available at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/higherambitions>.

financial support in the Pre-Budget Report on 9 November 2009 for undergraduate internships, and we will bring together undergraduate and graduate internships opportunities through a refined, on-line National Internships Service, building on the success of Graduate Talent Pool. This is to ensure that students from low income backgrounds can benefit from the opportunities that internships offer.

- maintaining our ambition that 50 percent of young people participate in higher education, but we realise that this has meant that we may have focused less than we should have on the 50 percent who will not go to university. That is why we committed to a new aspiration that three quarters of young people should participate in higher education or complete an advanced apprenticeship or equivalent technician level course by the age of 30.
- ensuring that young people can progress through vocational routes to high status professional careers and that adults have the chances to acquire the skills to get on in the workplace and branch out to create new enterprises. The Skills Strategy, published on 11 November 2009⁵, set out plans to take this forward, including a commitment to develop proposals for a scholarship scheme for apprentices; and new opportunities through Skills Accounts to empower learners. The new adult advancement and careers service will help adults make the choice.

14. In addition, the Employment White Paper⁶ published in December 2009 sets out how we will continue to support people from a variety of backgrounds back into work.

15. The White Paper, *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system*, set out how we will build upon significant improvements in the last decade, create a world-class education system and build a strong economy and workforce for the future. Pupil and Parent Guarantees underpinned by legislation will ensure that every child can succeed. School Report Cards will look to measure a school's contributions to children's wider development, resilience and life chances.

16. The Milburn Panel's report was about fair access to the professions, but we will also continue to focus on those with furthest to travel recognising that some people have many barriers to overcome to achieve success. Our programmes with the most disengaged, with offenders, with people in the lowest income brackets, provide opportunities to everybody to improve life for them and for their families.

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⁵ Skills for Growth – the National Skills Strategy (November 2009).

Available at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/skills-for-growth>.

⁶ Building Britain's Recovery: Achieving Full Employment (December 2009).

Available at: www.dwp.gov.uk/buildingbritainsrecovery.

Specific Government Actions in Response to Recommendations in the Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions⁷

This section of the Government response describes specific actions we are taking or propose to take to address the issues raised by the Panel's Final Report⁷. It covers all 88 recommendations, the vast majority of which we have accepted in full or in principle. Recommendations accepted in principle acknowledge the spirit and intention behind the recommendation, but propose actions based on policy developments since the Panel's report was published in July or to be implemented in other ways. We have also accepted in principle the recommendations for the professions themselves, which will be taken forward by the reconvened Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum. The professions' endorsement and commitment are critical to ensure we make rapid progress.

The detail of our policy prescription responding to many of the recommendations is contained in the following strategies – Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy⁸, Higher Education Framework⁹, Skills Strategy¹⁰, Employment White Paper¹¹ and in the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance. Many recommendations have already been implemented. For the remainder we have provided implementation dates, most of which are consistent with the timetabling suggested by the Panel. Acceptance of the Panel's recommendations represents a substantial and significant programme of work which has commitment from across Government.

Finally, as a result of accepting two specific recommendations in the report, we will have put in place the means to monitor and drive progress over the coming period through the new Social Mobility Commission and the reconvened Panel on Fair Access to the Professions which will help to drive the Social Mobility agenda in the years ahead.

Related strategies

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- 7 Unleashing Aspiration: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions (July 2009). Available at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/publications.aspx.
- 8 Quality, Choice and Aspiration: A strategy for young people's information, advice and guidance (October 2009). Available at: <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk>.
- 9 Higher Ambitions: The future of universities in a knowledge economy (November 2009). Available at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/higherambitions>.
- 10 Skills for Growth – the National Skills Strategy (November 2009). Available at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/skills-for-growth>.
- 11 Building Britain's Recovery: Achieving Full Employment (December 2009). Available at: www.dwp.gov.uk/buildingbritainsrecovery.

What drives social mobility?

Recommendation 1:

Social mobility should explicitly be the top overarching social policy priority for this and future governments. The Government should develop new ways of embedding this priority across all government departments. It should develop new partnerships with civic institutions, professional bodies, community organisations and individual citizens to help deliver this priority.

ACCEPT Improving social mobility is a key element of the Government's social and economic policies – demonstrated by our commitment to ending child poverty, tackling social exclusion and supporting families. We are proud of our achievements, but must do more. The Government recognises that a culture of aspiration, as well as the provision of opportunity, is a central part of a socially mobile society. The aspirations people have to better themselves drive social progress. We will work to ensure young people aim high and aspire to make the most of the opportunities available to them, through an aspiration raising campaign, improved careers guidance and a network of inspirational mentors.

We will continue to focus our energies on providing everyone in society with greater and fairer opportunities. In particular, the new socio-economic duty in the Equality Bill will promote social mobility and social justice. It is designed to narrow the gap between rich and poor and engage the public sector in the delivery of social mobility. This new statutory duty will require key public bodies to consider socio-economic inequalities when planning and resourcing their services.

The implementation of the duty will be informed by the findings of the National Equality Panel, headed by Professor John Hills, which will report in late January. The report will outline the scale and nature of economic inequality in the UK, and explain how social background, gender, race and other factors impact on life chances and outcomes. The Government will respond to the Panel's report, outlining achievements and setting out future plans to address economic inequality.

As detailed in recommendation 2, we will create an expert Social Mobility Commission that will provide Government with ongoing support through research and analysis of its progress with the social mobility agenda.

Recommendation 2:

Building on the New Opportunities White Paper¹², the Government should establish an expert social mobility commission. The Commission should have at its core three key roles: research, technical advice, and transparency and accountability. It should be comprised of a small number of independently appointed experts, meeting as an advisory board and supported by a handful of staff.

ACCEPT We will establish a Social Mobility Commission. The Commission's work will include:

- conducting ongoing analysis and research to provide evidence on trends and policy on social mobility in the UK and internationally;

¹² New Opportunities White Paper – Fair Chances for the Future (January 2009). Available at: www.hmg.gov.uk/newopportunities.

- producing an annual report setting out progress made by Government and the professions on delivering their commitments in the Milburn report; and
- conducting a review of the Department for Children, Schools and Families's Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy.

A Transition Team will be immediately set up within the Cabinet Office to develop the detail of the Commission's governance, remit and work programme necessary for the full Commission then to be launched. The Rt Hon Alan Milburn, in his continuing role as Chair of the Panel on Fair Access, will be consulted by the Transition Team and advise on the Commission's work programme, ways of working (including stakeholder engagement) and responsibilities of Commission members.

Lead: Cabinet Office.

Implementation date: A Transition Team will be set up immediately, with the creation of the full Commission following shortly after.

Reforming the Gifted and Talented programme

Recommendation 3:

The Government should reform and rebrand the Gifted and Talented programme to provide more opportunities to pupils in primary and secondary schools, including mentoring, work tasters and training in soft skills.

ACCEPT The Gifted and Talented programme will be reformed in line with the school-led approach to delivering a personalised education that meets the needs of individual pupils, as set out in the 21st Century Schools White Paper¹³.

We will give more flexibility to schools to access the provision that best meets the needs of their gifted and talented pupils. We will provide support and guidance to schools through regional partnerships on the types of provision available to support gifted and talented learners, with a specific focus on mentoring, work tasters and training in soft skills.

In addition, gifted and talented young people, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, will be core beneficiaries of the programmes being developed in response to the other recommendations in the Milburn Panel's report.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: April 2010.

¹³ Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system (June 2009). Available at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/21stcenturyschoolssystem.

A national network of career mentors

Recommendation 4:

The professions and Government should together introduce a national scheme for career mentoring by young professionals and university students of school pupils in Years 9 to 13. The national mentoring scheme should involve partnerships with employers, voluntary organisations, universities and schools.

ACCEPT The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, via the Higher Education Funding Council for England, have now introduced an Aimhigher Associates scheme which, following a successful pathfinder phase, is being rolled out nationally. Associates are undergraduates from similar backgrounds to the pupils they mentor and will work in schools where there is low progression to higher education.

We are committing to expanding mentoring opportunities for young people and will invest £10m in developing capacity to achieve this. We want to encourage more people – from business, higher education and elsewhere to support young people, particularly those from more deprived backgrounds, to raise their aspirations. The re-focussed Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum (see Recommendation 82) will provide advice on delivering this recommendation.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: July 2010.

Recommendation 5:

The professions and the Government should organise a ‘Yes you can’ campaign, headed by inspirational role models, to encourage more young people to aspire to a professional career.

ACCEPT We will back a major communications campaign supported across Government. In partnership with employers, voluntary organisations, universities, professional bodies, schools and colleges we want, through this campaign, to inspire young people to consider different careers and see entry to the professions as an option that can be within their reach. We want all young people to fulfil their potential and will encourage them to lift their aspirations, irrespective of their background.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: We will start this campaign, particularly the engagement of partners, in early 2010, with the main thrust of the campaign to follow during the course of the year.

School alumni

Recommendation 6:

The Government, working with the professions and universities, should develop a national database of people willing to act as role models or mentors for young people in their former schools.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE A number of data platforms (such as www.do-it.org) are already available. The Department for Children, Schools and Families will work with the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum to develop a database using these existing platforms and data available from key partners.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: July 2010.

Opportunities to gain insights into professional life

Recommendation 7:

The Government should undertake a radical overhaul of work experience programmes in schools – in conjunction with reforms to information, advice and guidance services and the Gifted and Talented programme – to ensure that they are professionally organised and better aligned with pupils' careers decision-making.

ACCEPT The Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Strategy sets out a number of measures, including improvements to increase significantly the opportunities for mentoring and work tasters for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, to meet the Panel's recommendation. We are to make opportunities available to 3,000 young people in years 9-13. We also committed in the IAG strategy to develop a new vision for work experience, including working with the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum to secure commitments from the professions, and to examine the scope of third sector providers, such as the Social Mobility Foundation, to provide more work placements.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: September 2010.

Recommendation 8:

The Government should establish a national work taster scheme for older school pupils, starting with those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. The professions should identify employers willing to take part. Together the Government and the professions should provide financial support for the project, which should be linked to the proposed national scheme for mentoring by young professionals and university students.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE We have committed to looking to Education Business Partnership Organisations to challenge stereotypes in career choices and to strengthen their focus on professional placements, tasters and mentoring for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: Ongoing.

Professional outreach

Recommendation 9:

Each profession should recruit and support a network of young professional ambassadors who would work with schools to raise awareness of career opportunities for young people. Professional bodies should recognise as continuous professional development the contribution of young professionals who volunteer their time.

ACCEPT We will build on existing networks of professionals supporting young people, such as A Local Lawyer In Every School (ALLIES). We will also seek advice from the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum to further enhance these networks.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: From April 2010.

Recommendation 10:

All schools should work with businesses and professions to promote and support professionally led outreach at late primary and early secondary age.

ACCEPT The Department for Children, Schools and Families's Children's Plan¹⁴ set out how we would strengthen diversity and collaboration by ensuring every secondary school has a business or university partner.

The Education and Employer Taskforce was established in 2008 to ensure every school and college has an effective partnership with employers. The taskforce is receiving £1.5 million of Government funding over three years in addition to raising support from the private sector to, amongst other things, improve business outreach in schools.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: This will be dealt with at the next meeting of the Education and Employers Taskforce Partnership Board.

¹⁴ The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures (December 2007). Available at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan.

Harnessing technology to inform and inspire young people

Recommendation 11:

The Government should work with a professional group to establish a ‘youth technology and innovation challenge’ award as a means of identifying and showcasing creative ways to inspire young people.

ACCEPT Opportunities for showcasing and inspiring young technology and innovation talent are already available through the Department for Children, Schools and Families’s annual ‘Big Bang Fair’ which includes a New Science Competition with a ‘Young Technologist of the Year’ award, and the F1 in Schools World Championships.

Lead: Department: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: Implemented.

Recommendation 12:

The professions and the Government should create a ‘professions.com’ website to link young people to existing online information about professional careers and schemes, such as internship and mentoring programmes. The professions should provide relevant content and material to develop this website.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE We support this idea, which will help to ensure that young people get the information they need to help them make the right choices, and we want to work with the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum to gauge the professions’ interest in establishing and running a ‘professions.com’ website. In addition, there are existing websites which can be enhanced. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will work to improve the access to and quality of information on professions on the Directgov website. The Connexions Direct website administered by the Department for Children, Schools and Families already incorporates an on-line database (Jobs4U) which includes all professional occupations.

**Lead: Department for Children,
Schools and Families.**

Implementation date: August 2010.

Financing these programmes through new partnerships

Recommendation 13:

The Government should bring forward seed-corn funding, in the region of £2.5 million to £3 million, to fund the recommended proposals on mentoring, work tasters and an online portal. Projects should be co-funded by a partnership comprising government, professional bodies and employers.

ACCEPT We want to engage young people and parents who have limited horizons and low aspirations in ways that capture their imagination and are based on practical experience so that they are inspired to aim high. We will therefore make £10m available through the Youth Sector Development Fund specifically to support the development of information, advice and guidance that responds to the needs of young people. Our priorities for development funding will be organisations which:

- support mentoring for young people in and outside school, boosting progress towards our ambition that every pupil should have access to a mentor;
- provide new approaches linking businesses to schools and colleges, raising aspirations for the world of work and access to the professions;
- enable students and graduates of universities to share their experience with young people in communities who have little ambition for higher education;
- provide innovative on-line provision or interactive technology which responds to young people's expectations for sourcing information, advice and guidance in new ways;
- meet parents' needs for information, advice and guidance.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families. **Implementation date:** April 2010-March 2011.

Recommendation 14:

The Government should use the model of Social Impact Bonds as a means of leveraging state and private investment into the delivery of social mobility interventions.

PARTIALLY ACCEPT We agree that the model of Social Impact Bonds is an interesting one. (The principal concept of this model is that initial investment is raised outside the public sector to fund programmes that deliver improved social outcomes. Payments are made to the initial investors on the basis of the level of outcome achieved).

The Ministry of Justice is considering the feasibility of running a pilot based on the Social Impact Bond model in order to reduce reoffending rates for short-term prisoners. The Ministry of Justice will need to consider whether there is a strong value for money case to pursue a pilot of this model and, if so, develop a business case for approval by the Treasury. We will evaluate the success of this pilot, or any other pilots developed by other government departments, in order to decide whether the social impact bond model could be applied more widely to social mobility interventions.

Lead: The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will monitor progress on the pilot.

Implementation date: Ongoing.

Closing the attainment gap

Recommendation 15:

The Government should examine these and other educational reforms as part of a sustained new drive to close the educational attainment gap.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE Raising standards for all and narrowing attainment gaps for disadvantaged pupils are twin priorities which the Government remains committed to embedding throughout the system. The Department for Children, Schools and Families's Children's Plan states that the challenge to the education system is to ensure every child can succeed, to make available to all the best of what our schools offer in order to break the link between disadvantage and low educational attainment. The new system will identify problems and additional needs early and address them quickly; and provide a community resource that provides access to extended services and contributes to local cohesion and regeneration.

The new system will offer guaranteed entitlements for pupils and parents, that every child will be taught in a way that meets their needs, with one to one tuition for primary pupils who fall behind and catch up tuition if needed in Year 7; a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum; and access to suitable courses and qualifications. Early intervention support will be available, based in schools but as part of multi-agency working developed through Children's Trusts arrangements. Partnerships will be central to the delivery of the Guarantees and to tackling underperformance. Building on the specialist schools system and the expertise and facilities of special schools, partnerships will allow children access to the best teaching. The creation of Academies and Trust Schools will be accelerated to continue to tackle low performance. Strong governing bodies will be allowed to sponsor directly academies and new schools. £20 million will be made available to Accredited Schools Groups to spread their excellence through the system.

These reforms will be underpinned by strong school accountability focused on how well each child is progressing. A new School Report Card will provide a rounded assessment of school performance. Where it shows poor performance, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) may inspect more frequently and strengthen their focus on key areas, with more demanding standards for each judgement. Underperformance will lead to strong interventions, with structural solutions being the normal response. A major review of the Dedicated Schools Grant (to be applied from 2011) aims to produce a funding system that better reflects needs, narrows gaps and supports partnerships.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: Policies supporting a closing of the attainment gap are being implemented currently. Public Service Agreement 11 commits us to narrowing disadvantage gaps by 2011.

A richer school experience

Recommendation 16:

The Government should scale up its support to third sector organisations providing soft skill development programmes for young people. It should ensure that cost-effective and well-evidenced programmes are available in all parts of the country. Soft skills that could be prioritised include team working, leadership and presentation skills.

ACCEPT The Department for Children, Schools and Families is engaged in work in support of this recommendation through the Youth Sector Development Fund. Since 2008, the fund has helped 43 organisations across England offer a range of programmes to young people, including support for soft skills. Up to £100 million will be available from April 2008 to March 2011.

Guidance on soft skills teaching is available to teachers through the National Curriculum Handbook and the Qualifications Curriculum and Development Agency secondary curriculum.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: Implemented.

Recommendation 17:

Schools should place new emphasis on providing a range of expanded extra-curricular activities. The Government, working with Ofsted, should ensure that school inspections assess how well schools are providing good-quality extra-curricular activities.

ACCEPT The Department for Children, Schools and Families expects all schools to be providing access to a core offer of extended services by 2010 which includes access to a rich and varied menu of before and after school activities. Already, around 90% of schools are offering access to the core offer of extended services backed by over £1 billion in funding, including funding to subsidise the cost of participating in activities for children who are economically disadvantaged or are in care. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) takes account of schools' extended services as part of the inspection process.

The use of learning outside the classroom activities is also implicit within the proposed changes to the primary curriculum. Schools will have much more flexibility to plan a curriculum that gives them much greater discretion to select content according to their local circumstances and resources. The new secondary curriculum emphasises these experiences as part of everyday subject learning.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: 2010.

Recommendation 18:

The Charity Commission's assessment of independent schools for public benefit should include how they are sharing their expertise in extracurricular activity and soft skill acquisition with state schools.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE There is a range of ways in which charitable independent schools can demonstrate their public benefit and it is a matter for the charity trustees of each such school to decide how they can best meet the public benefit requirement. To assist charity trustees, the Charity Commission has published material which gives examples of the ways in which such schools might provide opportunities to benefit. Such opportunities may include sharing expertise in extracurricular activity and soft skill acquisition with state schools. In assessing the activities of a charitable independent school the Charity Commission will include such activities in their consideration of whether it meets the public benefit requirement.

We cannot direct the Charity Commission's work but we will discuss with them the ways in which sharing expertise in extracurricular activity and soft skill acquisition with state schools can provide wider benefits to the public. This will inform the Charity Commission's knowledge of the value of this work when making future assessments and when publishing further illustrative examples of other opportunities for public benefit that charitable independent schools provide and report on to the Charity Commission.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: Within 12 months and ongoing.

Recommendation 19:

The Government should provide resources to ensure that every state school – starting with those in the most deprived areas – that wishes to participate in Cadet Force activities is able to do so.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE We are delighted that the Panel has recognised the excellent work carried out by the Cadet Forces, especially in their 150th year. This recognition is a tribute to the dedication of the Cadet Force adult volunteers who deliver the structured, but challenging, training that makes the cadet experience so beneficial for the young people that join. It must be noted, however, that there are actually some 240 Cadet units from the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), Sea Cadet Corps (SCC), Army Cadet Force (ACF) and Air Training Corps (ATC) hosted in State schools.

The 3100 community based (SCC, ACF & ATC) units cover most major towns and cities from the Shetland Islands to the Isles of Scilly. Any young person who wants to join the Cadet Forces should, therefore be already able to do so. We have arranged for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to provide contact details for the Cadet Forces to state schools in England and we hope to encourage our colleagues in the Devolved Administrations to do the same. We will also work with DCSF to see how we can encourage Community Units and Schools to work more closely.

Although defence resources are rightly prioritised towards success on operations in Afghanistan, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) is in the early stages of work with the Treasury to develop third party funding mechanisms to deliver additional cadet units where a requirement, schools based or otherwise, exists.

Initiatives like the London Challenge Partnerships, where independent school CCFs offer places to pupils from a neighbouring state school, have shown that our previous rules prohibiting such partnerships are wrong and we will take steps to change this immediately. To further incentivise Independent CCFs to take on partnerships we will include their performance in this area as part of the biennial reporting system and mandate them to open dialogues with their local state school. In addition to encouraging independent schools to form such partnerships where resources permit, this change will also allow state schools to keep their senior cadets who have left for either 6th Form College or full time vocational training. This will ensure that a state school pupil, whether in a partnership or a state school CCF, will have the same opportunity as their Independent contemporary. Because we are committed to supporting high quality cadet forces in schools, we will through the biennial reporting system continue to raise quality of provision by reallocating funding from the 5 worst performing CCFs every 2 years to support new CCFs in state schools. The Ministry of Defence will consult with schools on how best this can be implemented.

Lead: Ministry of Defence.

Implementation date: The Ministry of Defence is already working in this area and some elements have been delivered.

Recommendation 20:

The Government should work with the arts and cultural industries to deliver cultural programmes to a network of 'Arts Explorers' aged 5 to 11 years. They would receive an annual programme of visits and training in arts and cultural activities, including music, dance, theatre, software and video making.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The Government acknowledges the importance of cultural activities. By 2010 all schools will offer a rich menu of after school activities, including those of a cultural nature. Find Your Talent Pathfinders, under the Department for Children, Schools and Families's Find Your Talent programme, are exploring how children and young people can access arts and cultural activities. This involves local authorities and cultural organisations working together.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: By 2010.

Recommendation 21:

All schools should ensure that pupils from Year 6 upwards have a record of achievement that brings together all their extra-curricular and soft skill activity.

ACCEPT The Government has accepted the recommendation from the Expert Group on Assessment that primary schools should use primary graduation certificates to recognise each child's achievement in a range of subjects and areas, and highlight the child's strengths before he or she progresses to secondary school.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: September 2011.

Reforming careers advice

Recommendation 22:

Schools and colleges should have direct responsibility for providing information, advice and guidance, with a professional careers service located in every school and college – starting from primary age.

ACCEPT IN PART We agree that careers advice for young people must be improved and we have set out how we will deliver these improvements in our recently published Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) strategy. Local Authorities were recently given a new, crucial leadership role for IAG. They are expected to deliver better outcomes and more coherent services for young people. We have put these services on notice to improve, and we are clear that recommendation 23 below remains on the table. We will review their performance in 18 months to two years to see if these expected improvements have been achieved. In the meantime we agree that schools and colleges have an important role to play in commissioning careers services and in ensuring that they meet their needs. We expect local authorities to ensure that learning providers are closely involved when IAG services are commissioned and designed. We also agree that careers related activities should commence at an early age.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: Review in 18 months.

Recommendation 23:

The Government should remove careers responsibility from the Connexions service. It should reallocate an estimated £200 million to schools and colleges in order to give them the freedom to tender for careers services from a range of providers.

REJECT We acknowledge that the quality of information, advice and guidance (IAG) delivered through Connexions varies quite considerably among areas of the country. We want to see a consistently high quality of IAG everywhere and we expect local authorities to take the lead in making this happen. We therefore announced in the IAG Strategy that we will formally review the quality and effectiveness of local authorities' delivery of IAG in 2011. In the meantime the IAG Strategy sets out the action we are taking to support system leaders and the workforce to deliver the best possible IAG to young people. This will help local authorities to improve their efforts to create integrated youth support services, with Connexions central to those efforts. If improvements are not made, we will not hesitate to take further action, including returning to the Panel's recommendation that budgets for careers education should be devolved from local authorities to schools and other front line providers.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: Not applicable.

Recommendation 24:

Schools should broker information and advice for children and parents who have not attended university themselves. The package of advice should include support in completing the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service forms, preparing for admissions interviews and arranging for parents to visit local universities.

ACCEPT New statutory guidance for schools sets out our expectations of “key information” that young people should receive about higher education in Key Stages 3 and 4. Taking forward our ambition to extend the statutory age to which young people receive careers education to 18 will ensure that young people receive information and advice about higher education during their post-16 learning. The Department for Children, Schools and Families’s Information, Advice and Guidance strategy emphasises the importance of helping parents to support their children more effectively and sets out a range of measures to deliver this.

Lead: Department for Children,
Schools and Families.

Implementation date:
Part delivered and on-going.

Recommendation 25:

Schools, colleges and professions should work in partnership to produce career prospectuses and online information sources aimed at parents. Information could include routes into different professions and the remuneration and costs involved.

ACCEPT The Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum will provide advice on how this recommendation should be implemented. Schools and colleges will have a role in disseminating the information as part of our plans set out in the Information, Advice and Guidance strategy to improve the information available to parents.

Lead: Department for Children,
Schools and Families.

Implementation date: By April 2010.

Recommendation 26:

Ofsted should be given new powers to inspect schools on the quality and performance of their information, advice and guidance provision as part of the Ofsted inspection framework.

ACCEPT The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Schools (Ofsted) Evaluation Schedule for Schools (which sets out what inspectors evaluate) and the school self-evaluation form or SEF (which helps schools to self-evaluate their work and is used as a basis for inspection) have both been revised and careers education/information, advice and guidance now influence a range of areas on which inspectors are required to form judgements.

Lead: Department for Children,
Schools and Families.

Implementation Date: Implemented.

Schools focusing on pupils' outcomes

Recommendation 27:

The Government should use the School Report Card to provide greater transparency and accountability in regard to schools' performance on improving pupils' outcomes. The Government should develop and introduce appropriate destination indicators and data to assess the progress that pupils make between starting school, leaving school and their destinations after school.

ACCEPT The Secretary of State announced on 14 October 2008 the Government's intention to introduce a School Report Card to improve reporting of schools' performance. The School Report Card Prospectus published alongside the 21st Century Schools White Paper set out our plans for the development of the Report Card, including the development of a 16-19 progression measure which would show the proportion of pupils completing Year 11 at a school who went on to participate in learning and achieve further qualification levels by age 19.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

**Implementation date:
To be introduced from 2011.**

Recommendation 28:

The Government should consider how schools could be better incentivised – including financially – to improve pupils' overall outcomes.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The 21st Century Schools White Paper sets out a new approach to school improvement and accountability, which will place a clear responsibility on every school to improve; to support pupil development across the five Every Child Matters programme outcomes; and to support the progress of every pupil, especially those from underperforming groups.

The introduction of the School Report Card (SRC) will mean schools are held to account for pupils' attainment, progress and wellbeing; and will place particular focus on schools' success in narrowing the gap between pupils from underperforming groups, and their peers. The strongest schools, as identified through the SRC and the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspection, will be supported to spread their best practice to other schools. Poorly performing schools – including those with low absolute attainment, but also, for example, those whose pupils are failing to make adequate progress, or where reasonable overall performance hides particularly weak outcomes for disadvantaged groups – will be required to put in place effective school improvement plans, which will need to be signed off by their School Improvement Partner (SIP) (and part of the school's budget may be held back by the SIP, until a strong school improvement plan is agreed). Where school performance is inadequate, and the school cannot demonstrate its capacity to deliver rapid improvement, local authority and central government's powers to intervene (for example, by requiring a school to join an Accredited Schools Group) are being strengthened.

Around £3bn is already in the school funding system for deprivation, and we have been working with local authorities to ensure more of it is passed on to deprived pupils. In the White Paper we committed to:

- a) the total amount of deprivation money in the system staying the same or increasing;
- b) 100% of that money being passed on to deprived pupils by the end of the next Parliament.

We are currently undertaking a review of school funding (the 'Dedicated Schools Grant Review'). The aim of the review is to develop a single formula to distribute the Dedicated Schools Grant from 2011-12 that will support local authorities and schools in raising educational achievement and narrowing attainment gaps and that recognises the costs of different groups and areas. We shall be consulting on the review early this year, and in particular are looking at how money for additional educational needs including deprivation should be distributed. We are also looking at how, where schools do not have sufficient improvement plans in place, the School Improvement Partner can withhold a proportion of the school's budget until they do.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: Ongoing.

Universities: new opportunities to pursue higher education

Recommendation 29:

Universities and the Government should actively promote a range of entry points through an all-year academic calendar in order to allow learners to enrol on, and undertake, courses at more flexible times throughout the year.

ACCEPT The Government's Higher Education Framework stated that increasing the range of options available for people who wish to study on a modular basis, at a time and place that suits them, is key to creating fairer and wider access to higher education. Multiple start dates are becoming increasingly common across the sector and many institutions offer considerable flexibility for employer-specific courses. We therefore accept the principle behind this recommendation and ask the sector, with support and guidance from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), to continue to develop further flexibilities whilst at the same time maintaining high quality standards. We recognise that it is up to each university or college to take decisions on what it can provide, reflecting local circumstances and the profile of its student population. Encouraging flexible provision will be a key component of HEFCE's forthcoming review of teaching funding, announced on 4 November 2009.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Ongoing implementation under the Higher Education Framework.

Recommendation 30:

Universities and the Government should develop a transferable credit-based learning system to recognise student achievement in discrete modules or mini-courses, building on the findings of the Burgess Report.

ACCEPT Following the recommendations of the Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Steering Group (Burgess Group), the sector has produced a credit framework for higher education in England. The use of academic credit in higher education supports flexibility in access to higher education and, while this is a matter for individual institutions, the Government would like to see its adoption continue to grow in response to demand. Universities can already claim funding for credit-bearing courses, and the Higher Education Credit Framework for England highlights the potential roles for credit in supporting progression into and within higher education, and transfer between programmes. Short, credit-based courses are already popular with employers. It may take longer for businesses to adapt recruitment processes to take credit into account, but this can only be bolstered by examples of good practice such as the approach taken by the Open University, which is in the vanguard of the credit system.

Lead: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Implementation date: Implemented and on-going.

Recommendation 31:

The Government, working with the Higher Education Funding Council for England, should prioritise investment in e-learning infrastructure to extend the possibilities of remote and online learning.

ACCEPT We will support the new task force led by Lynne Brindley, Chief Executive of the British Library, to help UK higher education remain a world leader in online learning, and grow its market share by 2015. The task force will identify opportunities for investment and innovation within and between universities and colleges, and with the private sector, in the development of online learning, including the building of critical mass. Through the Higher Education Funding Council for England, we will be prepared to provide seedcorn funding on a competitive basis for university-private sector partnerships which will strengthen our market position.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Ongoing through the work of the Task Force.

Recommendation 32:

The Government, working with the Higher Education Funding Council for England, should examine how to remove the artificial and increasingly indefensible division between part-time and full-time higher education in relation to funding, regulatory and student support frameworks.

ACCEPT The Government will look to the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance announced on 9 November 2009 to examine this issue and its terms of reference were drafted to enable this. The Review is expected to deliver recommendations in autumn 2010.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Autumn 2010.

Vocational routes into higher education

Recommendation 33:

The Government should ensure that it delivers on its commitment to incorporate apprenticeship frameworks into the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) points system by 2010.

ACCEPT The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the National Apprenticeship Service, includes a requirement that all frameworks will show clear progression routes and that qualifications within level 3 and level 4 frameworks will be accredited with UCAS tariff points. UCAS will develop a proposal for the implementation of the tariff points requirement. All apprenticeship frameworks are required to be fully compliant with the SASE by April 2011, as announced in the Government's Skills Strategy published on 11 November 2009.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: April 2011.

Recommendation 34:

The Government should fully fund an initial 3,000 Apprenticeship Scholarships to higher education, rising over time to 10,000 every year, to give the most talented apprentices the chance of a university education. Funding should come from existing Train to Gain budgets.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The Government believes it is vital that we create an environment where those undertaking vocational study aspire to progress into higher education and where the support and guidance is in place to give them the best possible opportunity to do so. Our recently published Skills Strategy announced that an apprenticeships scholarships fund of £1 million will be set up from autumn 2010, so that some 1,000 of the best apprentices receive £1,000 each to incentivise further progress with their learning and skills development, including in higher education. This scheme will be set alongside measures to widen the range of higher apprenticeships available and improve information on pathways into higher education from apprenticeships.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: September 2010.

Recommendation 35:

Universities and colleges, working with the Government, should make the concept of ‘Higher Education within Further Education’ one that is universal across the country so that many more mature students, in particular, are able to study for a degree.

PARTIALLY ACCEPT The Government, through the Higher Education Funding Council for England, is seeking to grow local higher education through initiatives such as University Centre Suffolk, the University Campus in Southend and the Universities of Cornwall and Cumbria. We recognise that higher education offered in further education colleges is a valuable part of the higher education landscape. We are committed to the enhancement of locally accessible higher education that can create new opportunities for individuals and their communities. This will be achieved, as resources allow, through innovative partnerships between universities and further education colleges, and by support for new local higher education centres under the New University Challenge initiative.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Ongoing.

Widening Participation further

Recommendation 36:

Sustainable, concrete links should be established between individual schools, particularly those with low progression rates, and local universities, including specialist help to increase the number of pupils achieving five GCSEs at grades A*-C (including English and mathematics). All universities should offer a representative to join the governing bodies of such schools. And, as we propose in recommendation 4, all universities should enlist students to act as role models and mentors for pupils in local schools.

ACCEPT The Government has committed, through the New Opportunities White Paper (NOWP), to guarantee that by 2012 high performing pupils from low income backgrounds will receive support to pursue higher education. We will ensure that high performing pupils from low income backgrounds will receive a package of structured assistance across their time at secondary school. This will be as comprehensive as that often received by young people attending the best schools and colleges with high rates of progression to higher education and will include support to attend the most selective institutions. Our ambition is that every such child should:

- have an early experience of what higher education is like, and later a more sustained one;
- benefit from regular mentoring;
- go to a school with structural links to a university, where teachers are equipped to properly identify and nurture their talent, including the offer of appropriate GCSEs, A-levels and Diplomas;
- get high-quality information, advice and guidance on their choice of subject and university; and
- for those with the most potential, be sought out and invited to a summer school or similar experience of higher education.

Planning for implementation of this commitment is underway. Approximately 57% of pupils eligible for free school meals achieve level 4B or above in English and maths at Key Stage 2 (KS2). Using these indicators as proxies, we estimate that around 130,000 young people between the ages of 11 and 16 will be covered by this guarantee. Increasingly sophisticated use of data by teachers to track pupil progress and to personalise learning will help schools to target support appropriately. By using performance at KS2 we will ensure that we capture those young people at risk of making a poor transition to secondary education.

As acknowledged in the NOWP, many young people will already be in receipt of this level of support and we will not duplicate that activity. Widening participation activities of the type described above are currently funded from a wide variety of sources, including Aimhigher, the HEFCE widening participation allocation, universities' own resources, as well as resources that flow through local authorities, schools and colleges. It is of course important that all existing support is as effectively targeted as possible. This may mean re-prioritising existing resources within Aimhigher and Aimhigher Associates so that more pupils from low income backgrounds receive the level of support set out above. The Department for Children, Schools and Families will undertake some sampling of school activities during 2010 to gauge how many eligible pupils are already supported. This will be followed up with a local assessment of delivery gaps during 2011/12 coordinated through Aimhigher Partnerships. The detailed mechanism for ensuring eligible pupils are able to access this support is being developed as part of the implementation plan. We will also look at how we might inform parents of the provision that is available to support their child.

This approach is reflected in our wider set of Pupil and Parent Guarantees that we are currently legislating for. That is why, subject to consultation, the element of the new Pupil Guarantee on access to high quality careers education and information, advice and guidance will ensure that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who have potential to do well at university, are informed about the support available to access higher education and the benefits it affords. This may include: visits to a university, direct engagement with undergraduates and/or lecturers, master classes or summer schools and might be arranged through the school's own links with a university or as part of a partnership activity such as Aimhigher. The young person will have access to a local Connexions adviser when needed and we are increasing access to mentoring which may be adults, peers or undergraduates, on-line or face to face, based on the needs of the individual. The new Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy will ensure all young people receive the high quality information, advice and guidance they deserve.

The National Council for Education Excellence's recommendations for strengthening partnerships among universities, schools and colleges were accepted by the Government last year and are now being implemented. The question of whether Higher Education Institutions' staff join school governing bodies must be for individual Higher Education Institutions to decide.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Plans for the implementation by 2012 will be produced in early 2010.

Recommendation 37:

All universities should work with schools to ensure that higher education related information, advice and guidance, and outreach and mentoring programmes are provided from primary school level onwards.

ACCEPT Improving information, advice and guidance in schools is a key feature of the National Council on Education Excellence's recommendations. As a result, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) will be piloting a simple brokerage system linking primary schools with Higher Education Institutions through the Aimhigher partnerships from the new academic year reporting in May 2010. HEFCE also intend to examine how partnerships' existing links with secondary schools can be effectively used to deliver activity indirectly to their feeder primary schools. In addition, HEFCE support Aimhigher Partnerships – schools, colleges, universities and others who work together to raise aspirations, awareness and progression to higher education amongst those from lower socio-economic groups. Universities themselves also support a range of outreach activities, working with schools and colleges to improve advice and information about progression to higher education.

The Department of Children, Schools and Families's (DCSF) published **Quality, Choice and Aspiration: A strategy for young people's information, advice and guidance** on 26 October. It recognizes the importance of providing young people with an early introduction to higher education and announces Key Stage 2 pilots in 38 primary schools in 7 local authority areas which will explore best practice in delivering careers-related learning to this age group. They will support the introduction in 2011 of the new primary curriculum, which will feature economic wellbeing for the first time. See also Recommendation 36 in respect of work with DCSF to guarantee that by 2012 high performing pupils from low income backgrounds will receive support to pursue higher education. We will publish, in early 2010, our plans for delivering this commitment.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Implemented and ongoing policy.

Recommendation 38:

The Government should redirect an element of widening participation resources into supporting these local partnerships.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE We already provide considerable funding, via the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in support of Aimhigher Partnerships. These are partnerships of schools, colleges, universities and others that work together to raise aspirations, awareness and progression to higher education amongst those from lower socio-economic groups. In addition, universities themselves support a range of outreach activities, in partnership with others, including schools and colleges. We and HEFCE continue to consider how funds can be targeted to best effect, building on the targeting guidance issued in 2007 and the introduction, last year, of a new allocation methodology for the widening access element of the widening participation allocation, which will help focus and strengthen higher education institutions' links with schools and colleges. Recognising the strategic importance of these partnerships, we will continue to look to improving the targeting of funding to get the best value for money. At this stage, we do not believe a further redirection of funds is needed. See also Recommendation 36 in respect of work with the Department for Children, Schools and Families to guarantee that by 2012 high performing pupils from low income backgrounds will receive support to pursue higher education. We will publish, in early 2010, our plans for delivering this commitment.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Implemented.

Recommendation 39:

Each profession should develop partnership compact arrangements with university faculties. These arrangements might include linking up recent professional entrants as personal mentors with young people in schools, and issuing guidance about the profession and how to get into it. (See recommendations 4, 9 and 12).

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The Government supports this recommendation and will work with the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum and the higher education sector in developing advice on how it might be implemented, taking into account the Department for Children, Schools and Families's recently published Information, Advice and Guidance strategy.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: June 2010.

Recommendation 40:

The Higher Education Statistics Agency should publish information on student admissions at university, college and course level, with more detail on pupils' backgrounds. This should be published annually, with year-on-year progress tracked. It should be provided in a format that enables a transparent assessment of the effectiveness of widening participation expenditure at the individual university level.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE Last year universities were required, for the first time, to produce Widening Participation Strategic Assessments. These Assessments will include each university's Access Agreement with the Office for Fair Access; its admissions policy; and the broad level of resources that institutions will commit to widening participation and the measures and targets by which they will judge success. Additionally, we announced in the Higher Education Framework that we are asking Sir Martin Harris, the Director of Fair Access, to consult Vice Chancellors and advise the Government by Spring 2010 on further action that could be taken to widen access to highly selective universities for those from under privileged backgrounds – and to ensure that measures for wider access are prioritised most effectively and do not suffer in a time of greater fiscal constraints.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Ongoing.

Recommendation 41:

By law it is for universities to determine their admissions procedures but we hope that all universities will take into account the educational and social context of pupils' achievement in their admissions process.

ACCEPT The Secretary of State, Lord Mandelson, in a speech on 27 July 2009, gave government backing for those universities taking broad and innovative approaches to identifying talent. This approach to admissions is widely accepted across the universities sector. As the Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions recognised, admissions decisions are a matter for each university but it is in every university's best interest to attract students with the greatest potential. There is much good practice and evidence emerging across the sector in this area, and we will look to Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (a programme established in 2006 to support institutions in the development of fair admissions) to help share and communicate that more widely.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Implemented and ongoing policy.

Addressing financial fears

Recommendation 42:

In order to overcome financial fears, universities should help schools to inform children before they reach the age of 16 – together with their parents – about the grants and financial support to which they would be entitled if they progressed to university.

ACCEPT The Government is committed to ensuring that children receive comprehensive information about the financial support available to them if they wish to go to university. Previous information campaigns have helped to raise levels of awareness such that 85% of students and parents know that financial help exists. Last year over 500,000 copies of the Government's main awareness raising publication 'How to Get Financial Help as a Student' were sent out. Recent customer insight work by the Student Loans Company has demonstrated how positively this publication was received by students and parents alike. In order to build on those successful campaigns we have asked Student Finance England (SFE) to be the one stop shop for student support, and to provide a centralised, accessible, and streamlined information and application service for young people, and their parents. Record numbers of students have accessed the on-line information and applications service rising from a low base to over 90% of students going on-line last year. The Student Loans Company, operating SFE on behalf of the Government, is working with a range of organisations and stakeholders, and with local providers in schools and via Young Peoples Services, to ensure information is provided as early as possible to young people. SFE have an ongoing customer insight programme to deliver continuous improvement in their offering to students, and to ensure that information provided is relevant, timely, and easily understood by students, their parents and advisors.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Ongoing.

Recommendation 43:

The Government should use the opportunity of its review of the impact of variable tuition fees to consider a radical reshaping of the student support system. It should initiate a national debate on the trade-offs between higher fees, growing student places and increasing financial support for students. It should consider fairer financial support for those undertaking postgraduate and part-time courses, more targeted packages of financial support for students from average and less well-off families, and new support for students living and learning at their local university, including 'fee-free' higher education.

ACCEPT The terms of reference for the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance have been set to ensure that it may look at these issues. The review will work in an open and consultative way to make a national debate as described possible. The review is expected to deliver recommendations in autumn 2010.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Autumn 2010.

Integrating professional experience into academic courses

Recommendation 44:

The Government should work with universities to develop proposals to integrate a flexible element of professional experience into all higher education courses.

ACCEPT The Higher Education Framework for the first time asks universities to publish an employability statement. It is a top concern for business that students should leave university better equipped with a wider range of employability skills. All universities should be expected to demonstrate how their institution prepares its students for employment, including through training in modern workplace skills such as team working, business awareness and communication skills.

We are clear that there can be no room in the system for vocational programmes that do not constantly evolve to meet changing business needs. There will be a new central role for the UK Commission for Employment and Skills to advise on areas where there is an insufficient supply of graduates in particular disciplines, and also cases where university programmes are failing to reflect changed business requirements or the priorities articulated by employer-led bodies such as Sector Skills Councils and Regional Development Agencies.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: 2010.

A new focus on student outcomes

Recommendation 45:

The Government should support universities to collect and publish a rounded picture on student destinations, building on the existing leaver surveys. The Government should reflect on the merits of linking data to financial incentives and may wish to redirect some of the Widening Participation funding to this end.

ACCEPT This recommendation is covered by the provisions of the Higher Education Framework.

We agree that all students should be able to make genuinely informed choices about study, based on a clear understanding of the nature of the teaching programme they can expect, and the long-term employment prospects it offers. This is particularly important for students from families with no previous experience of higher education.

From September 2009 the University and College Admissions Service (UCAS) website course search facility has provided a direct link to the Unistats information on the relevant subject area for the institution(s) chosen. This provides specific information and feedback from previous students on that course on:

- The UCAS points and entry information for previous applicants (including what students did before starting the course);
- Student breakdown, showing the ratios of female: male and mature: young students;

- National Student Survey satisfaction ratings for the teaching and learning quality;
- Degree classification breakdown of previous students;
- Progression information – percentage of students progressing from year one to year two;
- Employment prospects – showing what students were doing 6 months after graduating: i.e. percentage employed (broken down into graduate and non graduate jobs); top 10 profession types of those employed; percentage doing further study; percentage working and studying.

As the Higher Education Framework outlines, we are asking the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) to see how this information can be further improved, building on the foundation of existing Unistats information. In support of this, over the next two years HEFCE is undertaking detailed research and consultation on the information needs of prospective students (as well as other key stakeholders such as parents and employers) to find out what information they want and how they would prefer to access it. We and HEFCE continue to consider how funds can be targeted to best effect.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Ongoing under the Higher Education Framework.

Internships: new opportunities to get onto the professional career ladder

Recommendation 46:

The Government should review how effective the Panel’s voluntary approach on internships has been by the end of 2012, with a view to enacting stronger means to ensure compliance if satisfactory progress has not been made at that point, including through new legislation.

ACCEPT The Government will undertake a review of the outcome of the voluntary approach in 2012.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: By end of 2012.

Establishing a fair and transparent system for internships

Recommendation 47:

The professions, the Government, trade unions and the third sector should together produce a common best practice code for high-quality internships.

ACCEPT The Government will examine existing guidance and best practices for internships and will implement the adoption of a code through appropriate bodies. Any code or quality standard will apply to undergraduate as well as graduate internships.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: We will work with appropriate bodies towards a target date of July 2010.

Recommendation 48:

Each profession should make employers in its field aware of the best practice code and encourage them to adopt it for all relevant internship and work experience placements (including university 'sandwich' courses).

ACCEPT The Government will seek the views of the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum on how best to take this recommendation forward, including through the adoption of a common best practice code for internships as suggested in recommendation 47.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: We will work with appropriate bodies towards a target date of July 2010.

Recommendation 49:

The Government should develop the Talent Pool Internship Portal to become a single website for all pre- and postgraduate internships.

ACCEPT Building on the experience already gained, we will bring together undergraduate and graduate internships opportunities through a refined, online, National Internship Service.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: We will work with appropriate bodies towards a target date of July 2010.

Recommendation 50:

The Government should ensure that the Talent Pool Internship Portal has an advertising budget that is sufficient to ensure that it has a high-profile launch. It should target students who would otherwise not be aware of these opportunities, pre-university students who might not know that financial help towards a professional career is available, and schools with a high proportion of children on free school meals.

ACCEPT An advertising campaign with a significant budget is already underway. Information has been sent to employers and University Careers Services has sent booklets to 400,000 graduates last year. To boost the number of internships available to new graduates last autumn, the Government has introduced the Graduate Talent Pool website, www.bis.gov.uk/graduatetalentpool, which provides the infrastructure for transparent advertising and application for internships. This links to recommendation 49.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Implemented.

Recognising best practice: a national Kitemark for employers

Recommendation 51:

The professions, the Government, trade unions and the third sector should agree an Internship Quality Kitemark scheme for high-quality internship programmes. The Kitemark should set out the criteria that a high-quality internship placement should meet (based on the common best practice code for high-quality internships proposed in recommendation 47).

ACCEPT The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is examining existing standards, such as the National Council for Work Experience's Quality Mark and Internocracy's Star Internship Programme (I.SIP), as well as the best practices proposals indicated in recommendation 47, and the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum will provide views on the development of a Kitemark scheme.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: We will work with appropriate bodies towards a target date of July 2010.

Recommendation 52:

Each professional association should make the acceptance and use of the best practice code and Kitemark a condition of being a member of the professional association, and accept responsibility for making employers in their field aware of both.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum will consider proposals on best practices and Kitemarks being developed by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and provide views on the feasibility of this recommendation.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: We will work with appropriate bodies towards a target date of July 2010.

Recommendation 53:

Universities should take responsibility for ensuring that their 'sandwich' courses are in line with the common best practice code for high-quality internships and meet the Kitemark standards.

ACCEPT Mechanisms already exist for quality control of studying off campus provisions. Universities will be engaged in the consideration of best practices and Kitemarks for internships in the implementation of other associated recommendations.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: We will work with appropriate bodies towards a target date of July 2010.

Recommendation 54:

The National Union of Students, Trades Union Congress and the Government should work together to take forward an outreach programme to ensure that students from all backgrounds give due consideration to undertaking an internship.

ACCEPT The Government will seek views from the NUS and TUC to determine the best way to take this proposal forward.

Lead: Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: We will work with appropriate bodies towards a target date of July 2010.

Recommendation 55:

The Talent Pool Internship Portal should go further in developing and promoting its forum where ex-interns can post reviews of the internships that they have undertaken.

ACCEPT Ex-interns can email confidential feedback to Government through the Talent Pool Internship Portal. In addition, an on-line forum where ex-interns can discuss their experiences has been established. There are also a number of private on-line fora already on the internship market that enable independent discussion.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Implemented and ongoing.

Affordability: removing financial constraints

Recommendation 56:

The Government should allow students to draw down their existing Student Loan entitlement in four parts, rather than the current three, so enabling students to be able to cover the additional costs of undertaking a short summer internship. The Government should review how to appropriately target additional loan support to such students through this window.

REJECT While the Government accepts the principle of this recommendation to make internships more accessible to students from low-income backgrounds, it is not clear that changing the phasing of existing student loan entitlements would be effective for students or efficient financially, given the additional delivery costs involved. The Government will consider the issues further following the report of the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance, which will be looking at the future of the student support system.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills/Department for Work and Pensions.

Implementation date: Not applicable.

Recommendation 57:

The Government should explore ways of providing means-tested micro-loans to interns to cover the cost of living and commuting for a short internship period.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE We agree that access to internships should not be limited to those with the means to finance their participation. We will offer financial support for up to 10,000 undergraduates from low-income backgrounds to take up short internships in industry, business and the professions. £8 million of government funding will be provided to pay a bursary equivalent to the minimum wage towards this scheme and we will be seeking matched funding from the professions and employers. The details of the scheme will be developed with the higher education sector and through the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. **Implementation date: From summer 2010.**

Recommendation 58:

Companies offering internships should be given the option to pay a small part of their tax contribution directly to the Student Loans Company to cover the cost of the internship loans and associated administrative costs.

REJECT Tax measures are often not the most effective way to deliver assistance of this kind to businesses. We have instead decided to provide funding for bursaries for undergraduates from low-income backgrounds to undertake internships, as set out in our response to recommendation 57.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. **Implementation date: Not applicable.**

Recommendation 59:

The Government should work with banks and other lending institutions to provide internship support loans to be used to cover the costs associated with undertaking an internship. Such loans could be made along similar lines to Professional and Career Development Loans.

ACCEPT We will work with banks to identify how they might best support young people who want to do an internship, including potentially through Professional and Career Development Loans.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: We will begin to explore these issues with banks immediately.

Recommendation 60:

Provision of all government brokered or supported financial assistance for interns should be dependent upon the internship placement in question having received the Internship Quality Kitemark. Professions should stipulate a similar restriction upon any financial assistance provided or brokered by them for similar purposes. Universities should support the Kitemark scheme by advertising it to students who are looking for internships.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE Implementation of this recommendation is linked to the outcome of our examination of existing codes of practice and Kitemarks for internships (see the response to recommendations 47 and 51). The Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum will have a role in developing proposals.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: We will report on progress by June 2010.

Recommendation 61:

The professions should provide more support for interns from lower socio-economic backgrounds through grants and loans. The Government should recognise the efforts of those employers that provide such support for interns by granting tax relief on money that is provided for grants and loans.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE As set out in our response to recommendation 57, we have decided to offer financial assistance to undergraduates from low-income backgrounds to undertake internships and will be seeking matched funding for this from the professions and employers. We not believe that tax measures are the most effective way to deliver assistance of this kind to businesses.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: From summer 2010.

Recommendation 62:

Professions should work directly with banks and other lending institutions to provide privately brokered financing for those studying for relevant professional qualifications.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE We will work with the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum to ask members of the professions to act on this recommendation.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: We will ask the Collaborative Forum to report by June 2010.

Recommendation 63:

The professions should create an online resource that sets out the range of profession-specific financial support that is available for prospective interns and students of professional qualifications. The online resource should set out what support is available, where it can be accessed, the criteria used to disburse it and the various application methods and deadlines. Such information should be advertised on professional websites, as well as on the Government's Talent Pool Internship Portal.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The Government information website Direct.gov already provides a platform for accessing information on the professions. We will work with the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum to improve the availability and quality of information on internships on the website.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: June 2010.

Recommendation 64:

Universities should provide low-cost or free accommodation for young people undertaking internships during university vacations. Universities should work with the Government to set up a matching service for prospective interns.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE Whilst the disposition of university accommodation is the responsibility of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), we see significant merit in the proposals and we will encourage the HEIs to take advantage of this opportunity and explore ways of signposting the availability of accommodation on the Direct.gov website.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: We will work with appropriate bodies towards a target date of July 2010.

Recruitment and selection: collecting data on socio-economic background

Recommendation 65:

The Government should collect and publish data on the socio-economic background of applicants and entrants to the Senior Civil Service, drawing on the lessons that have been learned from collecting and publishing data on gender, race and disability.

ACCEPT The existing Civil Service diversity strategy, *Promoting Equality, Valuing Diversity*, and its predecessor, the diversity 10 Point Plan, both included social and educational background as part of the Civil Service's definition of diversity. We need to learn more about the backgrounds of Civil Service staff and ensure that we bring in and bring on people from the widest possible talent pools and encourage them to aspire to the most senior leadership roles.

We intend to begin monitoring and publishing the socio economic background of Senior Civil Service (SCS) entrants using SCS base camp (a mandatory training course for new SCS entrants) as the vehicle to collect the data.

In addition, we plan to begin to collect socio-economic data for Fast Stream applicants from September 2010 ensuring a consistent approach is taken.

Lead: Cabinet Office.

Implementation date: Ongoing.

Professions planning for fair access

Recommendation 66:

Each profession should carry out a review of current practice on fair access to its profession, with a view to developing practical ideas for improvement. The professions should report publicly on these by the end of 2010, with a clear set of recommendations and an action plan for implementation.

ACCEPT We will ask the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum to provide a report on current practice within the professions, with recommended actions for improvement, by the end of 2010.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: By end of 2010.

Promoting fair standards: a guide for employers

Recommendation 67:

The Government's online Professional Recruitment Guide should be amended and should be jointly and actively promoted by the professions and the Government to help employers to develop recruitment practices that can ensure fairer access.

ACCEPT The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, working with the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum, will develop proposals for the implementation of this recommendation.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: By July 2010.

Flexible professions: new opportunities for career progression and extending the ladder of entry points into the professions

Recommendation 68:

Each profession should work with the National Apprenticeship Service and the relevant Sector Skills Councils to establish clear progression routes from vocational training into the professions, and ensure that learners are aware of these routes.

ACCEPT The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will develop guidance on a framework to set out progression routes from apprenticeships into the professions, with advice from the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum. This will be implemented as part of the new Specification of Apprenticeships Standards.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: April 2011.

Recommendation 69:

The Government and the professions should provide a repository of best practice setting out practical ways in which vocational routes can be expanded into the professions.

ACCEPT The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, with the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum, will work to implement this recommendation, building on the progression opportunities available through vocational qualifications and identified in all Diplomas and the Diploma Development Partnerships, which have representation from professional bodies.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: June 2010.

Recommendation 70:

The Government should extend apprenticeships in professional areas of employment in government departments. Where applicable, these should be explicitly linked to existing management development programmes such as the Civil Service Fast Stream.

ACCEPT The Government has pledged to create an additional 35,000 apprenticeship places across the economy as a whole of which 1,600 will be in government departments this year. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Cabinet Office will develop proposals for additional actions in taking this recommendation forward.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Cabinet Office.

Implementation date: The additional government department apprenticeships will be in place by April 2010. Ongoing development of proposals from January 2010.

Recommendation 71:

The professions should consider how to introduce apprenticeship schemes as part of their reviews of fair access processes in recommendation 66.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum will develop proposals on how best to implement this recommendation. The new Specifications of Apprenticeship Standards, to be published shortly, will be key to taking this proposal forward.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: June 2010.

Paraprofessional entry routes to the professions

Recommendation 72:

Each profession should examine the potential to devolve functions to paraprofessionals. The Government should ensure that, across all of the public services, reform programmes are being introduced to do the same.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The Government supports this recommendation and will work with Departments and the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum on developing advice on how it might be implemented.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: June 2010.

Recommendation 73:

The professions should work with the Government and others to set out clear progression maps from paraprofessional roles, and ensure that training systems support these routes.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE As in the case of recommendation 72, the Government supports this recommendation and will seek the views of the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum on its implementation.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: June 2010.

Opening up mid-career opportunities

Recommendation 74:

Professional bodies and professional regulators should encourage businesses in their sector to ensure that they meet best practice in mid-career changes and career interchange routes. Regulators should publish information on how successful professional employers are being in providing more flexible entry and progression routes.

ACCEPT The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, working with the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum, will develop a strategy for implementing these proposals.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: June 2010.

Recommendation 75:

The Government should review how best to support return-to-work programmes for mid-career changes and professional re-entrants, for example through incentives for employers who adopt such schemes early.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The Employment White Paper¹⁵ published in December 2009 sets out how we will continue to support people from a variety of backgrounds back into work. We plan for this to include a new single purse funding approach to streamline current funding arrangements, subject to funding priorities. We will also continue to align Jobcentre Plus and the adult advancement and careers service with a view to providing a fully integrated and seamless offer to customers.

Lead: Department for Work and Pensions.

Implementation date: Ongoing.

¹⁵ Building Britain's Recovery: Achieving Full Employment (December 2009). Available at: www.dwp.gov.uk/buildingbritainsrecovery.

Encouraging more flexible working patterns

Recommendation 76:

Once economic circumstances allow, the right to request flexible working should be extended to all employees.

REJECT The Government has done a great deal to enable people to cope with work and family responsibilities. For example, we introduced the right to request flexible working and have since extended it but we have focused it on parents and carers who face particular pressures to combine work and family life. This helps employers to prioritise. We are continuing to work with employers on ways to further improve flexible working including in the Employment White Paper, 'Building Britain's Recovery', and the Family Friendly Working Hours Task Force, which will report in the Spring and the forthcoming DCSF Families and Relationships Green Paper.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Not applicable.

A new demand-led training system that empowers learners

Recommendation 77:

The Government should reconfigure the existing Skills Account programme to establish a truly demand-driven system of Lifelong Skill Accounts. They could comprise a voucher up to the value of £5,000 that could be topped up through contributions from individuals and employers with a wide range of entitlements, including to apprenticeships, professional qualifications and to part-time further and higher education programmes, for example.

ACCEPT The recently published Skills Strategy sets out how the Government will develop skills accounts as part of a demand-led training system that puts power and choice firmly in the hands of the learner. Accounts will give individuals greater choice and purchasing power, and let them drive quality improvements across the skills system. The proposals will reflect customer feedback about the experience of a voucher system from the recent trials of accounts.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: Skills accounts will be rolled out nationally from autumn 2010.

Recommendation 78:

As part of a shift to a more demand-led model of training the Government should review how to redirect support for employers through tax or other direct incentive schemes.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The Government keeps under review the effectiveness of its skills programmes, including the current subsidy regime, and looks at developing more targeted interventions to raise demand for skills. Tax measures may not be the most effective way to deliver assistance to individuals and employers. The existing subsidy regime has a number of advantages; in particular alleviating upfront credit constraints (especially important for individuals and small firms), and allowing flexible and effective targeting at particular types and levels of training (particularly for those with the lowest existing skills levels) in line with wider social objectives and to minimise deadweight.

The recently published Skills Strategy has built on this approach to announce a number of measures to provide more direct incentives to encourage co-funding. In particular, a Joint Investment Scheme of up to £50 million was announced that would work with a small number of sector skills organisations in areas key to economic recovery. The fund, which might grow over time to £100 million with matched employer contributions of £50 million or more, would support some 75,000 training places in priority sectors at advanced vocational levels. The Government has also shifted significant funding into more demand-led routes through Train to Gain and Adult Apprenticeships.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and HM Treasury.

Implementation date: Ongoing.

Recognising the contribution of further education as a driver of social mobility

Recommendation 79:

As part of a shift to more demand-led training, the Government should review how it can free up the oversight and control of further education.

ACCEPT The Skills Strategy sets out how the system of oversight and control of further education is to be further simplified. We will introduce greater freedom for all colleges and training institutions to manage their resources more flexibly, combined with enhanced freedoms for outstanding colleges and providers across their total budget.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is reviewing the roles and responsibilities of intermediary bodies, taking account the requirements of the Public Value Programme and general efficiency issues. The design and structure of the Skills Funding Agency and the Young People's Learning Agency are in line with this recommendation. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service, set up as a sector owned body, places increasing oversight and budgetary control over improvement and development activity in the hands of the sector.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: In progress. Further substantial change during 2010/2011.

Recommendation 80:

The Government should ensure that future increases in spending are better aligned between further and higher education, recognising the important contribution of further education colleges for social mobility, particularly as providers of diverse training routes into the professions.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The Government will consider the future balance of public spending between further and higher education in the forthcoming Spending Reviews, and will reflect on the outcome of the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: By end 2010.

Delivering the recommendations

The Panel

Recommendation 81:

The Panel on Fair Access should meet annually to carry out a stock-take of progress that the Government and the professions have made in implementing its recommendations. After each meeting it should publish its findings, with any additional recommendations it sees fit to make. The Government should support the Panel to carry out these tasks.

ACCEPT The Government agrees that the Panel on Fair Access should undertake a stocktake of progress in implementing its recommendations in 2010 as part of the ongoing work of the Social Mobility Commission.

Lead: Cabinet Office.

Implementation date: 2010.

A UK Professional Forum

Recommendation 82:

The Government and the professions should agree to continue the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum in the form of a UK Professional Forum. The new Forum should be chaired at ministerial level and should comprise senior representatives from a diverse range of professions.

ACCEPT The Government will re-launch the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum along the lines suggested by this recommendation. Membership will be drawn from senior representatives from a diverse range of professions, their regulators and essential support organisations. It will include a small Executive Group, which will be chaired by David Lammy and will meet twice before June 2010, and a small number of sub-groups, arranged thematically to address those recommendations that are relevant to the Professions.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: January 2010.

Professional regulators

Recommendation 83:

The statutory and approved regulators of individual professions should embed the social mobility and fair access agenda into strategic plans.

ACCEPT The Government will work with regulatory bodies, through the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum, to foster this approach. Some current regulatory frameworks for professions already incorporate elements of the social mobility and fair access agenda, such as mid-career entry and non-degree entry. The Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum will advise on how these principles might be embedded more widely across the professions.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: June 2010.

Recommendation 84:

Regulators should consider how to embed more widely the fair access agenda permanently into the work and strategic planning of their professions and take the appropriate regulatory action to do so.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE This recommendation will be taken forward in the same way as recommendation 83.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: June 2010.

Corporate social responsibility

Recommendation 85:

The professions should routinely report on activities that are aimed at making access fairer as part of their established corporate social responsibility reporting arrangements.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, with advice from the Gateways to the Professional Collaborative Forum, will develop proposals for the implementation of this recommendation.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: June 2010.

Recommendation 86:

The Government, through Business Link services, should provide comprehensive guidance on what type of activity could be taken to make access fairer and that would meet corporate social responsibility objectives.

ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will explore with Business Link the best ways of making this guidance available to businesses.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: June 2010.

Recommendation 87:

The Government should explore the case for targeted support, such as tax incentives, to leverage additional measures from employers to open up access.

REJECT Tax measures to incentivise employers to participate in mentoring, outreach and internship and work experience programmes may not be the most effective way and could carry considerable risk of deadweight. To meet these objectives via a tax incentive scheme would require a considerable degree of complexity. We will encourage greater participation from employers through approaches set out in the responses to other recommendations in the Milburn Panel's report and with involvement from the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and HM Treasury.

Implementation date: Not applicable.

A fair access charter mark

Recommendation 88:

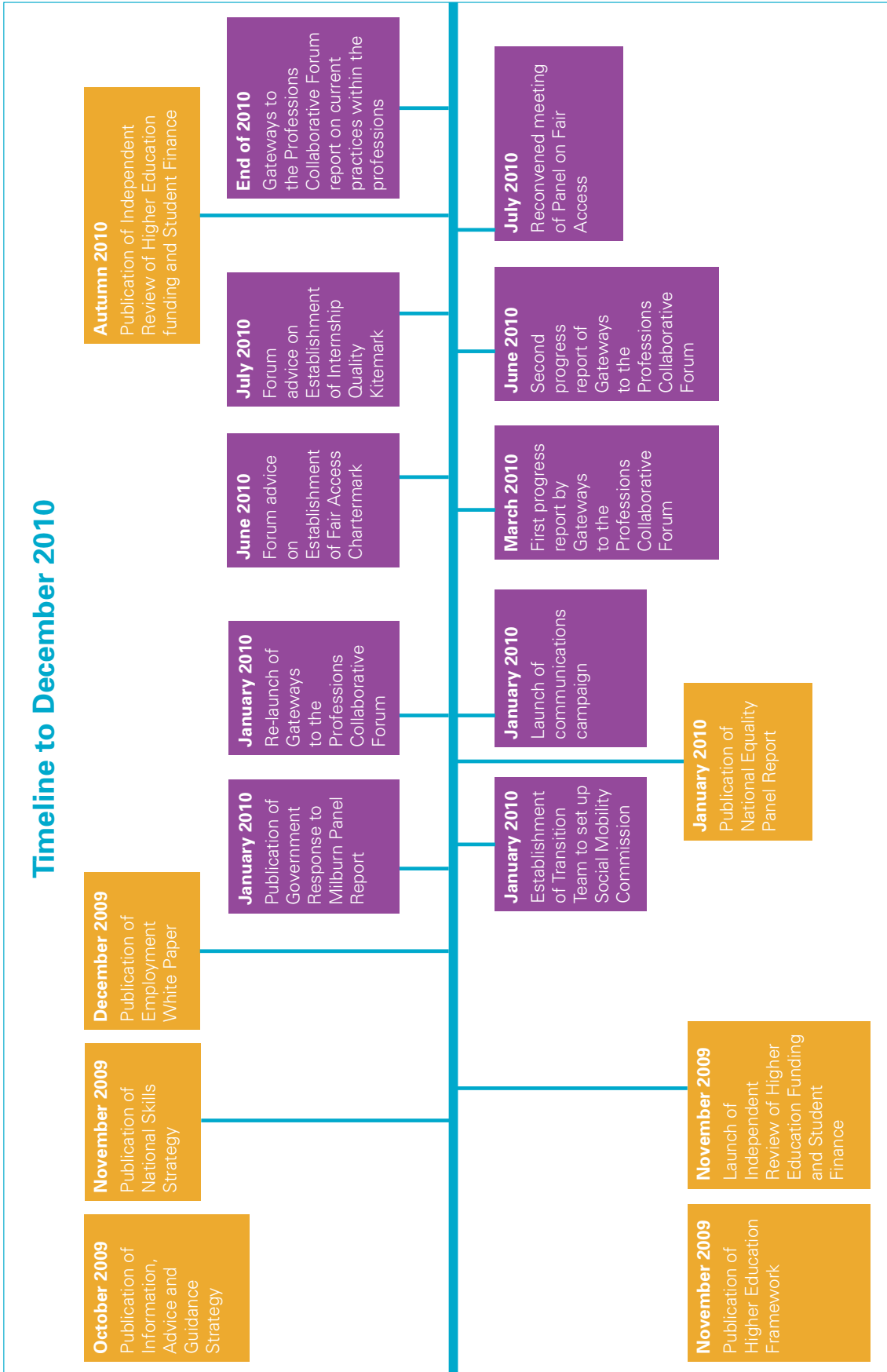
The Government should introduce a fair access charter mark to recognise and reward those professional bodies and employers that take direct, effective and meaningful steps towards making access to their profession fairer.

ACCEPT The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, with advice and support from the Gateways to the Professional Collaborative Forum, will develop proposals for the implementation of this recommendation.

Lead: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Implementation date: June 2010.

Annex 1



Annex 2

Related publications

The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures (December 2007).

Available at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan

New Opportunities White Paper – Fair Chances for the Future (January 2009).

Available at: www.hmg.gov.uk/newopportunities

Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system (June 2009).

Available at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/21stcenturyschoolssystem

Unleashing Aspiration: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions (July 2009).

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