

Elitist Britain

2019

The educational backgrounds
of Britain's leading people



Social Mobility
Commission



About the Sutton Trust

The Sutton Trust champions social mobility from birth to the workplace so that all young people have the chance to succeed in life. It does this through evidence-led programmes, agenda-setting research and policy influence.



**Social Mobility
Commission**

About the Social Mobility Commission

The Social Mobility Commission is an advisory non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the UK and to promote social mobility in England.

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Forewords

Sir Peter Lampl

Founder of the Sutton Trust and Chairman of the Education Endowment Foundation



Over the last two decades, the Sutton Trust has pioneered research into the educational backgrounds of those at the top of British society. In that time we have covered fields from the legal profession to medicine, from the

media to Nobel Prize winners. Across a wide variety of professions we see a similar picture – those educated at independent schools and Oxbridge are over-represented among Britain’s elite.

This report is published at a critical juncture for this country. We find ourselves an increasingly divided society. Divided by politics, by class, by geography. Social mobility, the potential for those to achieve success regardless of their background, remains worryingly low. The British education system is partly responsible for this divide, but it also has the potential to rectify it. Giving young people from all backgrounds access to the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in life is key to bridging the gap.

For this to happen, the country’s most

successful educational institutions need to open their doors to those beyond a privileged few. Top state schools need to ensure that they are as open to disadvantaged young people as the well-off; those with the means to obtain tutoring for the 11-plus, or to purchase a home in the catchment area of a high-performing school.

Our independent sector, which has long been a source of educational and professional success, also should enable access for a wider section of society. Independent schools offer their pupils an array of advantages, from smaller class sizes, to top notch sporting facilities and opportunities for extracurricular development. Opening up independent day schools on the basis of merit, not money, via the Sutton Trust’s Open Access scheme, has long been an objective of mine.

At university level, Oxford and Cambridge have both recently announced ambitious schemes to widen access. It is essential that these great universities deliver on that promise.

Elitist Britain 2019 lays bare the lack of opportunities for so many young people across Britain. Amid an atmosphere of political tumult in Westminster, it must not be forgotten that addressing Britain’s stubborn social mobility problem remains one of the most important challenges that lies ahead.

“Giving young people from all backgrounds access to the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in life is key to bridging the social mobility gap.”

Dame Martina Milburn

Chair, Social Mobility Commission



The Social Mobility Commission is delighted to be working with the Sutton Trust to look at the “power gap” which separates those who dominate the top of many professions and businesses and those who

are left behind. Both organisations know that education lies at the heart of the social divide and people who have the best educational opportunities often get the best, well-paid jobs.

Elitist Britain shows little has changed at the top in recent years. Decision makers in government, business and the judiciary are still dominated by the seven per cent of the population who are educated privately and the one per cent who go to Oxford or Cambridge University. But should this small elite have such a big say in running the country?

Our analysis does suggest small shifts to address this imbalance. A record number of MPs (52 per cent) went to comprehensive schools and fewer army officers were educated at independent schools than five years ago.

Yet still more than a third of the current Cabinet went to private school and over 57 per cent attended Oxbridge. Even newer industries, such as tech firms and PR firms have a high proportion of privately educated CEOs.

Geographical differences are also worrying with many of the most prestigious jobs in businesses, journalism, law and politics, based in London, despite unaffordable rents and prohibitive house prices. Ideally more organisations should move their headquarters out of the capital to the regions.

Not everyone needs or wants to make it to the top but those who wish to should get the chance to do so. Many sectors including the law, media and the civil service are now taking steps to address the issue through better apprenticeships, paid internships and blind recruitment - but it is a slow process. The Social Mobility Commission will shortly publish practical guidance for employers to help them widen access and improve progression opportunities.

Politicians, employers, educators and policy makers all need to work together to ensure that Britain’s elite becomes much more diverse, in gender, ethnicity and social background. It is time to close the power gap and ensure that those who hold the reins of power can relate to and represent ordinary people.

“Politicians, employers and educators all need to work together to ensure that Britain’s elite becomes much more diverse in gender, ethnicity and social background.”

Key findings

→ **The United Kingdom in 2019 is an increasingly divided nation.** The vote to leave the European Union both reflected and accentuated deep social divisions across the country. The nature of Britain's 'elite' is higher in the national consciousness than ever, with trust between significant sections of the population and those at the highest levels of politics, business and the media, under strain. The latest indications are that social mobility across the UK is low and not improving. This deprives large parts of the population, both socio-economically and geographically, of opportunity. This study, conducted for the first time by both the Sutton Trust and the Social Mobility Commission, offers a snapshot of who gets to succeed in Britain in 2019.

→ **This report looks at the educational backgrounds of Britain's elite across a broad range of sectors.** The Sutton Trust's *Leading People (2016)*, and the Social Mobility Commission's *Elitist Britain (2014)* painted a picture of a country whose power structures are dominated by a narrow section of the population: the 7% who attend independent schools, and the roughly 1% who graduate from just two universities, Oxford and Cambridge. Looking at the five years since 2014, *Elitist Britain 2019* shows isolated pockets of positive change, but a picture characterised by persistent inequality.

→ **The broad trajectory of private school over-representation appears to be downwards, but change is happening slowly.** Two fifths of the elite examined here (39%) attended independent schools, more than five times as many as the population at large (7%). The prospects of those educated at private schools remain significantly brighter than their peers. The proportion of the elites having attended grammar school (20%) is more clearly on the decline, though this is in the main likely to be a symptom of generational change, reflecting the ending of the selective system in most of England during the 1960s and 70s, and the rise of the comprehensively educated generation. Also a function of generational change is the level of university attendance rising across many sectors, as the increased number of graduates in the population filters upwards.

→ Politics

In politics, the 2017 General Election returned a parliament with the highest number of comprehensively educated MPs on record, at

52%. Nonetheless, 29% of MPs still come from a private school background, four times higher than the electorate they represent. The House of Lords is even less representative, with 57% of its members having been educated privately. This figure is actually 8 percentage points higher than 2014, potentially owing to the profile of new Lords appointed by David Cameron and Theresa May in the interim. The cabinet, at the time of analysis in spring 2019, was composed of 39% independently educated members. This is in stark contrast with the shadow cabinet, with just 9% - the lowest level of the privately educated in Britain's elite outside professional football. Increasing numbers of MPs have university degrees (up 5 percentage points), with the numbers graduating from Oxbridge (24%) consistent over time.

→ Business

Business saw some of the highest rates of internationally educated members of the elite, with 43% of FTSE 350 CEOs, and over half (51%) of the Sunday Times Rich List top 100 schooled abroad. Looking at those educated in the UK alone however, there were large numbers who were independently educated - 57% of the Rich List and 48% of FTSE 350 CEOs. Tech firm CEOs and entrepreneurs, a source of business innovation, also had large numbers of privately schooled members, but at 44%, entrepreneurs had the highest rate of non-university graduates outside sport and the creative industries.

→ Media

The media, alongside politics and the civil service, form a triumvirate of sectors at the top of the socially exclusive list, with all three largely centred in London. Newspaper columnists, who play a significant role in shaping the national conversation, draw from a particularly small pool, with 44% attending independent school and 33% coming through the independent school to Oxbridge 'pipeline' alone. Looking at a variety of roles in the news media, including influential editors and broadcasters, we see a similar picture, with 43% having been privately educated and 36% graduating from Oxbridge. Trends in the sector, including budget cuts, the closure of many local media organisations, the increasing casualisation of work and high numbers of unpaid internships, contribute to the ongoing under-representation of those from less well-off backgrounds across the media.

→ **Whitehall & Public Bodies**

In Whitehall and public bodies, which are responsible for enacting government policy and overseeing a wide range of sectors across British society, there is a consistent picture of over-representation of those from elite educational backgrounds. Civil service permanent secretaries (59%), Foreign Office diplomats (52%), and Public Body Chairs (45%) have among the highest rates of independently educated in their ranks. Despite efforts to overhaul entry into the Civil Service, its highest levels remain highly exclusive, with 56% having graduated from Oxford or Cambridge, and 39% having attended both a private school and Oxbridge. While the numbers of the comprehensively educated in these roles is on the rise, this is largely at the expense of declining grammar school numbers, reflecting historic reforms in the state education system.

→ **Public Servants**

Looking at a wider group of public servants, across law, defence and the academic world showed some of the highest rates of elitism. Senior Judges were the most rarefied group, with two thirds attending private schools and 71% graduating from Oxbridge. In fact over half (52%) of senior judges took the same pathway from independent school to Oxbridge and then into the judiciary. While these figures are slightly lower than in 2014, they are far removed from even many fellow members of the elite. The armed forces also had high proportions of privately educated in their highest ranks (49%), although this is down by 13 percentage points on 2014. University Vice Chancellors in contrast had relatively low levels of private school and Oxbridge educated members among their number.

→ **Local Government**

The picture of politics at local government level is substantially different from the national level. Local government leaders have a lower proportion of those educated independently (20%) compared to MPs (29%). Additionally, local government CEOs are among the least likely to have been privately educated, at 9%, a significant contrast with their counterparts in the Civil Service in Whitehall, who sit at the other end of the spectrum. Oxbridge attendance among both groups (5%) is also one of the lowest outside sport. Given the spread of these roles across the country, it is perhaps unsurprising that they reflect a substantially different background than the rest of the political establishment centred in London.

→ **Influential Women**

Women are under-represented across the top professions, making up just 5% of FTSE 350 CEOs, 16% of local government leaders, 24% of senior judges, 26% of permanent secretaries and 35% of top diplomats. For women who do make it to the top, their journeys do not always look the same as those of their male peers. In a variety of sectors, women at the top are less likely to have attended Oxbridge than their male counterparts, including the judiciary (where they are 25 percentage points less likely), the House of Lords (21 percentage points), and those working as newspaper columnists or diplomats (both 17 percentage points less). Nonetheless, women in top roles, including influential female leaders in Britain (43% of whom attended private school), are much more likely to have attended an independent school than women in the population overall.

→ **Creative Industries**

Creative industries saw some of the lowest proportions of Oxbridge graduates, with just 2% of top selling pop music artists attending the two universities, and over 70% not attending university at all. Among the wealthiest members of the TV, film and music industries, university attendance was somewhat higher, at 42%, with about a quarter attending Russell Group institutions. They also had substantial numbers of independent school attendees, at 38%, though the number attending comprehensives has risen by 18 percentage points since 2014. Popular music appears more diverse than those at the top of the acting profession (30% independently educated compared to 44%).

→ **Sport**

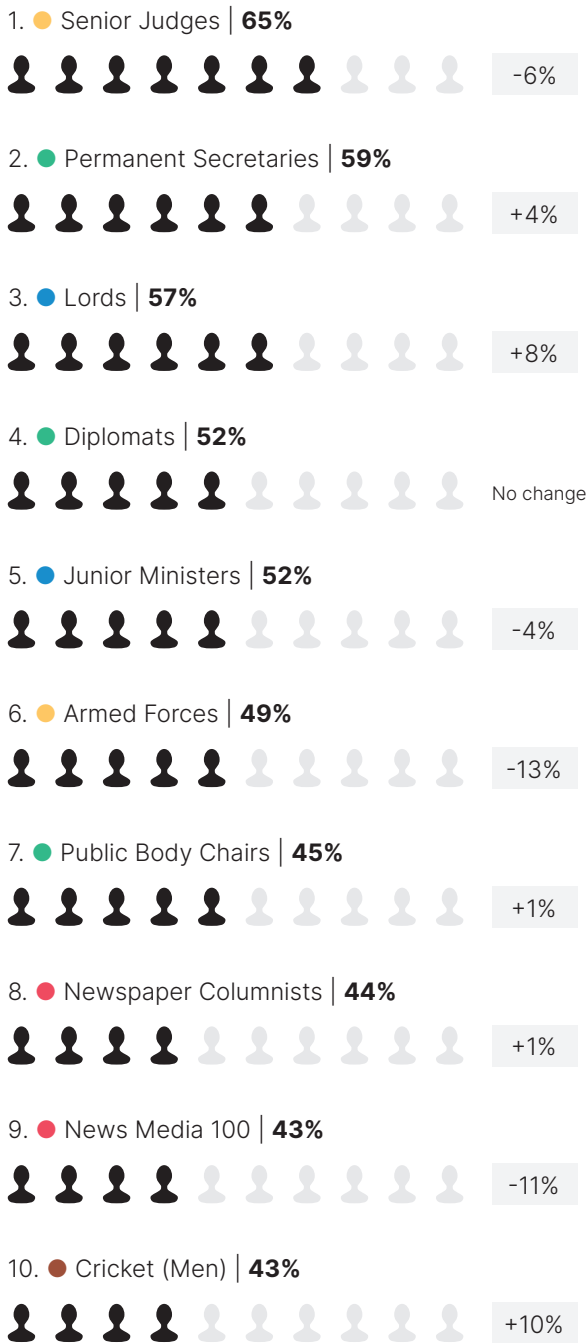
There were big differences across sports, and between men's and women's teams. While 5% of men's football international players attended independent schools, 37% of rugby internationals and 43% of the England cricket team had done so. Rugby showed big differences across the nations: 25% of England internationals attended comprehensives, compared to 81% of Six Nations champions Wales. Women's teams showed similar patterns to their male counterparts in terms of school background, but around 80% of women's internationals across football, cricket and rugby had attended university, compared to small numbers of men. This reflects generally lower levels of financial compensation and career opportunities in the women's game.

In numbers

Independent School Attendance

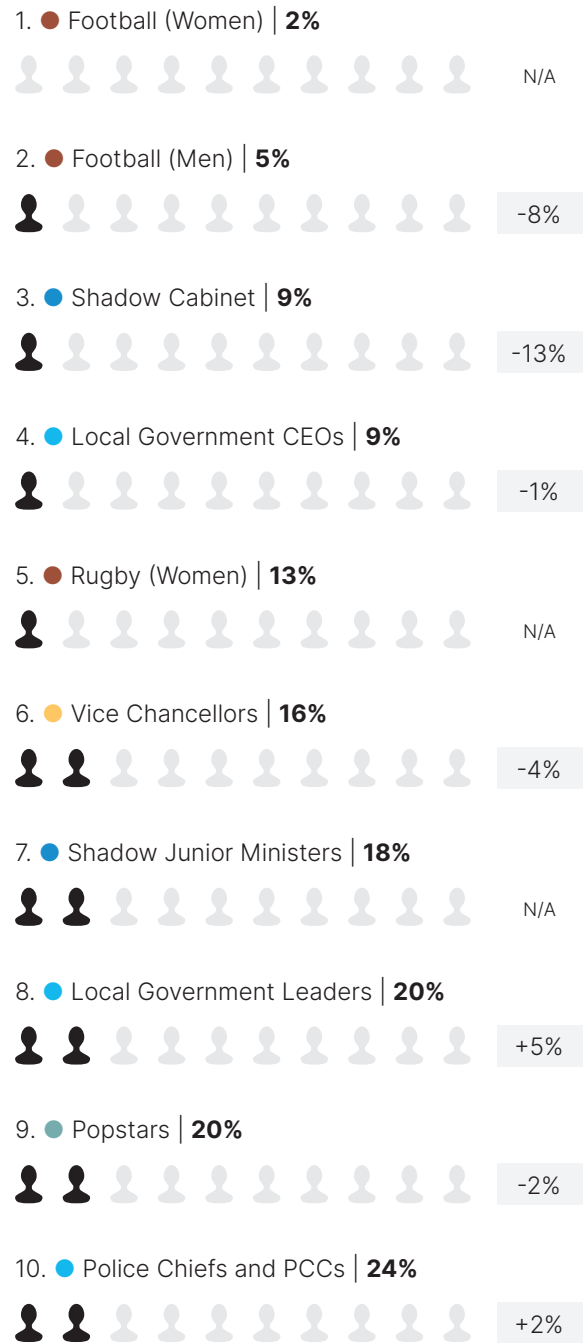
The 10 professions with the **highest** independent school attendance

Indicates change since 2014



The 10 professions with the **lowest** independent school attendance

Indicates change since 2014

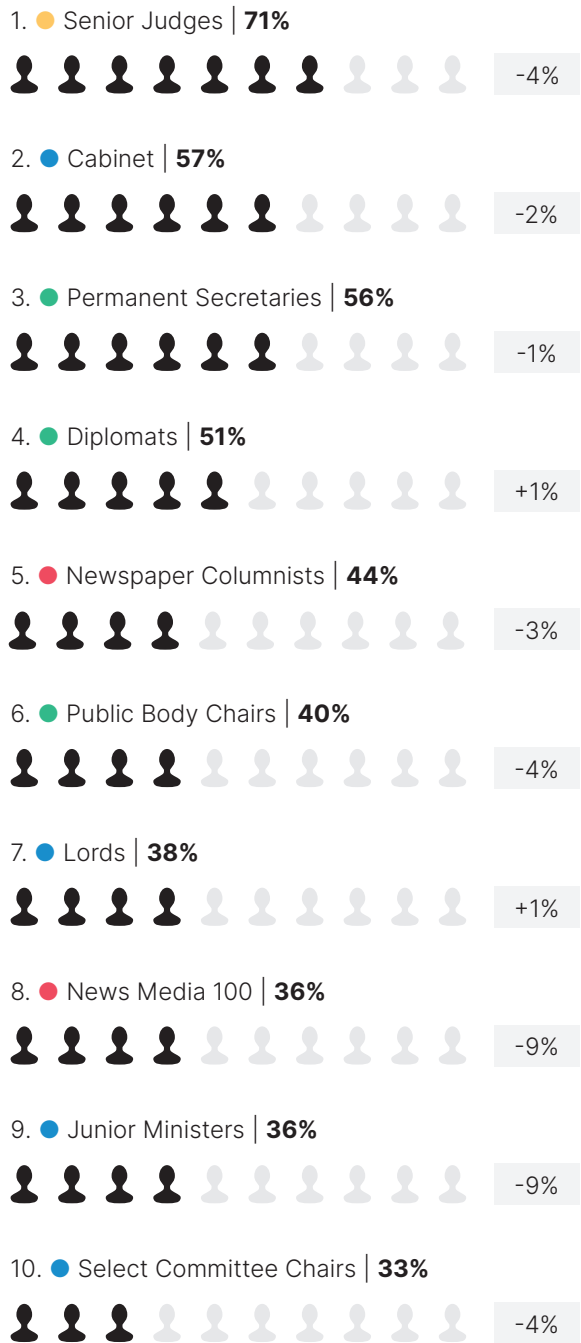


Whole UK population: **7%**

Oxbridge Attendance

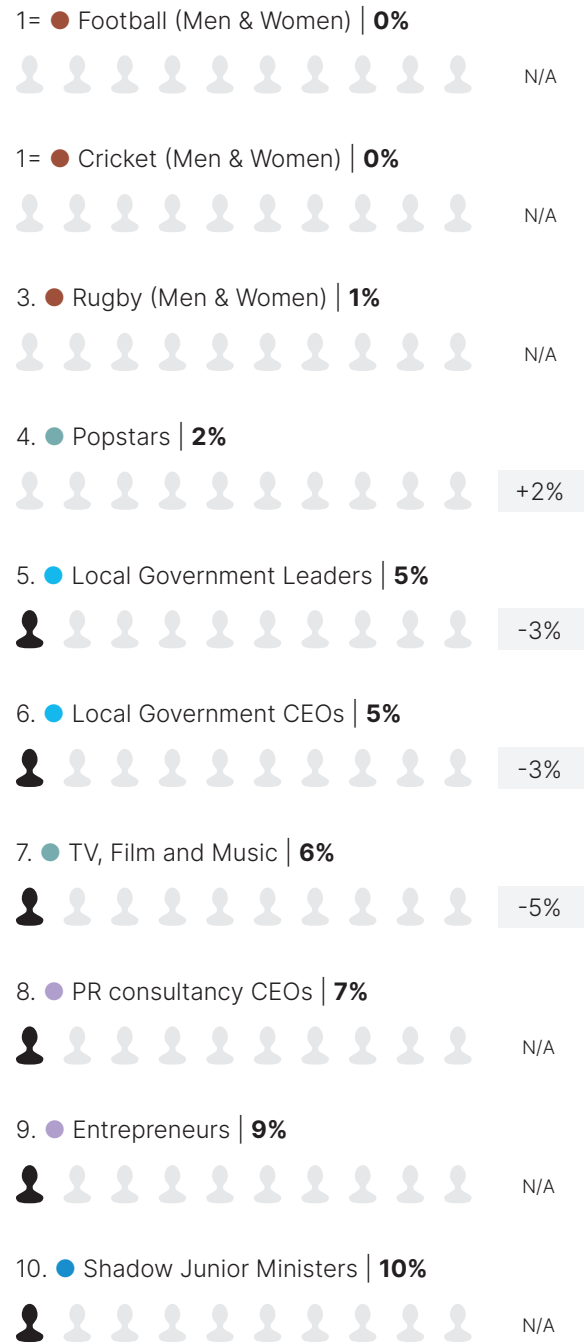
The 10 professions with the highest Oxbridge attendance

Indicates change since 2014



The 10 professions with the lowest Oxbridge attendance

Indicates change since 2014



Whole UK population: **less than 1%**

Policy recommendations

Across Society

- 1 Social diversity should be a key mission across the whole of British society to ensure we make use of the talents of people from all backgrounds. Enacting the 'socio-economic duty' clause of the Equality Act 2010 should form the centrepiece of this.** Access to opportunities should not be dependent on the social class you grew up in, and socio-economic background should be considered similarly to ethnicity and gender. Enacting Section 1 of the Equality Act, obligating public bodies to give due regard to how they can reduce the impact of socio-economic disadvantage, would send a signal that opportunities should be for everyone.

In the Workplace

- 2 Data on the socio-economic background of employees should be collected and monitored by employers in the same way as gender or ethnicity.** In order to combat inequalities in the workplace, employers and government need to have better data to identify where the barriers lie. There should be a particular focus on how class background interacts with level of seniority in an organisation. Employers should follow Cabinet Office advice on the best measurements to use, including parental qualifications, occupation, type of school attended, and eligibility for free school meals.
- 3 Financial barriers to entry to leading industries and professions must be tackled, including unpaid internships of significant length.** The culture of expectation of unpaid work from recent graduates and entry level employees must be confronted. This only serves to restrict the talent pool available to employers to those from backgrounds who can afford to subsidise their unpaid or precarious work. Employers should comply with National Minimum Wage Regulations where the intern is effectively a worker. But given the confusion among employers and interns around the law on this, there should be specific legislation which clarifies and tightens the rules around internships.
- 4 Recruitment practices should be open and transparent.** Internships and entry level jobs should be openly advertised to help young people from under-represented groups get a foot on the ladder. Many internships are never advertised, and instead offered through informal networks. This locks out talented young people without connections and limits opportunity. Employers should also look at new routes into their profession, such as apprenticeships, which could open opportunities to a wider group.
- 5 Employers should adopt contextual recruitment practices** that place attainment and successes achieved in the context of disadvantage, including underperforming schools and less advantaged neighbourhoods. There are a growing number of such contextual tools available to employers, from organisations including Rare, PiC and upReach. When considering which qualifications are required, employers should only require those which are actually and demonstrably necessary to perform the job.

6 **Class pay gaps, and differences in retention and promotion rates should also be addressed.** Better access to jobs is only the beginning; progression within an organisation is also key to real social mobility. Employers should collect and analyse data looking at barriers to progression, and send a message to staff that fostering an inclusive culture is paramount. Employers should also consider providing mentoring or sponsorship schemes for those from under-represented groups and formalise promotion processes to reduce the risk of senior staff bypassing the system and safeguarding progression based on merit.

7 **Leading social mobility employers should take a sector leadership role and share best practice.** Employers in a variety of sectors have taken a lead on widening access to their organisation and have demonstrated innovative approaches to improving social mobility. For this culture to spread more widely, such organisations should take a role in sharing and promoting best practice within their sector. Senior leadership buy-in is also crucial to effective culture change.

In Education

8 **Universities should revolutionise their practice in relation to disadvantage, by contextualising admissions and reforming their approach to outreach and partnership, both with schools and with other universities.** Highly selective universities in particular, where low and moderate-income students are substantially under-represented, should make greater use of contextual admissions, including reduced grade offers, to recognise the differing circumstances faced by applicants. In terms of outreach, universities should ensure their work is effective, evidence-based and conducted in partnership with communities and schools facing significant disadvantage.

9 **School admissions processes need to tackle social segregation in schools.** High quality teaching is the most important factor for the attainment of disadvantaged young people, providing them with the basis for success later in life. A more even spread of students from different social backgrounds across the system could help to tackle inequalities in access to quality teaching. High performing comprehensives, grammar schools and independent schools should all consider their admissions policies carefully and do more to increase the numbers of pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds. For example, introduction of the Sutton Trust's Open Access scheme, which would address financial barriers to independent day school entry, should be considered.

10 **High quality careers advice needs to be available to young people from all backgrounds.** Good careers advice can be transformative for young people, but despite recent progress made on realising the Gatsby Benchmarks by the Careers and Enterprise Company in England, provision across the country remains inconsistent. All pupils should receive a guaranteed level of careers advice from professional impartial advisers. For those facing disadvantage – or who are at risk of not reaching their potential – there should be further support available. There should be an emphasis on what works in career advice for disadvantaged pupils in particular.

Introduction

The United Kingdom in 2019 finds itself an increasingly divided nation, divided economically, divided politically, and divided geographically. There is a deepening sense of different parts of society living entirely separate, parallel lives, with a frequently profound misunderstanding of each other's worries and concerns. As Britain prepares to leave the European Union after a landmark referendum result in 2016, public trust in those considered to be the country's 'elite' is under strain. This disconnect between those at the top of society and those below is not new, but many see the current breakdown in trust as unprecedented in living memory.

Britain has a history of division based on social status and class that strongly persists today. It is this stratification that lies at the root of many of the divides we now see so prominently. Social mobility, the opportunity for people to succeed in life regardless of their background, is both low and showing little sign of improvement. Considerable portions of the population see little opportunity to succeed, either on their own terms or on those valued by society as a whole, and their lives increasingly feel separate to those who have reached the heights of British society. This lack of opportunity also has a geographical, as well as social component, with large swathes of the country feeling left behind by an increasingly London-centric economy. More than a decade after the 2008 financial crisis, the implications for wider society are still being felt, and the disconnect between those in charge of Britain's institutions and the wider population is only growing.

The Sutton Trust has been working to study and bridge this disconnect for over two decades, highlighting the lack of opportunities faced by young people from low income backgrounds and working on practical projects to spread opportunity and widen access to the knowledge and skills needed to flourish. In 2012, the Social Mobility Commission was established by government in recognition of the dire inequalities in opportunity faced by young people. While opportunities are influenced by a complex web of policy issues, including tax, welfare, housing, transport, the labour market and wider levels of inequality, at the heart of both organisations is the recognition that education lies at the core of the social divide, but also has the power to challenge it.

It is more than a decade since the Sutton Trust first started looking at the educational backgrounds of those at the top of British society. Since then, research from the Sutton Trust's *Leading People*¹ and the Social Mobility Commission's *Elitist Britain*² has revealed the extent to which those from a narrow group – alumni of private fee-paying schools and the country's two most prestigious universities,



Oxford and Cambridge – dominate a range of the country's top professions, from members of parliament to journalists, judges to diplomats.

Here, for the first time, the two organisations have worked together to look at the backgrounds of those in the 'elite' professions across British society. As there is no single way to define this group, in this report we have looked across a wide range of different professions, including individuals with the most political power and influence, those with the most wealth and the highest earnings, people working at the top of the country's key institutions and the individuals playing leading roles in our cultural life. We have also been able to look at how the educational backgrounds of this group have changed over time, looking back at the landscape five years ago to build a picture of how the make-up of the country's top professions has, or hasn't, shifted over this period.

While success should not be defined only in terms of wealth and power, who rises to the top of fields from politics and business, to media, culture and sport matters, for two main reasons. Firstly, it indicates whether opportunities to reach the most sought-after positions in society are equitably distributed – and whether those powerful positions draw on the talents of all sections of the population. But it also matters because those who occupy these roles make decisions and take actions on a daily basis that affect everyone in the country. As people are naturally shaped by their background and life experiences, for a healthy society it is vital that these roles reflect all geographical areas and social backgrounds – not least as it is frequently the decisions made by those in the highest positions that can have the deepest impact on opening up opportunities for others.

Our report comes at a crucial time in the country's history. Amid increasing division and political polarisation, there is a feeling that those at the top of society are disconnected from the lives of ordinary citizens, and that they don't understand their concerns, worries or frustrations. Tackling this disconnect, and building opportunities for people of all backgrounds to succeed in life is one of the most profound challenges that lies ahead for this country.

Background

Recent years, particularly since the establishment of the Equality Act in 2010, have seen a welcome push to improve several dimensions of diversity, including gender and ethnicity, in Britain's top jobs. However, despite increasing recognition of Britain's social mobility problem, socio-economic diversity has not been accorded the same level of importance. While the Equality Act did contain a clause called the 'socio-economic duty', which emphasised the importance of equal treatment for those from different socio-economic backgrounds, it was never enacted in legislation. Facilitating social mobility, so that those in sought-after professions reflect a variety of social backgrounds, should be seen as an equally important part of ongoing efforts to open up opportunities in every part of British society. Everyone with potential who puts in hard work should have the opportunity to reach the top of their profession, regardless of the background they have come from.

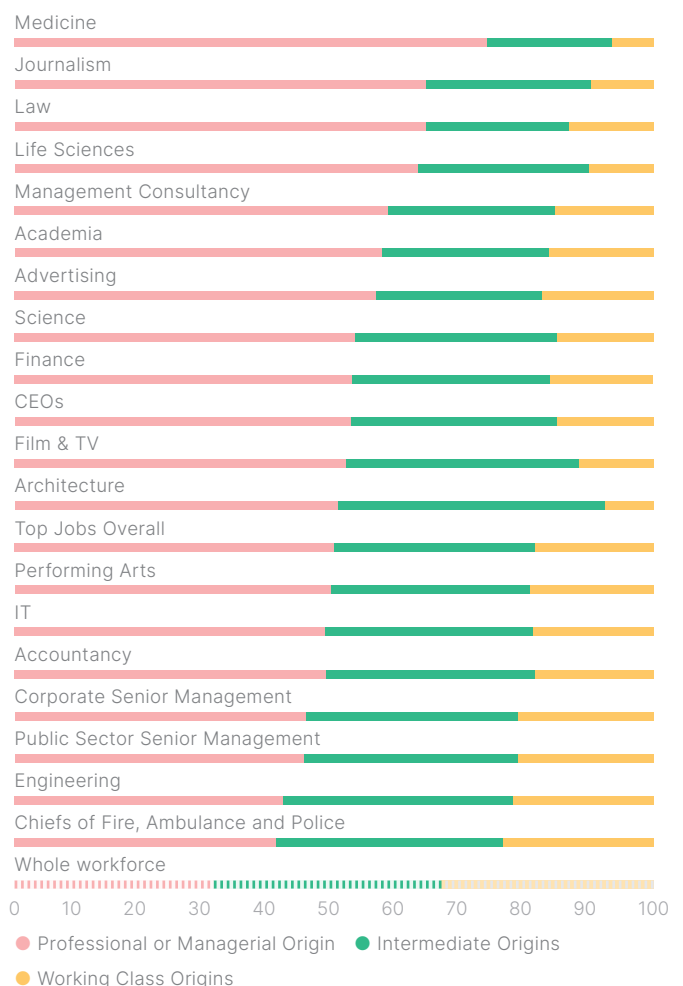
Society also stands to gain significantly from access to the top jobs being decided on merit, rather than limiting opportunities only to those with financial advantages or networks. Low levels of social mobility mean that much talent is wasted because of artificial barriers to success, and addressing that waste is likely to have significant economic and social benefits.³ Broadening the talent pool beyond a narrow group of those from well-off homes can provide significant benefits for employers too. Indeed, companies with greater diversity outperform those that are less diverse,⁴ and are also the most innovative.⁵ When barriers are removed for talent, everyone in society stands to benefit.

Individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds face significant obstacles throughout their life. Children from poorer backgrounds fall behind their better off counterparts in development before they even start at school. This gap widens throughout young people's time in the education system,⁶ and continues to influence whether they attend university, which institutions they attend, and their entry into the workforce.⁷ Further still, we know that these disadvantages can be compounded in the form of 'double disadvantage' when those from lower socio-economic backgrounds are from particular ethnic minority backgrounds or

geographic areas, are women, or have a disability.⁸

Entry to the professions traditionally regarded as 'elite', positions with significant prestige, and usually high financial remuneration, is known to be particularly heavily stratified by socio-economic background. Figure 1 is from the recently released book *The Class Ceiling*⁹ and shows the class background of the workforce of several elite professions. Across these roles, individuals from professional or managerial backgrounds are consistently over-represented, including 74% of those working in medicine, 64% of journalists and the same percentage of those working in law coming from higher socio-economic backgrounds.

Figure 1: Percentage of individuals in each profession by class background⁹



Elitist Britain 2019 looks at more than 6,000 individuals at the very top of the country's elite professions. Collecting data on family income and social class background is challenging, especially on such a large scale. Many people are understandably unwilling to share detailed

information on their circumstances while growing up. To ensure we were looking at a characteristic which could be collected in a practical, consistent and unintrusive way, this report uses educational background as an indicator of social background.

School

The type of school someone attends is both a proxy for socio-economic background and is also in and of itself an important part of someone's background, which can have a substantial impact on where they end up in life. From the quality of teachers that students have access to, to the range of extracurricular activities they can take part in, schools play a pivotal role. Schools also have an important part to play in providing advice and support on the next steps in life, especially for young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds, who are less likely to have access to this help at home.

Students at private schools, especially those with the highest fees, have access to high quality teaching and facilities, and much greater levels of resource than schools in the state educational sector; an issue which has been explored in detail recently by Francis Green and David Kynaston in the book *Engines of Privilege*. Just 7% of children attend such schools,¹⁰ and fees are such that the majority of those attending without financial support will be from highly affluent backgrounds. Historically, substantial numbers of pupils gained government funded places at Direct Grant schools (schools where some places were allocated based on academic merit and others paid fees), or at fully independent schools through the Assisted Places Scheme. However, since the abolition of the latter in the late 1990's only very small numbers of those admitted to private schools receive means tested bursaries. According to the Independent Schools Council, just 1 per cent of private school pupils currently have all their fees paid for, and just 4% have more than half their fees covered. Even for those receiving some financial aid, most will have needed to pay fees at levels well out of reach for most low and middle income families. The Sutton Trust's Open Access scheme, piloted at The Belvedere School between 2000 and 2007, went further, with a third of places fully subsidised and another third partly subsidised. This resulted in a free school meal eligibility rate of 33% among those admitted, and a better social mix overall.

While the quality of schools can of course vary substantially within sectors, young people in independent schools outperform their peers academically even when other factors such as prior attainment are taken into account.¹¹ They are also much more likely to attend top universities, with Sutton Trust research having found that independent school pupils applying to higher education in England are seven times

more likely to gain a place at Oxford or Cambridge compared to those from non-selective state schools, and twice as likely to gain a place in the Russell Group.¹² Many schools provide intensive advice and coaching to pupils in the university application process, and students enjoy far greater levels of support than their comprehensively educated counterparts. Fostering 'essential life skills' such as confidence and motivation, through small class sizes and significant financial resources dedicated to extra-curricular activities such as debating, drama and sport also plays a role.¹³

Private schools also concentrate students from similar backgrounds together, helping them to form networks which can aid them in seeking out elite jobs in later life. Indeed, alumni of just nine leading public schools in Britain are 94 times more likely to reach elite positions than those from other schools, and much of that advantage still persists even when they have not attended top universities, suggesting that the 'old boys networks' formed in top private schools play an important role in access to the elite.¹⁴

It is important to keep in mind throughout this report that many children educated in the state sector themselves come from highly advantaged backgrounds. This is particularly the case for grammar schools. Just 2.5% of the students attending England's grammar schools are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), compared to 14% in the state secondary school system as a whole.¹⁵ However, exclusion is not just limited to this group, with research also showing that a wider group of families with low to moderate incomes are also significantly under-represented in grammar schools.¹⁶

Comprehensive school attendance on its own is not necessarily a marker of disadvantage. There are high levels of social segregation even within the comprehensive school system, with many of the best performing schools in the country located in wealthy areas, serving advantaged populations. Previous Sutton Trust research has found that the proportion of FSM eligible students at the very best comprehensive schools is about half of the average across England, Scotland and Wales.¹⁷ While private school attendance, and to a lesser extent grammar school attendance, can on average be seen as an indicator of likely socio-economic privilege, this privilege also extends into parts of the comprehensive sector too. The Social Mobility Commission have recently commissioned a piece of work on this subject, looking at the extent to which the social balance within a school has an impact on educational outcomes.

Nonetheless, the reality is that the vast majority of disadvantaged young people are educated in the state sector, and in comprehensive schools in particular – and the vast majority of those educated in private schools are from affluent backgrounds.

University

While entrance to university is, in theory, on the basis of merit and talent, the reality is often different, due to inequalities earlier on in the system. Educational advantage at school level is largely replicated in higher education, with students from private schools considerably more likely to enter a top university than their state educated counterparts. In the UK, a small number of schools dominate access to Oxford and Cambridge (often referred to collectively as Oxbridge), with just 8 top schools and colleges in the UK sending as many pupils to Oxbridge as 2,900 others put together. Despite gradual increases in the numbers of state school pupils admitted to Oxbridge, it remains around 60%, yet 93% of pupils attend such schools. Similarly, while fewer than 5% of pupils attend grammar schools, they make up 15% of acceptances to the Russell Group, a group of highly selective research-intensive universities. They also make up 21% of acceptances to Oxbridge.¹⁸

The university someone attends goes on to influence their opportunities in the job market, with graduates of higher ranked universities more likely both to be invited to interview and to be offered a higher entry rate salary,¹⁹ and competitive employers targeting the most selective universities when looking for students for their graduate programmes.²⁰ Given that the most prestigious universities tend to attract applicants with the highest exam results, one might expect that this combination of talent and the education provided by such institutions would unsurprisingly result in success in the working world. Nonetheless, the sheer scale of progression into the elites of British society from universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, who together educate only a small proportion of graduates, is evidence of how narrowly concentrated that opportunity is.

This is partially as a result of Oxbridge providing their graduates with two things that go beyond the degree itself: firstly, education can frequently be viewed as a 'positional good', marking one's rank in comparison with others, and Oxbridge provides this mark of prestige, valued highly by employers, who have often attended themselves. Secondly, it provides graduates with networks and cultural capital that allow them to build connections with successful people of similar backgrounds.

University attendance is not an unambiguous indicator of socio-economic privilege, but it has served as an important mediator between family background and the chances of success in life. Less than 1% of the population attend Oxford and Cambridge, and while these universities are world-renowned and highly selective, it is surely not desirable that such a concentration of the nation's elite comes from just two universities, with so many other excellent higher education institutions across the country.

Defining the 'elite'

This report illustrates how access to some of the most prestigious, influential and well-paid roles in the country is limited to those born with advantages from the very beginning of their life.

The roles in this report were chosen primarily for two reasons:

- ***Roles with the highest prestige, and wealth, which are among the most coveted in society.***

Making such sought-after positions accessible to those from all backgrounds is an essential component of a society which cares about fairness and equity.

- ***Roles with substantial power and influence over people's lives, which make the decisions that affect all of us day to day.***

There is a danger to society if many of those in such positions of power and influence are from a very similar background and a limited set of life experiences, which do not reflect the lives of the country as a whole.

Given the subjective nature of the elite as a concept, it is inevitable that this list is not exhaustive. While more expansive than any previous study conducted, the report does not cover sectors such as banking and finance individually, or influential groups such as think tanks. It also focuses on Westminster politics rather than members of the devolved assemblies. Work by the Sutton Trust has also demonstrated that professions such as medicine show high levels of independent school over-representation,²¹ along with Britain's historic list of Nobel Prize winners.²² We also fully recognise the value of socially purposeful jobs, such as teaching, and that power and wealth are far from the only markers of success. Nevertheless, we hope that it is broad enough to shed light on the state of meritocracy in Britain, and to provide a snapshot of who gets to reach the top positions in society.

Patterns of participation

School

As education policies have altered over time, and correspondingly the proportion of students educated at different types of school has changed, it is difficult to track the exact proportion of the population overall who attended a private, grammar or comprehensive school at a given point. This means that the patterns of educational backgrounds will look different depending on the age profile of the group analysed. Many of the individuals in this report will have been educated when grammar schools were more common, but others will have been to school when attending a grammar school was relatively rare. Attendance at grammar schools was at its peak in the 1960s, when

around 25% of all pupils in state secondary schools attended one. That figure fell to 10% by the mid-70s, before falling to 5% by the end of the same decade, a proportion which has remained relatively steady since then.²³ At the same time, comprehensive schools have become much more common, gradually rising to now educate the vast majority of the state secondary school population. Attendance at independent schools has not changed substantially since the 1960s, fluctuating at somewhere between 6-8% over the last few decades.²⁴

Currently 7% of students in the UK attend private schools, 5% attend state grammars, and 88% attend comprehensives. However, these figures differ substantially between nations. In England, 8% of students attend independent schools, 7% in Scotland, 4% in Wales and less than 1% in Northern Ireland. Wales and Scotland do not have grammar schools; England does, but only in some areas, making up 4% of pupils across the nation. In Northern Ireland, a much larger proportion of students (43%), attend grammar schools, which is likely to explain

their much lower rate of independent school attendance.²⁵

In contrast to the educational backgrounds of the population as a whole, looking at the backgrounds of all the professionals we have examined in this report, we see a significantly different picture. Figure 2 compares their backgrounds to the current UK school population. 39% of the professional elites examined here attended independent school, compared to just 7% of current students across the UK. Given private school attendance has remained relatively stable over time, it is clear that privately educated individuals are substantially over-represented in Britain's elites.

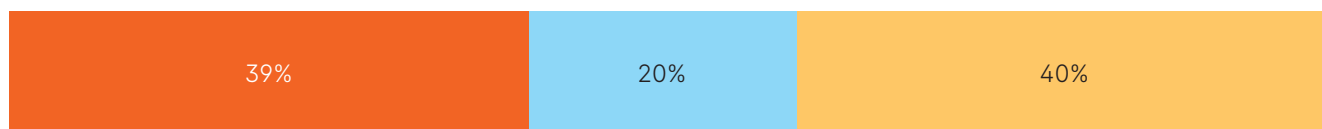
A fifth of the elites in this report attended grammars, compared to 5% of the current population. Given the likely age profile of those in senior positions, many will have attended school as grammar school numbers were falling from their high of 25% in the 1960s. This is reflected in the declining levels of grammar attendance shown here compared to the first Elitist Britain report in 2014.

Figure 2: School type attended by the elite compared to the current UK school population

Current UK School Population



Elites



● Independent ● Grammar ● Comprehensive

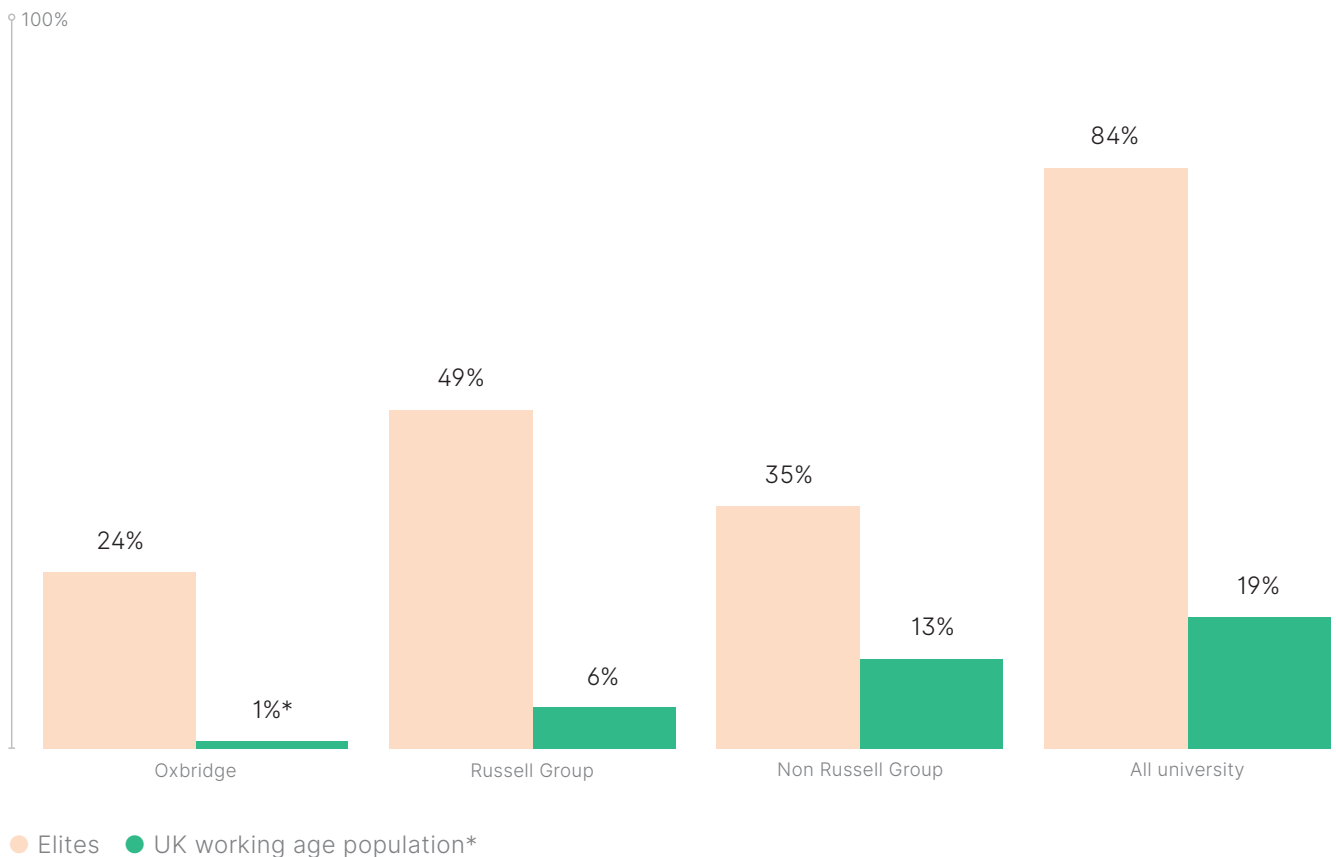
University

University attendance has also altered substantially over time. Participation in higher education has risen from just 3.4% in 1950, to 8.4% in 1970, 19.3% in 1990 and 33% in 2000.²⁶ In 2017, 42% of the working age population had attended higher education in some form, with 19% holding an undergraduate degree or a higher qualification. Just 6% of the working age population have an undergraduate degree from the Russell Group.²⁷ Equivalent figures are not available for Oxbridge, but figures show that just 1% of 18-year olds in 2017-18 attended one of the two universities.²⁸

Taking an overall look at the group of elites we have examined in this report; they are unsurprisingly much more likely to have attended university, and to have attended an elite educational institution, than the population overall. As shown in figure 3, while just 19% of the working age population are educated to the level of bachelor's degree or above, 84% of the elites we have examined are. While many of these

elite roles will require a university degree, others will not. The largest gaps between the elites and the population overall are found in attendance of the most prestigious institutions. Just under a quarter (24%) of elites attended Oxbridge, compared to only 1% of 18-year olds. While only 6% of the population attended the Russell Group for an undergraduate degree, almost half of our elites have done so.

Figure 3: University type attended by the elite compared to the UK's working age population

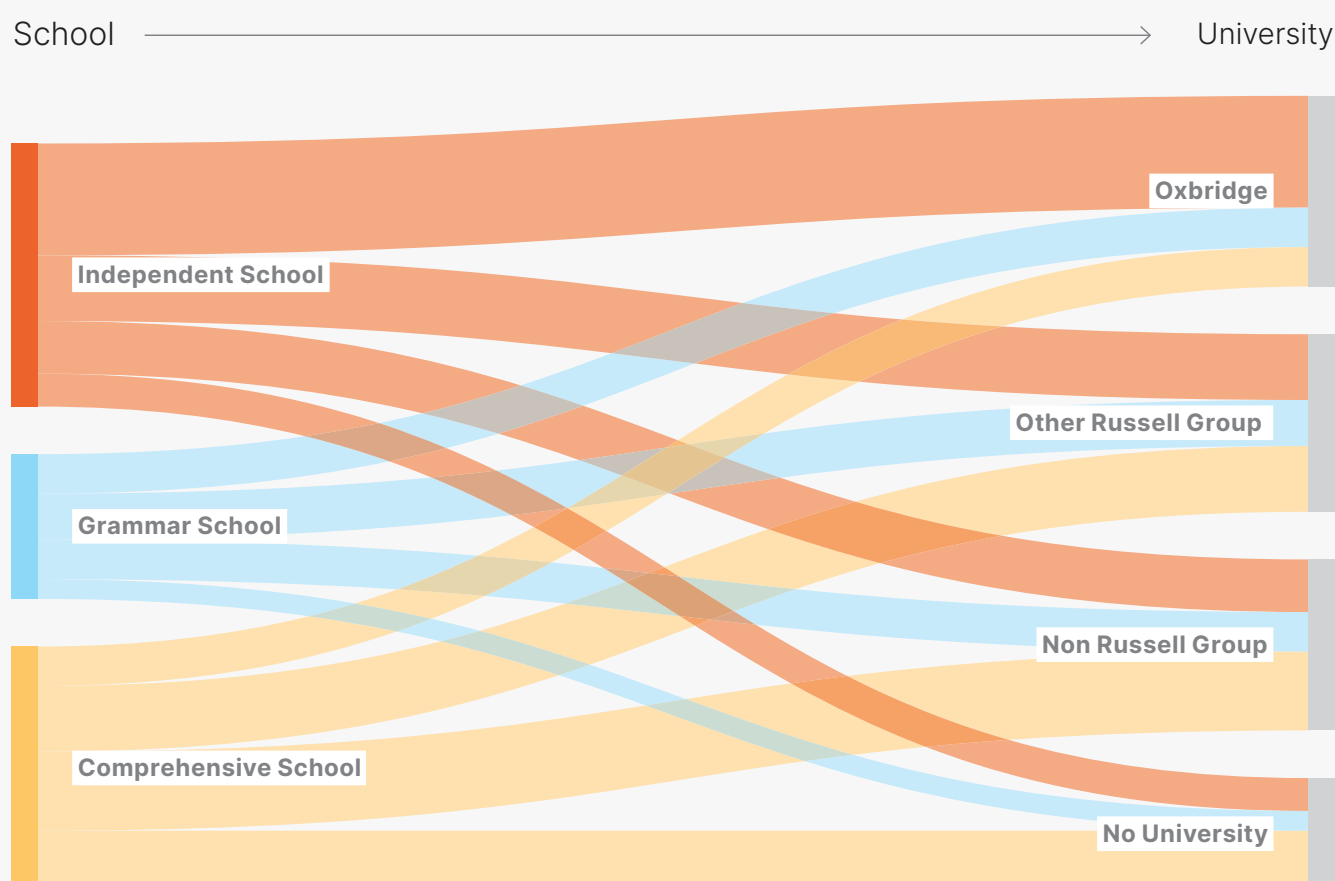


*All figures are for the UK's working age population, apart from figures for Oxbridge, which are calculated for current 18 year olds.

The Educational Pathways of Britain's Elite

In each section through the report, we have taken a look at the educational backgrounds of a key profession in more detail; examining the pathways that individuals have taken, from the type of school they attended and then on to where they went to university. Looking at these pathways allows us to explore in more detail the routes taken by Britain's elites, for example who has taken the path from an independent school and then on to a top university like Oxford or Cambridge.

The figure below displays pathways taken by those who reached the positions in our elite group as a whole, with the size of the 'flow' representing the size of the group.* On the left side of the graph we see which schools they attended. The flows from left to right then represent the pathways taken from those in each type of school to university.



Despite the fact that almost nine in every ten students currently attend comprehensives, independent and comprehensive schools represent about equal numbers (around two fifths each) of this elite group.

The most common pathway into the elite is attending independent school followed by Oxford or Cambridge, making up 17% of the whole group, and forming a strong 'pipeline' into the highest status jobs. Those who attended independent school and any Russell Group university comprise over one in four of the elite as a whole (27%).

Those who went to a comprehensive followed by a non-Russell Group university (12%) form a significant proportion, though of course this represents a much larger group in the population as a whole. In the current English school population, more than three times as many school leavers go on to a non-Russell Group university than a Russell Group institution. The comprehensive to Oxbridge pathway represents just 6% of the whole elite group.

The next part of this report takes a detailed look, sector by sector, at Britain's elite.

*This figure just includes those for whom we have information on both school and university, so numbers may differ slightly from elsewhere. It also excludes those educated internationally. The sport section is not included, as the dynamics of educational pathways there, particularly for male athletes at university, are complex and substantially different from those in the rest of the report.

1. Politics

Attended Independent School

On average **44%** of politicians attended independent schools

Lords | **57%**



Junior Ministers | **52%**



Cabinet | **39%**



Select Committee Chairs | **33%**



MPs | **29%**



Select Committee Members | **25%**



Shadow Junior Ministers | **18%**



Shadow Cabinet | **9%**



General Population | **7%**



Attended Oxbridge

On average **31%** of politicians attended Oxbridge

Cabinet | **57%**



Lords | **38%**



Junior Ministers | **36%**



Select Committee Chairs | **33%**



MPs | **24%**



Select Committee Members | **20%**



Shadow Cabinet | **15%**



Shadow Junior Ministers | **10%**



General Population | **<1%**



Introduction

Where politicians were educated, and how representative their educational experiences are compared to the population overall is an important question in a representative democracy. Politicians are the population's voice in Westminster; both in government and in opposition, and they are the pool from which the government is chosen. If politicians' backgrounds, and therefore their experiences, look very different to the people they seek to represent, it may mean that the concerns and priorities of all parts of society are not adequately reflected in parliament.

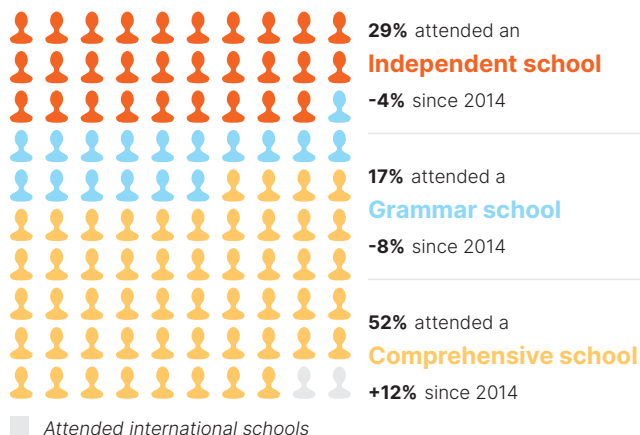
Politicians are also ultimately responsible for education policy, including the state school system, and for policies which affect the entire university system and technical training routes, including apprenticeships. It is therefore important that many of those responsible for these areas have experience of the state education system, of universities outside of the most selective institutions, and of technical routes into the world of work.

Sections

- | | | | |
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| 19 | Members of Parliament | 23 | Select Committee Chairs |
| 20 | House of Lords | 24 | Discussion |
| 21 | The Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet | 25 | Case study - Gloria De Piero, Labour MP |
| 22 | Junior Ministers and Shadow Junior Ministers | 26 | The Educational Pathways of MPs |

Politics | Members of Parliament

School attendance

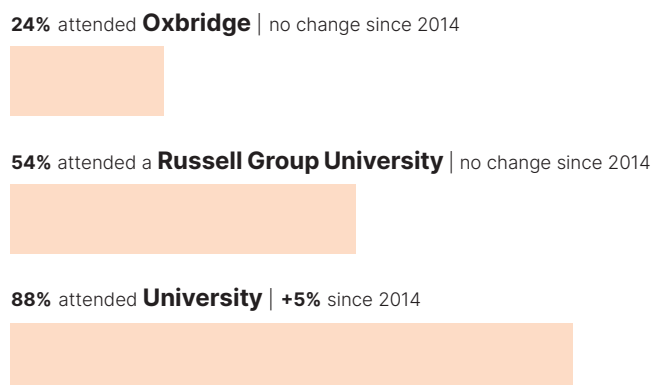


MP candidates are selected through a variety of processes, depending on the party. Historically the proportion of MPs who were privately educated has been gradually reducing over time, although it has remained far higher than the population at large.²⁹ The proportion who attended university has risen substantially, as politics has become increasingly professionalised. Indeed, many MPs work in largely graduate level jobs in politics and public affairs before they stand for office, with 25% of MPs having previously worked in politics, and 8% in public affairs before they became a member of parliament. Before the 1990s, it was relatively common for MPs to enter parliament from working class occupations. Doing so now is a rarity.³⁰

School

There have been two elections since the publication of *Elitist Britain* in 2014, but privately educated MPs still make up almost a third of the House of Commons. In that time, there has been a fall in the percentage of MPs who attended a grammar school (by 8 percentage points). A similar fall in grammar school attendance has been seen throughout several sectors examined in this report, likely to reflect generational change, as those educated after the grammar school system was largely abolished in the UK enter the top of their field. Just over half of MPs attended a comprehensive school, a 12 percentage point increase since 2014.

University attendance

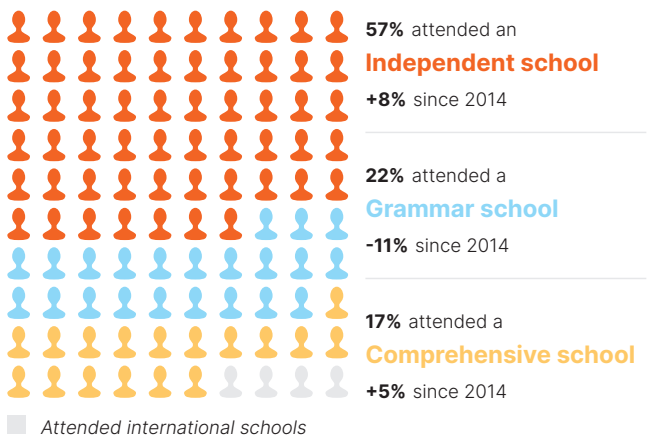


The proportion of MPs who attended a private school differs substantially by political party. In the Conservative party, just under half (45%) of MPs attended an independent school, compared to 15% in the Labour party. Conservative and Labour MPs were equally likely to have attended a grammar school (17% in both parties). Looking outside of the two main parties, just 6% of SNP MPs attended a private school, and the clear majority (85%) attended a state secondary school.

University

Most MPs attended university (88%), with many having attended a highly selective institution. Just under a quarter attended Oxbridge, with very little change over the last five years. A further quarter attended another university in the Russell Group, which has also not changed since 2014. Currently, only 12% of MPs did not go onto higher education, a figure that has fallen by 6 percentage points in the last five years. This rise in university educated MPs has been largely due to an increase in MPs who attended universities outside of the Russell Group. Looking by party, Conservative MPs were more likely to have attended Oxbridge than Labour (31% vs 20%).

School attendance



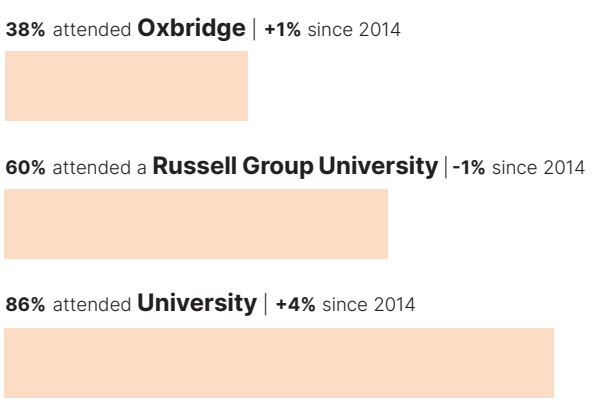
There are several routes to gaining a seat in parliament's upper chamber, the House of Lords. The House of Lords Appointments Committee recommends individuals for appointment as non-political party life peers. It also vets the nominations of anyone recommended by UK political parties, with members then approved by the prime minister. Several former prime ministers have been criticised for filling the Lords with their personal contacts, including Tony Blair³¹ and David Cameron.³²

There are also 26 Bishops from the Church of England, and 92 hereditary peers. Hereditary peers lost their automatic right to sit in the House of Lords in 1999; the 92 who remain are elected to their seat by other members of the House. Most hereditary peerages can only be inherited by men.

School

The educational backgrounds of Lords are substantially different to those of MPs in the Commons, with a much larger proportion of peers having been privately educated; a figure which is actually on the rise. A sizeable majority attended an independent school: 57%, a proportion which has increased by 8 percentage points since 2014. A high proportion of peers from every party or group in the Lords attended independent school, with 61% of Labour and 60% of Conservative peers having

University attendance



been privately educated. The proportions of Liberal Democrats (54%), Crossbenchers (55%) and Bishops (54%) who were privately educated were slightly lower, but still much higher than the general public.

Fewer than a fifth (17%) of Lords and Baronesses attended a comprehensive school, although this is up 5 percentage points from 2014. 22% of those sitting in the Lords attended a grammar school, an 11 percentage point decrease over the last five years. Labour peers were slightly less likely to have attended a grammar, with only 16% having done so, compared to 24% of Conservative and 26% of Lib Dem peers.

University

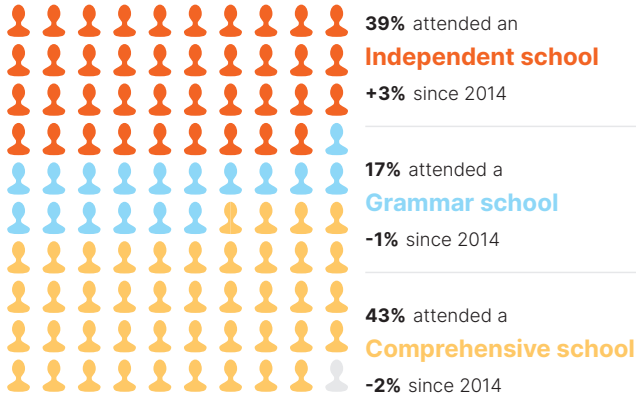
Baronesses and Lords were considerably more likely than MPs to have attended Oxbridge, with 38% having done so. Indeed, a large proportion of the House of Lords attended either Oxbridge or another Russell Group university (60%), a figure that has barely shifted since 2014. Labour peers (22%) were less likely to have attended Oxbridge than peers from the Conservative party (39%).

As with the House of Commons, the proportion of non-graduates in the Lords is declining, now standing at 14%, a 4 percentage point decrease over the last five years.

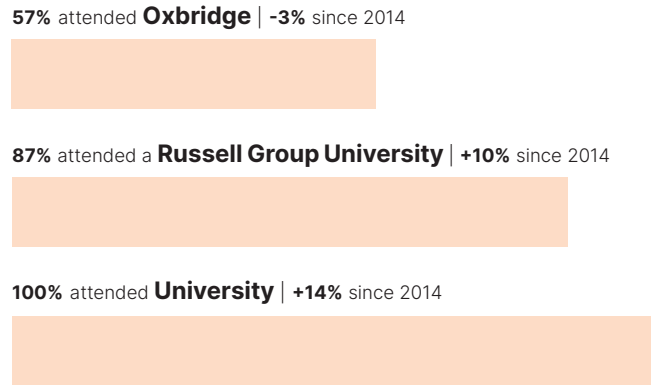
Politics | The Cabinet & Shadow Cabinet

The Cabinet

School attendance

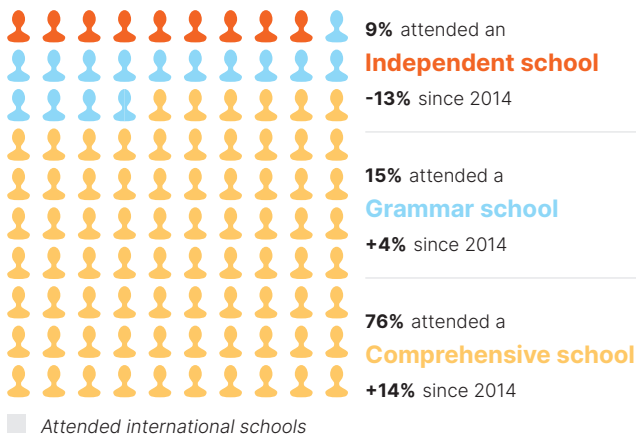


University attendance

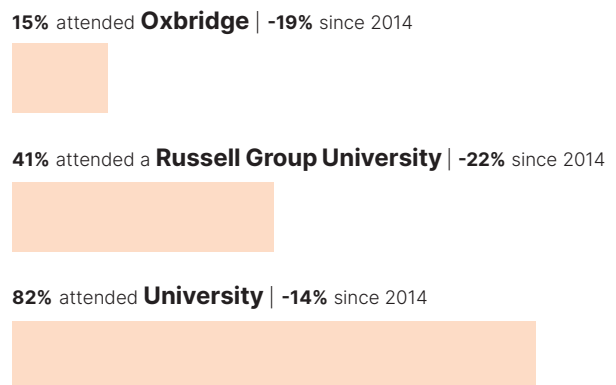


The Shadow Cabinet

School attendance



University attendance



The cabinet is the collective decision-making body of the government, which is made up of the Prime Minister, along with her most senior government ministers. Likewise, the shadow cabinet is selected by the Leader of the Opposition and plays an important role in scrutinising the work of government. Ministers and shadow ministers are mostly drawn from MPs, although they can also be Baronesses or Lords, though much less common.

School

The cabinet is currently much more likely to have attended a private school than parliament overall, with 39% of cabinet ministers having attended an independent school, compared to 29% of MPs. This in large part reflects the high proportion of Conservative MPs who attended private school (45%). Just under a fifth (17%) of the cabinet attended a grammar school, a similar

figure to MPs overall. However, just 43% went to a comprehensive, lower than the 52% of MPs who did so.

Over the last five years, there has been a considerable amount of change within the government. In that time, the government has changed from a coalition between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats to a Conservative majority and then minority administration, including a change of prime minister. Despite these changes, and a high level of ministerial turnover, the educational profile of ministers has changed very little. The biggest change has been in the proportion privately educated, which has increased slightly by 3 percentage points.

The educational backgrounds of the shadow cabinet stand in stark contrast however. Shadow cabinet ministers are over four times less likely to have attended an independent school than their counterparts in government, with just 9% having done so. This figure is

similar to the proportion of the general population that has attended a private school and is far lower than the proportion of MPs in parliament who did so, including in the Labour party. This figure has fallen substantially since 2014 (by 13 percentage points), during which time the Labour leadership passed from Ed Miliband to Jeremy Corbyn. The proportion of those privately educated in the shadow cabinet is the lowest of any of the groups in the report outside footballers.

University

The cabinet are also more likely to have attended Oxbridge than MPs overall, with 57% of cabinet ministers having attended one of the two institutions, which has changed very little since 2014. This is much higher than the proportion of MPs overall (24%). More cabinet ministers have now been to a Russell Group university, rising from 77% in 2014, to 87% now. All of the current cabinet attended university, compared to 86% in 2014.

Members of the shadow cabinet are also much less likely to have attended Oxbridge than the cabinet, with only 15% having done so. Similarly, this figure has also fallen in the last five years, down by 19 percentage points in that time. This figure is now slightly lower than the proportion in the Labour Party overall (20%).

Looking more broadly at the Russell Group, only 41% of the shadow cabinet attended one of the universities in the group, less than half the proportion of the cabinet who did so. The proportion of the shadow cabinet who attended a Russell Group university has fallen by 22 percentage points since 2014, largely driven by the reduction in Oxbridge attendance. A sizeable proportion of the shadow cabinet did attend university (82%), but this too has fallen since 2014. It is 14 percentage points lower than five years ago, going against the general trends across this report. In fact, it is the only group with a substantial decrease outside the creative industries.

Politics | Junior Ministers & Shadow Junior Ministers

Junior ministers are government ministers who are not full cabinet members and include Ministers of State and Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State. They have an important role in the direction of government departments, with shadow junior ministers also playing an important role in scrutiny of government.

School

The schools attended by junior ministers are even more unrepresentative overall than cabinet ministers. Over half (52%) of junior ministers attended a private school. Under a third (28%) went to a comprehensive.

A small proportion (18%) of shadow junior ministers attended private school. However, this is still over twice the proportion in the population overall, and much higher than the shadow cabinet. Two thirds of shadow junior ministers attended a comprehensive school.


University

While junior ministers are more likely to have attended private school than the cabinet, they are less likely to have attended a top university. Just over a third (36%) of junior ministers went to Oxbridge, a figure which has fallen by 9 percentage points since 2014. They are also less likely to have attended a Russell Group university, with 61% having done so, a figure which has also fallen from 72% in the last five years. As with the cabinet, most (91%) junior ministers attended university, a slight fall since 2014.

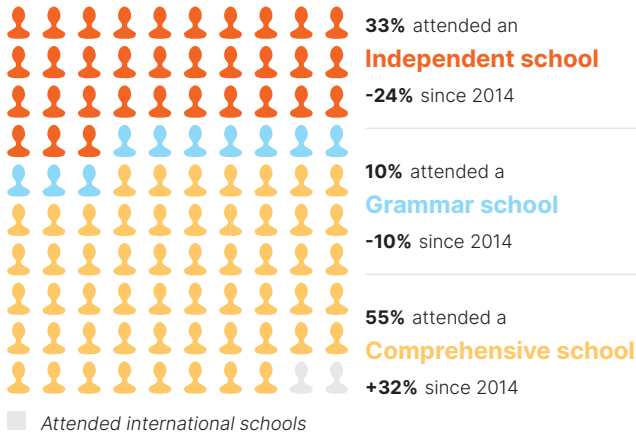
Looking at shadow junior ministers, just 10% went to Oxbridge, less than a third of their governmental counterparts. 44% of shadow junior ministers attended one of the universities in the Russell Group, similarly much lower.

Politics | Select Committees

Select Committee Chairs

 School attendance

 University attendance



33% attended **Oxbridge** | -4% since 2014

58% attended a **Russell Group University** | -3% since 2014

93% attended **University** | +9% since 2014

One of the most important ways in which MPs can hold the government to account is through select committees; cross-party groups of MPs, Lords or both who investigate a specific area or issue. This section focuses only on select committees within the House of Commons.

The importance of select committees has increased in recent years, with experienced and well-known politicians, including former ministers, taking the decision to stand for election as select committee chairs. A combination of factors, including the requirement that the government must reply to reports written by a select committee within 60 days, several high-profile MPs becoming select committee chairs and increased media coverage means that these committees now often play an influential role in public debate.

Most select committee chairs are elected by the House of Commons, but only members of specific parties can stand to become the chair of each select committee. General membership of select committees in the Commons must reflect the composition of the Commons overall, and once this composition has been decided, select committee members are decided by elections held within each party.³³

School

Members of select committees are largely reflective of the Commons as a whole, with a quarter having

attended independent schools, compared with 29% of MPs overall, and has decreased by 6 percentage points since 2014. A third (33%) of select committee chairs attended an independent school, but this figure has reduced substantially since 2014, when well over half (57%) of select committee chairs had done so.

The proportion of select committee members who attended a grammar school (14%) has also decreased since 2014, falling by 11 percentage points. The fall in members who attended private or grammar schools has been accompanied by a corresponding increase in the proportion who went to a comprehensive, which now stands at 58%. A similar pattern is seen for chairs, with the proportion who attended a comprehensive rising by 32 percentage points to now make up just over half (55%) of all chairs.

University

One third of select committee chairs, and a fifth of select committee members attended Oxbridge, similar to 2014. Half of select committee members attended the Russell Group, a 6 percentage point increase since 2014. The proportion of select committee chairs who attended the Russell Group is only slightly higher at 58%.

Politics | Discussion

The educational backgrounds of politicians in the UK look very different to those of the population that they represent. This is particularly true for the Conservative party, and therefore for the ministers and junior ministers within the current government, who are highly unrepresentative of the population as a whole in terms of educational background. However, across all parties, MPs are more likely to have attended an independent school than the general public. Fundamental to this issue is how people go on to become MPs, with potential access issues at every stage of the pipeline, from exposure to politics at school, to gaining work experience in politics, through to the monetary costs involved in becoming a candidate.

“Without money and connections, it can be extremely difficult to gain a job in politics.”

Students at comprehensive schools may be less likely to have opportunities to learn about and engage with politics. While Citizenship has been a part of the national curriculum since 2002, including classes to improve political literacy and to teach students about democracy and government, concerns have been raised that the subject is not being taught well enough in schools.³⁴ In contrast, many top independent schools have extensive opportunities to learn about politics. For example, last year, student societies at Eton welcomed politicians including former prime minister John Major and the former home secretary Alan Johnson to speak to students.³⁵ This is extremely far removed from the experiences of students in comprehensive schools, although many individual schools, and initiatives such as Speakers for Schools, are working to address this.

Another potential barrier for would-be parliamentarians is gaining experience in politics. Jobs in the area, such as working in an MP's office, can be vital for a potential candidate to gain experience and form contacts within a political party. However,

previous Sutton Trust research has shown that unpaid work in Westminster is common, with almost one third (31%) of staffers having previously worked for an MP unpaid. Many of these positions are also not openly advertised. Without money and connections, it can be extremely difficult to gain a job in politics.³⁶

Then when it comes to running as an MP itself, the high cost of becoming a candidate can be a barrier for many. A survey of over 500 candidates who stood in 2015 found that the average personal cost of running was £11,118, including lost earnings, travel and the cost of attending events. This cost was even higher for those fighting in marginal seats.³⁷

Crucially, we need more data on socio-economic diversity in parliament. Parties should monitor the socio-economic diversity of their candidates, and collect information on people who work for them, such as the staffers working for MPs in Westminster. Initiatives such as the Speaker's Parliamentary Placement Scheme offer promise in terms of opening up access to parliament, but they need to widen their applicant pool and be run on a much larger scale in order to make real change in politics.

It is also deeply concerning that parliament's unelected chamber, the House of Lords, looks so different to the population as a whole, and very different even to parliament itself. Given that these roles are given out by appointment, much greater scrutiny is needed for this process, to ensure that the Lords better resembles the population it is intended to represent, as well as having the expertise it needs, and to open up the highest levels of politics to a broader range of people.

There are many other organisations with a substantial impact on British politics which we have not been able to examine here. This includes think tanks, lobby groups and other organisations and groupings within political parties. These groups write reports which often form the basis of parties' policies, and have a large impact both on politicians themselves, and on the wider public. Although outside the scope of this work, it is important that these organisations also consider their socio-economic composition carefully.

Case Study

Gloria De Piero

Labour MP



I was brought up in a two up two down terrace in Bradford. My mum and dad had a number of routine jobs but they stopped working due to dad's ill health when I was about nine and we relied on benefits.

Most of my childhood

memories are of being poor and cold, but my dad would buy second-hand books and he was always going to the library. Our house was full of books. We had more books than most of the middle-class homes I visit today. My school, which has now closed down, didn't really push me, but I didn't really push myself either. I didn't know anyone that had been to university other than my teachers or my doctor. The only people that mentioned this strange place called 'university' were my parents. It was their life's work to get me there.

I struggled to get a job working for the Labour Party or the trade union movement after university so I tried for political journalism instead. I met someone through the Labour Party who had worked on the biggest political programmes when I was looking to get in. He suggested I write to the editors of the programmes I worked on and ask to see them. I managed to get a job and eventually became a political reporter for GMTV.

I think politics can be a closed shop. If you come from a political family that can be a way in. It opens doors because friends and acquaintances can be pestered into providing work experience or job opportunities. Just as importantly, if you've grown up in a political family

you already have a good understanding of how politics works. Historically, trade unions helped hundreds of people who start out representing colleagues in the workplace to organise and agitate. That is still the case, but perhaps less so than in the past. That leaves a lot of people out. In fact, most people wouldn't have a clue how to become an MP. It's our job to change that.

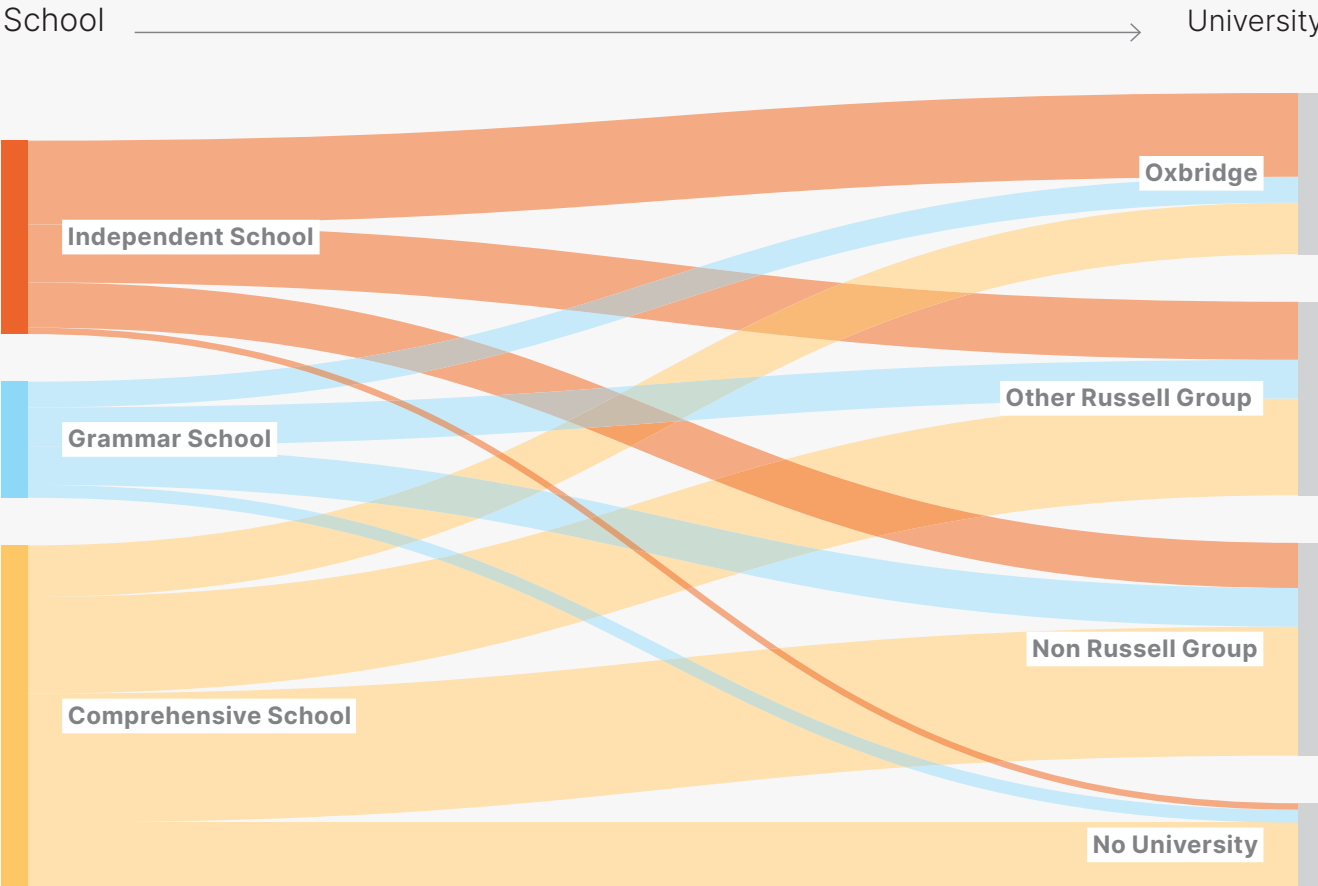
My worry with politics is that, for some, it has become a profession in its own right, like law or the media, which strikes me as worrying. The politicians who really make a difference become MPs or ministers because they want to change the world. It's not a way to acquire status or win kudos.

I don't want to be too gloomy. There are a fair number of MPs from working class backgrounds - but you don't see nearly enough of them on TV and too many never get handed top jobs by their leaders. I think the fact that most political programmes are hosted by people from a certain background deters some people from going on. It's a debating game rather than something for our constituents to hear about the everyday issues that matter to them.

Someone once told me that the way to get ahead was to ask and be cheeky. I thought he was joking, but it must have had some effect as when TV research jobs were advertised, I applied and got the job. Getting that foot in the door was invaluable. I'll never forget the editor who gave me my break despite the fact I didn't go to Oxbridge. Now I'm a small employer, I do my very best to give bright people from ordinary backgrounds a break.

The Educational Pathways of MPs

In each section through the report, we have taken a look at the educational pathways of a key profession in more detail. The following figure displays the pathways taken by the UK's MPs, with the size of the 'flow' representing the size of each group. On the left side of the graph we see which schools they attended. The flows from left to right then represent the pathways taken from those in each type of school to university.



13% of MPs attended both an independent school and Oxbridge, with 22% moving from an independent school to any of the Russell Group universities. 8% went from a comprehensive to Oxford or Cambridge, but a much bigger group (15%) attended other Russell Group institutions. Notably, the most common pathway was attending a comprehensive school followed by a non-Russell Group university (20%); higher than many other sectors in this report.

2. Business



Attended Independent School

On average **31%** attended independent schools

FTSE 350 chairs | **34%**



Entrepreneurs | **34%**



PR consultancy CEOs | **34%**



Sunday Times Rich List | **28%**



FTSE 350 CEOs | **27%**



Tech firm CEOs | **26%**



General Population | **7%**



Attended Oxbridge

On average **17%** attended Oxbridge

FTSE 350 chairs | **27%**



FTSE 350 CEOs | **15%**



Sunday Times Rich List | **14%**



Tech firm CEOs | **12%**



Entrepreneurs | **9%**



PR consultancy CEOs | **7%**



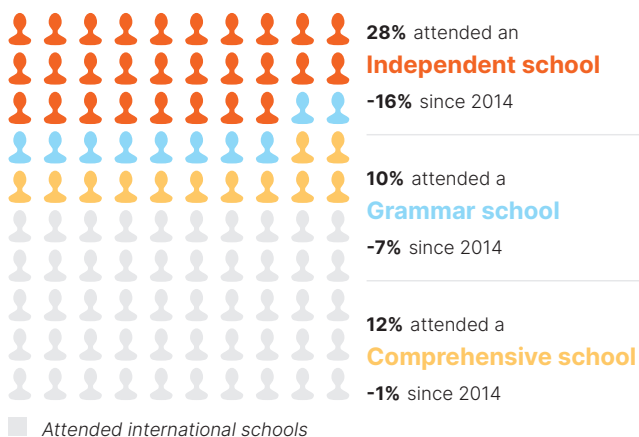
General Population | **<1%**



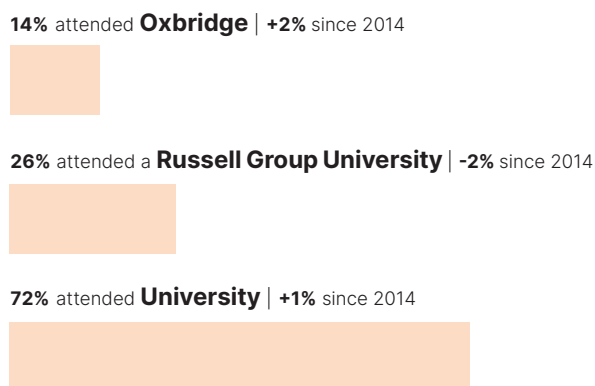
Business | Sunday Times Rich List



School attendance



University attendance



The Sunday Times Rich List is a list of the wealthiest people or families in the UK, by net worth. The list includes non-British citizens, such as those who work or live predominately in the UK, or with strong links, such as those who have donated to British political parties or charities. The list has been published each year by the Sunday Times since 1989, with editors estimating each person's wealth based on publicly available information including the value of companies, land or property owned. This report looks at the top hundred entries on the list, including joint entries.

School and university background

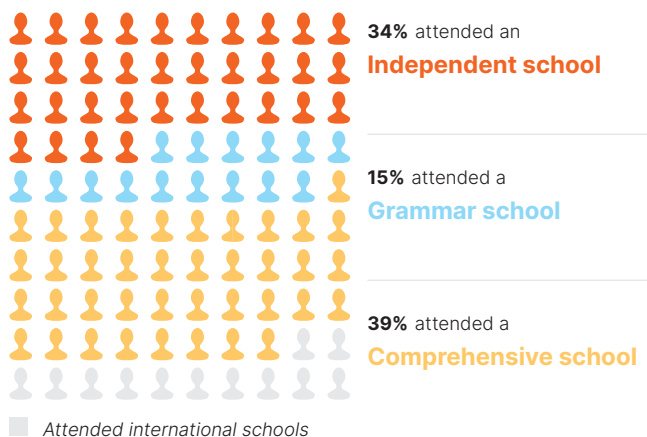
28% of the Sunday Times Rich List attended an independent school in Britain, a substantial fall since 2014, when the figure was just under half (44%).

However, much of the difference owes to a substantial increase (25 percentage points) in the number of those educated abroad. Looking at those educated in Britain only, the picture is substantially different, with 57% educated privately, one of the highest in this report, and significantly higher than the proportion of the population as a whole, at 7%. The proportion of comprehensively educated remains stable and low at 12%.

The proportion of the Rich List who attended Oxbridge is similar to the figure in 2014 (14% in 2019 compared to 12%), and while towards the lower end of the spectrum amongst Britain's elite, is influenced by the 36% of members who attended university internationally. A sizeable proportion (28%) of the Rich List did not attend university, a figure which is also stable over the last five years.

Business | Entrepreneurs

School attendance

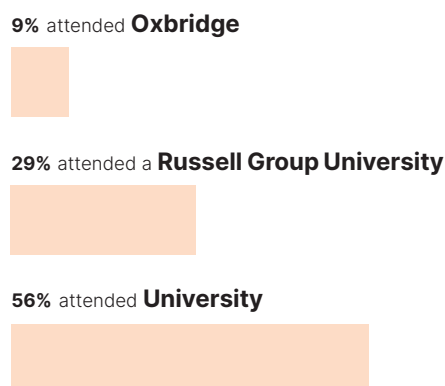


For the first time, this edition of Elitist Britain also includes entrepreneurs, individuals who have set up a new business, usually at some amount of individual risk, who have then gone on to have a substantial amount of both wealth and influence when their company has become successful. The next section looks at the most influential entrepreneurs in Britain, who have set up some of the country's most famous companies.

School and university

Just over a third (34%) of the entrepreneurs examined here attended a private school. Just 12% were

University attendance



schooled internationally, the lowest in this section. On the other hand, 39% attended comprehensives, the highest in this section. A large proportion (44%) did not attend university, the highest proportion outside sport and the creative industries. Just 9% attended Oxbridge, one of the lowest proportions of any of the sectors in this report, and just under a third (29%) attended a university in the Russell Group.

Business | FTSE 350 Companies

The Financial Times Stock Exchange 350 is a weighted stock market index, which includes the 350 highest value companies listed on the London Stock Exchange. Here we look at the chief executives (CEOs) and chairs of FTSE 350 companies. CEOs of companies in this group often come from a financial background, frequently working as a chief financial officer (CFO) before taking on the post of CEO. Chairs have usually previously been a CEO themselves, sometimes of the same company, then staying on to offer support and advice to their successor.

School and university

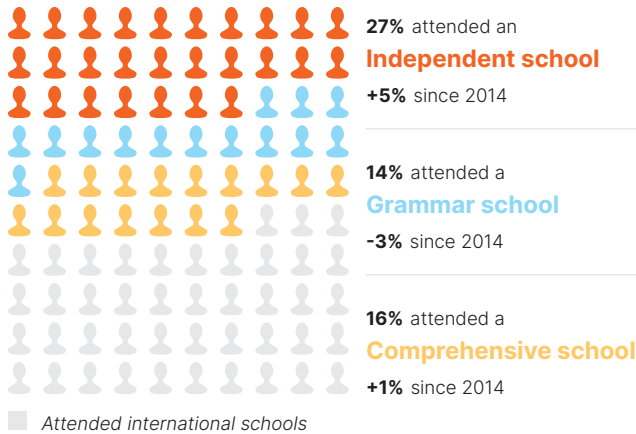
Just under a third of FTSE 350 CEOs (27%) attended an independent school, a slight increase (by 5 percentage points) since 2014. A large proportion were educated outside of the UK (43%), consistent with 2014, so

when just those schooled domestically are taken into account, the independent figure rises to 48%. FTSE 350 chairs were more likely to have attended a private school, at 34% (50% of those educated in the UK), and more likely to have attended a grammar school, with 22% having done so. Chairs were however less likely to have been educated outside of the UK.

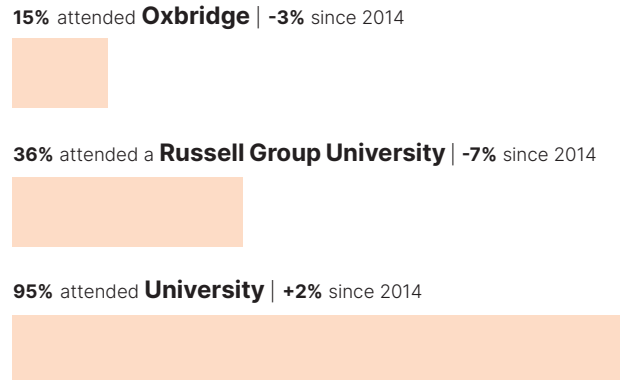
Almost all CEOs (95%) and chairs (91%) attended university. 15% of FTSE 350 CEOs attended Oxbridge, similar to 2014. A larger proportion of chairs attended one of these two universities, with over a quarter (27%) doing so. Over a third (36%) of CEOs attended a university outside of the UK, slightly lower than the proportion who went to school abroad. A smaller proportion of FTSE 350 chairs attended university outside of the UK (21%).

FTSE 350 CEOs

School attendance

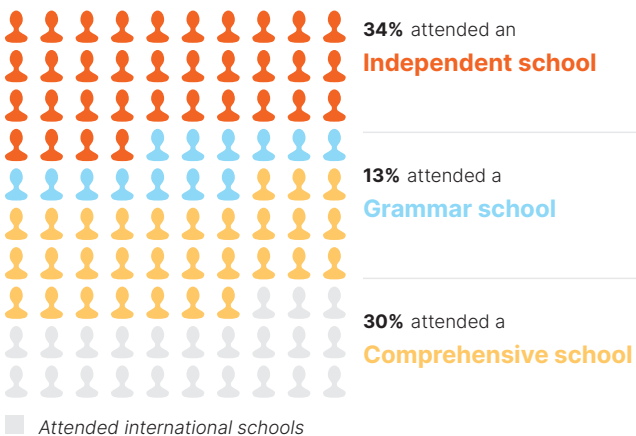


University attendance

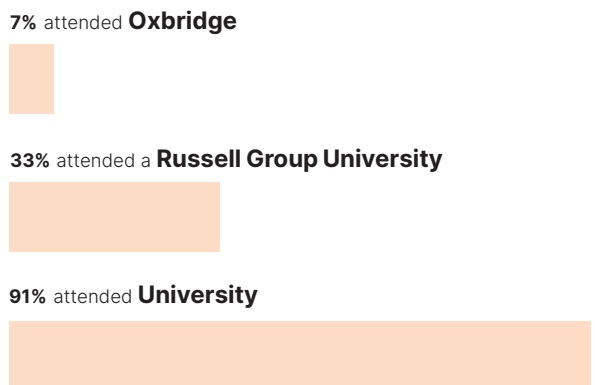


Business | PR Consultancy CEOs

School attendance



University attendance



This section also looked at the CEOs of the top Public Relations (PR) firms in the UK, the first time that the either the Sutton Trust or the Social Mobility Commission have looked at this sector. This sector was specifically chosen because PR consultancies help companies, organisations and individuals to build a positive reputation with the public, and are therefore highly influential in the national debate. They do this in a variety of different ways, working with both traditional media such as newspapers and television, and also increasingly through social media. They help to build positive stories about their clients and manage bad news in a way that causes the least amount of reputational damage to their client. PR consultancies work for a wide range of different clients, including political parties and large businesses.

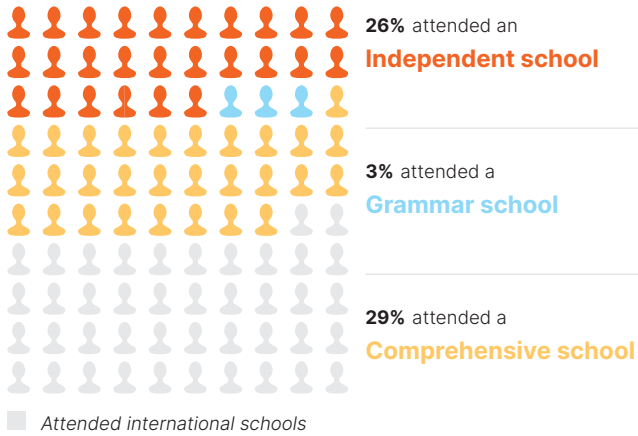
School and university

A third of top PR consultancy CEOs attended a private school, similar to the other categories in this section. Just under a quarter (24%) were educated outside of the UK, and just under a third (30%) were educated at a comprehensive school. Just 7% of PR consultancy CEOs attended Oxbridge, a substantially lower proportion than found for FTSE 350 company CEOs. Just over a quarter (26%) were educated internationally, a third attended a university in the Russell Group, and just 9% did not attend university. About a third attended non-Russell Group universities, higher than other categories in this section.

Business | Tech Firm CEOs



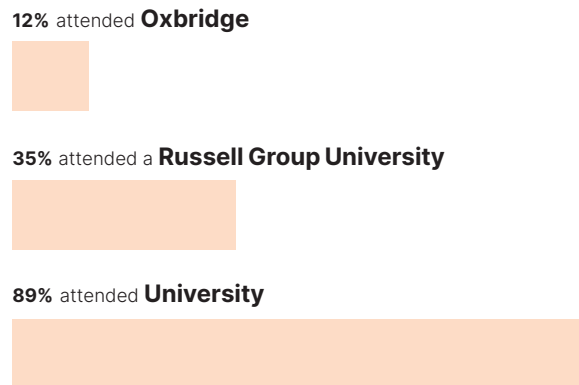
School attendance



Tech firms are companies at the forefront of modern technology, with the potential to transform the way we live and work. They are often among the fastest growing companies and offer a contrast to some more traditional sectors with well-established firms. The next section looks for the first time at the educational backgrounds of the CEOs of the fastest growing technology companies in the UK, which includes companies focused on innovation and research, operating in sectors including software, the internet, telecoms and biotech. Roles at the top of tech firms are usually well paid and have increasing influence on wider society. Technology companies are often by their very nature disruptive, and so have significant influence in changing the way their industries work.



University attendance



School and university

Despite the different nature of these companies, the proportion of tech firm CEOs who attended private school is broadly similar to the percentage of FTSE 350 CEOs who did so, at just over a quarter (27%). A very small proportion (just 3%) attended a grammar school. Again, a substantial proportion (41%) were educated internationally, similar to the FTSE 350. Looking at those educated in the UK only, independent school attendance was 45% and comprehensive 50%.

The clear majority (89%) of tech firm CEOs went to university. 12% attended Oxbridge, again broadly similar to the FTSE 350. A third were educated internationally, and a further third attended a Russell Group institution (including those who attended Oxbridge).

Business | Discussion

Throughout several areas of British business, from the FTSE 350 to the fastest growing technology companies, individuals from private schools are consistently over-represented. While there has been a drive to increase diversity in businesses, including efforts to make both boards and CEOs more representative of the population at large, these efforts have focused primarily on gender and ethnicity, with less attention placed on socio-economic background, in large part due to the fact that it is not a 'protected characteristic' in legislation. For example, while there are government backed reviews which aim to increase the proportion both of women⁴⁰ and of individuals from ethnic minorities⁴¹ on company boards, there is no such initiative to look at the issue of socio-economic diversity in the board room.

“Many young people do not have the opportunity at school to build the skills involved in setting up a business.”

There are potential access issues at every point of the pipeline for individuals working to rise to the top of any business. However many forward-looking companies have now started to look at how to increase diversity in their graduate intakes. This has included reviewing entry requirements and interview processes, broadening their recruitment pool to a wider range

of universities, and recruiting apprentices to create a direct entry point for young people who have not been to university. This work has been promising, but more needs to be done by a wider group of companies to really move the dial on access. Collaboration and sector leadership is key in this, with several promising examples including Access Accountancy, and PRIME in the legal sector, involving firms working together to increase access to their profession.

While some companies have started to look at the entry point into their sector, fewer have looked at how to ensure that individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds are able to progress through their businesses. A body of research increasingly shows how gaps in salary, promotion and staff retention based on social background open up, even for those from less well-off backgrounds who manage to get into such jobs. For example, one company which has started to look at progression is KPMG, who, working together with the Bridge Group, has identified several ways in which barriers to progression can be tackled, including looking at how projects of work are allocated and ensuring that processes within the company are not informally bypassed.⁴² Similar work is needed in more companies to examine and tackle barriers to access and progression.

Work is also ongoing at an industry specific level, including some promising work being carried out in public relations. The industry's trade body, the Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) released a report last year on diversity in the sector including socio-economic background. The body called for several measures to be taken by PR firms to improve diversity, including monitoring the diversity



of staff, offering quality and paid apprenticeships, and putting in place fair and transparent recruitment processes. The PRCA, together with others, have launched the campaign 'PR Internships for All', calling on the UK's leading PR agencies to commit to increasing access to internships in the sector, including paying their interns the Living Wage, and taking on interns from universities outside of the Russell Group.⁴³ They have also put together a list of PR agencies who pay their interns at least the National Minimum Wage.⁴⁴

Looking at the people who form their own businesses, which includes many of those included in the Sunday Times Rich List, there are also several potential barriers for budding entrepreneurs on their way to the top, with significant personal financial risk involved in setting up a new company. Indeed, those who are self-employed are more likely to own their homes outright, something which can allow them to take the financial risk involved in setting up a company.⁴⁵ Inequality in ownership of these sorts of financial assets is also likely to continue to increase, as rising levels of inherited wealth are likely to deliver the biggest benefits for those who are already financially well-off.⁴⁶

If innovation and entrepreneurship are limited to just those from specific social backgrounds, it can serve to limit the type and scope of the problems those innovations seek to solve. A government review on boosting entrepreneurship in deprived communities found that in the 10% most deprived areas in the country, people were almost 50% less likely to be self-employed.⁴⁷ Work by the charity Nesta has also identified the lack of diversity in innovation, identifying

early exposure to invention and innovation for children, and creating the 'freedom to fail' for adults as key requirements.⁴⁸ Commentators have warned that the route to entrepreneurship is becoming more difficult, such as former Dragons' Den panellist Hilary Devey, who commented that the playing field is "no longer level" because a large proportion of businesses need an initial cash injection. "To get Pall-Ex [her freight exporting company] off the ground, I ended up selling my house and car. But how many young, aspiring entrepreneurs today even have their own house or car to sell? Launching a new business shouldn't be a privilege to those born with a silver spoon in their mouth."⁴⁹

There are also concerns that many young people do not have the opportunity at school to build the skills involved in setting up a business. The Sutton Trust has previously highlighted the work of one charity working in this area, Envision, which runs programmes for disadvantaged young people including 'Community-Apprenticeships', loosely based on the reality TV show 'The Apprentice'. During the programme, young people are given the help of business mentors to develop and implement their own ideas to tackle social problems in their communities.⁵⁰ The programme is currently being evaluated by the Sutton Trust's sister charity, the Education Endowment Foundation. This and similar programmes have the potential to open up the skills needed for entrepreneurship to a greater diversity of young people.

Case Study

Charlie Mullins

Entrepreneur



I was born in Camden, before moving to an estate in Elephant and Castle, South London, at the age of eleven. I lived with my mother, father and three brothers. We were a working class family, my mother working as a barmaid

and my father a factory worker. I had a very basic education. I had many days off school, as well as missing a year of education when we moved home.

I used to skip school and help the local plumber. He had a nice house and money, which inspired me. I thought that by getting into the plumbing trade I could help myself out of a low socio-economic situation. I left school at fifteen with no qualifications, and began an apprenticeship. The local plumber advised me that if I took up an apprenticeship, I would never be out of work. The contractual nature of apprenticeships means that you are committed to the work, and this gives you a chance to get your foot in the door. I would not be where I am now if I had not listened to him. After my apprenticeship, I was self-employed, and started Pimlico Plumbers with a van and tools.

I do not feel that my lack of education hindered my progression, as I think that you get a true education when you go into the world of work. However, I

would say that the lack of advice at school regarding apprenticeships would have been problematic if I had not met my local plumber. Back then, you were not expected to do well out of an apprenticeship.

I think that where you grow up does impact your career prospects. When you live in a rougher area, it is easy to fall onto the wrong path. When you are around other people with no aspirations it is easy to get sucked in. However, I also think that this can inspire and drive someone to succeed. It is important that you can break away and make something of yourself.

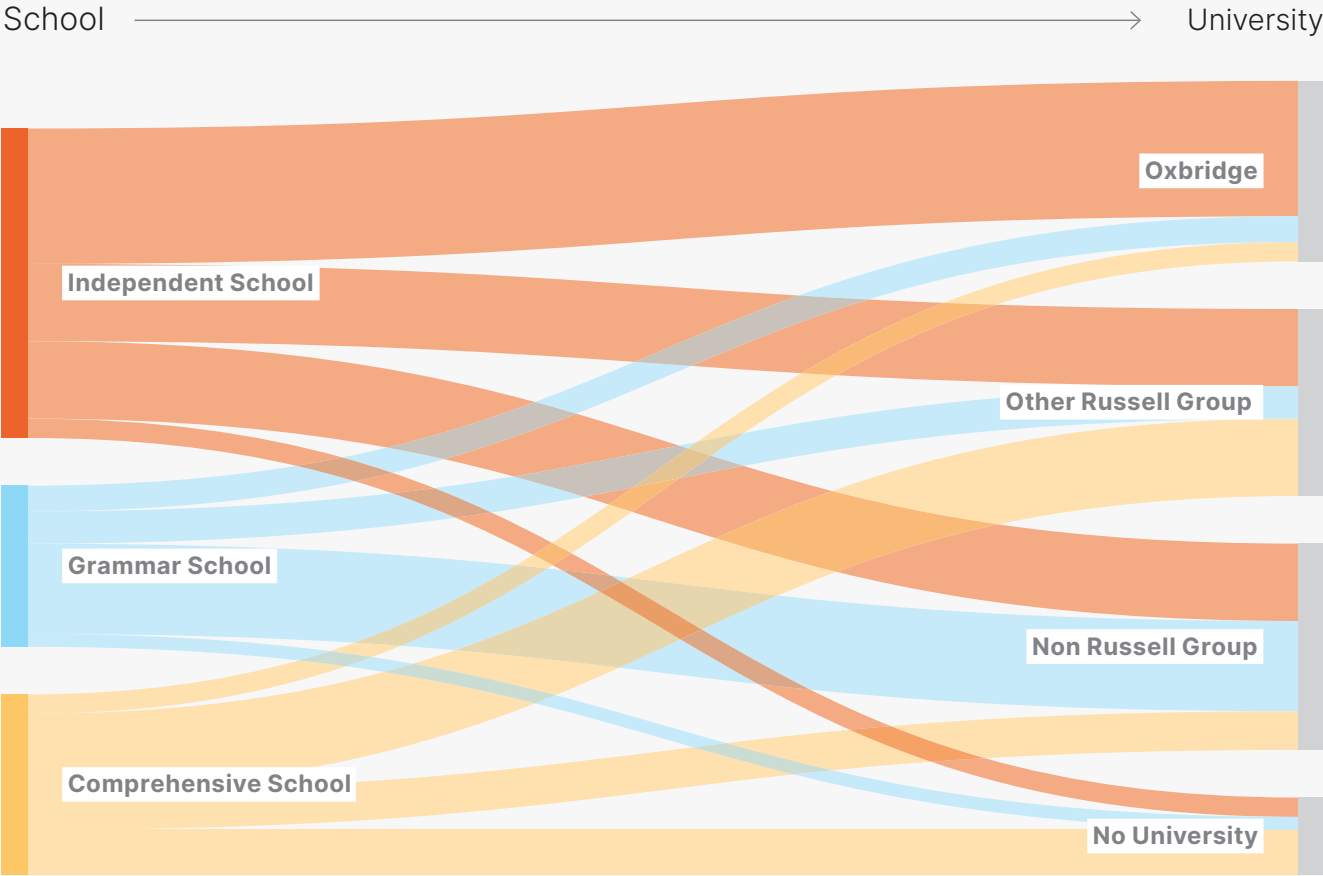
I do not think my profession is particularly elitist, as success in my area is based on skill.

The skills you learn in the plumbing trade can take you anywhere in the world. Although there is still a shortage, the perception of traders is changing, and many go on to run their own businesses now. People used to look down on entrepreneurs, but now it seems to be more fashionable. Entrepreneurs from backgrounds such as mine often speak at events, serving as examples to others.

My one piece of advice would be to take up an apprenticeship and commit yourself to it. Apprenticeships are key to improving social mobility within professions, and I believe in a few years apprenticeship qualifications will be equivalent to degrees.

The Educational Pathways of FTSE 350 CEOs

In each section through the report, we have taken a look at the educational pathways of a key profession in more detail. The following figure displays the pathways taken by FTSE 350 CEOs educated in Britain, with the size of the 'flow' representing the size of each group. On the left side of the graph we see which schools they attended. The flows from left to right then represent the pathways taken from those in each type of school to university.



While a large proportion of CEOs in this group were educated internationally, this graph focuses on those who went to schools and universities in the UK. The independent school to Oxbridge pathway accounts for more than one in five of the group (21%), with a third of the group in total having attended both private school and a Russell Group university. Comprehensive school to Oxbridge accounted for just 3% of the CEOs.

3. Media

Attended Independent School

On average **40%** attended independent schools

Newspaper columnists | **44%**



News Media 100 | **43%**



BBC Executives | **29%**



General Population | **7%**



Attended Oxbridge

On average **39%** attended Oxbridge

Newspaper columnists | **44%**



News Media 100 | **36%**



BBC Executives | **31%**



General Population | **<1%**



Media

Introduction

The media are a key element of any democracy, informing the public and holding elected representatives and other powerful institutions to account. In this role the media have significant influence in shaping a country's political, social and cultural agenda. Digital, broadcast and print editors decide not only what to cover and how to cover it, but equally importantly what not to cover. In turn newspaper columnists analyse and interpret political decisions, not only with the opinion pieces they write, but also through their television, podcast and radio appearances.

Who fills these extremely important positions matters. While most news journalists will aspire to leave their opinions outside their place of work, it is somewhat inevitable that they will bring their experiences with them. Journalists need to know about a story to cover it, but if journalists and others working in the media all come from a similar background and have similar experiences, there is a danger that even with the best efforts to reach out, there are likely to be important stories, nuances or angles that they simply miss.

Commentators have previously spoken about this dangerous disconnect between the media and the population in the last five years, particularly in relation to the UK's vote to leave the European Union in 2016, a result which was not expected by much of the UK establishment, including many journalists. Journalists have also been criticised in the aftermath of the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, with veteran broadcaster Jon Snow commenting:

"Why didn't any of us see the Grenfell action blog? Why didn't we know? Why didn't we have contact? Why didn't we enable the residents of Grenfell Tower – and indeed the other hundreds of towers like it around Britain – to find pathways to talk to us and for us to expose their story? I felt on the wrong side of the terrible divide that exists in present day society. We can accuse the political classes for their failures, and we do. But we are guilty of them ourselves. We are too far removed from those who lived their lives in Grenfell Tower."⁵¹

Not only can this disconnect lead to journalists missing important stories, it can also mean they cover some issues out of proportion to their importance to society overall. For example, while less than 1% of the population attend Oxbridge, the two universities are covered extensively in the media,⁵² often to the exclusion of other education matters, including issues affecting other universities, and particularly the vocational and technical education sector.

Sections

39 News Media 100

40 Newspaper columnists

40 BBC Executives

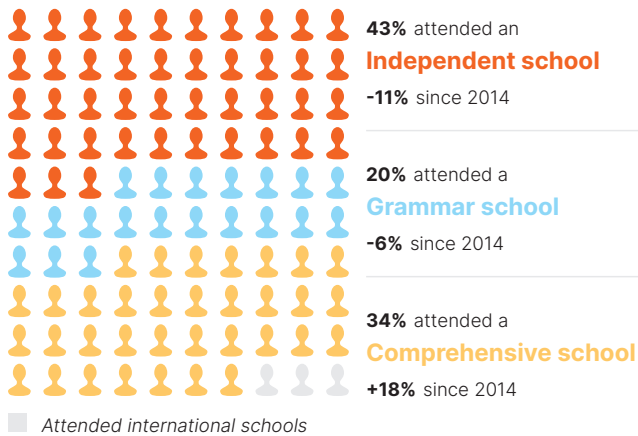
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44 The Educational Pathways of Newspaper Columnists

Media | News Media 100

School attendance

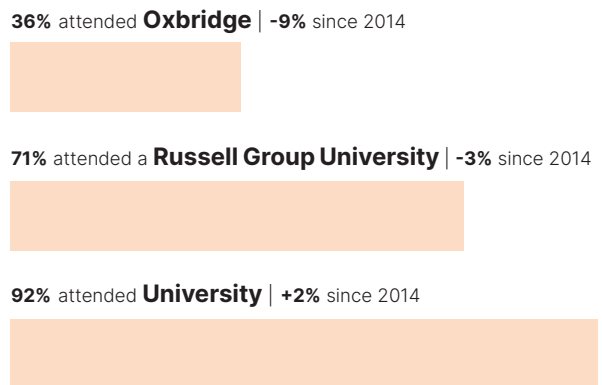


The media 100 gives a broad overview of those working in the UK's news media, including newspaper and magazine editors, editors of major digital news outlets and TV and radio news presenters and editors. To identify this group, we used research by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism⁵³ to select the news outlets across broadcast, digital and print media with the biggest reach across the UK. We looked for the individuals in the most senior editorial positions at these outlets. For broadcast outlets with multiple news programmes, we used personal judgement and figures on reach to select the news programmes and stations with the biggest influence. To reflect the growing importance of digital and social news, we have updated this list from 2014 to include digital editors, and have also increased the number of editors from regional titles.⁵⁴ While we feel this was important to ensure this list is reflective of the current media landscape, these changes should be kept in mind when making comparisons with 2014's data.

School and university background

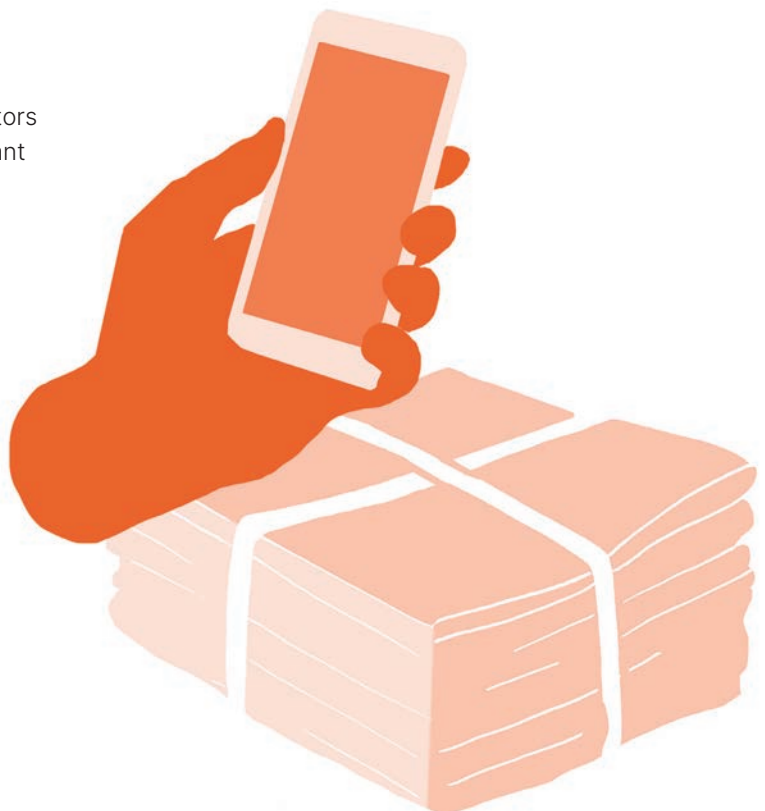
The news media 100 group had among the highest proportions of independent school and Oxbridge alumni among their number. Those with the most influential positions in news media are considerably more likely to have attended a private school than the population at large, at 43%. One fifth of the group went to a grammar school, and just over a third (34%) attended a comprehensive. The proportion of those at

University attendance



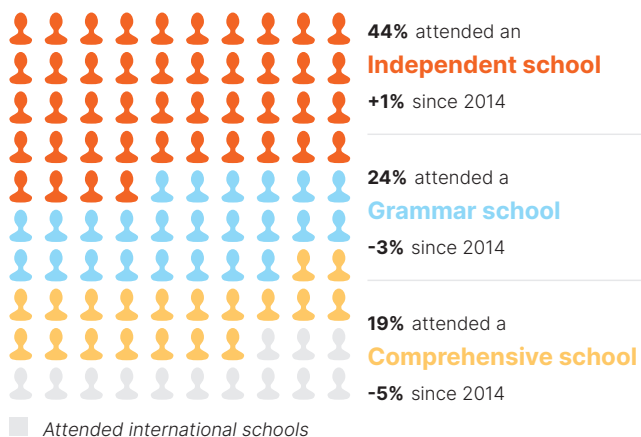
the top of the news media who went to a comprehensive school is substantially different to the 2014 list, up from just 16%. The proportion who went to independent schools (down 11 percentage points) and grammar schools (down 6 percentage points) is also lower.

The overwhelming majority (92%) of our news media 100 attended university, a small increase on the figure in 2014 (90%). Just over a third (36%) attended Oxbridge, 9 percentage points lower than the 2014 list. Just over 70% attended the Russell Group overall, slightly lower than 2014.



Media | Newspaper Columnists

School attendance

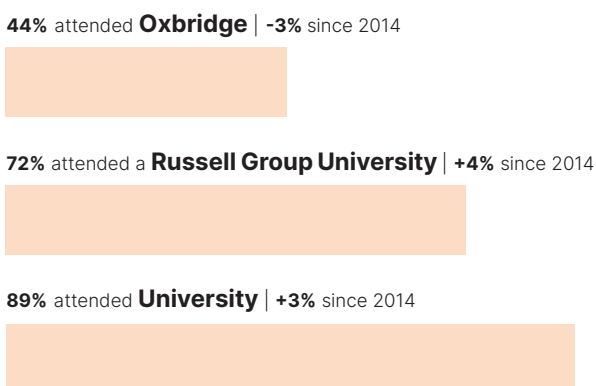


Newspaper columnists have a unique position to shape the political agenda, as they are able to share their views on the political issues of the day on widely read and shared platforms. The next section looks at newspaper columnists writing on politics, policy, news and current affairs for the most influential papers and outlets in the UK.

School and university backgrounds

Newspaper columnists were even more exclusive in their educational backgrounds than the news media group. 44% of newspaper columnists attended an independent school, with a quarter attending a grammar school, and less than a fifth (19%) going to a comprehensive school. Although the group of newspaper columnists covered here is slightly different to those included in 2014 (in this report we focused on those commenting on politics and

University attendance



closely related areas, whereas the 2014 list also included those writing columns on food, sports and television), the proportion who attended independent school is the same as the list examined in 2014.

Almost three quarters (72%) of columnists went to a Russell Group institution for their undergraduate degree, and a large proportion (44%) attended one of just two universities, Oxford or Cambridge. These figures have changed very little since 2014, although the proportion who attended university internationally has also roughly doubled (from 6% to 12%).

The independent school to Oxbridge pipeline accounts for a third (33%) of all columnists. Grammar school to Oxbridge (13%) and comprehensive to Russell Group (9%) are other common pathways. Comprehensively educated columnists who graduated from a non-Russell Group university account for less than 2% of the total.

Media | BBC Executives

The next section takes an in depth look at the top staff at the largest broadcaster in the country, the BBC. As a public broadcaster, paid for by a household TV license fee, it is often held under a greater amount of scrutiny than other similar organisations. The corporation also has the largest viewing share of any broadcaster in the UK.⁵⁵ From news coverage, to sports, to children's television, the BBC has a significant impact on all parts of British society.

School and university backgrounds

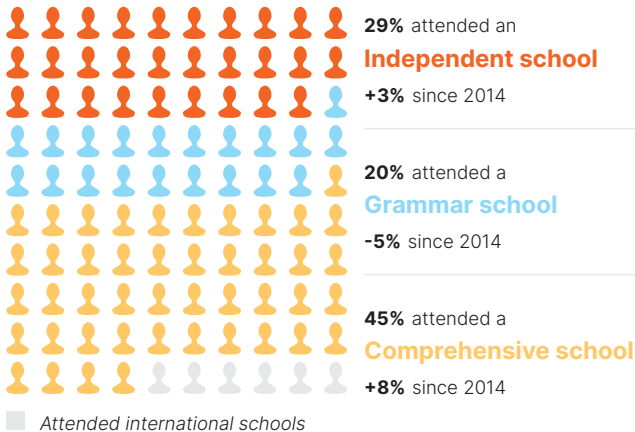
Compared to the other categories in this section, the school educational background of BBC executives

was less socially exclusive, with 29% having attended independent school. However, this figure is still substantially higher than the population, and has changed little since 2014, when the figure was 26%.⁵⁶ A fifth of BBC executives attended a grammar school. The proportion of BBC executives who went to a comprehensive school has risen in the last five years, from just 37% in 2014 to 45% now.

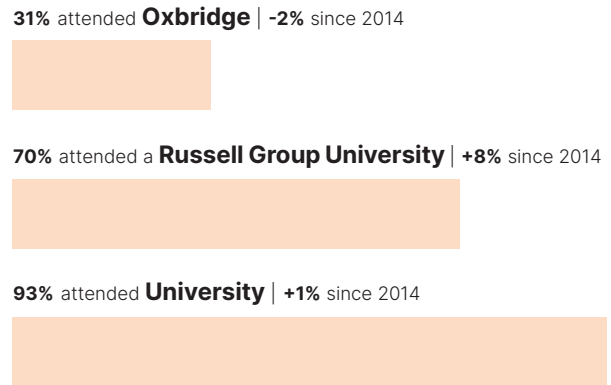
Almost a third (31%) of BBC executives attended Oxbridge, a figure that has barely shifted since 2014. Most (70%) attended a Russell Group university, which has actually increased since 2014, by 8 percentage points.



School attendance



University attendance



Media | Discussion

The educational backgrounds of people in the top jobs in UK media, with a focus here on those working in news, politics and current affairs, look very different to the general population, with newspaper columnists the least like the audiences they write for. This isn't a new problem. Previous Sutton Trust research going back as far as 1986 has shown that the educational backgrounds of the country's media has, for a long time, looked very different to those of the population as a whole, and painted a picture of a media elite growing more socially exclusive over time.⁵⁷

Importantly, the impact of this gap is likely to increase with the ongoing decline of local media; which is both an important first rung on the ladder for many aspiring journalists and a vital source of news stories from diverse communities across the country. Indeed, local news is often first to pick up important stories which otherwise would not be noticed by national papers. But local news is currently facing a funding crisis, with jobs and whole newsrooms being lost.⁵⁸

Looking in greater detail at the journalist pipeline, The National Council for the Training of Journalists, the leading training organisation for journalists in the UK, has carried out research on increasing diversity in journalism.⁵⁹ That work raised several potential barriers to access, including the increasing need for postgraduate qualifications to enter journalism (grants for which are very rare) and the expectation of unpaid work placements in the industry, an issue the Sutton Trust has also previously highlighted.⁶⁰ As economic conditions have tightened in the industry, in recent years many papers have also moved away from having permanent staff writing opinion columns, towards commissioning comment pieces from freelancers.

Working as a freelance journalist can be precarious and may act as a barrier for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who lack the financial and social safety nets sometimes required by such unpredictable work. A number of initiatives are attempting to increase access to the industry. One such project is The Student View, a charity which aims to increase the number of schools with student newspapers to give young people a first flavour of journalism. The charity works in schools with groups in which at least 50% of students are eligible for the pupil premium.⁶¹ To tackle the issue of unpaid internships in journalism, the organisation Press Pad connects interns to people who can host them in London.⁶² The Spectator has also introduced a fully paid 'no CV' internship scheme, limiting the importance of previous experience to try to increase opportunities in the media for people from a more diverse range of backgrounds.⁶³ However, while all these initiatives are welcome, they are relatively low level given the scale of the access issue in the media as a whole, and do nothing to deal with declining opportunities outside of London as local papers have closed.⁶⁴ Across the media, much more needs to be done to increase access and break down barriers for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

In the last few years, the BBC has been taking active steps to improve socio-economic diversity. It was the first broadcaster to monitor and publish the socio-economic background of their employees, including the type of school they attended and the educational backgrounds of staff's parents. According to the BBC's own statistics, 16% of their UK public service staff (not including for example the World Service) attended a private school. While still higher

than the population, this figure is much lower than the senior executive group examined here. This figure also differs across the organisation, with a high of 24% of their news staff having attended a private school. They also release figures for their senior leadership, although the group they look at is a much wider group than those included in our figures here. Of senior leaders overall 22% attended private school, and 36% of senior leaders specifically in news did so.⁶⁵

“Working as a freelance journalist can be precarious, a potential barrier for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds”

They also recently launched an apprenticeship programme, with input from the Sutton Trust, to help open pathways into the BBC for young people from a more diverse backgrounds.⁶⁶ While the BBC is making progress, having also been named in the top 50 employers by the Social Mobility Index,⁶⁷ in recognition of the action they have taken, there is still a substantial amount of work to be done, especially in opening up the most influential roles at the very top of the organisation.

Attention to diversity and equality issues is often particularly focused on the BBC, as the main public service broadcaster, but socio-economic diversity is an issue across all major broadcasters. Channel 4 recently carried out detailed research on this issue, which found that its staff are substantially unrepresentative of the general population, with 67% of Channel 4 staff having parents with professional or managerial jobs.⁶⁸ The work also looked at some of the reasons behind a lack of progression of staff from lower socio-economic backgrounds within Channel 4 to the top positions in the organisation. Following this work, the broadcaster has now put in place a variety of initiatives to try to improve socio-economic diversity in the organisation, including running an apprenticeship scheme, setting up new bases in Leeds, Glasgow and Bristol,⁶⁹ and preventing employees from bringing in family members for work experience. However, as with the BBC, much more needs to be done to open up opportunities, especially at the very top. The other major UK broadcasters, ITV and Sky, have done much less to look at this issue. ITV recently carried out a survey looking at the socio-economic background of its senior leadership team, but have not yet carried this out on among their wider staff. They have also recently signed up to the Social Mobility Pledge.⁷⁰ Sky has plans to start monitoring the socio-economic background of its staff in the near future.⁷¹ Such monitoring however, is only the beginning of a process of diversification, and not an end in itself.

Case Study

Cait FitzSimons

Editor, 5 News



I was born and grew up in Sunderland, where I attended the local Catholic comprehensive school. My father was one of 14 children, the son of an Irish immigrant. He left school when he was 14 and joined the merchant navy, and when

I was growing up he worked as a milkman. My mum was an assistant at the local department store. I was the first person in my family to gain a degree, studying Fine Art at Coventry University.

I'm an accidental journalist. In 1997, I moved to London to do a postgraduate course, but needed some money to get by. One of my cousins was an administrator at ITN and knew Channel 4 News needed some freelance runners. I was so lucky to get the opportunity; without it I wouldn't have dreamed of working as a journalist. From there, I went on to work at 5 News, which was set-up as a multi-skilled newsroom. As I was quick to pick-up technical skills, I had the time and space to get the hard bit, journalism.

5 News was a great place to start my working life, friendly and energetic. But to me, it felt quite alien, with lots of people from the south-east of England who were confident and vocal. There were even people who were related to famous reporters and politicians. I've always joked that I was middle class until I worked at ITN, then it felt more like being working class.

Throughout my career, across a number of different newsrooms, I've had moments where I've been aware that my northern accent was seen as a negative. I experienced the odd joking comment about my pronunciation of certain words. There was also the occasional assumption that anyone from the north was automatically working class or with limited education.

I've never felt that my background held me back but it's only in recent years that I've come to see it as an asset. As an editor, I'm willing to consider stories that more traditional newsrooms might overlook. I'm happy to be challenged and to admit I'm wrong. Newsrooms must adapt to survive, and I think increasing diversity will mean we find new ways for the industry to thrive.

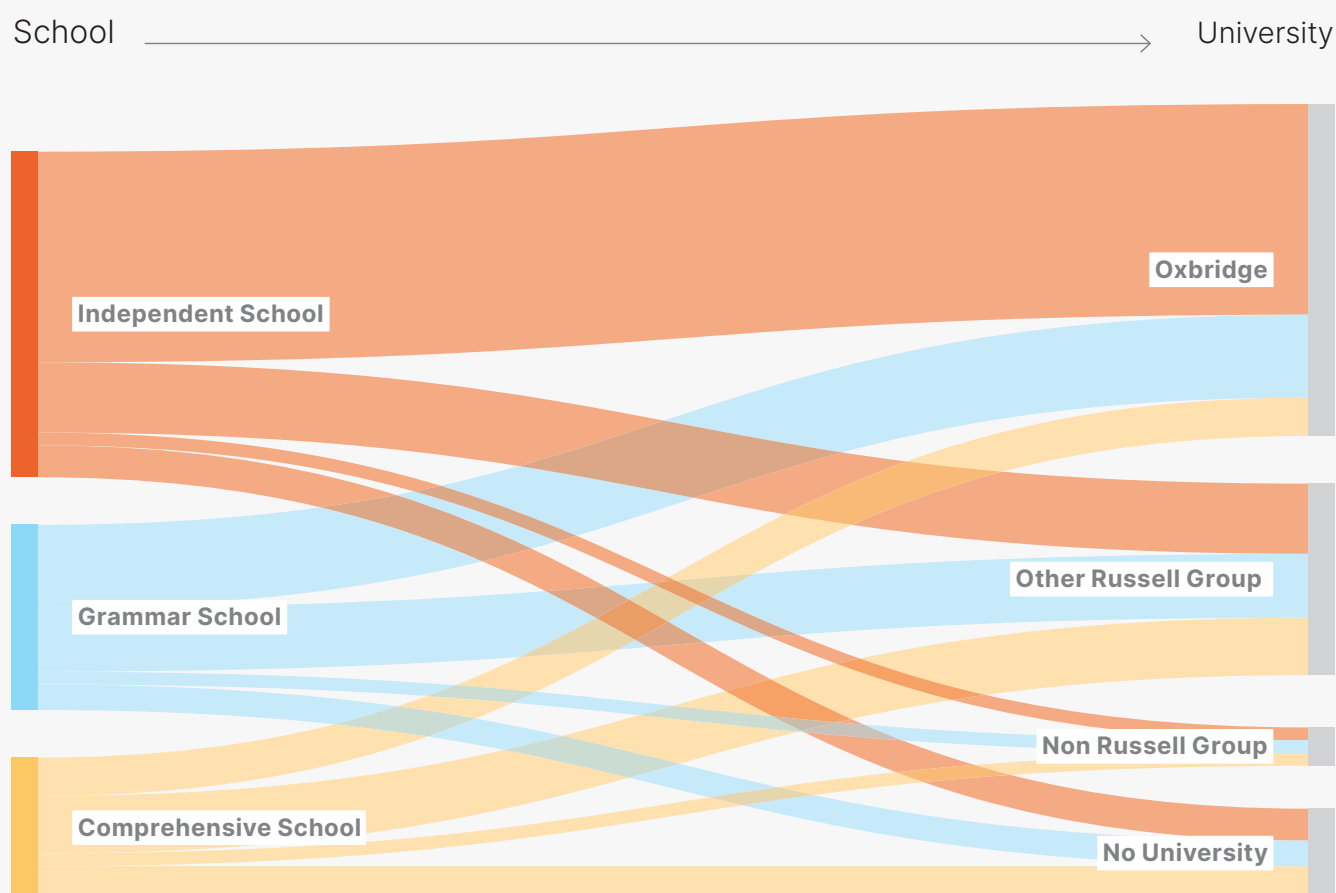
I try to make my newsroom a place where not only the me of 20 years ago, but also people who have different life experiences will feel supported and encouraged. The best example of this is being pitched a story I never would have spotted or considered and being surprised by what it delivers. I know I have a responsibility to make the newsroom a place where people feel confident in voicing their ideas, even if they have never had the chance before.

I don't think I'd become a journalist if I was starting out now. Newsrooms are smaller and entry level jobs have become much more demanding, candidates often have both a relevant degree and post-graduate qualification. There's still the occasional opportunity to spot and develop someone with potential who might not have followed the usual educational route, but it's something I need to do more.

There have been some positive changes in the media recently, like more apprenticeships, but things are not changing quickly enough. I think the challenges of spotting talent and training new journalists are becoming even harder with every local paper or regional radio newsroom which cuts or closes. News organisations should look more closely at how universities recruit students, but we also need to reach out to schools and colleges ourselves to give young people a better insight into what we do and open up new routes into media.

The Educational Pathways of Newspaper Columnists

In each section through the report, we have taken a look at the educational pathways of a key profession in more detail. The following figure displays the pathways taken by newspaper columnists educated in Britain, with the size of the 'flow' representing the size of each group. On the left side of the graph we see which schools they attended. The flows from left to right then represent the pathways taken from those in each type of school to university.



The independent school to Oxbridge pipeline accounts for a third of all newspaper columnists, one of the highest in the report. Including other Russell Group institutions brings the figure to close to half. Just 2% of columnists went from a comprehensive to a non-Russell Group university. This is lower even than the number who were privately schooled and did not have a degree. Grammar school to Oxbridge is the second most common pathway among columnists, comprising 13% of the group. Non-Russell Group universities as a whole make up a particularly low proportion of newspaper columnists compared to other professions.

4. Whitehall and Public Bodies

Attended Independent School

On average **44%** attended independent schools

Permanent Secretaries | **59%**



Diplomats | **52%**



Public Body Chairs | **45%**



Public Body CEOs | **30%**



General Population | **7%**



Attended Oxbridge

On average **39%** attended Oxbridge

Permanent Secretaries | **56%**



Diplomats | **51%**



Public Body Chairs | **40%**



Public Body CEOs | **25%**



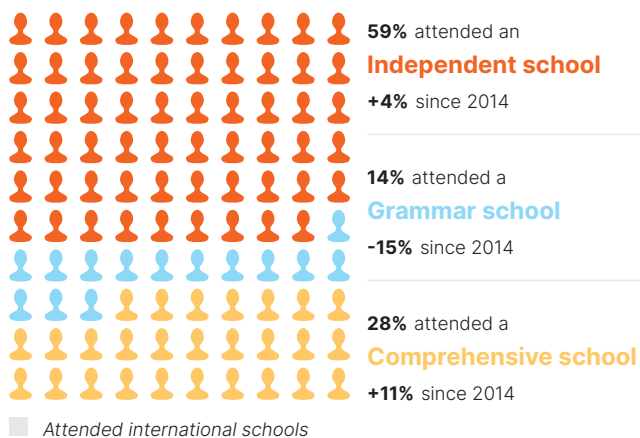
General Population | **<1%**



Whitehall and Public Bodies

Whitehall | Permanent Secretaries

School attendance

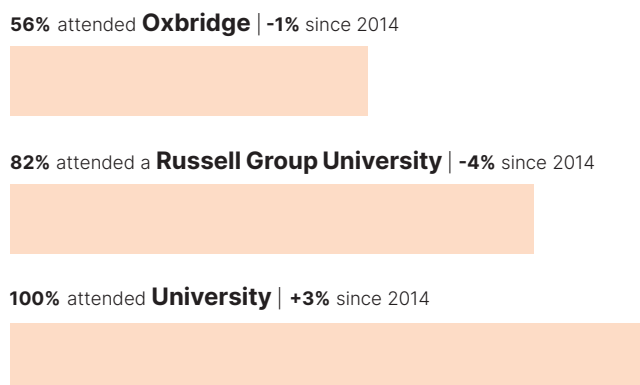


A permanent secretary is the most senior civil servant within any government department, with responsibility for running it day to day. Permanent secretaries also act as senior advisors to their department's Secretary of State and are accountable to parliament for how their department spends public funds. They are normally in place for several years, and most are appointed following a long career within the civil service.⁷³

School and university background

A large majority of permanent secretaries (59%) come from private school backgrounds, the second highest proportion in this report, behind senior

University attendance

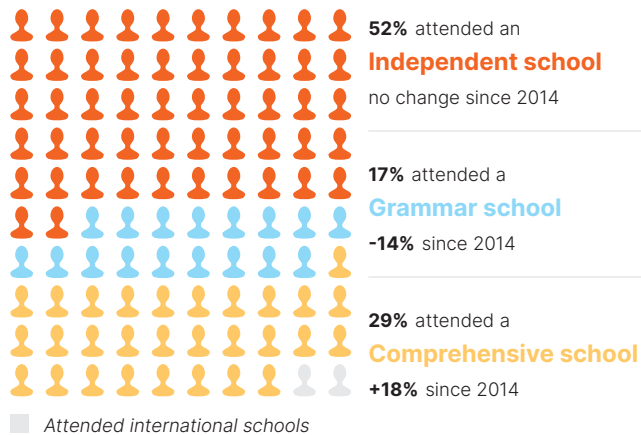


judges. This number, if anything, has seen a small increase over the last five years. Fewer than a third (28%) attended a comprehensive school. As the proportion who attended grammar schools has decreased, the comprehensive figure has gone up, rising by 11 percentage points since 2014.

The top of the civil service is also dominated by alumni of Russell Group universities, particularly Oxford and Cambridge. Over half (56%) attended one of the two institutions, again one of the highest across all of the professions in this report. The overwhelming majority (82%) attended either Oxbridge or another Russell Group university.

Whitehall | Diplomats

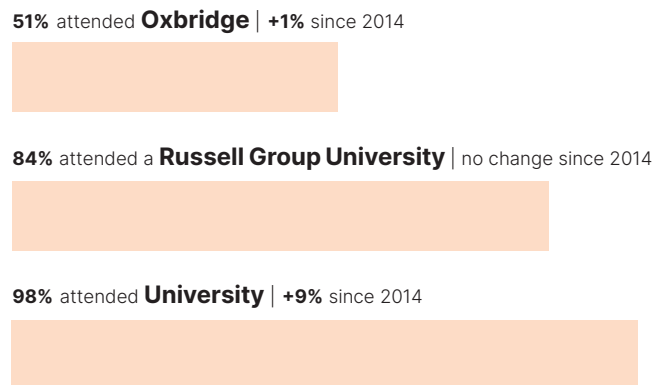
School attendance



British diplomats, including Ambassadors and High Commissioners, are an important part of the UK Civil Service. They act as the country's most senior official representatives abroad, influencing foreign policy, helping to negotiate bilateral and multilateral agreements, providing information and insight about their host country to the UK and in turn providing information and insight about the UK to their host country. They are also the first port of call in helping British people overseas.

Many diplomats have commented the role is a 'lifestyle not a job', due to the need to work all over the world, move frequently, and work outside of typical working hours, including evenings and weekends. Individuals have usually been in the Civil Service for a long time before becoming a top diplomat, with many entering through the Foreign Office Fast Stream, a highly competitive graduate scheme. This section looks at the country's top diplomats, Heads of UK Missions abroad.

University attendance



School and university background

Over half (52%) of top British diplomats attended a private school, a figure which has not changed in the last five years. In common with the generational change seen in many sectors in this report, what has reduced substantially in that time is the proportion who went to a grammar school, down by 14 percentage points since 2014.

In 2014, the proportion of British Ambassadors and High Commissioners who went to a comprehensive school was very low, at just 11%. While the 2019 figures show it at 29%, it is still low in comparison with other sectors.

A very large proportion of British diplomats attended Oxbridge (51%). Almost all attended university, and of those who did, all attended a university in the UK. The vast majority (84%) attended a Russell Group institution.

Whitehall | CEOs and Chairs of Public Bodies

A public body is an umbrella term for a group of organisations which deliver public services but are not government departments. They tend to operate at arm's length from ministers, making the roles that run and oversee them vital positions for the direction and day to day running of the organisations. Chairs of such organisations are prestigious positions, often taken up by former politicians, longstanding public servants, or other high profile persons from business or civil society. These are often post-career appointments, meaning they can look quite different from those who run the organisations day to day. Appointments are governed

by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Many public bodies play a crucial role in monitoring the quality of public services, including health and education bodies such as Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and Ofqual. Decisions made by these bodies have substantial influence on their sector. Others include research funding councils, museums and conservation organisations; all organisations which have impact on a range of issues from which diseases we focus research funding on, to how we interpret our past and what we do to protect the natural world around us.

School and university background

Both the chairs and CEOs of public bodies are much more likely to be privately educated than average. 45% of chairs and 30% of CEOs attended a private school, with very little change in these figures since 2014. Just 18% of public body chairs attended a comprehensive school, although this has risen from only 11% in 2014. A larger proportion of chief executives attended a comprehensive school, which has risen by 10 percentage points since 2014. The proportion of both chairs and CEOs who attended a grammar school since 2014 has fallen, by 13 percentage points to 28%

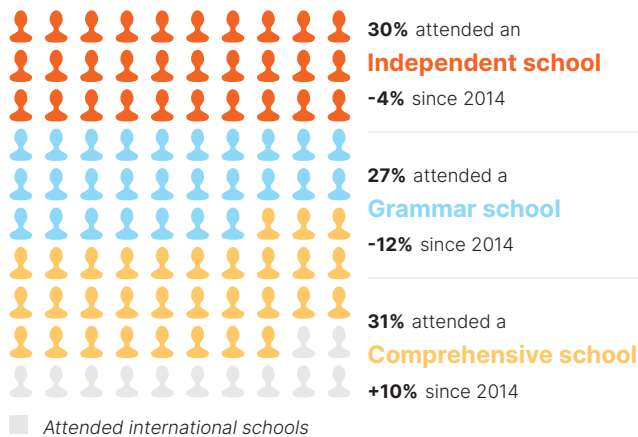
for chairs, and by 12 percentage points to 27% for CEOs.

It should be noted that school data could only be found for 60% of the chairs group, so results should be taken in that context.

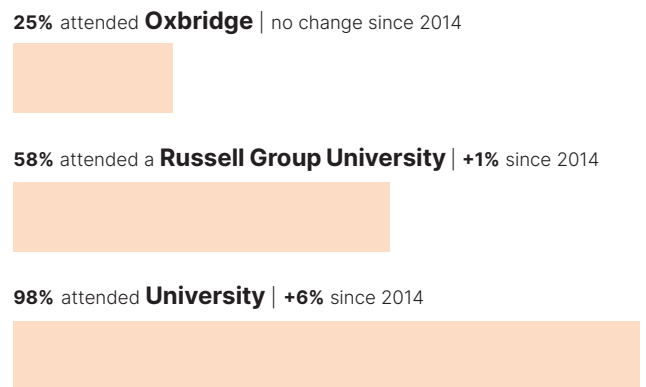
A large proportion of public body chairs attended Oxbridge (40%), again higher than the proportion of CEOs (25%), although the figure has come down slightly over the last five years, falling by 4 percentage points. Only a very small number of either chairs or CEOs did not attend university, and most went to one of the Russell Group, 58% of CEOs and 69% of chairs (down 5 percentage points).

Public body CEOs

School attendance

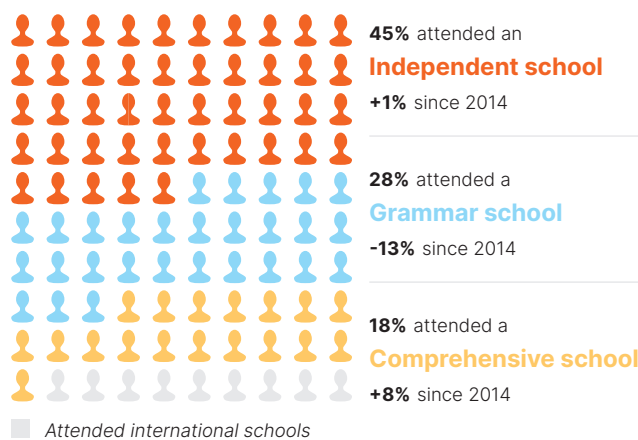


University attendance

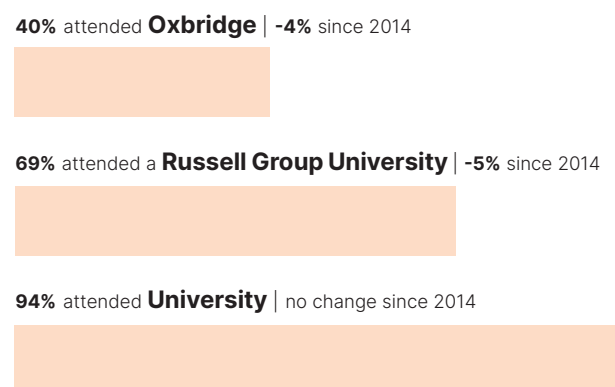


Public body chairs

School attendance



University attendance



Whitehall | Discussion

Over the last few years, the civil service has taken several steps to diversify the intake of their Graduate Scheme. The Fast Stream is designed to *'equip candidates to become future leaders of the Civil Service'*. It is hoped that by increasing the socio-economic diversity of their intake, in the future more senior roles within the civil service, such as permanent secretaries, will be more representative of the general population. In 2016, the civil service carried out, with the Bridge Group, a full independent assessment of access to the Fast Stream by socio-economic background, the first of its kind commissioned by any employer. The report found that the profile of the Fast Stream's intake is *'less diverse than the student population at the University of Oxford'*. When looking at the reasons behind the lack of diversity in the scheme, they found that candidates from highly selective universities (who have the least diverse student bodies) are the most likely to apply, and that there is a perception among many students from lower socio-economic backgrounds that the Fast Stream is 'not for them'. Students said that they did not understand enough

“There is a perception among many students from lower socio-economic backgrounds that the Fast Stream is ‘not for them.’”

about the selection process, and perceived the civil service to be 'white, male and Oxbridge'.⁷⁴

In the run up to and following that report, the civil service made several changes to their Fast Stream recruitment processes. University names and UCAS points have been removed from the application process and an assessment centre has been opened outside of London in Newcastle. Additionally, the civil service have increased the amount of outreach work they do on campuses to encourage applications to the Fast Stream; updated how the socio-economic background of candidates is recorded and shortened the application window in a bid to improve candidate engagement. They have also created a 'Fast Pass' for anyone who has completed the civil service Summer Diversity Internship (open to students under-represented in the Fast Stream, including those from lower socio-economic backgrounds), allowing

former interns to skip stages of the application process, improving their success rate. A cross government Social Mobility Network, to tackle issues across the civil service, has also been set up.⁷⁵

Following these changes, there have been increases both in the number of applicants from lower socio-economic backgrounds to the Fast Stream, and in the number accepted onto the programme. In 2015, applicants from lower socio-economic backgrounds made up 8% of applications, a proportion which has since doubled to 16% of applicants in 2018. However, these applicants are still much less likely to be accepted onto the scheme than others, with those from managerial and professional backgrounds twice as likely to get in as those from routine and manual backgrounds.⁷⁶

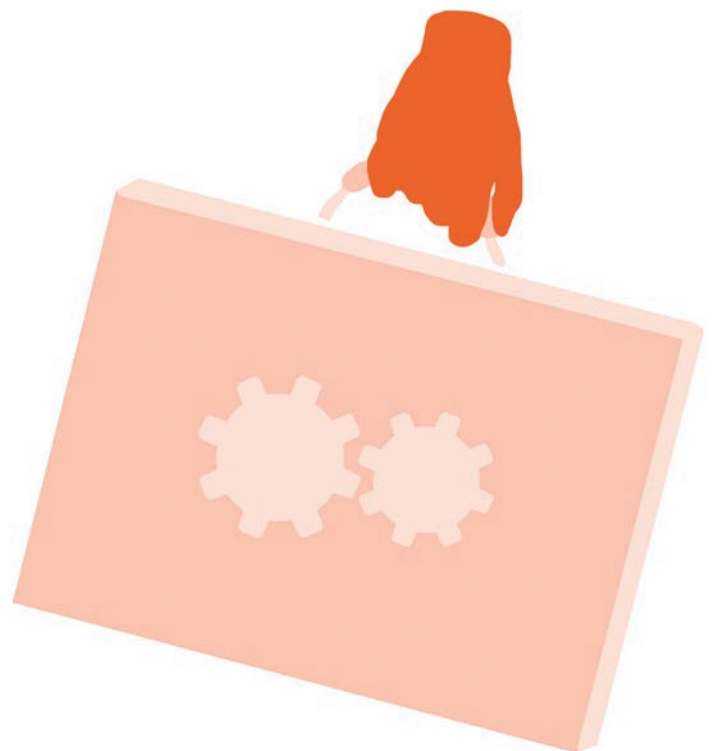
In the diplomatic service specifically, similar efforts are being made to tackle this issue. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) launched 'Foreground', a social mobility network for staff, in 2016. The network carries out a range of work, including reaching out to people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, supporting staff members facing barriers related to their background, and engaging with policy to reduce existing barriers for people entering the FCO. Foreground also represent the FCO on a cross-government network which aims to improve diversity of background across the civil service.⁷⁷ However, of concern going forward is the collapse in modern foreign languages study in recent times, particularly in more disadvantaged schools, which impacts on opportunities to learn about different countries and cultures.⁷⁸

The civil service needs to do more to understand why applicants from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to be accepted onto the programme. Additionally, while the changes made to the Fast Stream are positive, any changes will take a long time to feed through the system at higher grades, which is far from guaranteed, given the barriers to career progression faced by those from less well-off backgrounds.⁷⁹ Such barriers, and the process behind top appointments, should be examined in detail and measures taken to address these issues.

There has been much less scrutiny of the backgrounds of those working for public bodies. However, it is clearly an important issue for government. According to the Cabinet Office; 'Public bodies play an important role in public life, making decisions and delivering the essential services that benefit the communities they serve. To be truly effective, public bodies need to draw from a mix of people with different skills, experiences

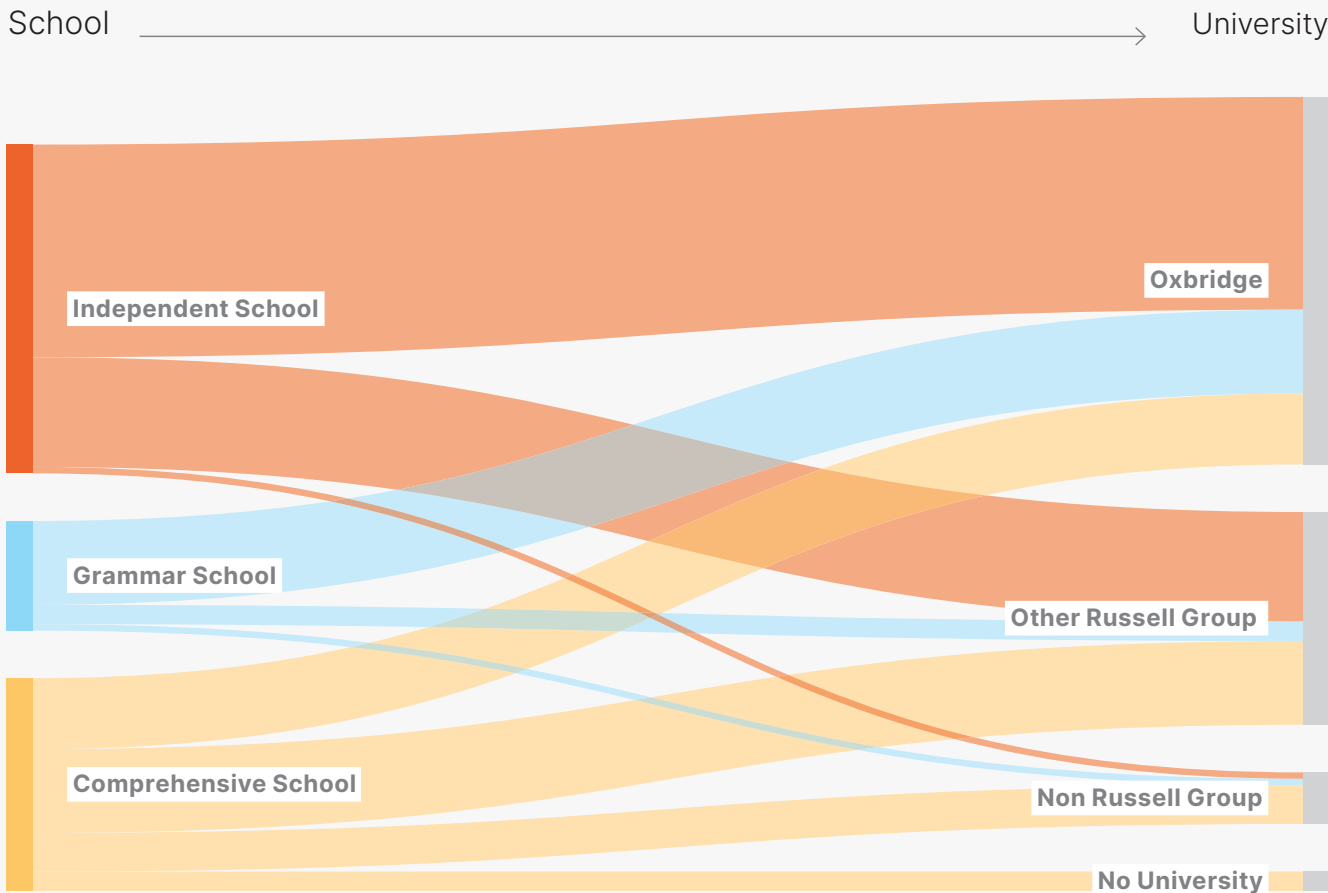
and backgrounds to serve on their boards.’⁸⁰

Findings here clearly show that the educational backgrounds of public body chairs are, however, not very diverse. The same is also true for their chief executives, albeit to a lesser degree. As well as central Whitehall departments, these organisations should also be held to the same high standards, given the importance of their work and their receipt of public funding. While diversity is a criterion in the governance code regulating public appointments,⁸¹ more needs to be done to deliver on this aspiration, including reporting on the socio-economic background of those taking up such roles across sectors.



The Educational Pathways of Diplomats

In each section through the report, we have taken a look at the educational pathways of a key profession in more detail. The following figure displays the pathways taken by diplomats educated in Britain, with the size of the 'flow' representing the size of each group. On the left side of the graph we see which schools they attended. The flows from left to right then represent the pathways taken from those in each type of school to university.



Independent school alumni educated at Russell Group institutions make up half of the diplomats in our study, with the private school to Oxbridge pathway comprising 33% of the group. Russell Group universities as a whole dominate, with grammar school to Oxbridge (13%) and other Russell Group (10%) among the most common routes into the top of the diplomatic service. Just over one in ten top diplomats got there via attending a comprehensive school followed by Oxbridge.

5. Public Servants

Attended Independent School

On average **45%** attended independent schools

Senior Judges | **65%**



Armed Forces | **49%**



Vice Chancellors | **16%**



General Population | **7%**



Attended Oxbridge

On average **41%** attended Oxbridge

Senior Judges | **71%**



Vice Chancellors | **19%**



Armed Forces | **16%**



General Population | **<1%**



Public Servants

Introduction

Looking beyond Whitehall, local government and public bodies, there are many other prestigious, highly paid and influential positions in public life. The next section begins to paint a picture of some of those, looking at a wider group of public servants working in key positions at the top of justice, defence and academia.

As the roles covered in this section cover a range of different professions, more detail on each individual sector is included within the body of this chapter.

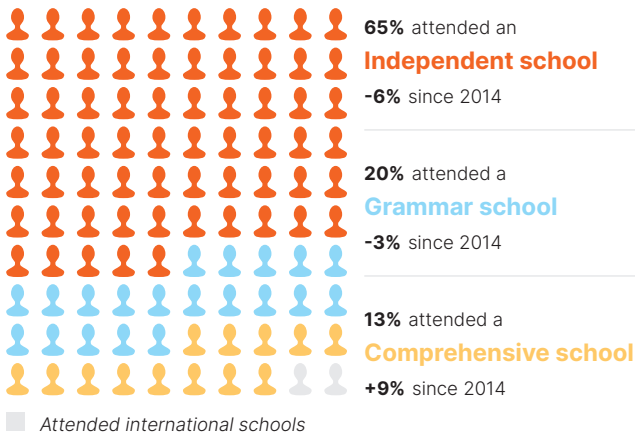
Sections

- | | | | |
|----|------------------|----|---|
| 55 | Senior judges | 58 | Discussion |
| 56 | Armed Forces | 59 | Case study - Mouhssin Ismail, Former lawyer |
| 57 | Vice Chancellors | 60 | The Educational Pathways of Senior Judges |

Public Servants | Senior Judges



School attendance



Senior judges, namely the Lord Chief Justice, Supreme Court Judges, Lord and Lady Justices of Appeal and High Court Judges, sit on the highest courts in the country. These courts fulfil a number of different roles, including importantly being the courts where cases are appealed from lower down in the system and decisions are made which affect the whole population. Senior judges have previously spoken about the importance of diversity on the benches of these courts, including the current President of the Supreme Court, Baroness Hale, who commented that the public should be able to look at the judges and say “they are our judges”, as opposed to seeing them as “beings from another planet”.⁸²

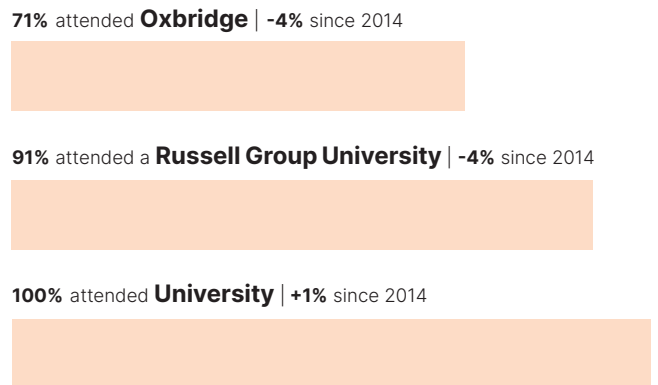
School and university background

Senior judges are the most socially exclusive groups of all the professions examined here, with the highest numbers of both independent school and Oxbridge alumni.

Almost two thirds (65%) of senior judges attended private schools. While this has reduced by 6 percentage points compared to 2014, it is still around ten times higher than the proportion of the population who attend independent schools. Judges who were privately educated dominate the



University attendance



most senior positions in Britain’s court system.

The proportion who attended grammar schools is 20%. While this has fallen slightly, going down by 3 percentage points since 2014, this is a much smaller reduction than has been seen in some other sectors during the same period.

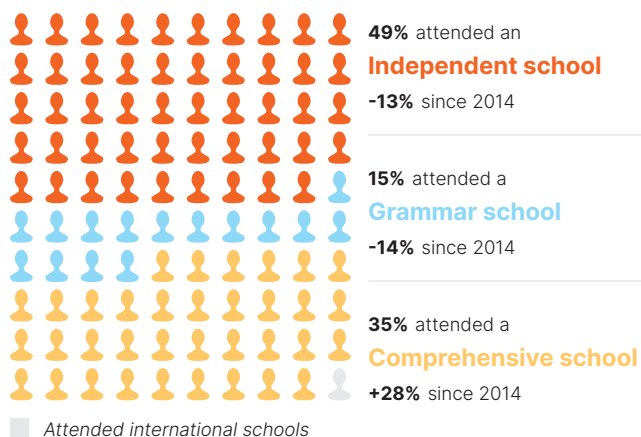
While the educational background of judges is still very different from the whole population, the proportion who attended comprehensive schools is on the increase, having more than tripled from 4% in 2014 to 13%, albeit from an extremely low bar.

Alumni of Oxford and Cambridge also heavily dominate the judiciary. Just under three quarters (71%) of senior judges went to one of the two institutions, with little change since 2014. In fact, the independent school to Oxbridge pipeline alone accounts for more than half of all senior judges (52%).

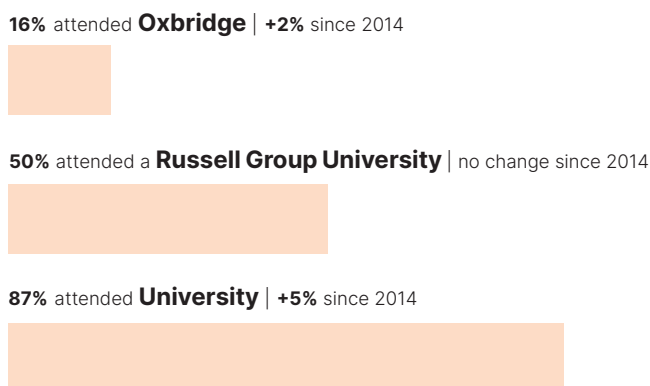
All the senior judges included in this report went to university, and even those who did not attend Oxbridge still, in the main, attended a university in the Russell Group, with only 9% attending a non-Russell Group institution.

Public Servants | Armed Forces

School attendance



University attendance



The armed forces are comprised of several different parts of the country's defences, including the Army, the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy. This section looks at officers at the very top of the armed forces in Britain, looking at those at the rank of two stars (Major General) and above. These roles are held by those with senior appointments in military headquarters, including the Ministry of Defence, and are officers who have generally been in the armed forces for a long time before taking up their positions.

While politicians hold ultimate responsibility for whether we go to war, and how that war is conducted, decisions made by senior military personnel day to day also have major impacts on frontline troops. The profile of senior personnel is particularly relevant, given that lower levels of the army disproportionately recruit from disadvantaged communities,⁸³ and the army has previously been accused of specifically targeting young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds for recruitment to such frontline positions.⁸⁴

School and university background

The armed forces have among the highest proportions of privately educated personnel looked at in this report, with almost half of senior officers educated at independent schools (49%). Just over a third attended a comprehensive school, and 15% a grammar. While these figures show that

the top of the armed forces looks very different from the population overall, there has been substantial change over the last five years – some of the most striking in this report.

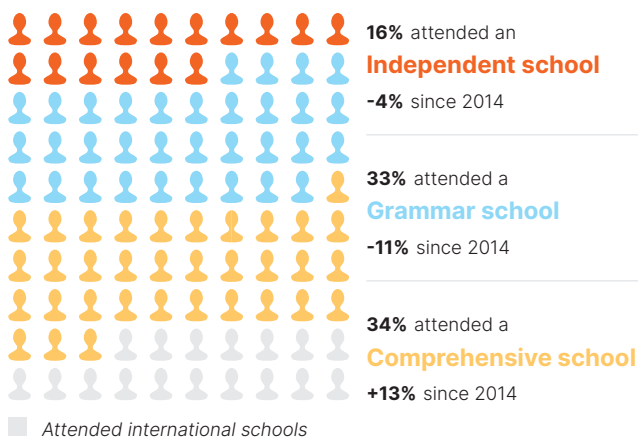
The proportion of senior officers who were educated at a comprehensive school has increased from just 7% in 2014 to 35% in 2019's data. This has been accompanied by falls in the proportions who were educated at both private and at grammar schools. In 2014, just under a third (30%) of senior officers were educated at a grammar school, but this figure has halved over the last five years. Similarly, the proportion of senior officers educated at a private school was previously 62%, but has now reduced by 13 percentage points to 49%.

Private school attendance is higher among more senior ranks, with two thirds of four-star generals having attended. While the 2019 group had a slightly higher proportion of two star officers than 2014, this does not account for the significant increase in the proportion educated at comprehensive schools.

Most senior officers in the armed forces had attended university (87%). Half of senior officers went to a Russell Group university, and 16% attended Oxford or Cambridge. While this proportion is lower than in many other top professions, it still shows a high level of representation of the two universities amongst senior officers relative to their size.

Public Servants | Vice Chancellors

School attendance



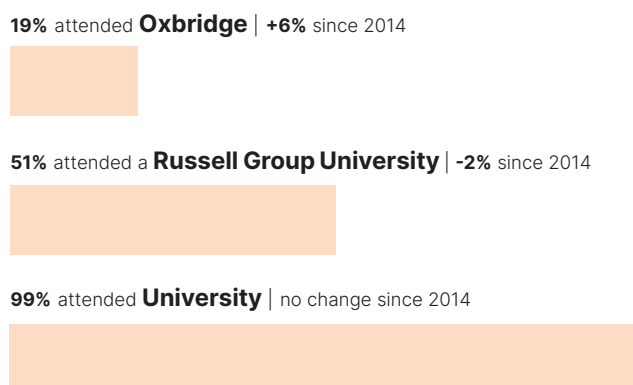
Vice Chancellors are the chief executives of British Universities, responsible for leadership over both the academic and administrative aspects of the institution. Individuals in these positions have had a significant amount of media attention recently, given the high salaries awarded to some VCs.⁸⁵ Vice Chancellors are the main figurehead of a university, and act as a representative for the university externally. They have responsibility for thousands of students and staff, as well as millions of pounds in research grants. Universities are also often major employers in their area and support the jobs of many others in the local community.

Vice Chancellors have significant influence over the culture of their institution, including efforts around diversity, inclusion and widening participation, and making sure these values are championed throughout the university. Such issues are of particular importance given how unrepresentative the student bodies of many top universities are when compared to young people overall.⁸⁶

School

Compared to many of the other sectors examined in this report, a relatively low proportion of VCs were educated privately, with 16% having attended an independent school. This proportion has also reduced in the last few years, falling by 4 percentage points since 2014.

University attendance



However, only about a third (34%) of academics attended comprehensive schools. A large proportion of VCs attended grammar schools, with a third (33%) having done so. The picture has improved in the five years since 2014, with the proportion of VCs educated at comprehensive schools rising by 13 percentage points from 21% in 2014, mostly offsetting a drop in the proportion attending grammars.

Almost a fifth (17%) of University Vice Chancellors were educated outside of the UK, reflecting the international nature of academia. Looking at just those educated in the UK, 20% attended independent schools, 40% grammar and 41% comprehensive.

University

As would be expected, most Vice Chancellors completed an undergraduate degree, with only one VC having not obtained an undergraduate degree. 88% of VCs attended a university in the UK, with 14% having studied for a degree abroad, similar proportions to those found in 2014.

Just over half of VCs (51%) attended a Russell Group university, the same proportion as in 2014. However, in that time, the proportion of VCs who attended Oxford and Cambridge has increased. In 2014, just 13% had done so, a figure which has since increased by 6 percentage points, now standing at 19%.

Public Servants | Discussion

Across the judiciary, the armed forces and the higher education sector, graduates of Oxbridge and alumni of independent schools are over-represented. The top of the country's judiciary in particular is heavily dominated by private school and Oxbridge alumni. One of the reasons for this is likely to be the age of those holding such positions, reflecting patterns of entry into the profession from several decades ago, and the absence of term limits means that the pace of change is slow. Nonetheless, there remain many barriers for individuals aspiring to these roles. Most judges are barristers before they take up the position. However, a large proportion of barristers have been privately educated and have often attended prestigious universities. Looking at top barristers, those named in the Chambers UK list of the top 100 QCs in the country, in 2015 almost 71% had attended private school and almost 80% went to Oxbridge.⁸⁷ Data obtained by the Bar Standards Authority has also shown barristers are substantially more likely to have attended private school than the population at large.⁸⁸ Research looking at graduates of the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC), which barristers need to complete as part of their training, has shown that graduates whose parents have not been to university are roughly 33% less likely to obtain 'pupillage' (essentially training contracts) than graduates of the course who have a parent educated to degree level.⁸⁹

The Bar Standards Board has previously identified several possible barriers to access, including an expectation from some pupillage training organisations that applicants must have previously completed an unpaid "mini-pupillage" before they can apply, and the potential cost barriers for applicants to attend interviews.⁹⁰ Previous research carried out by the Sutton Trust found that internships in the legal sector have some of the lowest levels of open advertisement, and a high level of the use of personal contacts to secure placements.⁹¹ Indeed the Legal Services Board have raised issues with both the cost of training and of unpaid and unadvertised pupillages as a barrier to the profession (although such unpaid placements have now been banned by the Bar Standards Board, so should no longer be taking place).⁹² While the Courts and Tribunals Judiciary do publish statistics each year on the backgrounds of court judges, these figures do not include any measures of their socio-economic background.⁹³

Turning to the army, while top positions are less dominated by Oxbridge alumni than other sectors, individuals who attended private schools are highly over-represented at the top of the military. We know very little about socio-economic diversity in routes to top officer positions in the army, and while the Ministry of Defence do publish data on gender,

ethnicity, age, religion and sexual orientation in the armed forces,⁹⁴ they do not currently publish information on socio-economic background.

Particularly concerning however, are the vast discrepancies in education between the higher and lower ranks of the military, with the Sutton Trust's Leading People report pointing out that just 17% of army recruits were reported to have achieved above a C in GCSE English, compared to 45% of school leavers.⁹⁵ The army has also recently been criticised for the large amounts of taxpayer money being spent on sending officers' children to elite private schools, an issue that looks particularly stark given the over-representation of the privately educated at the top of the country's military.⁹⁶

The process of change in the army is likely to take a long time, as the army recruits junior soldiers and officers, and then develops those individuals internally. Therefore, if intakes diversify now, it will take a long time to feed into senior levels. The army should also look at potential barriers for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds to rise to the top of the military, including routes from soldier level to officer level, to ensure they have an equal opportunity to do so. It should also be noted that army officers do not require a degree, and the army pays for individuals to earn a degree while they serve, which may also help to open up opportunities for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.⁹⁷

While the government has recently increased the number of cadet units in schools in more deprived areas, which aim to develop skills, including leadership, likely to be sought after at higher levels within the army,⁹⁸ the Combined Cadet Force remains dominated by independent schools. Concerns have also been raised as to the cadet model as a recruiting tool in schools.⁹⁹

While much more representative of the educational backgrounds of the population than top judges or army officers, Vice Chancellors are also unrepresentative. While there is a large amount of focus in the media on who goes to study at university, much less scrutiny is given to who goes on to study for PhDs and then can take up an academic position. Working in academia increasingly requires working on precarious short-term contracts and moving frequently, both across the UK and internationally, all of which may act as barriers for academics from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Working-class academics have also spoken out publicly about feelings of alienation and a perception of having outsider status within universities.¹⁰⁰

Case Study

Mouhssin Ismail

Former lawyer



I was educated in a state comprehensive school in Ilford, East London. My interest in becoming a lawyer was cultivated by my English teacher and during my time as a lawyer in a City firm, I received fantastic support

and training. However, I began to realise there are few lawyers who worked for high profile city firms that came from a similar background to mine. It also became apparent there was a difference in the quality of my 'education', which at times led me to question whether I actually 'fitted in.' In particular, my affluent peers had an appreciation of the arts, fine dining and theatre which I had not been exposed to as a young person. When I compared my own home life to my more privileged peers, I noticed there were very little discussions about politics, philosophy or the arts. School was seen as the sole place where learning took place. This leads to young people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds being left behind academically (defined in its broadest terms), socially and culturally because they do not possess the 'powerful knowledge' which is taught in more privileged circles.

It is against this background that I made the difficult decision to leave the legal profession and return to the area I grew up in to support and prepare students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access high profile career paths. There are great initiatives that

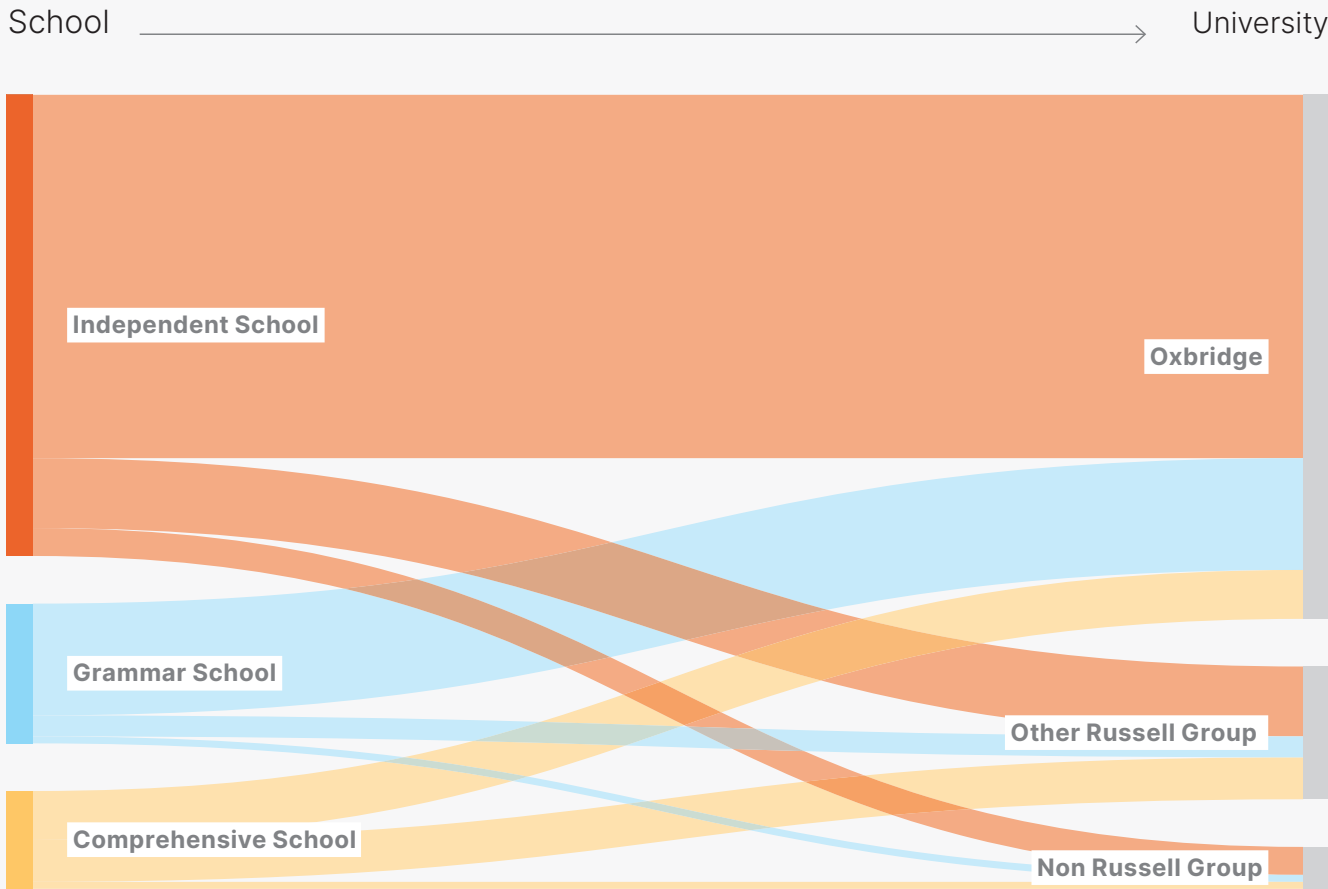
attempt to demystify law, but the legal profession continues to be extremely difficult to enter and there is much to be done if the perception of law being an elitist profession is to be eradicated.

We need to start by raising the bar of what we expect a primary, secondary and sixth form student to achieve within the state sector. Professionals should constantly be asking themselves whether their most academic students are able to compete with their peers in high performing independent or grammar schools and whether their curriculum is rigorous enough. We should provide young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with the same quality of education that students from a selective independent or grammar school receive. This has to begin with getting the basics right at primary school in maths and English as well as establishing the type of work ethic that parents from middle class backgrounds instil in their children from a very young age. We also need to teach our students knowledge that is valued and is necessary to access and progress within these professions.

There is also a role for law firms, who I am pleased to say have taken it upon themselves to introduce initiatives that seek to 'uplift' young people from disadvantaged areas in the hope of encouraging more credible applications from students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The key is not to lower the bar for less privileged students but to be clear about what they need to succeed and then develop a curriculum that provides these students with the knowledge and skills required.

The Educational Pathways of Senior Judges

In each section through the report, we have taken a look at the educational pathways of a key profession in more detail. The following figure displays the pathways taken by senior judges, with the size of the 'flow' representing the size of each group. On the left side of the graph we see which schools they attended. The flows from left to right then represent the pathways taken from those in each type of school to university.



The majority of senior judges (52%) attended both an independent school and one of Oxford or Cambridge, by some margin the highest in the report. Grammar school to Oxbridge was the next most common pathway (16%). 7% of senior judges came from comprehensives via Oxbridge, with another 6% through other Russell Group universities. A very small proportion came from non-Russell Group institutions, mostly those who had previously been privately educated.

6. Local Government

Attended Independent School

On average **16%** attended independent schools

Police Chiefs and PCCs | **24%**



Local Government Leaders | **20%**



Local Government CEOs | **9%**



General Population | **7%**



Attended Oxbridge

On average **6%** attended Oxbridge

Police Chiefs and PCCs | **13%**



Local Government CEOs | **5%**



Local Government Leaders | **5%**



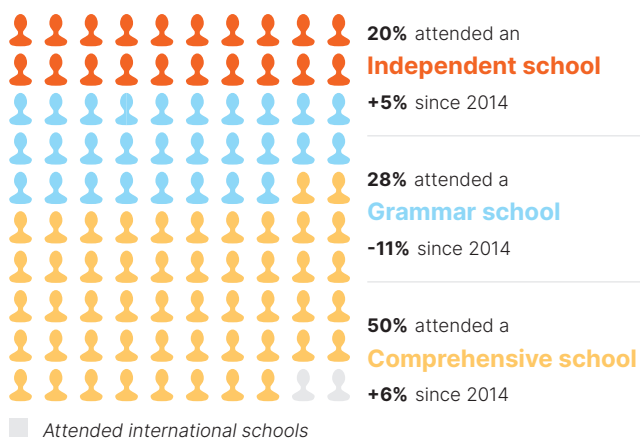
General Population | **<1%**



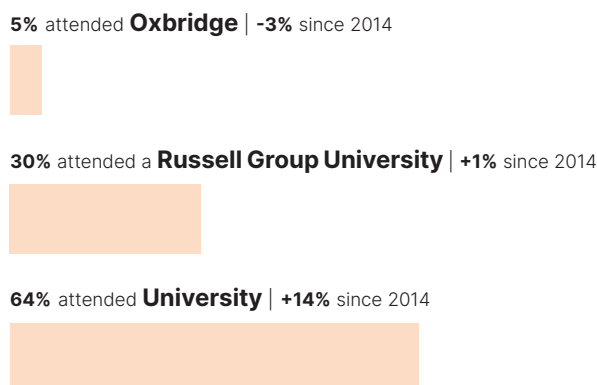
Local Government

Local Government | Local Government Leaders

School attendance



University attendance



Council leaders provide political leadership and set the strategic direction of the local council. They chair council meetings, distribute executive portfolios and work together with the council's staff to deliver their vision for the area. They need to be selected by their local parties, first to be elected as councillors, and then by their fellow councillors to become council leader. The next section looks at local council leaders in England, to allow comparisons with data from 2014.

Councils have responsibility for the delivery of a wide variety of services, including social care, many schools, housing, libraries, planning and waste collection. The decisions made by local councils are important to the lives of people across the country, and as is the case with nationally elected politicians, it is important that they are reflective of the communities they serve.

School and university backgrounds

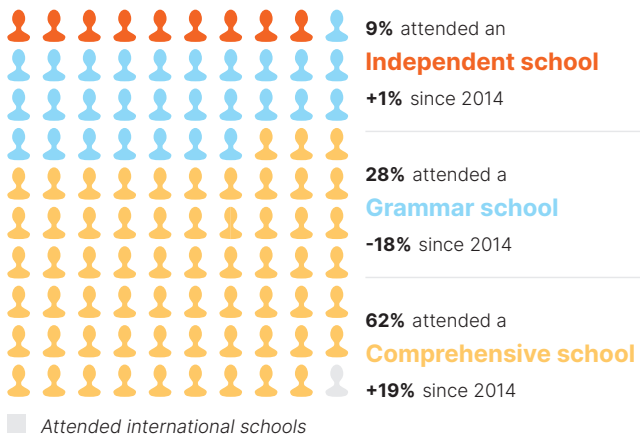
While national politics is among the most socially exclusive of sectors, local government is very different,

with the proportions attending elite institutions among the lowest of any of the areas included in this report. However, despite this, council leaders are still almost three times as likely to have attended an independent school than the population as a whole (20%). Going against the trend in many other sectors, this figure has recently increased, up from 15% in 2014. Only half of local council leaders attended a comprehensive school, a figure which has risen slightly (6 percentage points) since 2014. Grammar school attendance, while high at 28%, has been squeezed, having fallen by 11 percentage points since 2014.

In contrast to many of the other sectors examined in the report, over a third (36%) of local council leaders did not attend university. However, as with many other elected positions, a larger proportion now attended university than did in 2014, when the figure was 50%. None of the local council leaders we found information for attended university outside of the UK. Only a small proportion (5%) attended Oxbridge, down by 3 percentage points since 2014.

Local Government | Local Government CEOs

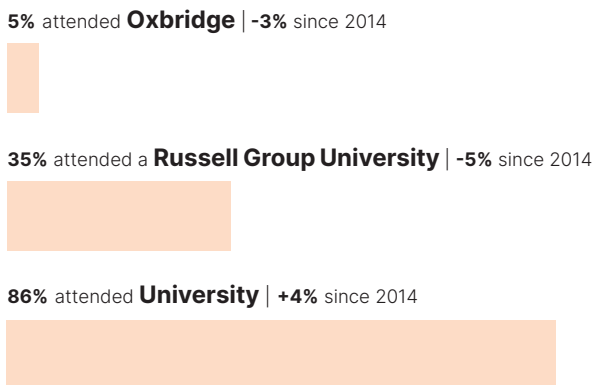
School attendance



Local council chief executives manage the resources of the council to fulfil the goals set out by the council's leader. They also play a crucial role in providing leadership for council staff and, as with many of the other roles examined in this report, have the potential to play an important role in how diversity initiatives are implemented across the council as a whole. As with national civil servants, local council CEOs play an important role in advising local council leaders and running the day to day operations of the council.

Since the last report, many councils have removed their CEO roles when restructuring their senior leadership team and instead replaced them with several roles with responsibility over only a specific part of the council's work. For example, Bristol City Council, a few years after the introduction of a directly elected mayor, replaced its CEO with three directors, each of whom report directly to the mayor.¹⁰¹ However, the majority of councils retain a CEO or equivalent position. To allow comparisons to 2014, this is still the role examined here.

University attendance



School and university backgrounds

Only 9% of local council CEOs attended an independent school, broadly similar to the percentage who have done so in the country's population overall, and one of the lowest rates in this report. This makes council CEOs half as likely to have been to a private school than the electorally appointed council leaders.

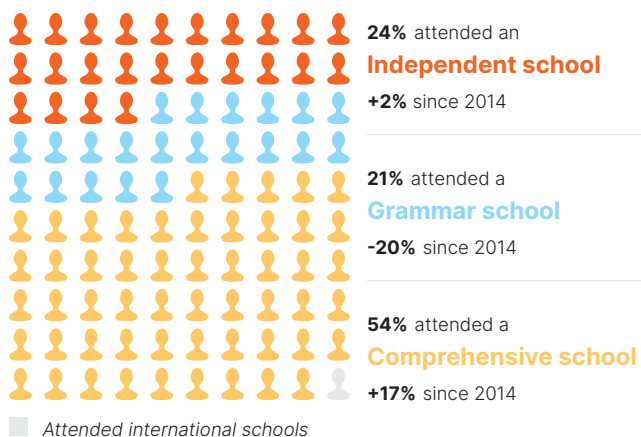
There has been a substantial drop in the proportion who attended a grammar school, falling from just under half (47%) to under a third (28%) since 2014. Correspondingly, the proportion who attended a comprehensive school has increased by a similar amount (19 percentage points) in the same period.

A sizable proportion (86%) of local council CEOs attended university. However, similarly to local council leaders, only a small percentage went to Oxbridge (5%), a figure which has also fallen since 2014. Just over a third of council CEOs attended one of the Russell Group universities, which has fallen slightly (by 5 percentage points).

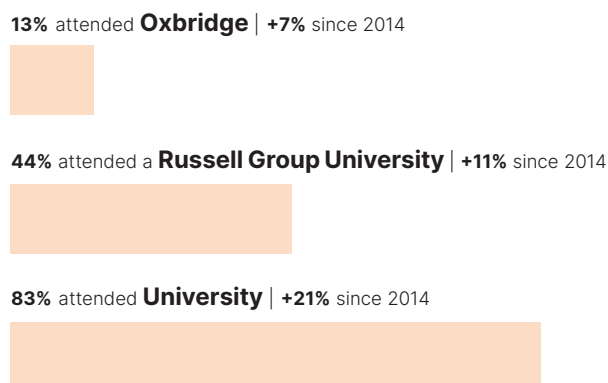
Local Government | Police Chiefs and PCCs



School attendance



University attendance



Chief Officers are the top police officers in their force. The phrase refers to the chief constable in most areas, but also covers other roles such as the Commissioner, and Deputy and Assistant Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police in London. They are responsible for leading police operations in their area. This section looks at chief constables and similar roles in England, Wales and Scotland.

The work of chief constables is overseen by Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), introduced by the coalition government in 2010 and first elected in 2012. PCCs have responsibility over how the police force is run in their area, including how the police budget is spent.¹⁰² PCCs are selected by political parties, who put forward candidates to run for the position. Turnout in elections to select PCCs has been low, with an average of just 27% of the electorate voting for the positions in 2016.¹⁰³ The role of PCC exists in England in Wales but does not exist in the rest of the UK.

Both chief constables and PCCs play important roles in shaping policing in their area, making who fills these positions an important issue for how policing is delivered and the force's relationship with their local community. Forces have been criticised extensively for not looking like the communities that they serve, especially regarding the representation of those from ethnic minority backgrounds;¹⁰⁴ who are more likely to be from lower socio-economic backgrounds and live in areas where crime is more prevalent.¹⁰⁵

Research by the National Centre for Social Research identified that efforts to increase diversity across the police force, to ensure they look more like the communities they serve, have not made progress due to a lack of buy-in from senior officers. Chief constables and Commissioners can play pivotal roles in this effort.¹⁰⁶

School and university backgrounds

Just over half (54%) of Chief Officers and PCCs attended comprehensive schools, a figure which has gone up substantially since 2014, increasing by 17 percentage points. Most of this rise has been due to a decrease in the proportion of those at the top of the police who went to grammar schools, which while still relatively high at 21%, has had a large decrease from 42% in 2014.

Almost a quarter (24%) of Chief Officers and PCCs attended a private school, a proportion much higher than in the population overall. This figure has also increased slightly since 2014.

Looking at the two groups separately, elected PCCs were found to be more likely to be privately educated than Chief Officers. Of PCCs, 29% were privately educated, 29% attended grammar schools, and only 40% attended comprehensives. In contrast, 19% of Chief Officers attended private schools, only 14% went to a grammar, and a much larger proportion (67%) attended a comprehensive school.

Most Chief Officers and PCCs have been to university (83%), which has increased substantially since 2014 when only 62% had done so. Just under half have been to a Russell Group university and 13% went to Oxbridge. Attendance at Russell Group institutions has increased substantially, by 11 percentage points, since 2014. The proportion of Chief Officers and PCCs who attended Oxbridge has more than doubled, standing at just 6% in 2014. In contrast to their school backgrounds, Chief Officers were around twice as likely as PCCs to have attended Oxbridge or another Russell Group institution.

Local Government | Discussion

Top roles in local government, particularly local government CEOs, are some of the most educationally representative of the sectors examined in this report. However, local government leaders, PCCs and Constables still look different to the populations they represent and serve.

The positions in this section may better reflect the population overall because of their locations. Previous research has shown that people from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to move away

“We risk local government becoming the exclusive preserve of a privileged few who have the luxury of time and money to spare”

for university, and those who do are more likely to return to their home region after graduation.¹⁰⁷ Roles like those looked at in this section, which are spread across the country, with their work focused on the local communities in which they are based, are perhaps unsurprisingly more diverse than sectors largely based in London and other metropolitan areas.

Issues remain however. There are several potential barriers for individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds looking to stand as representatives in local councils. Councillors do not receive a salary, but instead receive a ‘member’s allowance’, which should cover the time and expenses they have incurred doing council business, and anyone who holds additional responsibilities (for example, the Leader of the Council, portfolio holders, scrutiny chairs and opposition leaders) will also receive a responsibility allowance for these duties. However, concerns have been raised that the amount local councillors are given as an allowance may be a barrier for access.¹⁰⁸

Other potential financial barriers include councillors not being given enough money to cover care for dependents, and councillors having no right to remuneration during parental leave. These issues are likely to effect women especially, but particularly those women without financial resources to cover the cost themselves.¹⁰⁹ In 2014, councillors lost access to the Local Government Pension scheme, a move which the Local Government Association warned would “risk local government becoming the exclusive preserve of a privileged few who have the luxury of time and money to spare”.¹¹⁰ Finally, although employers are

legally required to allow councillors time off work to fulfil their duties (albeit unpaid), some councils have been criticised for holding meetings during working hours, a barrier for anyone who needs to hold down a job alongside their role as a councillor.¹¹¹

In this report, we have not been able to look at the wider group of councillors from which leaders are chosen. There are roughly 20,000 councillors in England and it is not clear whether council leaders are more or less representative than councillors as a whole. So questions remain as to where the barriers lie, and whether the major issues are in becoming a council leader or whether they instead lie in becoming a councillor in the first place. Further work to look at the backgrounds of councillors more generally would be of help in answering that question, along with extending the analysis across the rest of the UK.

Generally, roles in local government are put under much less scrutiny than positions in national government. Local and PCC elections have low levels of turn-out and voter engagement. However, without data and attention, it is unlikely these positions will become more representative. If local political parties were to start to monitor the socio-economic background of their council and PCC candidates, they would be much better placed to identify issues and put in place initiatives to improve diversity.



Case Study

Tina Redshaw

British Ambassador to Cambodia



I grew up in Denton, a village in East Sussex. My dad was a salesman for a local carpet company, later moving up to become a manager there. My mum was a seamstress before becoming a housewife for most of my childhood. Neither

of my parents had been to university themselves. I attended a local comprehensive school, before going to York University to study Language and Linguistics.

My entry into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was not through the traditional route, which is applying to the graduate scheme straight or soon after leaving university. At the time, I just didn't consider the FCO as a place to work, I hadn't seen it as a possibility. Looking back, I don't think I would have been selected, I wasn't ready at the time, nor had I considered a civil service career.

After university, I went to Nanjing, China on a British Council Scholarship. On return, I worked in the field of British Chinese relations, which included going back to China to work as Country Director for the organisation Voluntary Service Overseas. From there, I was promoted to become the Regional Director for Southeast Asia, and when in that role I saw that the FCO were advertising to recruit mid-career professionals with language skills and overseas experience. I applied and after a long recruitment process was offered a job.

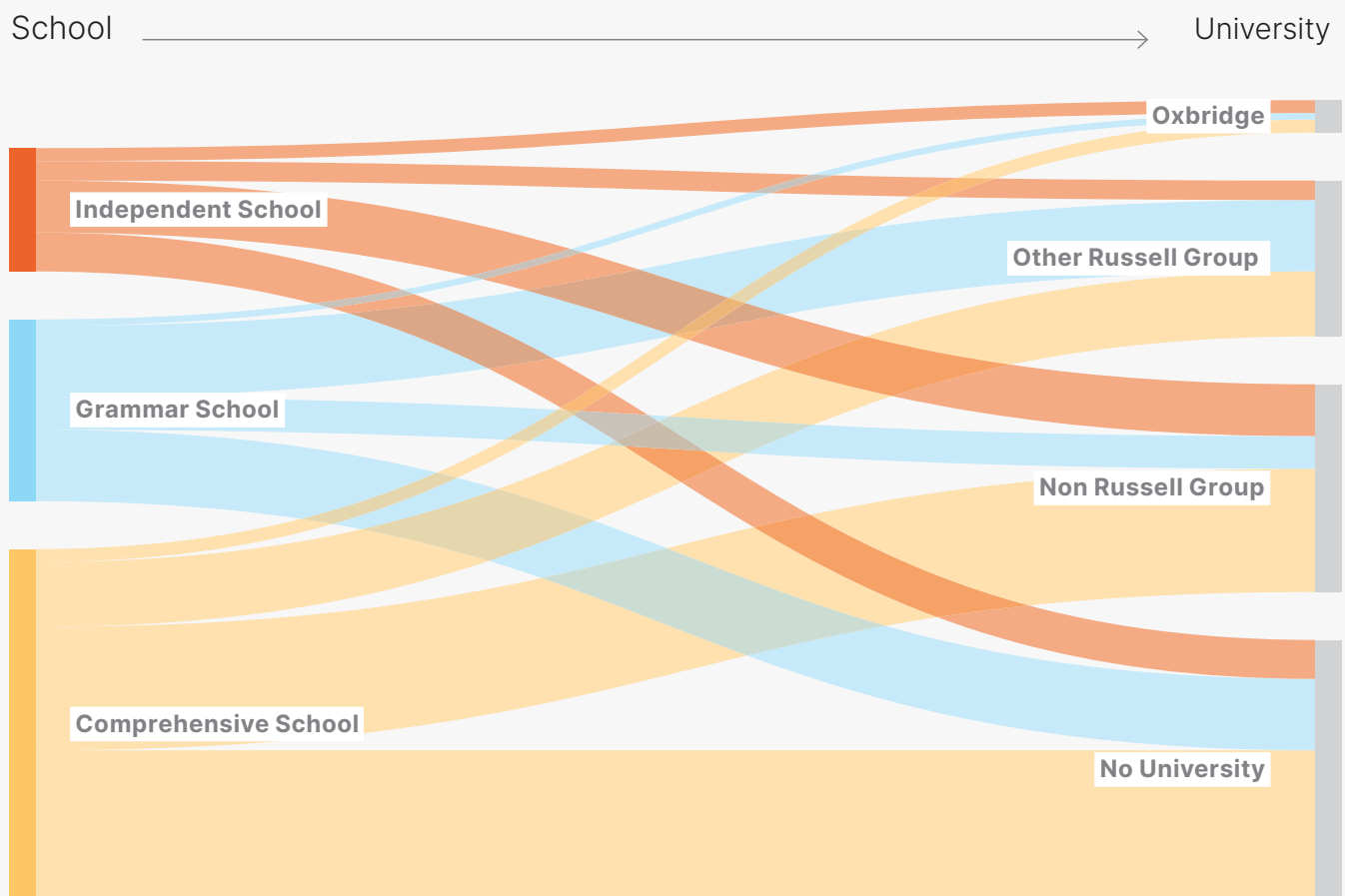
I think that the FCO is in the main open to people from all backgrounds, and throughout my career I have worked with a variety of people from different sorts of backgrounds. But at the very top there is still, in my view, amongst a small but vocal minority something of a sense of the 'old boy's network', although this is improving as more women get into the top jobs. At leadership events within the FCO, a small group of men appear to think it's ok to take up all of the speaking space. You would hope they would be a bit more diplomatic at times!

Ensuring the FCO is representative of the population in terms of gender and ethnicity is discussed frequently, and changes are being made, but I've rarely heard people discuss someone's educational background. I'm aware of fairly large numbers of Oxbridge graduates across the organisation but far less sighted about who might have attended private schools.

I think that my background has helped in my professional life to keep me grounded. It has certainly helped me to relate to people from all backgrounds, both overseas and in UK. This is important for a job that is all about relationship building. When I joined the Foreign Office, it was the first time the organisation had ever recruited people mid-career, and the cohort who joined the FCO with me was very mixed. I think that having the opportunity to move into an organisation like the FCO part the way through your career is definitely important for ensuring diversity. Now, there aren't the same opportunities for mid-career professions to enter the FCO in the way that I did, and competition for places on their graduate scheme is as hot now as it always has been.

The Educational Pathways of Council Leaders

In each section through the report, we have taken a look at the educational pathways of a key profession in more detail. The following figure displays the pathways taken by local government leaders, with the size of the 'flow' representing the size of each group. On the left side of the graph we see which schools they attended. The flows from left to right then represent the pathways taken from those in each type of school to university.



The pathways of local government leaders look substantially different to other categories in the report. The biggest group is formed of those who ended their education after comprehensive school (23%). One in five (19%) attended a comprehensive followed by a non-Russell Group university, similar to politicians in Westminster, with both sets of politicians showing much higher numbers from this group than other elite professions. Just 2% came from independent schools and Oxbridge, the most common route among the elite as a whole. Grammar school alumni attending other Russell Group universities, or attending no university at all (both 11%) were also common pathways into local government leadership.

7. Influential Women

Attended Independent School

Baronesses | 62%



Female Diplomats | 57%



Female Senior Judges | 50%



Women in News Media | 44%



Influential Female Leaders | 43%



Female Newspaper Columnists | 38%



Female Public Body Chairs | 32%



Female MPs | 24%



Female Local Government Leaders: | 18%



General Population | 7%



Attended Oxbridge

Female Senior Judges | 52%



Women in News Media | 50%



Female Diplomats | 40%



Female Newspaper Columnists | 34%



Influential Female Leaders | 23%



Baronesses | 23%



Female Public Body Chairs | 22%



Female MPs | 20%



Female Local Government Leaders: | 3%



General Population | <1%



Influential Women

Introduction

Across several of the sections examined in this report, women are substantially under-represented. Women make up only 5% of FTSE 350 CEOs, 8% of tech firm CEOs, 16% of local government leaders, 24% of senior judges, 26% of permanent secretaries and 35% of top diplomats; the gender composition of most 'elite' professions in the UK does not match the population overall. Many individual women, despite a large amount of talent and hard work, are not able to reach the top of their professions at the same rate as their equally qualified male counterparts. This can have serious consequences for women more generally, as issues that affect women specifically can often be overlooked by decision makers at the top of the sectors examined here, including politicians, business leaders and those working in the media.

Importantly, the limits that women experience due to their gender do not act in isolation but can also intersect with the challenges and obstacles which come from other parts of their identity, including socio-economic background. Indeed, women from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to move up the social ladder, while men are more likely to remain at the top.¹¹² And if women do get to the top, those from less advantaged backgrounds face a double pay gap, both for their gender, and for their socio-economic background. In the top professions, the gender pay gap is around £10,000 year, and the socio-economic pay gap is £6,400. However, the pay gap in these professions between the most privileged men and the least privileged women is a huge £18,900, over £2,000 more than the two gaps added together.¹¹³

Previous research has also shown that men experience a direct advantage from being privately educated, in the form of increased earnings, above and beyond that explained by their higher educational attainment alone when compared to their comprehensively educated counterparts. The same is not however true for women, who if privately educated do not receive the same additional non-qualification related earnings boost.¹¹⁴

Clearly, gender and socio-economic background together play an important role in someone's ability to reach the top. It is important that the effort to improve social mobility is as inclusive as possible. Given that gender and socio-economic background serve as a double disadvantage, it is vital we look at ways to tackle both issues in combination. This section looks at the educational background of women in the top professions in two ways. First, by looking specifically at the women in many of the other top professions featured elsewhere in this report. Secondly, by looking at a group of the UK's most influential female leaders.

Sections

- 71 Women in the top professions
- 72 Influential female leaders
- 73 Discussion
- 74 The Educational Pathways of Influential Women

Women | Women in the top professions

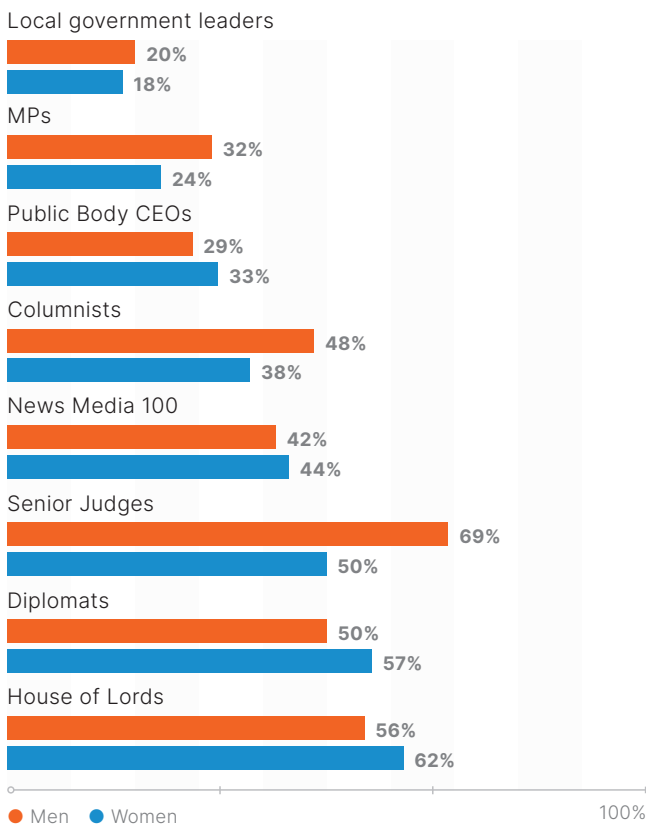
Many of the professions we have looked at in this report have very low levels of female representation. In many cases, including tech firms, FTSE 350 CEOs and popular musicians, there are so few women that we cannot robustly look at breakdowns by gender and educational background.

For the professions where such breakdowns are possible, the picture in terms of schooling is not straightforward. In several professions, men at the top of the sector are more likely to be privately educated than their female counterparts. Male senior judges are 19 percentage points more likely to have attended a private school than their female counterparts, male newspaper columnists 10 percentage points and male MPs 8 percentage points more likely. Conversely, in other professions women are more likely to be privately educated. Female diplomats are 7 percentage points more likely to be privately educated than their male counterparts, and in the House of Lords, Baronesses are 6 percentage points

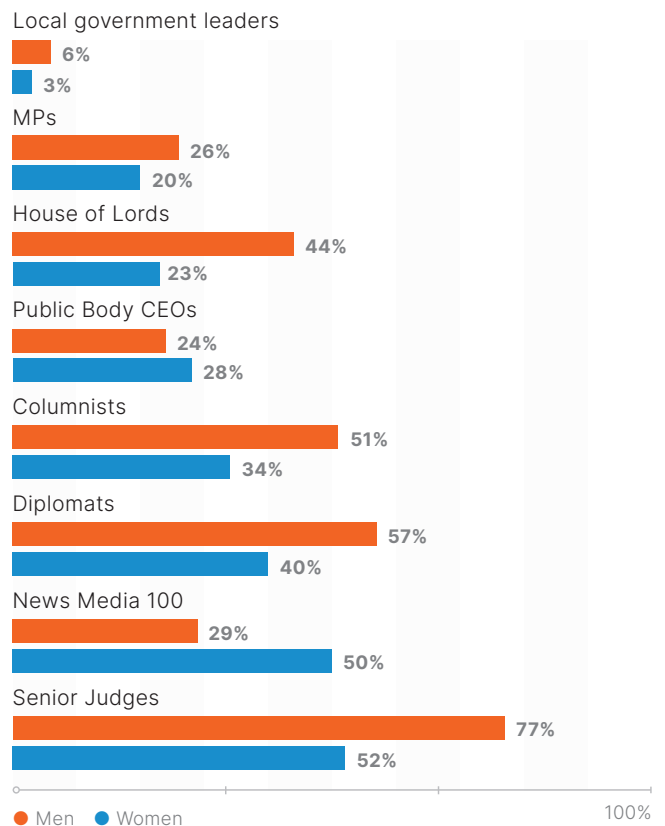
more likely to have been to private school than Lords. However, it should be noted that where women are more likely to have attended an independent school, the gaps are not as large as those seen in some of the professions where men are more likely. Given this mixed picture, it is difficult to discern whether such patterns are meaningful, or statistical noise.

The picture at university level is clearer. Across a variety of the professions examined in this report, women are less likely to have attended Oxbridge than their male counterparts. Female judges are 25 percentage points less likely to have attended Oxbridge than male judges, Baronesses 21 percentage points less likely than Lords, female newspaper columnists and diplomats 17 percentage points less and female MPs 6 percentage points less likely to have attended Oxbridge. Similarly, although local government leaders have a very low rate of Oxbridge attendance, women in these roles are still half as likely (3% vs 6%) to have attended Oxbridge than men in the same positions.

Independent Schools

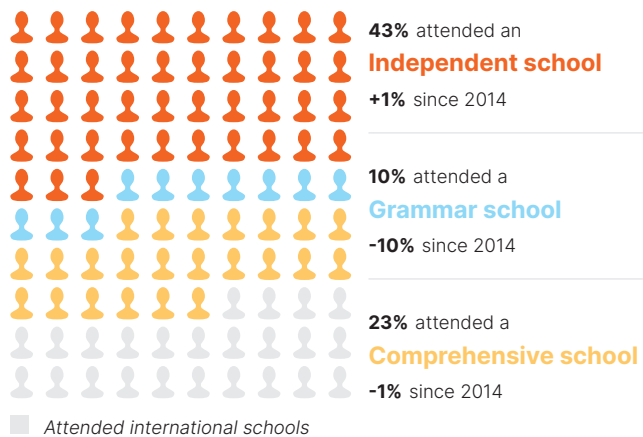


Oxbridge

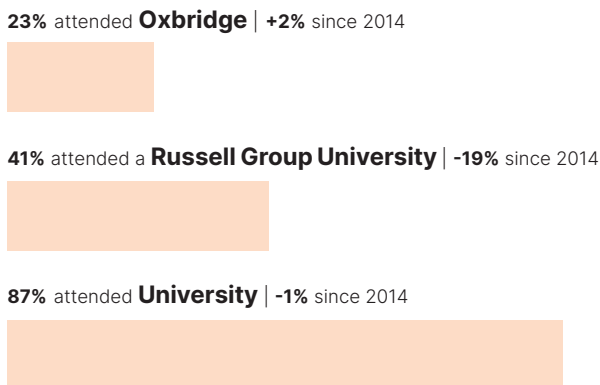


Women | Influential female leaders

School attendance



University attendance



The 2014 edition of *Elitist Britain* looked at the educational background of women included in the BBC's *Woman's Hour* 2013 woman's power list, which included leading women from a wide range of sectors. There is unfortunately no equivalent list of influential women now available, as the *Women's Hour* list changes in scope and purpose from year to year. Instead, this section looks at a similar list put together by *Harper's Bazaar*, featuring the UK's 150 most influential female leaders across a range of sectors, very similar to those looked at in 2014. This list also has some crossover with women in other sections of this report.

School and university background

Almost half of the group of influential women examined in this report attended an independent school (43%), with little change since 2014. This is close to the average for all professions across this report, but over six times the population at large. Although it should be kept in mind that differences in this section may be due to changes in methodology since 2014, the proportion of influential women who attended grammar

school has, as with many of the other groups looked at in this report, decreased in that time from 20% to 10%. However, the reduction in grammar school attendance has not, as was the case in many other sections of this report, been accompanied by an increase in women educated at comprehensive schools. The proportion who went to a comprehensive is just 23%.

The majority of influential women included in this report went to university (87%). The 2019 list has more members educated abroad than the 2014 list however, 21% in 2019, compared to 10% in the previous list.

Almost a quarter (23%) of the influential women in this section went to Oxbridge, a figure that has increased slightly since 2014, despite the increased proportion having studied internationally. The proportion who went to a Russell Group university has however decreased, from 60% in 2014 to 41% now.

Among those educated domestically, 17% of influential women took the independent school to Oxbridge pathway, less than many other sectors, with substantial proportions of those from independent schools attending non-Russell Group universities, or no university at all. 11% came from a comprehensive and non-Russell Group background.

Women | Discussion

Women are under-represented across the top professions examined in this report. While barriers that women face in the workplace have been examined in detail in a large body of literature, much less work has been done on the interaction between gender and socio-economic background.

For the women who do make it to the top, their journeys do not always look like the men who have done the same. The starkest difference in many sectors is fewer women having attended Oxbridge compared to their male counterparts. Although Oxford and Cambridge both started admitting women as full members in the 1920s, women made up only 10% of students at Cambridge and 15% at Oxford in the mid-1950s. This rose only gradually and still stood at just 19%

“Barriers include the high costs of childcare and the interaction of both sexist as well as classist attitudes around professional success and leadership.”

at Oxford and 13% at Cambridge in the 1970s, around 40% at both in the 1990s, and eventually reached parity in the early 2000s.¹¹⁵ This lack of access to the prestige and connections gained by those attending Oxbridge will have no doubt influenced some of the disparities seen here, and this change just may not yet have fed through to the top of these professions.

There are other factors which may differ between senior men and women. For example, women may be newer entrants to these roles, as gender diversity has improved, and therefore be younger on average than their male counterparts; or alternatively some may take longer to reach these roles due to career breaks, and therefore be older.

Importantly, evidence from the US suggests that the impact of socio-economic background and gender is not limited to the elite professions, but occurs at all levels; finding that women are at a higher risk of being downwardly mobile than men across the income spectrum, and that women find it harder to escape from the bottom income group if they are born to parents in that group. While only 35% of men born to parents in this bracket remain there themselves, 47% of women do.¹¹⁶

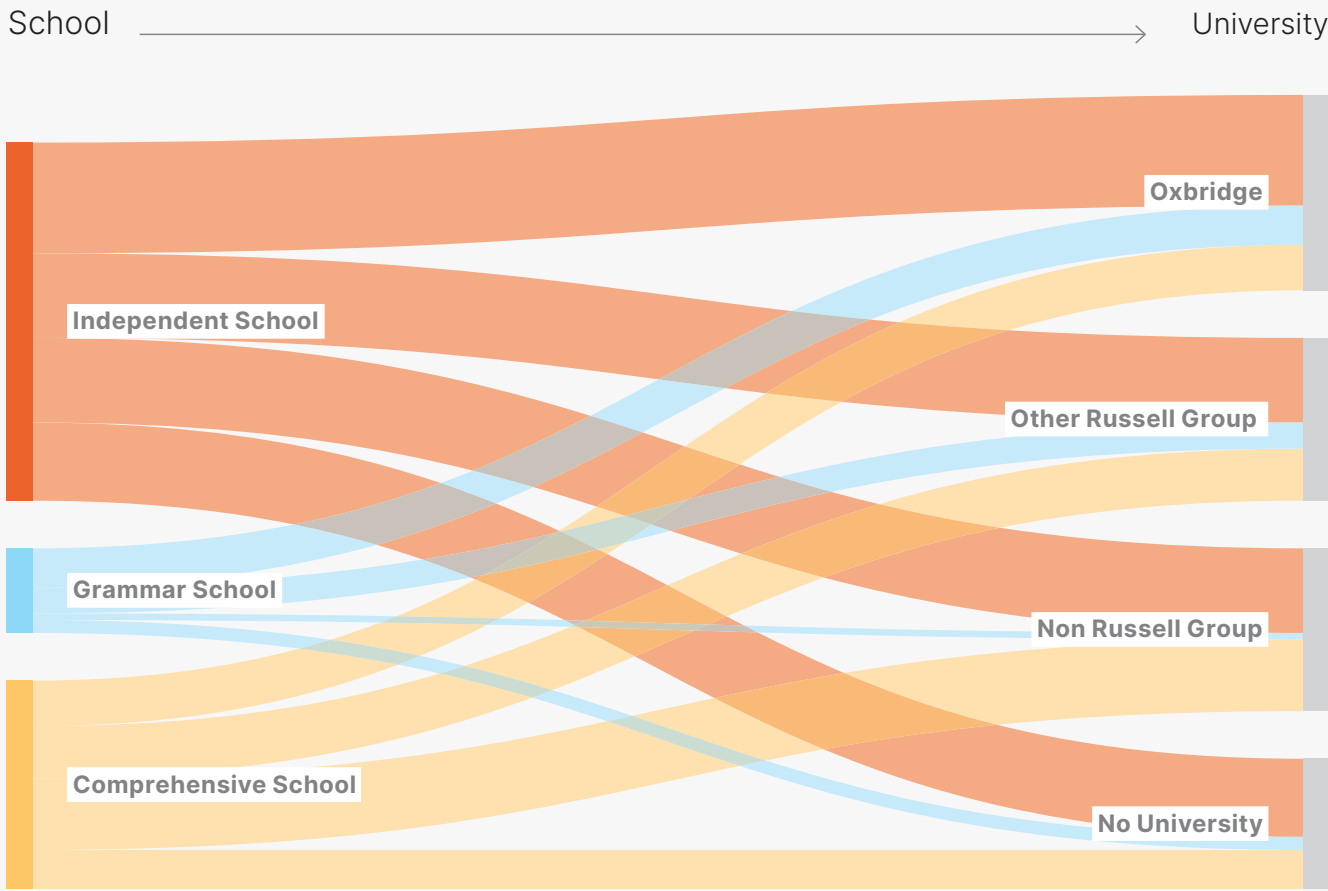
Clearly, more work is needed to look in detail at the ways in which socio-economic background and gender can interact to hold a woman back on her way to the top. Potential issues include the high costs of childcare and the interaction of both sexist as well as classist attitudes and expectations around professional success and leadership. Tackling these issues may help to break down barriers for women's progression in the professions. Childcare specifically is a challenge, not just because women tend to shoulder most of the childcare in families, but it is a particular issue for single parents (who are more likely to be women) with only one income to cover these costs while either working or in training.¹¹⁷

Looking in more detail at training at all levels, apprenticeships are an important vehicle for social mobility, but women face some specific challenges in accessing them. Research carried out by the Young Women's Trust found that apprentices with children are more likely to report financial difficulties, and that many report experiencing maternity discrimination during their apprenticeships.¹¹⁸ At all levels, women face potential barriers where challenges due to their gender and economic background converge.

Many of the industry specific challenges facing individuals discussed in other chapters are in many cases likely to be magnified for women. For example, in the politics section we discussed the high personal cost of standing as an MP, including lost earnings and the cost of travel to attend events. However, for many women this cost is likely to be higher, due to the need to pay for childcare. Women are more likely to be in low paid work with inflexible hours, additional issues that make it harder to stand as a candidate because of the interaction of their gender and socio-economic background. Additionally, work by the Fawcett Society, a gender equality charity, has found that female MPs are more likely to have had multiple roles typically associated with the professional path to become an MP than men, perhaps to help them to form the networks needed to stand, which they are less likely to have than men.¹¹⁹ As discussed earlier in this report, access to these roles often requires unpaid work in an MPs' office to secure. If women rely on this professional route into politics more often, and there are financial barriers to access this route, it's likely to have a larger impact on women from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The Educational Pathways of Influential Women

In each section through the report, we have taken a look at the educational pathways of a key profession in more detail. The following figure displays the pathways taken by influential women educated in Britain, with the size of the 'flow' representing the size of each group. On the left side of the graph we see which schools they attended. The flows from left to right then represent the pathways taken from those in each type of school to university.



The group of influential female leaders were largely typical of the elite group overall. 17% had found success through the independent school to Oxbridge pathway, 30% including other Russell Group institutions. 7% attended a comprehensive followed by Oxbridge. One major feature is the number of those privately educated who did not attend university (13%). More comprehensively educated women in the influential group had come through non-Russell Group universities (11% of the total) than through the Russell Group.

8. Creative Industries

Attended Independent School

On average **29%** attended independent schools

Richest in TV, Film and Music | **38%**



Popular Music | **20%**



General Population | **7%**



Attended Oxbridge

On average **4%** attended Oxbridge

Richest in TV, Film and Music | **6%**



Popular Music | **2%**



General Population | **<1%**

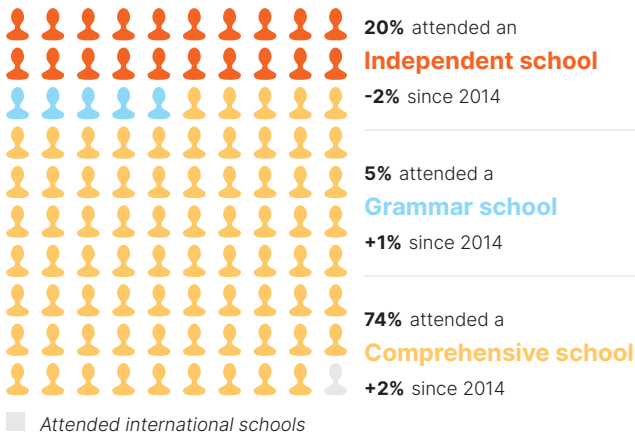


Creative Industries

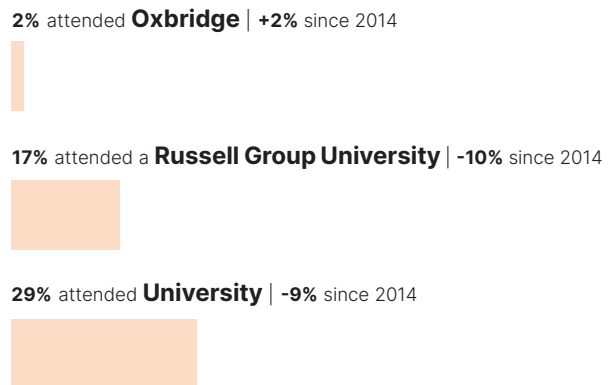
Creative Industries | Popstars



School attendance



University attendance



This section looks at solo artists and band members who have had a UK top 40 album over the last four years. Popularity here is determined by album sales, downloads and streams, and we have looked only at artists who are either from the UK or are primarily based here.

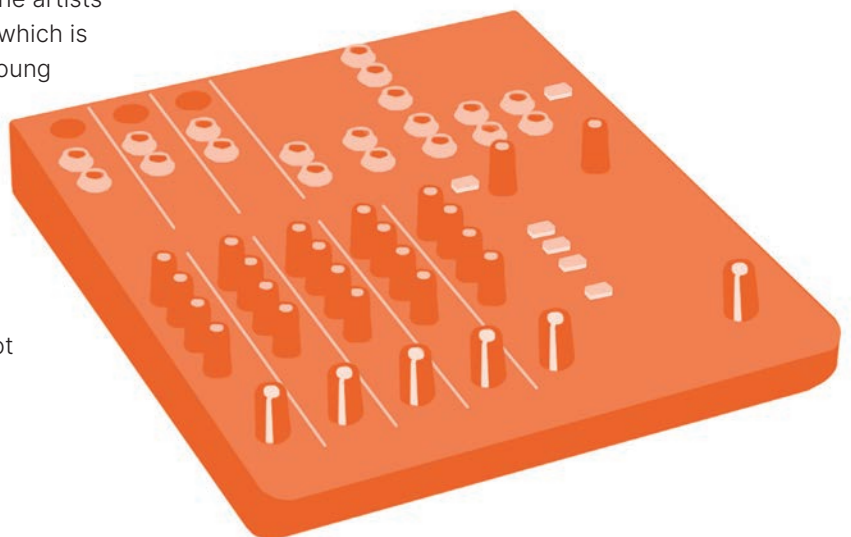
School and university background

The proportion of popular musicians examined here who attended a private school is relatively small compared to many of the other sections examined in this report, at 20%. However, this is still almost three times the proportion of the general population who attended a fee-paying school.

A relatively large proportion attended a comprehensive school (74%). Very few of the artists examined here went to a grammar school, which is likely in large part to reflect the relatively young ages of most big name acts in popular music. Most of the artists included here are in their 20s or 30s, so will have all attended school after grammar schools were abolished in most parts of the UK. These figures have all remained steady since the previous edition of *Elitist Britain*.

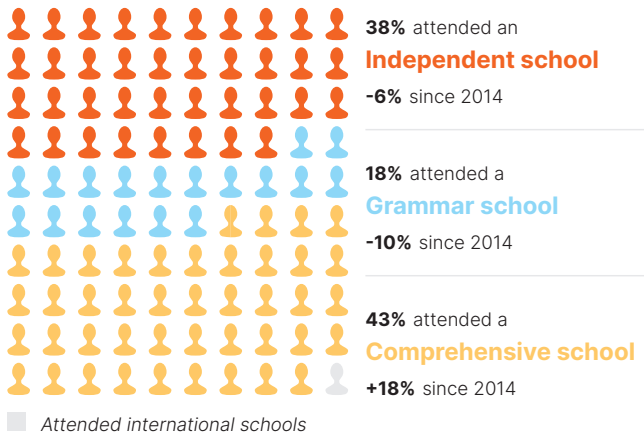
Most popular musicians in our list did not

attend university; just under a third attended (29%). This figure has dropped in the last five years, falling by 9 percentage points. Many musicians become famous at a relatively young age or spend a great amount of time in their early adulthood pursuing their career, which may explain why such a large proportion did not attend university. Given the small numbers of these musicians going to university, the proportion who attended the Russell Group (17%) and Oxbridge (2%) are also relatively low. In contrast to many other sectors, the most common educational pathway was comprehensive attendance followed by no university (65%).

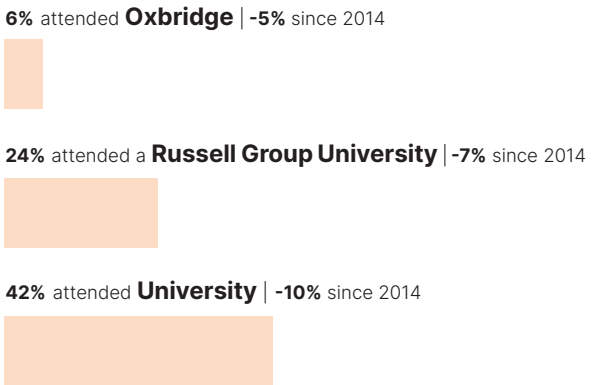


Creative Industries | TV, Film and Music

School attendance



University attendance



Next, we look at the richest individuals in TV, film and music, as determined by the Sunday Times Rich List. Many of those included here will have been in their industry for a long time, so this reflects more established stars in these fields, and is less likely to change substantially over time. However, there are a mix of ages included here, with some crossover with currently popular artists in our top album artists section.

School and university background

A large proportion of the country's richest musicians, film and television stars were privately educated (38%), although this figure has gone down by 6 percentage points since the last edition of Elitist Britain. There has also been a fall in the proportion who attended grammar school, which at just under a fifth has fallen by 10 percentage points. As the proportion attending independent and grammar schools has reduced,

correspondingly the proportion who attended a comprehensive had gone up, now at just under half (43%), but still very different to the population at large.

The richest musicians were less likely to have attended an independent school than those who made their riches through TV and film (30% compared to 44%) and more likely to have attended a comprehensive (46% compared to 40%).

A large proportion of the richest people in music, TV and film did not attend university (58%), a figure which has actually increased by 10 percentage points since the 2014 report, in contrast to most other roles analysed in this report. Only a small proportion (6%) attended Oxbridge, a figure which has almost halved in the same time period.

Those who made their riches through TV and film were much more likely to have attended Oxbridge (9%) than those who did so through music (3%).

Creative Industries | Discussion

While we have only taken a small snapshot of the creative arts in this report, research by others has shown the impact of socio-economic background across these industries. Previous work by the Sutton Trust found that 67% of British Oscar winners and 42% of British BAFTA winners attended an independent school,¹²⁴ and research has found that individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds have been found to be over-represented across the arts, including in film, TV, radio, music, performance, visual arts and publishing.¹²⁵

Previous research by the Sutton Trust has found that unpaid internships are particularly common in the arts (including placements in theatre, TV, film, fashion and music) compared to other sectors, and it is common for interns in this sector to complete several internships, with 32% of interns having completed three or more. Working class young people were also found to be less likely to carry out internships in this sector, when compared to people from more affluent backgrounds.¹²⁶ This culture of unpaid work acts as a substantial barrier to those without the resources to subsidise their career.

“Working class actors report being typecast into certain parts and are not able to sustain the long periods of unemployment or free work required.”

Looking at acting specifically, there are many potential access issues throughout an aspiring actor's journey to the top. At secondary school level, concerns have been raised about the recent decline in the study of creative arts at GCSE and A-Level. Many have linked this trend to the narrowing of the curriculum at school, alongside school funding pressures. There have been impacts both on facilities within schools and opportunities such as theatre trips, where costs are a factor, especially if students live far away from a major cultural centre. After school, the major routes into the profession for top actors are usually either to attend Oxbridge or a top drama school.¹²⁷ We have spoken elsewhere in this report about access issues specific to Oxbridge, and concerns have also been raised about the application process for top drama schools such as RADA and LAMDA. Many of these charge application fees of around £50 each to apply (though some offer fee waivers to those from disadvantaged backgrounds), and there is no centralised application process as there are for undergraduate courses at university. Additionally,

less scrutiny is put on who gains a place at these institutions. While there is extensive data available for the background of university students through UCAS, the same is not true for students at top drama schools.¹²⁸

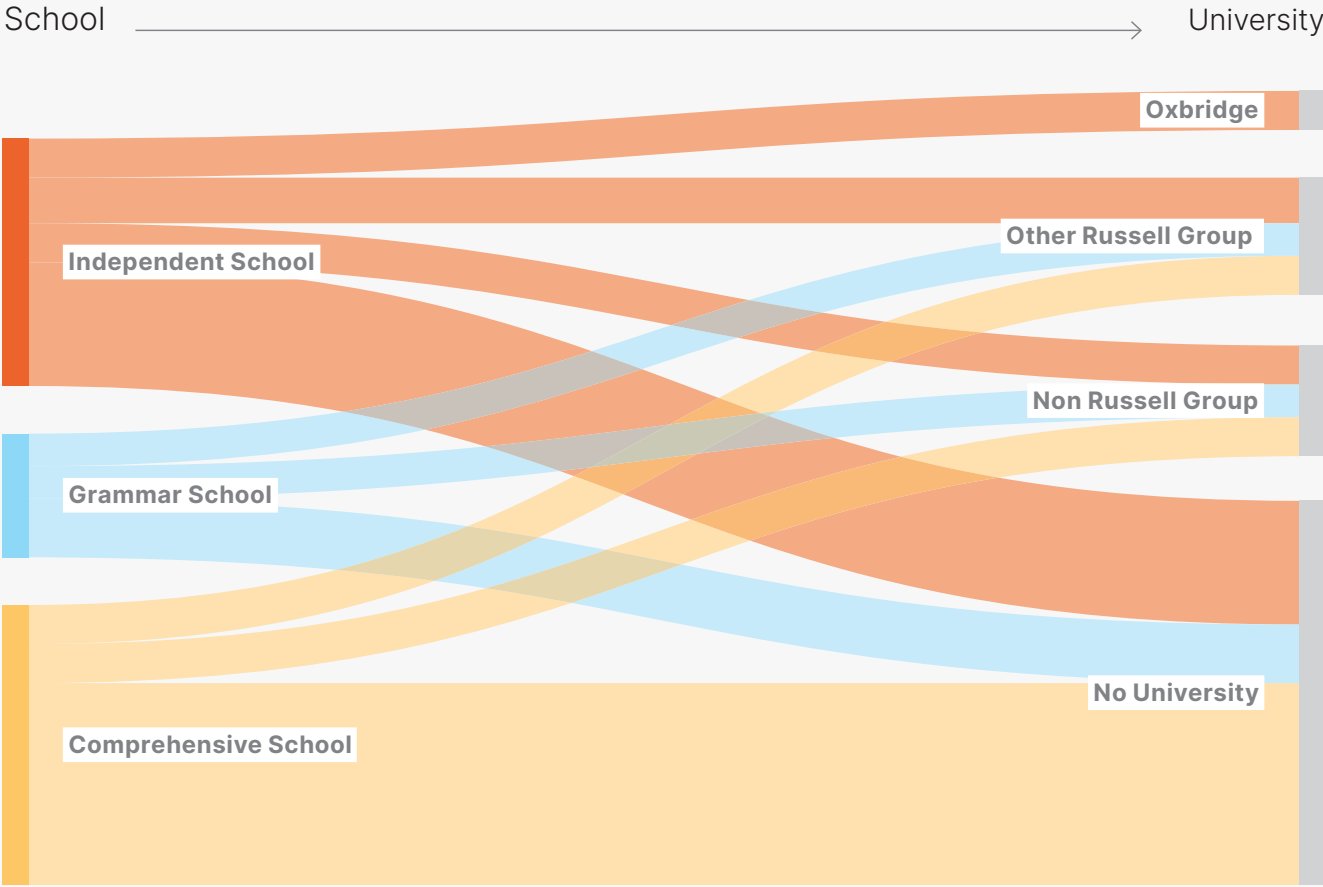
Once an aspiring actor enters the profession, barriers for individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds persist. Working class actors report being typecast into certain parts and are not able to sustain the long periods of unemployment or free work required on the way to the top.¹²⁹ Furthermore, many actors from lower socio-economic backgrounds who aren't based in London struggle to afford the high cost of attending auditions which are mostly held in the capital, even if the filming itself is happening elsewhere in the UK.¹³⁰

While popular music was not as socially exclusive as film and TV; popular musicians, especially those who have made the most money from their work, are still disproportionately from advantaged groups. Concerns have been raised about music learning in school, with recent research showing many of the most disadvantaged areas of the country have little in the way of music provision at A level.¹³¹ The Director of the Royal College of Music, Prof Colin Lawson, has described “a crisis in music education. The inequality in provision is now deep within the school system ... The conservatoire sector cannot recruit from the greatest pool of talent and, ultimately, the music profession will lose out.” Despite isolated successes such as the BRIT school, a state school in Croydon which is one of only a small number of free to attend specialist performing arts schools in the country, barriers in many schools remain. For example, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to continue learning to play an instrument after they have started, because of cost barriers.¹³²

Looking at access to popular music is however complex, as pop stars can come through multiple routes, and often do not have any formal training. Several of the bands featured in the top album list here were formed through reality shows such as the X Factor. These shows provide such aspiring young musicians with mentoring and access to industry insiders, which can help to break down access gaps, but by its nature, such opportunities are only available to a handful of winners. Technological changes have made music production more accessible, through digital tools that be used at home rather than requiring expensive studio recording time, though cost barriers remain. Furthermore, with reduced budgets across the music industry, the finances of an early career musician have potentially become more precarious, giving an advantage to those who can fund themselves to take the risks required for success. This unpredictability of income across the creative arts is one of the main barriers to more equitable pathways to success.

The Educational Pathways in TV, Film and Music

In each section through the report, we have taken a look at the educational pathways of a key profession in more detail. The following figure displays the pathways taken by the wealthiest in TV, film and music, with the size of the 'flow' representing the size of each group. On the left side of the graph we see which schools they attended. The flows from left to right then represent the pathways taken from those in each type of school to university.



The educational pathways of the wealthiest actors and musicians in Britain are unusual compared to many other professions in the elite. Almost a third (31%) attended a comprehensive school and did not attend university. A further 19% were privately educated and did not attend university. Non-graduates in fact make up more than half of the group as a whole. Small numbers attended independent schools and Oxbridge (6%), along with comprehensive school followed by a Russell Group university (6%).

9. Sport

Attended Independent School

On average **24%** attended independent schools

Cricket (men) | **43%**



Rugby (men) | **37%**



Cricket (women) | **35%**



Olympic Medallists (2016) | **31%**



Rugby (women) | **13%**



Football (men) | **5%**



Football (women) | **2%**



General Population | **7%**



Introduction

The relationship between sport, education and social class in Britain is a complex, and sometimes fraught one. It also differs substantially across sports. Pathways to elite level participation in some sports include school or university level participation, whereas in others it is largely independent of educational structures. Men's football, for example, has long been a game where professional players leave education as soon as possible during their school years, and the pathways to professionalisation are largely through the club and league structures. However, many other sports, particularly those with a history of amateur participation, include school or university competition as a step on the ladder to success.

Access to facilities is a crucial element of this, with many sports which require expensive equipment or special facilities resulting in a more socially exclusive participant base, including rowing, sailing and equestrian sports. Independent schools frequently have the funding to invest heavily in such facilities, and often boast high quality indoor and outdoor facilities in cricket, rugby, hockey and football. In fact, across a variety of school sports, it has been found that 53% of national school competitions were won by state schools and 46% by independent schools, despite 86% of competing schools coming from the state sector.¹³³

As well as the health benefits of regular sport, participation in such activities is frequently hailed as beneficial for the development of teamwork, leadership and other essential life skills.¹³⁴ However, participation in sporting activity is associated with higher socio-economic status. In fact, the gap in sporting participation between high and low socio-economic groups actually grew in the ten years prior to 2016.¹³⁵ Education – and specifically the type of school you attend – plays a significant role in this gap, and this is reflected at the highest levels of sport.

The Sutton Trust has regularly highlighted the levels of privately educated athletes among Team GB's Olympians,¹³⁶ and the 2014 edition of *Elitist Britain* looked at the school backgrounds of top players in men's Football, Rugby Union and Cricket, highlighted as the top three team sports for participation across the country.¹³⁷ Here, those sports are compared again, with women's national teams included for the first time.

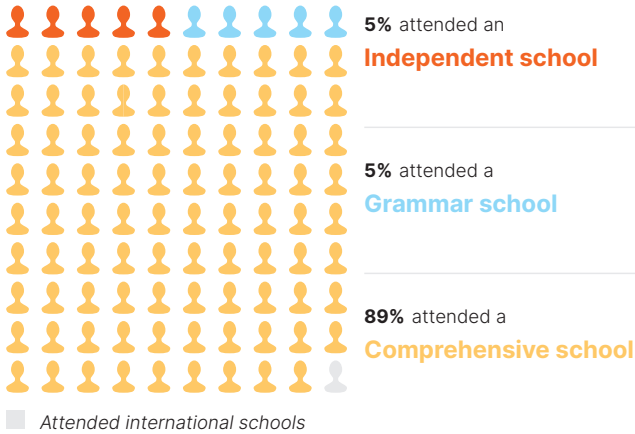
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Sport | Men's Sport

Football

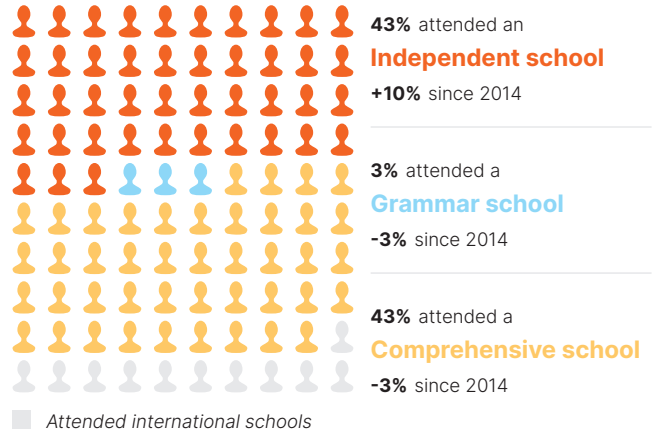
School attendance



Across the English, Scottish and Welsh national football teams, the vast majority of players had attended a comprehensive school: 89%, with just 5% attending independent schools. In England, just 4% of internationals attended independent schools, down substantially from 13% in 2014, though of course a small change in individuals can make big differences. There were minor differences between the three nations, primarily with England having a slightly lower comprehensive rate (82%), largely due to attendance at grammar schools (11%). In Scotland and Wales, comprehensive rates were 94%. As a result of the established routes into the men's

Cricket

School attendance

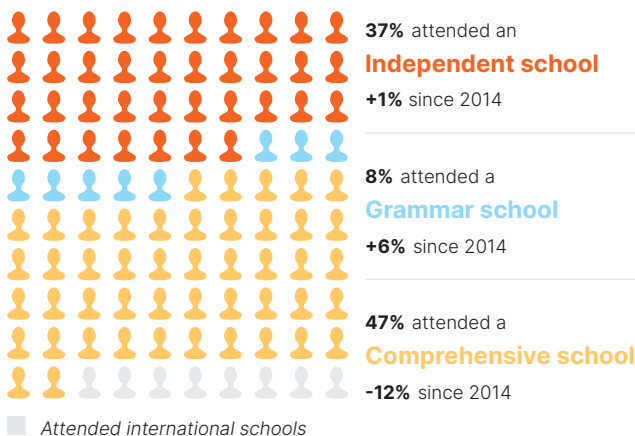


professional game – where talented youngsters are fast-tracked through club academy programmes – unsurprisingly, no players had attended university.

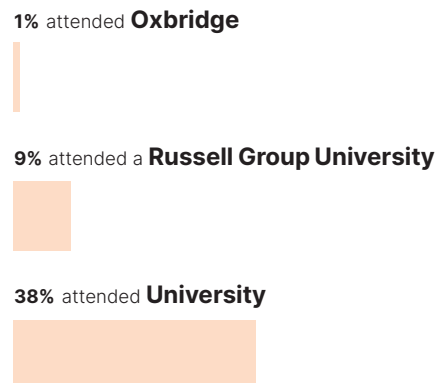
Cricket had the highest levels of privately educated internationals in the three team sports looked at, with 43% of the English cricket team attending a fee-paying school. This was actually up substantially from 33% in 2014, though predominantly at the expense of those who had attended schools abroad. 43% went to comprehensives, similar to 2014. University attendance was much lower than rugby, at 9%.

Sport | Rugby (Men)

School attendance



University attendance



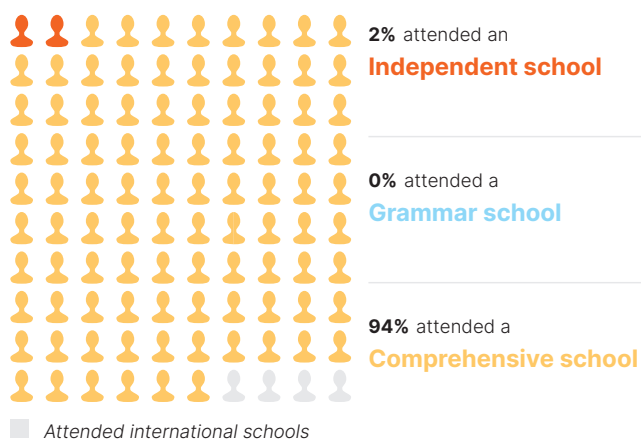
In contrast, 37% of British rugby union internationals had attended fee-paying schools, similar to 2014, while 47% went to comprehensives. This however obscures substantial differences across the three nations. England and Scotland had 44% and 49% respectively of players attending independent schools. England also has a substantial proportion of grammar school attendees (19%), with just 25% attending state comprehensives. In contrast, 81% of

Welsh internationals had attended comprehensives, and 16% independent schools. Scotland lay in between with 37% attending state secondaries.

Despite the professionalisation of rugby since the mid-nineties, substantial numbers of players still attend university, with many facilitating the development of players. 38% of rugby internationals attended university, with a quarter of those attending Russell Group institutions.

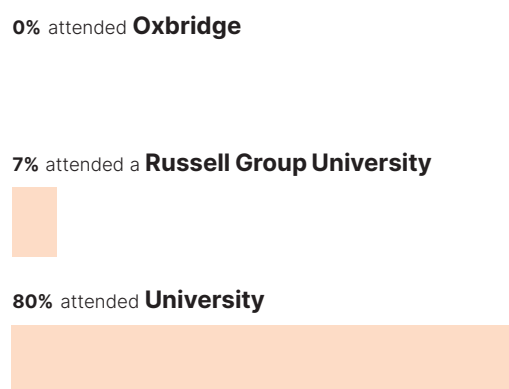
Sport | Football (Women)

School attendance



The educational dynamics of women's sport are often extremely different to men's. Differences in school backgrounds reflect the geographical and cultural background of the communities the sports draw from, but university attendance in particular reflects the nature of the sport itself, the requirements to compete, and the prospects of long term paid employment in the sport. The smaller sizes of the professional ranks and lower levels of financial remuneration mean that it makes sense for women's players to attain

University attendance

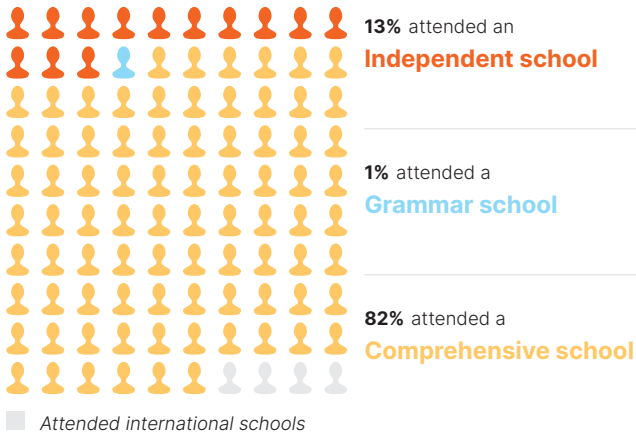


good educational qualifications where possible.

The proportion of women football internationals having attended comprehensives is actually slightly higher than men, at 94%. It is also the norm to have attended university, with universities providing facilities and developing grounds for players to grow. In fact, 80% of women's football internationals attended a higher education institution, though only a small number attended a Russell Group university.

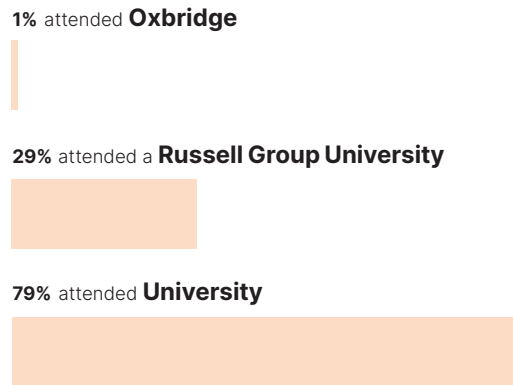
Sport | Rugby (Women)

School attendance



Female rugby union internationals also showed substantially different educational patterns than men, with 82% attending comprehensive schools, 35 percentage points more than their male counterparts, and just 13% attending independent

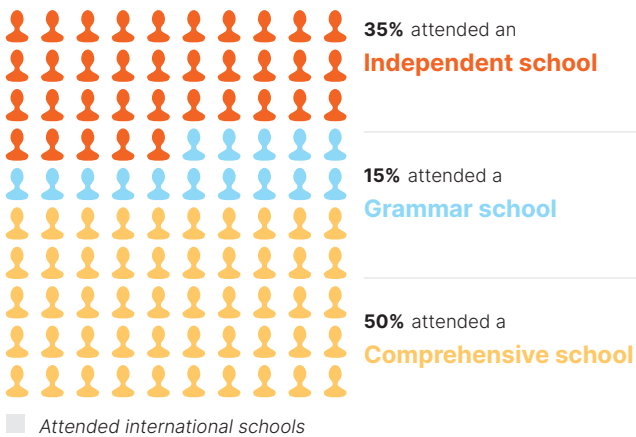
University attendance



schools. University attendance was similar with female footballers, at 79%, and twice as high as the men's internationals. A substantial proportion attended Russell Group universities (29%).

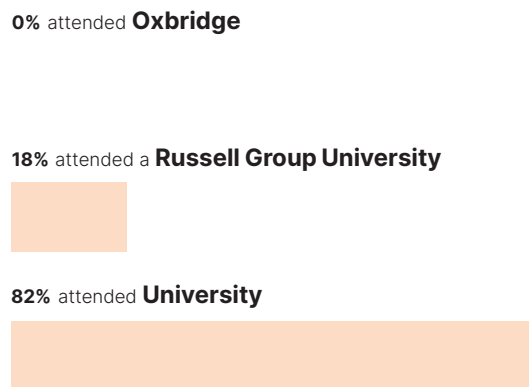
Sport | Cricket (Women)

School attendance



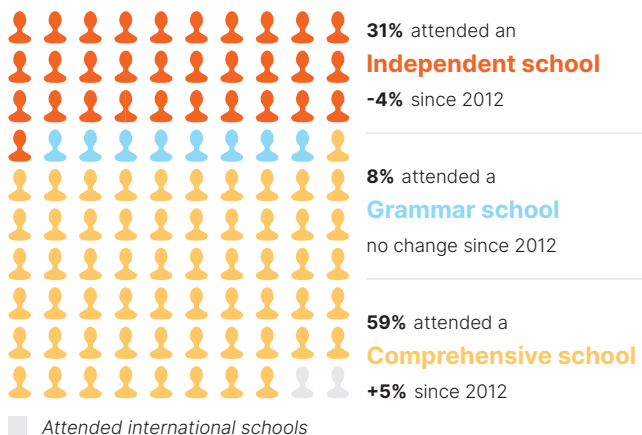
Female cricketers had the lowest rate of comprehensive attendance, at just half (50%), with 35% attending fee-paying schools and 15% grammars. Again, university attendance was very high at 82%, with 18% attending Russell Group institutions.

University attendance



Sport | Olympic Medallists (Rio 2016)

School attendance



The Sutton Trust has been looking at the educational backgrounds of Team GB Olympic medallists since the London 2012 games. In 2012, 35% of British medallists had attended an independent school. By 2016 however, this had reduced to 31%. The proportion attending a comprehensive school rose from 54% to 59% in the 4 years between the London and Rio games.

The Olympic Games include a vast array of sporting disciplines, many of which have different cultures, facility requirements and social patterns of participation. There are some Olympic sports that remain dominated by the privately educated. For instance over half (52%) of medal winning rowers attended fee-paying schools in 2016, along with 50% of the winning women's hockey team.



Sport | Discussion

There are substantial differences in the education backgrounds of top athletes across the three team sports. Footballers have the lowest rates of privately educated participants across the entire study of Britain's elite, and in fact is the only profession where the privately educated are under-represented among the groups studied. Rugby union and cricket remain sports with high proportions of independently educated participants, although this is less so the case for female when compared to male players. The reasons for such differences across sports are complex, reflecting historical patterns of social class associations, along with school cultures and access to high quality facilities.

The differences between men's and women's teams are instructive about the differing opportunities for financial reward in many of the nation's most popular sports, and the differing cultures within these sports. For example, the England team at the 2019 Women's Football World Cup is the first fully professional team the country has ever had, and the Scottish team still features many part-time players.¹³⁸

"An Old Etonian has won a medal in 'sitting down' sports at every Olympic Games since 1992."

School backgrounds were found here to be largely comparable between male and female footballers, reflecting similar social groups playing the game at grassroots level. However, high university attendance amongst women's internationals is likely due to the lower levels of professionalisation and financial compensation in women's sport. Universities can both act as a base to further a woman's playing career (with many attending sports focused universities such as Loughborough) but also to open up career options outside of playing the game professionally. While the rewards for success in men's football are much greater, they are encouraged and incentivised in large numbers to leave education at an early age, and for the many who won't make the grade, they are left with few qualifications.

Complexities are also seen in Olympic sport. Team GB have been frequently lauded for their success at 'sitting down sports',¹³⁹ including rowing, cycling, sailing and equestrianism. These all involve specialised and frequently expensive equipment and facilities, and are sports historically associated with higher social classes. The role of independent schools in many such sports is reflected in the fact that an Old Etonian has

won a medal in these sports at every Olympic Games since 1992. Funding has been increasingly targeted at such sports, on the basis that they offer the best chance of medals, and this approach has achieved substantial international success. But questions have been raised about whether focusing on boosting Britain's comparative advantage in terms of medals has come at the expense of funding more widely played and accessible sports such as basketball.¹⁴⁰

An extensive report conducted for Ofsted in 2014 showed the education and social class influences on participation in a wide variety of sports. It showed that rates of free school meal eligibility among international athletes were almost a third lower than in the wider population.¹⁴¹ This link is reflected at all levels, with socio-economic background and education levels shown to be significantly associated with regular sporting activity.¹⁴² The benefits of sporting participation mean that this association is of substantial concern, particularly in light of the questionable sports participation and public health legacy of the London 2012 games.¹⁴³ The impact of local authority funding cuts on sporting facilities, including the selling off of publicly accessible playing fields, has also been identified as limiting access to sport.¹⁴⁴

Efforts to combat these trends are ongoing, however. In 2018 Sport England launched a fund aimed at 'Tackling Inactivity and Economic Disadvantage', with a number of pilot schemes funded as part of an evidence-based approach to expansion, a commitment reiterated by their incoming CEO earlier this year.¹⁴⁵

Britain is a country obsessed by sport, and events such as the London Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022 can bring disparate elements of society together in a common experience. Sport is of great value, both individually and to society as a whole, but more needs to be done to ensure it is genuinely accessible to all.

Case Study

Maggie Alphonsi MBE

Former England Rugby player and current sports broadcaster



I was born in Lewisham in South London, and then moved to Edmonton in North London, which is where I spent most of my childhood. I grew up on a council estate with my mum, who was a single parent, and went to school at my local comprehensive.

I first started playing rugby after a conversation with one of my teachers, who arrived at school with a black eye after a game. At the time, I was having a lot of problems at school, I had too much energy, and I wasn't focused on studying. My teacher, who played rugby for Wales, suggested I tried putting my energy into the sport instead. Without that conversation and without that teacher, my life would have been very different.

As a girl who was black from a football-mad council estate, there just weren't very many people like me at the top of rugby, or at the top of any of the sports that I saw. But when I started playing rugby, and found that I was good at it, I discovered that my background didn't matter. The sport completely changed my life.

Following my retirement from professional rugby, I moved into the world of media, and now work as a sports broadcaster and keynote speaker. It has been challenging to try to change people's perceptions around rugby union, as it's often thought of as a male sport, and not as a game that women play. When I first started in my current role, I felt I had to convince people that I was capable of talking about the sport.

I feel very proud of my progression, but I am very aware that my success has been achieved in spite of the system, not because of it. I am pleased that, through my actions, I have opened up the door for other women and people from similar backgrounds to mine to be able to follow in my footsteps. Throughout my career, I have always tried to be a good role model for others.

I think that my background gives me a different perspective, which appeals to those who have come from a similar background who would not initially have been interested in rugby. While things have become easier than when I first started out, I think it's still a challenge for someone like me to get to where I have today.

Conclusions



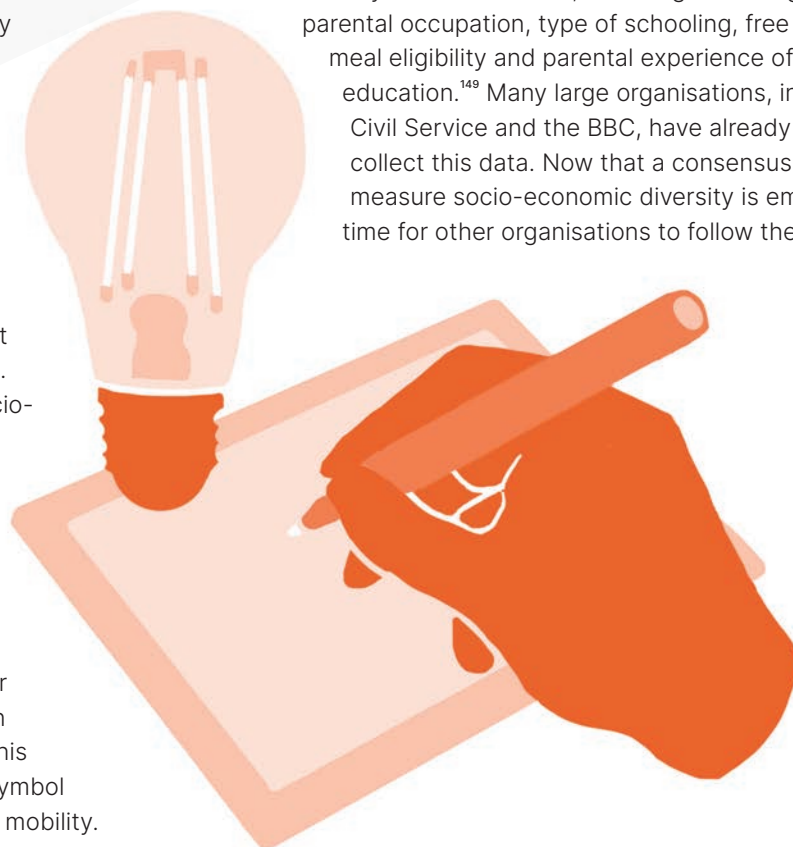
When Prime Minister Theresa May first entered Number 10, she promised to end several of the ‘burning injustices’ in British society, including the fact that *“if you’re at a state school, you’re less likely to reach the top professions than if you’re educated privately.”*¹⁴⁶ However, those who were privately educated remain over-represented in almost all of the professions examined in this report – a stark demonstration of the work that needs to be done to reverse decades of inequality. University also still plays a substantial role in someone’s access to the elite, with those in top jobs more likely to have attended a Russell Group university, with Oxbridge in particular supplying large numbers of those in top positions. Opportunities to reach the most sought-after and well-paid positions in Britain are characterised by vast inequalities, with the educational backgrounds of Britain’s ‘elites’ very different to the population as a whole.

Given this disparity, socio-economic diversity should be a key mission across the whole of British society. While there has been a welcome drive to increase the numbers of women and individuals from ethnic minorities in top roles (although with limited success), the same focus has not been given to other issues of disadvantage, including someone’s social and economic background. But doing so is vital, both for equality of opportunity, and because of the power and influence that these roles hold. The Equality Act 2010, in the ‘socio-economic duty’, provides a powerful tool to demonstrate a nationwide commitment to such a mission, but, in most of the UK, remains unenacted in legislation. While many other disadvantaged groups have legal protections under the Equality Act, socio-economic background is not currently a protected characteristic. Section 1 includes a duty on government and public bodies to have due regard for reducing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. While this is different to making socio-economic background a protected characteristic per se, multiple governments have refused to enact this duty in law, despite calls from civil society organisations.¹⁴⁷ Last year, the socio-economic duty was enacted in Scotland, in the form of the Fairer Scotland Duty,¹⁴⁸ but it has not been put in place in the rest of the UK. This should be rectified, as a powerful symbol of a renewed commitment to social mobility.

The workplace

One major issue that enacting the ‘socio-economic duty’ would help to address is the collection and monitoring of data. This report has used education as a means to examine socio-economic background. However, to fully understand the barriers to socio-economic diversity in Britain’s elites, we need more comprehensive data, and this data needs to be collected at every part of the pipeline, so that we can identify how and where access and progression issues arise. Only organisations themselves, with full access to their workforce, can make this happen, by collecting data on socio-economic diversity in the same way they are currently doing for ethnicity and gender. Enacting the socio-economic duty would provide a clear mandate for emphasising the importance of socio-economic background, alongside age, sex, race, religion and disability. Compelling public bodies to collect and publish socio-economic data would both catalyse real change within government bodies, whilst also pushing other organisations to take action on this issue. Nonetheless, even without a change in legislation, employers have the opportunity to lead the way and develop themselves as champions of social mobility in this regard.

Measuring socio-economic background is more complex than some other characteristics, which may help to explain why this issue has had less traction than other dimensions of diversity. However, the government has now published comprehensive guidance on how best to measure socio-economic diversity in the workforce, including collecting data on parental occupation, type of schooling, free school meal eligibility and parental experience of higher education.¹⁴⁹ Many large organisations, including the Civil Service and the BBC, have already started to collect this data. Now that a consensus on how to measure socio-economic diversity is emerging, it’s time for other organisations to follow their lead.

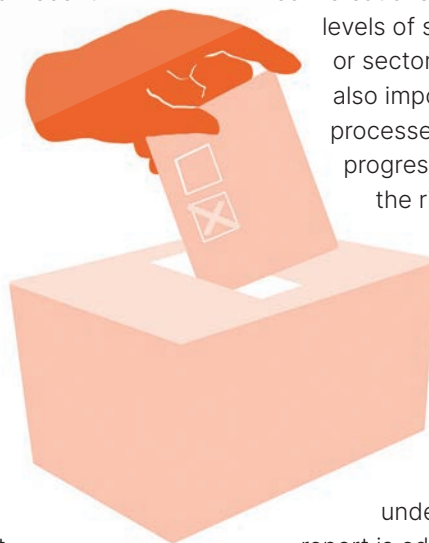


While we need a much greater understanding of access issues in the professions, there are changes we already know have the potential to open up opportunity, including ensuring that financial barriers to entering the professions are tackled. This includes ending unpaid internships, which remain an expectation for recent graduates across many of the professions we have examined here, and are often concentrated in London and the South East, making them inaccessible to many. In most cases, these unpaid placements, which effectively treat the intern as a worker, are illegal under current minimum wage law. However, research by the Sutton Trust has found there is a substantial amount of confusion on the law as it stands. We know that young people don't understand their rights to be paid, and that employers are either unknowingly or deliberately taking advantage of this legal grey area to avoid paying their interns. The Sutton Trust has thus advocated for the law around unpaid internships to be tightened, by banning all unpaid internships over four weeks in length. Internships are also too often not advertised, and instead given out through informal networks, which shuts out young people without connections. All internships should be openly advertised to ensure they are accessible to all.¹⁵⁰

Companies and organisations should also take steps to ensure that their recruitment practices are fair and transparent. One such step is to put in place 'contextual recruitment', in which organisations take into account the circumstances in which a candidate's academic achievements at school and university have been achieved, for example by looking at a student's A level grades in the context of the school they attended, or a lack of financial resources at home. Several contextual recruitment tools are now available, provided by organisations including Rare Recruitment, PiC and upReach, using different indicators and weightings of social background.¹⁵¹ Organisations should also make sure their graduate recruitment is targeted at a wide range of universities, not focused solely on the Russell Group, to encourage applications from talented young people in other parts of the education sector, given the inequalities in access that exist. Professions should also consider the benefits of offering high quality apprenticeship routes for young people which do not require traditional university attendance and provide the chance to 'earn while you learn'.

Once in a professional role, organisations also need to look honestly at where there are barriers to progression for people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Too often traits and characteristics

which are not linked to performance (for example, the concept of 'polish', dressing in the 'right' way, and having an air of 'gravitas') are taken as signs of someone being worthy of progression or promotion, rather than looking at competencies necessary for their role. Frank conversations are needed which include staff at all levels of seniority about how any organisation or sector recognises 'talent' or 'merit'. It is also important that organisations formalise processes around hiring, promotion and progression wherever possible. This reduces the risk of senior staff bypassing the system to boost the careers of people that they have affinity with; which can often be formed based on social and cultural similarities rather than on merit.¹⁵²



Education

The other vital element underlying the patterns seen in this report is education. The most prestigious universities open doors to many graduate employment opportunities, but access to them is heavily shaped by socio-economic background. As with employers, universities should also contextualise the previous attainment of students to reflect the circumstances in which those grades were achieved. While it is promising that some Russell Group universities have started to consider candidates' background in the application process, and a small number have made significant grade reductions, much greater change is needed. Universities should consider carefully what grades are necessary to complete their course, rather than setting their offers at the highest point they can based on competition for places. Students admitted contextually should also be given support to help them to thrive once they arrive on campus.¹⁵³

Looking to the school system, we know that high quality teaching is the single most important factor for the attainment of young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. However, previous Sutton Trust research has found that more experienced teachers are less likely to work in more disadvantaged schools,¹⁵⁴ and schools with higher proportions of students on free school meals have lower proportions of specialist science¹⁵⁵ and maths teachers.¹⁵⁶ Schools with high proportions of disadvantaged young people are also less likely to offer extra-curricular activities, which can help to build essential life skills like confidence and motivation.¹⁵⁷ Provision of careers advice is also often of lower quality in schools in deprived areas, and needs to be improved, so that all students have access to high quality information and advice on the options open to them. Current research suggests

careers education is best when it is individualised and starts early, beginning in primary school, and continuing throughout a student's time in education.¹⁵⁸

Tackling social segregation in schooling has the potential to open up opportunities for disadvantaged young people. Specific focus should be paid to broadening access to high performing comprehensive and grammar schools, both of which are highly socially selective. These schools should ensure that they prioritise the admission of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in their admissions processes. More socio-economically balanced intakes are vital to a healthy state school system, in contrast with the current situation where the socio-economic background of the school intake remains one of the biggest predictors of 'school success'. With more mixed intakes across all schools, this could even out performance, and help to improve standards at schools overall.

Ultimately it is also vital that the state school system is resourced properly to provide an education of the highest standard for the largest share of young people. Recent years have seen substantial levels of cuts to teaching staff and facilities at schools across the country.¹⁵⁹ This endangers schools' ability to give their pupils the best start in life, particularly when competing with the levels of resource available to those attending private schools, with access to high quality extracurricular activities.

Independent schools themselves however are also in need of reform. Given the advantages they

confer to their pupils, opening independent schools up to pupils from a wider range of backgrounds is crucial. While this could be done in part by increasing the number of full, means-tested bursaries on offer in independent schools, the Sutton Trust believes its Open Access scheme,¹⁶⁰ whereby all places at independent day schools are awarded on merit, would constitute a step change in the opportunities open to promising pupils from less well-off backgrounds.

The trends highlighted in this report are the product of a complex interplay of factors, including what happens in education, but also what happens at home. In this report we have highlighted some of the barriers that could be tackled and have begun to suggest some of the policy remedies that we believe will begin to open up opportunity more widely. Action will certainly be needed on a number of fronts and over many years. But that should not be a recipe for inaction.

Schools, universities, employers and the government all have a role to play in ensuring socio-economic background is not a barrier to success. It is vital to a healthy society that opportunities are not restricted to a lucky few, and those at the top of society are not drawn from groups radically different to the rest of society as a whole. This report has painted a picture of country where social class continues to play a strong role in success, across a wide variety of professions and fields. Recognising Britain's social mobility problem is a start, but fixing it will be key to the future of the country.

Case Study

Chris Rumfitt

PR Firm CEO



I grew up in Council house in a large family on an estate in Jersey. My parents each had children from previous marriages, and at times there were nine of us sharing a four-bedroom house. In my bedroom we sometimes squeezed

three beds. My dad was a postman, and my mum worked part-time on the check-out in the local supermarket. I never conceived of us as 'poor' at the time; but on reflection I guess we were. I remember times when we could not afford fresh milk, and used to use powdered milk until my Dad next got paid.

I always did well at school and my parents did a brilliant job in encouraging that. I went to my local primary and then local comprehensive schools. Then at 14 I transferred to my local 14-18 grammar school. For the first time, I was in an environment when going to university became the expectation and I followed that path. But still then, I wasn't pushed as far as I might have been. I got 3 A's in my A-levels but nobody at all ever suggested I apply to Oxbridge. I went to Hull and had a great time, but in hindsight why did my school not suggest I apply higher in my university choices given my grades? I guess kids from my school didn't go to Oxbridge.

I do not feel my profession is consciously elitist, but in practice, yes. A huge proportion of people went to private schools for instance. Sadly, things have got worse since I started out. I think the first reason for this is tuition fees. Whilst I get the rational case for fees, I just cannot believe my parents would have encouraged me in the same way if they had thought I was going to run into tens of thousands of pounds of debt. They could never have conceived of such a sum. An ever bigger reason, though, is housing costs. When I moved to London in 1998 you could get a shared flat in zone 3 for about £300 a month. Today, it is probably four times that sum. How would I have moved to London and made my way with rents at today's levels? I believe the third reason is unpaid internships. The preponderance of such internships as the entry level into many sectors, and the fact so many are secured by who their parents know rather than merit. I pay all my interns London Living Wage, but I am conscious that is not the entirety of the solution. It is access to them in the first place.

My advice to working class kids would be to always remember that if you are at the same level as others from more privileged backgrounds, it probably means you are better than them, because you have had to work harder to get there. Use the knowledge that you are better than them to give you the confidence to succeed more than them.

Case Study

Valerie Edmond

Actor



I was brought up in the early 1970's in a single end tenement in Springburn - a notoriously deprived yet industrially important part of Glasgow. It was a treat to see coal burning in the open fire, we couldn't afford a TV and we shared a toilet on the stair landing

with neighbours- but there were books from Springburn Library and my mum making time to read them with me along with a radio, playing out music and debate. My mum left Whitehill Secondary School at 14, even though she was gifted academically, and only went back to education almost 20 years later to complete her Highers to get into nursing. Although we couldn't afford a TV I felt informed as a young girl and secure and cherished really.

This changed when the council rehoused us in council housing in Balornock/Barmulloch. I attended the local state secondary school, with poor academic results as well as drugs and knife activity commonplace.

The pervading culture in the school was negative, and I was bullied because of my enthusiasm for learning and well-spoken manner which was deemed 'posh' and 'snobby'. This culminated in a physical attack one day which was deeply scarring and traumatic and will stay with me for the rest of my life. After that, I felt I needed to make a choice, would I succumb to the attitudes of those around me, or would I escape. Reading and books offered me that escape. An English teacher made a big difference, who allowed me to spend my lunchtimes in an out of use drama studio. I would walk around reading lines from Macbeth and poetry out loud. The messages in these texts gave me the strength to take on the adversity I faced.

One of my primary school teachers, who had studied at a drama school, encouraged me to apply and helped me prepare for an audition at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. There was a charge to audition, but it was a much smaller fee than it is now or I wouldn't have been able to gamble it. I was offered a place. Because of my background, I qualified for a full

grant from the Scottish government to attend, although this didn't cover rent, so I had to stay living with my mum, taking the bus back to our council flat while most of my fellow students had flats in the west end of Glasgow. Most had also been on 'gap years' and had 'gone travelling' around India, when I wondered what Indian food tasted like. I did have some problems fitting in initially but going to drama school was like finding dry land after being at sea, I loved it, and I excelled, winning the Best Student of The Year Award in my final year.

I found the theatre acting community in Scotland much easier to fit into, it was political and progressive but to get the big parts in television and film, I had to audition in London. Even though many of the series I was in were filmed in Scotland, casting was in London, and I would have to take the bus to make it affordable. I would need to go there and back in the same day to avoid the cost of staying overnight and my mum gave me food vouchers she was given at work, so I could eat during the day. I think my background has had a real impact on my work. I've had to fight more for opportunity and sometimes in an already unfair profession, that feels extra hard- but I feel fortunate to understand that acting is a simple reflection of the human condition which is a struggle that none of us escape. And I feel that I 'see' the truth of a character more clearly perhaps because of my own struggles. But there is always also, a deep down feeling of shame, of not being quite good enough and a sort of 'who do you think you are!' voice echoing around in your head when what you are doing is simply serving the truth. It is a great privilege to be given the chance to do that.

I hope things are changing, but awareness is key. I remember the careers officer visiting my school, when I said told her I'd like to be an actress, she replied to get out the room and come back in when I had something realistic to say because 'what gives you the right to say you want to be an actress.' I turned to leave, tears of shame pricking my eyes. But as I reached the door I turned back, sat back down and said 'what gives you the right to say I can't'. I do wonder how many people from my background today would carry on walking and how many more couldn't even bring themselves to dare to say it at all.

Appendix

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Appendix A | Schools

Chapter	Category	Independent (change since 2014)		Grammar (change)		Comprehensive (change)		International (change)		Population	Known	% Known
Politics	MPs	29%	(-4%)	17%	(-8%)	52%	(+12%)	2%	(no change)	650	632	97%
	Lords	57%	(+8%)	22%	(-11%)	17%	(+5%)	4%	(-2%)	792	663	84%
	Cabinet	39%	(+3%)	17%	(-1%)	43%	(-2%)	0%	(-1%)	23	23	100%
	Junior Ministers	52%	(-4%)	18%	(+1%)	28%	(+2%)	1%	(-1%)	96	93	97%
	Shadow Cabinet	9%	(-13%)	15%	(+4%)	76%	(+14%)	0%	(-4%)	35	34	97%
	Shadow Junior Ministers	18%		15%		66%		1%		93	85	91%
	Select committee chairs	33%	(-24%)	10%	(-10%)	55%	(+32%)	3%	(+3%)	40	40	100%
Select committee members	25%	(-6%)	14%	(-11%)	58%	(+18%)	2%	(no change)	319	308	97%	
Business	FTSE 350 CEOs	27%	(+5%)	14%	(-3%)	16%	(+1%)	43%	(-4%)	306	183	60%*
	FTSE 350 Chairs	34%		22%		12%		31%		349	226	65%*
	Sunday Times Rich List	28%	(-16%)	10%	(-7%)	12%	(-1%)	51%	(+25%)	127	94	74%
	Entrepreneurs	34%		15%		39%		12%		100	85	85%
	PR consultancy CEOs	34%		13%		30%		24%		150	104	69%*
	Tech firm CEOs	26%		3%		29%		41%		100	68	68%*
Media	News Media 100	43%	(-11%)	20%	(-6%)	34%	(+18%)	3%	(-1%)	100	79	79%
	Newspaper columnists	44%	(+1%)	24%	(-3%)	19%	(-5%)	13%	(+7%)	199	160	80%
	BBC executives	29%	(+3%)	20%	(-5%)	45%	(+8%)	6%	(-7%)	102	80	78%
Whitehall and public bodies	Permanent secretaries	59%	(+4%)	14%	(-15%)	28%	(+11%)	0%	(no change)	40	29	73%
	Public body chairs	45%	(+1%)	28%	(-13%)	18%	(+8%)	8%	(+4%)	152	126	83%
	Public body CEOs	30%	(-4%)	27%	(-12%)	31%	(+10%)	11%	(+6%)	166	99	60%*
	Diplomats	52%	(no change)	17%	(-14%)	29%	(+18%)	1%	(-4%)	145	82	57%*
Public servants	Senior Judges	65%	(-6%)	20%	(-3%)	13%	(+9%)	2%	(-1%)	140	121	86%
	Vice Chancellors	16%	(-4%)	33%	(-11%)	34%	(+13%)	17%	(+2%)	125	92	74%
	Armed Forces	49%	(-13%)	15%	(-14%)	35%	(+28%)	0%	(-1%)	98	71	72%
Local Gov	Local government leaders	20%	(+5%)	28%	(-11%)	50%	(+6%)	2%	(-1%)	348	197	57%*
	Local government CEOs	9%	(+1%)	28%	(-18%)	62%	(+19%)	1%	(-1%)	320	192	60%*
	Police Chiefs and PCCs	24%	(+2%)	21%	(-20%)	54%	(+17%)	1%	(+1%)	94	71	76%
Women	Influential women	43%	(+1%)	10%	(-10%)	23%	(-1%)	24%	(+11%)	149	115	77%
Creative industries	TV, film and music	38%	(-6%)	18%	(-10%)	43%	(+18%)	1%	(-2%)	90	82	91%
	Popstars	20%	(-2%)	5%	(+1%)	74%	(+2%)	1%	(no change)	98	80	82%
Sport	Football (men)	5%		5%		89%		2%		76	63	83%
	Football (women)	2%		0%		94%		4%		64	47	73%
	Rugby (men)	37%	(+1%)	8%	(+6%)	47%	(-12%)	8%	(+4%)	111	98	88%
	Rugby (women)	13%		1%		82%		3%		88	67	76%
	Cricket (men)	43%	(+10%)	3%	(-3%)	43%	(-3%)	11%	(-4%)	35	35	100%
	Cricket (women)	35%		15%		50%		0%		27	20	74%
	Olympic medallists	31%	(-4%)	8%	(no change)	59%	(+5%)	2%	(no change)	130	129	99%

*Below 70% target

Appendix A | University

Chapter	Category	University (change since 2014)		Russell Group (change)		Oxbridge (change)		Non-Russell Group (change)		International (change)		No uni (change)		Population	Known	% Known
Politics	MPs	88%	(+5%)	54%	(no change)	24%	(no change)	33%		1%		12%	(-6%)	650	642	99%
	Lords	86%	(+4%)	60%	(-1%)	38%	(+1%)	24%		2%		14%	(-4%)	792	715	90%
	Cabinet	100%	(+14%)	87%	(+10%)	57%	(-3%)	13%	(+4%)	0%	(no change)		(-14%)	23	23	100%
	Junior Ministers	91%	(-4%)	61%	(-11%)	36%	(-9%)	30%	(+7%)	0%	(no change)	9%	(+4%)	96	95	99%
	Shadow Cabinet	82%	(-14%)	41%	(-22%)	15%	(-19%)	41%	(+8%)	0%	(no change)	18%	(+14%)	35	34	97%
	Shadow Junior Ministers	90%		44%		10%		46%		0%		10%		93	89	96%
	Select committee chairs	93%	(+9%)	58%	(-3%)	33%	(-4%)	30%		5%		8%	(-9%)	40	40	100%
	Select committee members	86%	(+8%)	50%	(+6%)	20%	(+3%)	34%		2%		14%	(-8%)	319	316	99%
Business	FTSE 350 CEOs	95%	(+2%)	36%	(-7%)	15%	(-3%)	23%		36%		5%	(-2%)	306	265	87%
	FTSE 350 Chairs	91%		50%		27%		20%		21%		9%		349	312	89%
	Sunday Times Rich List	72%	(+1%)	26%	(-2%)	14%	(+2%)	9%	(no change)	36%	(+2%)	28%	(-1%)	127	99	78%
	Entrepreneurs	56%		29%		9%		19%		8%		44%		100	98	98%
	PR consultancy CEOs	91%		33%		7%		32%		26%		9%		150	136	91%
Media	Tech firm CEOs	89%		35%		12%		21%		34%		11%		100	92	92%
	News Media 100	92%	(+2%)	71%	(-3%)	36%	(-9%)	21%	(+8%)	0%	(-2%)	8%	(-2%)	100	83	83%
	Newspaper columnists	89%	(+3%)	72%	(+4%)	44%	(-3%)	5%	(-8%)	12%	(+6%)	11%	(-3%)	199	171	86%
Whitehall and public bodies	BBC executives	93%	(+1%)	70%	(+8%)	31%	(-2%)	18%		6%		7%	(-1%)	102	90	88%
	Permanent secretaries	100%	(+3%)	82%	(-4%)	56%	(-1%)	18%	(+7%)	0%	(no change)	0%	(-3%)	40	34	85%
	Public body chairs	94%	(no change)	69%	(-5%)	40%	(-4%)	22%	(+5%)	4%	(no change)	6%	(no change)	152	140	92%
	Public body CEOs	98%	(+6%)	58%	(+1%)	25%	(no change)	31%	(+3%)	8%	(+3%)	2%	(-6%)	166	130	78%
Public servants	Diplomats	98%	(+9%)	84%	(no change)	51%	(+1%)	14%	(+9%)	0%	(no change)	2%	(-9%)	145	104	72%
	Senior Judges	100%	(+1%)	91%	(-4%)	71%	(-4%)	9%	(+4%)	1%	(+1%)	0%	(-1%)	140	140	100%
	Vice Chancellors	99%	(no change)	51%	(-2%)	19%	(+6%)	34%	(-2%)	14%	(+4%)	1%	(no change)	125	118	94%
Local Gov	Armed Forces	87%	(+5%)	50%	(no change)	16%	(+2%)	36%	(+5%)	1%	(no change)	13%	(-5%)	98	70	71%
	Local government leaders	64%	(+14%)	30%	(+1%)	5%	(-3%)	34%	(+12%)	0%	(no change)	36%	(-14%)	348	217	62%*
	Local government CEOs	86%	(+4%)	35%	(-5%)	5%	(-3%)	51%	(+9%)	1%	(no change)	14%	(-4%)	320	243	76%
Women	Police Chiefs and PCCs	83%	(+21%)	44%	(+11%)	13%	(+7%)	39%	(+11%)	0%	(no change)	18%	(-21%)	94	80	85%
	Influential women	87%	(-1%)	41%	(-19%)	23%	(+2%)	25%	(+7%)	21%	(+11%)	13%	(+1%)	149	142	95%
Creative industries	TV, film and music	42%	(-10%)	24%	(-7%)	6%	(-5%)	18%	(-3%)	0%	(no change)	58%	(+10%)	90	84	93%
	Popstars	29%	(-9%)	17%	(-10%)	2%	(+2%)	12%	(+1%)	0%	(no change)	71%	(+9%)	98	84	86%
Sport	Football (women)	80%		7%		0%		63%		9%		20%		64	54	84%
	Rugby (men)	38%		9%		1%		27%		2%		62%		111	98	88%
	Rugby (women)	79%		29%		1%		51%		0%		21%		88	77	88%
	Cricket (men)	9%		0%		0%		9%		0%		91%		35	35	100%
	Cricket (women)	82%		18%		0%		64%		0%		18%		27	22	81%

*Below 70% target

Appendix B | Methodology

School attendance

Schools have been classified into one of three main categories, private (also referred to in this report as independent or fee-paying schools), grammar schools and comprehensives. Private schools are classified here as those which are both independent from government, and in which most pupils are fee-paying. Although Direct Grant grammar schools had some spaces paid for by local authorities, they remained outside of government control, and most pupils paid fees, so have therefore been categorised as private schools. These schools represent a small and declining proportion of those in the working age population.

All state funded schools have been classified as either grammar or comprehensive, depending on their admissions policies. Grammar schools are schools in which potential pupils sit an entry exam (the 11 plus) which aims to determine whether a student has high academic ability, with admissions decided on the basis of results in this exam. Comprehensive school is used here to cover all state schools which either required no exam for entry, or which did not require a high mark on the 11 plus to attend. This includes secondary moderns and the small number of technical schools which existed under the tripartite system. It also includes non-selective state schools in Scotland, generally not referred to as comprehensives.

We have separately categorised those who attended school outside of the UK as having attended an international school. These schools were not separately determined as being state or private, due to the difficulty involved in categorising schools based in different educational systems, where the educational context is often very different to that in the UK. Additionally, a very small number of individuals (less than five in total) were home schooled and have been classified as such.

School type was determined for the period in which the individual attended that school. For example, if a school was a grammar during the period in which an individual attended it, but has since become a comprehensive school, it has been categorised as a grammar. If a school became a comprehensive school part of the way through someone's attendance, but they were part of a grammar intake, their school's category was grammar.

When looking at type of school attended, we have included the school someone attended for most of their secondary education (for example, if they attended a private school for a year, and then moved to a state comprehensive school, we have categorised their schooling as comprehensive). These figures do not therefore show everyone who has ever

attended an independent school, which is likely to be higher than the figures included here. However, we felt that the school someone spent the majority of their secondary education in was a fairer reflection of their experience within the school system.

We have used secondary school attendance, rather than primary or college, for a variety of reasons: because this information is more easily accessible, because attendance up to at least age 15 has been universal since World War 2, and because this period is the run up to when someone takes their GCSE exams, a formative time, and an important decision point in their education.

University attendance

University type was determined by the institutions at which an individual gained their bachelor's degree. University types included whether they attended a Russell Group university* and whether they attended Oxford or Cambridge University. We defined Russell Group attendance as whether someone attended a university which is currently in the Russell Group, rather than whether the university was in the group at the time the individual attended.

We classified someone as having attended university if they were awarded a bachelors' degree, including if that was from an institution which was a polytechnic at the time, but has since become a university. If someone clearly attended university, but the institution is unknown, we have classified them as having attended, but have not included them in breakdowns by university type. We have also separately categorised anyone who attended university outside of the UK as having attended an international university.

How did we find out information about people's educational backgrounds?

We conducted desk-based research using a range of different sources including:

- LinkedIn
- Who's Who
- Local newspaper reports
- Facebook
- Bloomberg
- Wikipedia

Where we were unable to find data publicly online, we contacted individuals through email and LinkedIn. As many of those who provided information from direct communication did so on the understanding that their personal details would not

*We defined Russell Group attendance as whether someone attended a university which is currently in the Russell Group, rather than whether the university was in the grouping at the time the individual attended. A list of current Russell Group institutions is available here <https://russellgroup.ac.uk/about/our-universities/>

Appendix B | Methodology

be published, we are unable to publish disaggregated information about people's social backgrounds.

We aimed to find information for at least 70% of the schools and universities attended by the individuals in each section. This was achieved in the vast majority of sections in this report, but we were unable to find information (as it was not available publicly, individuals chose not to provide us with it, or we could not find contact details for that individual), for a small number of sections. For university attendance, information was found for fewer than 70% of individuals in the local government leaders section (62%). For schools, there was less than 70% coverage in FTSE 350 CEOs (60%), FTSE 350 chairs (65%), PR consultancy CEOs (69%), tech firm CEOs (68%), public body CEOs (60%), diplomats (57%), local government leaders (57%) and local government CEOs (60%). All other sections had 70% coverage or above.

How did we decide who to include in each section?

For many of the categories included here, there was a clear group of individuals to include, for example, all MPs or all permanent secretaries. For others, who to include in a list of the 'top' of a profession was more difficult. Wherever possible, we have used established lists created by others, ideally based on an objective measure (for example, someone's level of wealth, or album sales). Where no established list was available, we have created our own, using objective measures wherever possible to draw together a list of individuals to include.

A summary table including a brief description of each group is included below. A full explanation of the methodology used for each profession, including links to sources, can be found in the annex to this report, available online. All lists were created or derived between December 2018 and March 2019.

Politics	Group
MPs	All members of Parliament
Lords	All members of the House of Lords
Cabinet	UK Government Cabinet Ministers
Junior Ministers	UK Government Junior Ministers
Shadow Cabinet and Shadow Ministers	UK Government Shadow Cabinet Ministers and Shadow Junior Ministers
Select Committees	All Commons Select Committee Members
Select Committee Chairs	All Commons Select Committee Chairs

Business	Group
FTSE 350 CEOs and Chairs	Chief Executives and chairs of companies listed on the FTSE 350
The Sunday Times Rich List	The top of the list of the wealthiest people in the UK as of 2018, according to the Sunday Times
Entrepreneurs	Richtopia's Top 100 most influential British Entrepreneurs 2017
PR Consultancy CEOs	CEOs of the Top 150 UK PR consultancies as of 2018, according to PR Week
Technology Firm CEOs	CEOs of the top 100 fastest-growing private technology companies in Britain as of 2018, according to the Sunday Times

Media	Group
BBC Executives	Senior BBC Executives listed on the BBC website for transparency purposes
News Media 100	List created by the Sutton Trust, using research by the Reuter's Institute at the University of Oxford.
Newspaper Columnists	List of UK national newspaper columnists writing on news, politics, policy and current affairs (not including columnists who write only on lifestyle, food etc).

Whitehall and Public Bodies	Group
Permanent Secretaries	All Permanent Secretaries of UK Government departments
Diplomats	Heads of UK Missions Abroad (including Embassies and High Commissions)
Public Body CEOs and Chairs	Chief Executives and Chairs of Non-Ministerial Departments, Executive Non-Departmental Public Bodies and Executive Agencies

Public servants	Group
Senior Judges	Lord Chief Justice, Supreme Court Judges, Lord and Lady Justices of Appeal and High Court Judges
Vice-Chancellors	Vice Chancellors of UK Universities
Armed Forces	All Generals of two star rank (NATO code of OF-7) or above

Local government	Group
Local Government Leaders	Political leaders of Local Authorities in England
Local Government CEOs	Chief Executives of Local Authorities in England
Constables and PCCs	Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners for every Constabulary in the UK and senior Metropolitan Police Officers

Women	Group
Influential Women	Harpers Bazaar 150 Visionary Women 2017

Creative industries	Group
Popular music	UK artists (either born in or currently based in the UK) who had one of the top 40 selling albums of 2018, 2017, 2016 or 2015.
TV, Film and Music	Music: Sunday Times Rich List 'top 40 music millionaires' TV and Film: Sunday Times Rich List 'top 50 in film and television'

Sport	Group
Great British Olympic Medallists Rio Games 2016	Britain's 130 medallists at the 2016 Olympics games in Rio
Rugby Union (men's and women's teams)	Women's: Rugby World Cup 2017 teams (Note: Scotland were not in the World Cup so their six nations team from the same year was instead used) Men's: Rugby autumn internationals 2018
Football (men's and women's teams)	Men's 2018 football World Cup squad/qualifiers squad Women's 2017 Euro squads
Cricket (men's and women's teams)	England squad players who have taken part in an international match over the last year

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