

- [00:00](#) Why set up a social mobility pledge now when we've talked about social mobility for decades
- [00:07](#) because I won't see change on the ground. And I think we do a lot of talking about the problems of social mobility and not enough fixing of how you actually improve it.
- [00:15](#) Do you recognize that voice? It's former secretary of state for education, Minister for women and equalities. Now back venture,
- [00:25](#) Justine Greening and people put the but more importantly found or the social mobility pledge that soul groups part of
- [00:31](#) Justine was in Hull for business week event being held at Sewell Group studio in the east of the city calls the kid. Done good. The have an aim to inspire social mobility among local young people by revealing the real life stories of some of the holes, icons, people like this one lone fella, fresh back from my role, the bruising experience at Madison Square Garden.
- [00:53](#) My name is Tommy Coyle. I'm an ambassador for kids that might have had a bad style in life if you got involved with this social mobility pledge all being damn good to me. Very, very good to me. Um, the support me not just in Victoria but in Duffy also. And if an being for boxing, I would and have often a quarter a while now and I just feel like right to give some back to say I'm very proud to be from and give over kids a chance that I was given. Show them that with a bit of our work, a bit sacrificing perseverance. Success eventually is inevitable.
- [01:35](#) You're a fighter obviously by nature. Um, is increasing up the social mobility ladder, is it about fights or is it about opportunity?
- [01:45](#) It's about opportunity and then it's about what you do when you get that opportunity. And then he's about fighting because, you know, I had an opportunity of the weekend and I chose to fight, didn't work out, bought, you know, I'll continue fighting. And it's about never backing down from an opportunity, embracing it, embracing defeat, embracing failure and going again. Hopefully through my experience, through, through the success in my career, I can give kids hope.
- [02:17](#) The event was hosted by former whole western [inaudible], the right honorable Alan Johnson,
- [02:23](#) your rise from postmen up to the very highest levels of government as well documented particularly on your books you've served as Home Secretary, you've served as secretary of State for industry, for health, for education skills development, that sort of thing. You must have a better understanding than most as to why social mobility is so important. Why should we care about social

mobility? Yeah, well, I don't know whether I've got the answers, uh, because I have struggled with this all my political life as to how you can uncover

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the talent that may not have shown itself when they were at school, may have failed exams. I mean, famously the 11 plus when it existed, when I passed by, I remember all those much brighter kids actually in my class who were on the day failed and it condemned them to kind of secondary modern second class education. How do you get that rule talent and how do you identify it and how do you ensure they have the same opportunities as kids from backgrounds where it would be a young thinkable not to go to university and not to progress and do all those things. So you know, I'm just pleased that it is a political issue now for a long time it wasn't, we know you can only measure social mobility over long periods. I'd like to think that during my time in government and those uh, 13 years of labor governments that we actually made some progress, sure.

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Start Children's centres, the educational maintenance allowance that it had an effect. We won't know that for 2030 years, but there was a very important report in 2005 by the Sutton trust was a charity that deals with social mobility and the London School of Economics, LSE and their report showed social mobility is worse in this country than most other developed countries. Number one. And number two, it's going backwards not forwards. So I haven't got all the answers, but I do know is great that it's a political, that there is a political consensus about it. Justinee was a conservative education secretary. I was a labor education secretary. She's a council house kid from Rotterdam. You know, the fact that she, we disagree on lots of political issues doesn't mean we can't come together on this issue as social mobility to do what we're trying to do today, which is basically showed lots of kids in whole icons that they can, whether it's Tommy Coyle or whatever, it's poor or where is John Godber, uh, who had a difficult time but made it the kid done good.

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And at the same time getting a businesses because this is uh, I'll business week to get businesses to be more diverse in the way they are point people and not just to make it a tick box exercise based on has someone got a certain qualification, is social mobility for everybody? Should some people just be happy and content where they are now? Now is a very good question and I don't want social mobility to be mixed up with this issue. About whether you know you should somehow be ashamed of the circumstances you were born into in a post office. I knew lots when I was a postman. There was a root actually that you took and it all depended on seniority. You become a postman higher grade, then you become an inspector, then you become a senior manager in India. You become a head postmaster. I mean you could see the route up to the top, which was great and that's the kind of thing we need in employment.

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But there were lots of guys and a few women, not so many in that in those days who chose not to take that room, who were happy being a postman. And I've always said this actually, you know the factory worker who is content to be a factory worker, doesn't want to be a foreman, doesn't want to be the managing director. Happy to get there, watch after 30 40 years of law service. Nothing

wrong with that at all. Nothing wrong with that at all. I think what it is is the frustration. You know, someone wants to be a boxer, wants to be a rock star, wants to be a writer, wants to be an entrepreneur, and they haven't gotten a context, they haven't got the networks, they haven't got anything in their family history that allows them to do that. So all of that talent

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goes to waste. Is it right to want to be rich? I'm sort of casting my mind back to the end of the eighties, early nineties, and the community and Harry Enfield with his character. Yeah. Allows or money. Yeah. Oh, are we not in danger of sort of encouraging that sort of aspiration,

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not by social mobility, no. Social abilities and saying, look, if you want to be a millionaire, you can be a millionaire. A, I mean, there's no, not many millionaires out there, but there's the leader of all the city council. There's a, there's a, uh, a woman who's worked in the NHS and done fabulous stuff. Uh, there's a guy who's done, who started off as a nurse and has done amazing stuff's in the health service. There's the playwright, John Godber, but you know, so they're not setting out to be millionaires. Uh, John must be worth a few bob. Now he's 70 plays under his belt, but, but they're setting off to fulfill their potential, uh, in whatever role that is. And so actually I don't think there's anything wrong with someone saying, well, I want to do that cause I wanna learn, I wanna learn a bit of money. If you come from certain structures in society, you know how to do that. You've got inherited wealth, you've got your parents' business or you know, it's easy for you and I'm not condemning them. It's easy for, you know, someone from a certain background. They should be given the same opportunities as well.

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It was certainly fascinating, surprising even to see two former education secretary is from opposing political parties in such harmony and agreement about the importance of social mobility. So I asked Justinee what her aims were in putting together the social mobility pledge and the pledge actually involves.

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So what I wanted to do was to work with companies around the country to try and help them do better. And of course companies like [inaudible] group a really right at the forefront for what good looks like. So if we can share what they're doing with everyone else involved in the pledge and they're a hundred companies now, hundreds of companies, then I think that's actually how you get scalable change.

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So we've always had work experience weeks for young people, that sort of thing. What um, over and above that does a company need to do with its signs up to the,

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I've asked them to do three things. First of all, to get into local schools, talking about careers, what their businesses are about. Secondly, to open up their doors so that young people can actually see what they're literally experiencing it for themselves, whether it's work experience or an apprenticeship. And then thirdly, I've asked them to commit to make sure that their recruitment practices

are fair. So there is a lot of screening out of rough diamonds sometimes because you just focused on academic grades or we know that name blind recruitment can really help on BME candidates. But also why white working class kids called Tracy and Kevin who apparently the research shows tend to be screened out, which is ridiculous.

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What is the essential benefit for a business by engaging with social mobility and the social mobility pledge? What does a business really get out of it?

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Awesome line growth because the best asset any company's got is it's people

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best assets. Any company has are its people couldn't agree with that model and that certainly also seems to be the view of Dr. Paul Sewell OBE chair of the civil group. He told me why his business is so keen to be involved with the social mobility pledge and why listening to the stories of the whole icons is so significant.

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It gets your fishing fishing in different talent pool for a start. The education system is now producing a very specific talent pool of people coming into our businesses is a smaller pool with a lots of people fishing in it. There's lots of the set teen, very, very successful people here. None of whom came out of that pool. It came from disadvantaged who brings failures at school. The tragedy is business today would be turned off to these people. All of these people would have been denied two businesses, life in whole, et cetera. If the current situation of prevailed where we're only taking kids, we sat and had qualifications, etc.

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So we've always had work experience opportunities, that sort of thing. What in addition are you providing as a company? By signing up to

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the social mobility pledge? We're making a statement that we're hiring for attitude and training for scale. This is a business strategy on talent management. All business are in a war for talent in the moment. We're in as much as a war for talent, as a war for customers, and so we are being much cuter and much smarter about where we're looking for that talent.

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Let's hear from another whole icon. He's already been named, it's playwright John Godber. He's told me before how he's a keen observer of people's character and we see those observations written and played out large in his place. I asked him then if he thinks social mobility is driven by people's character and attitude or whether it's more to do with opportunities that present themselves and people's circumstances?

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Well, I think the short answer, it's a bit of both. Um, I think you've got to have drive. You've been very interesting for me, this looking back and I've just turned 63 so there are, there's multiple back on then the rest of look, look forward to and working out what my particular story was and, and why it happened. For

me, I think the level of opportunities have changed for young people. I think that's got narrower. I think what we understand by the education system has gotten narrower and it possibly will get narrow with the back in the back of Loria and the way that we're squeezing and bound to say we're squeezing outside of the curriculum and that is not a good thing for anybody. A lot of it comes from how you feel about yourself and about drive and a lot of you, I think he's about what your dream.

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I mean, I originally, I dreamt of playing for Leeds United Alongside Billy Bremner. That wasn't to be a, then as I woke up one morning and discovered I was 18 stone, that was a shock. And I thought, well, I'll probably get a game for Castleford. Well that wasn't to be, so I became a player. Right. Is, is, is a little bit by default. Um, but once you've decided to do something, I think the message from me would be don't let anybody tell you you can't do it. How is this social mobility pledge going to create more opportunity for young people and others? I think that's a really good question. I mean I support that question. I think there has to be, there has to be discussion with educationalists. There has to be a discussion with government. Uh, it's absolutely pointless saying we, you know, we're all, we're all lined up for a social media social mobility pledge if the opportunities out there and if people don't know about it.

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So there's a little bit supply and demand. I would strongly advocate that you need to have that pledge go right. Trickle right down into schools so that people on the ground know that there is an opportunity. And also that there are firms who are looking for people in a, in a broader sense rather than the traditional, you know, I've done a jump that hurdle of Jim that I love Jim that as well. Um, but it depends on what the firm is and what the skill base is and the quality of the, uh, of the candidate. I think what's really important is that it seems to me to be a two way conversation that firms need to be aware that this is, uh, a live issue, but also that people need to be aware that this is a live opportunity and without the two interfacing, then they will, they won't communicate with each other.

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Yes. Social Mobility, you climbing up the ladder, is that right for everybody? I think that's a great question. I think, um, we were chatting about this about a fortnight to go with, we'd just come back from London, where do I play in on the west end and this is QC came to see and she said, yeah, Mo. And she's involved with lots of charities. She said, I'm all for social mobility, but we have to realize that it means everybody. It just doesn't, it just doesn't mean those who are successful in business or successful in the arts. I was successful at sport. It means everybody. So I think that the overall umbrella brand would be take opportunities, whether it's to do with improving your life, improving the conditions of your life, you wellbeing, your welfare, etc. The danger is that everybody wants to be Richard Branson. Uh, I think that's unrealistic. So I think that the, that there ought to be a more holistic notion of what social mobility is. Because unless we are encouraging

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people at the bottom of our societies to feel good about themselves, then all we're doing is stretching the gaps in society.

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He's a straight talking fella is Mr Godber and that's a character trait I quite admire. He's right. The social mobility pledge isn't the only answer to how we can create opportunities for people to achieve their best. There are other things we should be doing. So I bought a couple of ideas to Justine Greening.

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How would you respond if I was to say that is this tinkering around the edges? That there are actually other issues we could tackle the GIG economy for example, people delivering somebody take away is for 65 pence a delivery stuck in under employment. Would we not be best? Um, tackling the GIG economy, legislating it out of existence for example.

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Barfing things like decision mobility, pleasure working with companies are how you improve what a career and what employment looks like. Because what I'm saying to companies is they have a broader responsibility and opportunity to change their communities and just literally employing people and trying to make money. That's, that's the whole point. The other thing I'm saying actually is don't wait for someone in Whitehall to change this. I mean why tools paralyzed with Brexit? I mean parliaments paralyzed with Brexit. Nothing else feels like it's going on. So actually if we want to get change on the ground, we should be finding other ways of doing it. And my point is that working through the social mobility pledge, I'm working with companies, we've got a huge potential to change things on the ground for young people across our country. We don't actually need to wait for any laws to change. I hope in time though that Westminster will catch up and there might well be some laws that need to change so that we can get out of the way to have more of this kind of stuff done by more companies more easily with schools,

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schools and education is so important isn't it, towards um, people's social mobility. Um, so university for example, should we be resourcing people to go to university rather than charging them?

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Well I said that we need to reform the system actually in and really get rid of this tuition fees and loan system. Cause I just don't think it works. And I think you're better off having just a graduate contribution, a bit like national insurance and we'll pay that because we will use the NHS. But under my proposal graduates would pay a graduate contribution and that would basically be how we fund our universities. I'd also as companies, but again, a bit like the NHS to pay their contribution to because they benefit from more skilled young people.

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So a couple of direct questions and a couple of thorough answers. Thank you very much Justine. Let's hear now from another of the whole items.

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So I'm Emma Latimer. And I'm the chief officer of NHS Hull clinical commissioning group and NHS North Lincolnshire clinical commissioning group. Why have you got involved with this social mobility pledge? Um, because I am from a background where I didn't necessarily have access to opportunity and I think it's really important that everybody has access to opportunity. So when I was asked to do this and I thought it'd be great to come home and tell my story to say to children, people, nothing's impossible. Nothing's out of your reach. Whatever barriers in your way. There's always a way around it. What those opportunities look like. Then opportunity sometimes can be a mentor, uh, access to something. Um, it can be, um, support for education and employment is a range of things that can support people. So I think for me personally, I know I was lucky to have mentors and good people that helped me an access to supported education further in my life because when I was younger, uh, we weren't able to afford any kind of university education.

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Once I got employment, I was off without support and was able to attend some really good qualifications, which had never been able to get if I hadn't gone into work. So is the CCG signed up to the pledge? CCG is definitely signed up to the pledge. Um, we want to give again, give everyone an equal opportunity to access work, um, to do things differently to aspire to it. So live their dream, I guess. What does social mobility actually look like and what are the benefits to the CCG in the NHS for, for signing up to this pledge? Well, obviously we, one of the biggest employers in the country and we want to attract people from every walk of life. So by doing, by being part of this today, I think it just shows us in NHS and employer, you know, we're really keen to work with people to support people who want to come and have a career in the NHS.

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And also obviously people who are in, who have job skills, new friends, education, employment are happier people. So being happier beans, beans, bean, healthier. Um, so obviously that's really important for us to, we don't want people to be here. We want people to be educated, to be supported and to live long, happy, healthy lives. Have you signed up to the pledge as the CCG to improve the opportunities and lives of people in the city or is it equally or even more about supporting the people you employed? Oh, I, oh, we already support the people employed. The, the NHS and the CCG have a plethora of policies in place and support, you know, those individuals are like think are quite looking supported. I think it's more for people in whole he wants to have opportunity who don't have that. They don't have a workplace and they don't have the opportunities that some of my team have. Um, so I think it's more about that. It's more about the people in whole and obviously supporting my own team again, to live that, you know, to fulfill our dreams and to do what they want to do.

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I phones the kid had done good event, quite enlightening terms. Social Mobility probably doesn't get used often when we're chatting with our friends in the pub or with our family at the dining table. But we can all understand that making sure everyone has an equal opportunity to achieve their best, well, that's the right thing to do. It isn't about academic achievement. It's about giving people

an opportunity to succeed and instilling in them the attitude, the aspiration to be their best. That's good for all of us.

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No country is going to be successful in the 21st century unless it really unlocks a talent of all of its people. My personal view is the Britain has a lot of the talent of about a third of its people and they think everything's fine because of course they're the people who tend to run those things. But actually the other two thirds know that it's not. And what I'm trying to do is create a different version of our country where we are lock everybody's potential. And I think that isn't just good for the two thirds that need more opportunity. I think it's good for all of us. I think it's how we all do better.

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Justine Greening. Thanks for your time. Thank you.

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