

THE
SOCIAL
MOBILITY
LIST

In partnership with bp



Making the Leap.

BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS TO LACK OF LESS ADVANTAGED SOCIO-ECONOMIC (LSEB) RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION

FEEDBACK FROM WORKING BREAKFAST FOR LAUNCH OF THE SOCIAL MOBILITY LIST



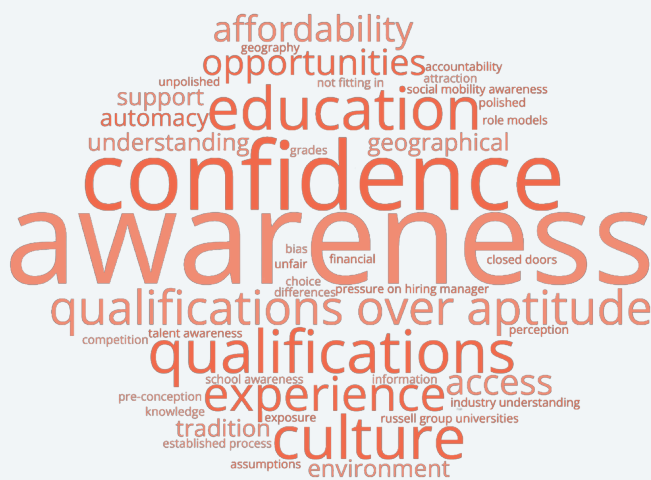


LSEB RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS SUMMARY

At the launch of The Social Mobility List in December 2024, we asked senior leaders and junior LSEB staff across several industries to list their biggest barriers and solutions to the recruitment and progression of LSEB candidates/employees.

Why recruitment and progression? The Key Findings Report from the 2024 UK Social Mobility Awards found that while many employers have launched community and pre-recruitment initiatives, there remains a lack of actual employment and career progression of LSEB candidates. Summarised below are the key themes identified by the attendees across both issues.

Recruitment Barriers



Progression Barriers



Recruitment Solutions

- **Early Outreach** – Engage schools, raise awareness, offer internships.
- **Career Education** – Provide career guidance and vocational options.
- **Inclusive Recruitment** – Value aptitude as well as qualifications, remove grade biases, and train hiring managers.

Progression Solutions

- **Mentorship, Sponsorship & Role Models** – Build networks and mentorship for career growth.
- **Clear Pathways** – Create transparent, merit-based career paths.
- **Support Systems & Networking** – Provide tailored support and confidence-building workshops.



RECRUITMENT THE SOLUTIONS

Solutions for this barrier ranged from changing subconscious hiring practices, achieved through manager training, to active initiatives such as ring-fencing opportunities for LSEBs. Below is a summary of these solutions identified by attendees at the List launch.

Inclusive Recruitment Practices

- Pre-selection focusing on aptitude, not just qualifications
- Training managers to recognise potential over polished resumes.
- Remove grade requirements and biases toward traditional qualifications.
- Ring-fence opportunities for those from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Training & Development

- Funded careers advice and vocational route education (e.g. apprenticeships).
- Educating candidates on job expectations.

Key Quotes

"Imposter syndrome erodes confidence and progress."

"Unwritten rules and lack of networks slow growth."

"Sponsorship, not just mentorship, accelerates careers."

Access & Outreach

- Outreach programmes for state schools and community centres, engaging before ages 15/16.
- Meet them where they are: raise awareness via social media (TikTok, Instagram).
- Paid work experience and internships.
- Expand geographical reach with open recruitment events.

Support & Flexibility

- Offer flexibility (e.g. subsidised accommodation, travel, interview times).
- Promote role models from similar backgrounds.
- Diverse recruitment panels and managers.

Collaboration & Industry Awareness

- Partner with educational institutions, recruitment agencies, and social mobility organisations.
- Increase industry awareness and career path options.
- Encourage cross-sector collaboration for broader access to opportunities.



PROGRESSION THE BARRIERS

There has been a positive shift toward employers' creating working environments that enhance LSEB employees' sense of belonging through social mobility networks, but actual career progression remains low.

People from LSEBs remain underrepresented at senior levels across many UK sectors. The 2024 SOMOs Key Findings Report found only 22% of employers reported activities focused on progression. Key actions from those committed to improving progression include ensuring pay transparency and establishing frameworks that outline the skills, experience, and training needed to progress. But more needs to be done to foster an environment of confidence, and combat imposter syndrome.

These were the **biggest progression barriers** identified by attendees at the launch of the Social Mobility List:



Key Quotes



"Imposter syndrome erodes confidence and progress."

"Unwritten rules and lack of networks slow growth."

"Sponsorship, not just mentorship, accelerates careers."



PROGRESSION THE SOLUTIONS

Solutions for this barrier range from pathway transparency and leadership training, to data collection improvements and increased mentorship. Below is a summary of those solutions identified by attendees at the List launch.

Mentorship, Sponsorship & Role Models

- Encourage senior leaders to mentor and sponsor talent.
- Implement reverse mentoring (juniors mentor seniors) to improve decision-making and raise visibility for LSEB groups.
- Ensure visible LSEB role models at various levels to inspire and guide others.
- Create more social mobility networks and mentorship programmes for career progression.

Clear Pathways

- Create transparent career paths with clear expectations and progression criteria.
- Ensure promotions are based on competencies, not background or networking.

Key Quotes



“Mentorship and visibility empowers career growth”

“Cultural change begins at the top”

“Merit over background”

Leadership & Culture

- Invest in high-potential talent from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and involve leaders in diversity initiatives (e.g. DEI bonuses, targets).
- Foster an inclusive culture that respects differences and challenges cultural biases.
- Promote transparency in progression and break away from traditional biases.
- Provide leadership training to help managers support diverse employees.

Data & Accountability

- Track and assess progression and diversity to ensure equal opportunities.
- Set diversity and social mobility targets to hold leadership accountable.
- Regularly assess progress through reporting and reviews to ensure fairness.

Support Systems & Networking

- Establish tailored support systems, including buddy schemes and networks, to help individuals feel a sense of belonging.
- Offer workshops to build self-confidence, leadership, and career navigation skills.



WHAT NOW?

Whether discovering more about best practice, understanding the current state of social mobility in the UK, partnering with Making The Leap or celebrating success, here are some suggested next steps...

Examples of best practice

Read **The Social Mobility List** for in-depth examples of best practice across over a dozen categories, as well as the showcase of individual Movers and Shakers in social mobility today.

Understand the current state of Social Mobility

The Key Findings Report from the 2024 UK Social Mobility Awards goes into more depth on the progression and recruitment issues identified, as well as exploring the work done by employers and educators to advance social mobility. **Read the report here.**

Partner with Making The Leap

We offer a range of bespoke partnership opportunities that can help you meet ESG, diversity, and employee engagement objectives, while also giving you access to new talent. **Find out more here.**

Already on the path?

If you are already solving some of the issues identified, and want to be recognised for your work, enter the 2025 UK Social Mobility Awards – entries open in April at **somo.uk**



Joining and thriving?

Advancing Social Mobility in 2023-24
Key Findings from the UK Social Mobility Awards 2024