



Economic
and Social
Research Council



**DEBATE
DISCOVER
DISCUSS**

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7-15 November

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**Creating equal opportunities
for all: intergenerational
mobility in England**

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Liz Williams (Social Mobility
Commissioner and FutureDotNow)**





Social Mobility
Commission

The long shadow of deprivation: Differences in opportunities across England

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(with Pedro Carneiro, Sarah Cattan, Lorraine Dearden,
Laura van der Erve, and Sonya Krutikova from IFS)

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Social mobility

- Social mobility – the extent to which opportunities are equal for everyone, across big cities and small towns, whether your parents are rich or poor
 1. We show *how* social mobility varies across small local areas in England for the first time
 2. We explore *why* there are differences in opportunities across place: considering the role of both education and the labour market



Data

LEO (Longitudinal Education Outcomes):

- **Linked administrative data** on school records, university records & earnings and employment
- **State-educated sons born 1986-88**
- **820,000 sons** across three birth cohorts
- **Earnings outcomes at age 28**
- **Family circumstances at age 16**
- Differences across the 320 **lower-tier local authorities in England** where the sons grew up

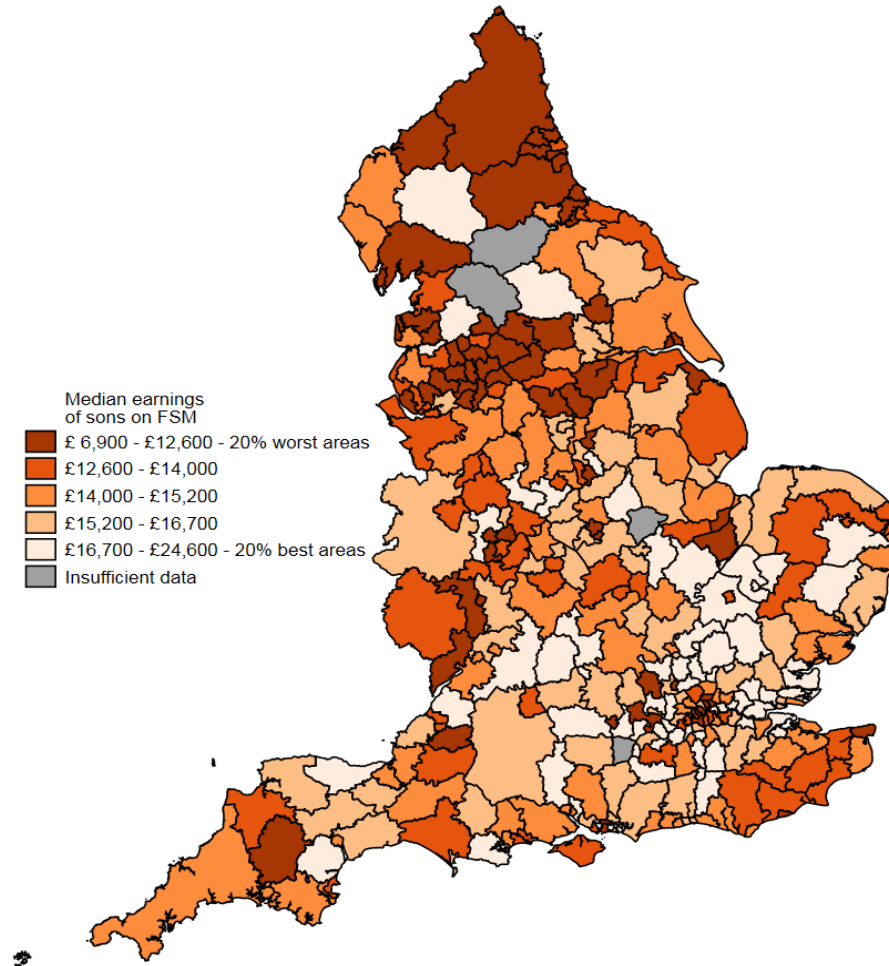


Main findings

1. Where you grow up matters – social mobility in England is a postcode lottery
2. In the least mobile areas family background casts a long shadow, with up to 33% of the gaps between sons from poor and rich families driven by non-education factors
3. Across all areas, education is a key driver of opportunities, but it doesn't explain *differences across areas*
4. In order to 'level up' we need a combined approach of education policy and labour market initiatives



1. Where you grow up matters – earnings of disadvantaged sons



Areas with the highest earnings for disadvantaged sons have pay that is twice as high as areas with the lowest earnings for disadvantaged sons



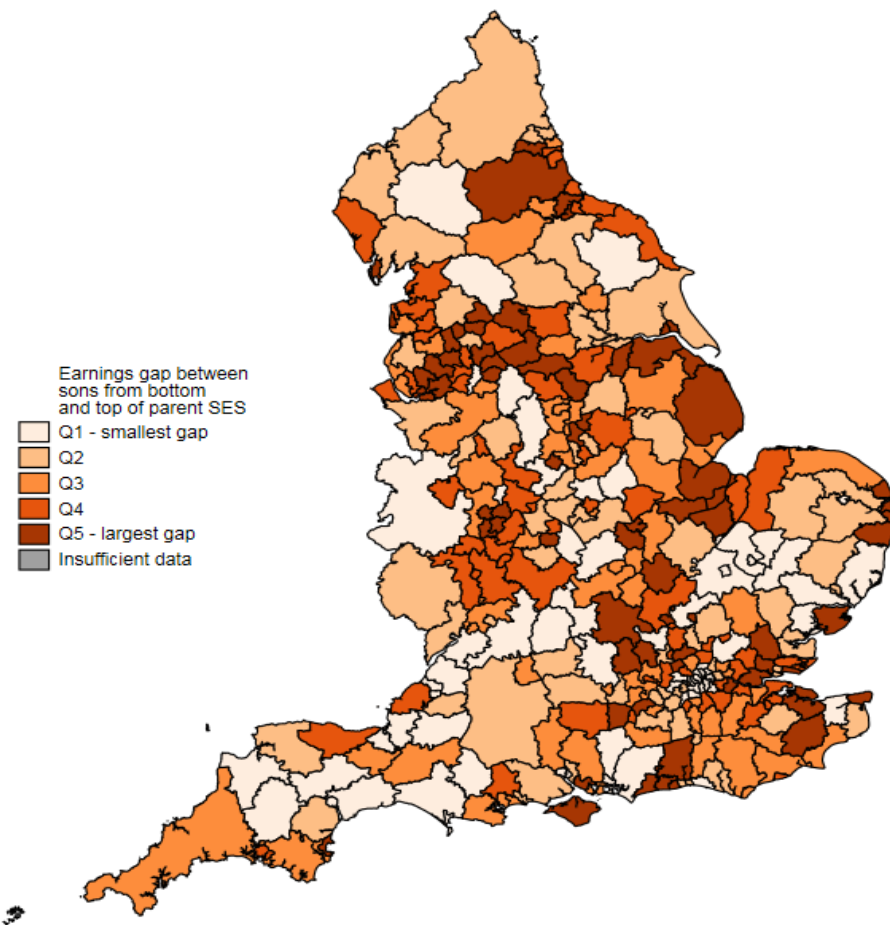
- Not a North versus South story

1. Where you grow up matters – pay gaps between rich and poor sons



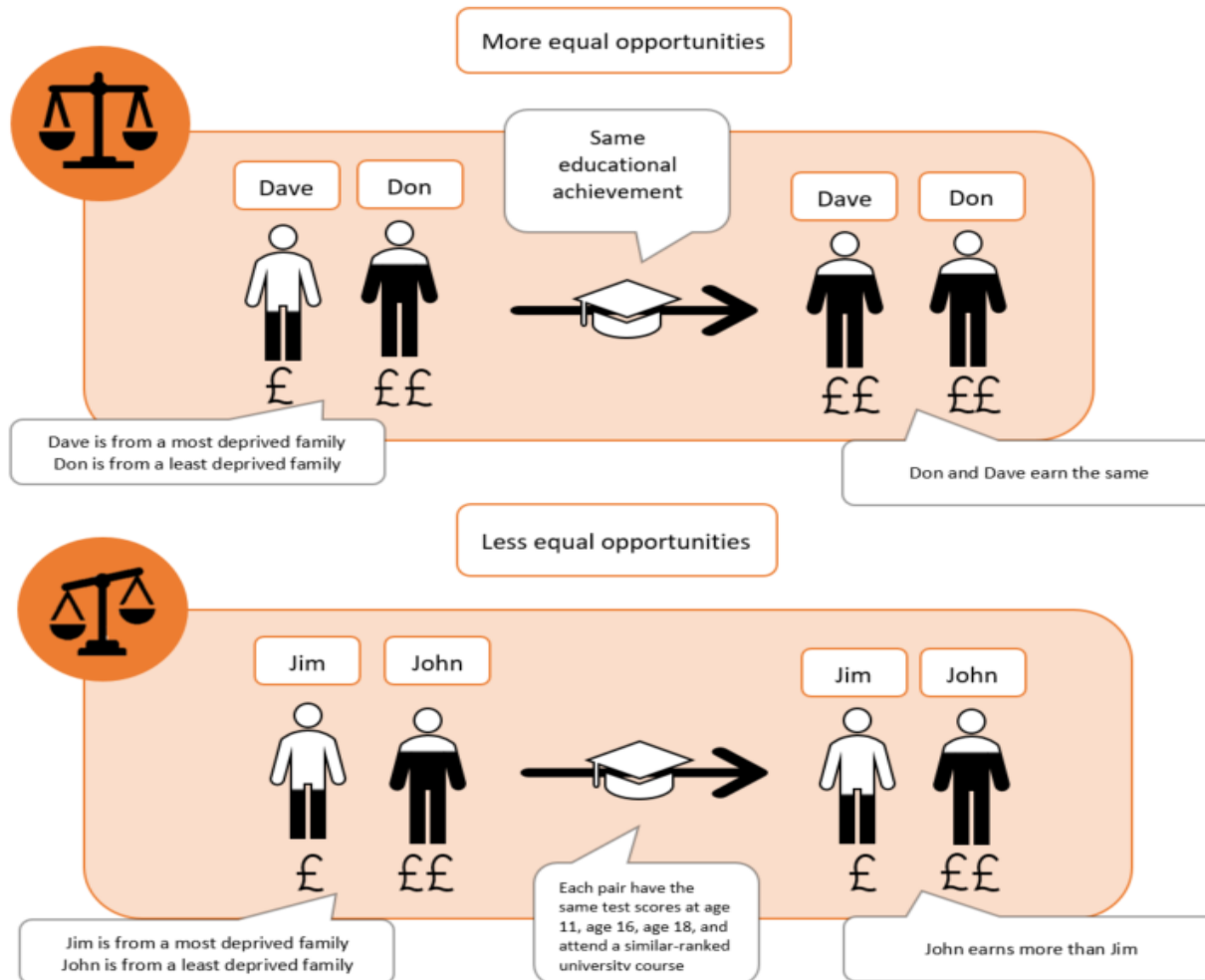
2.5X

Pay gaps between the richest and poorest sons are two and a half times larger in the least mobile areas than in the most mobile areas



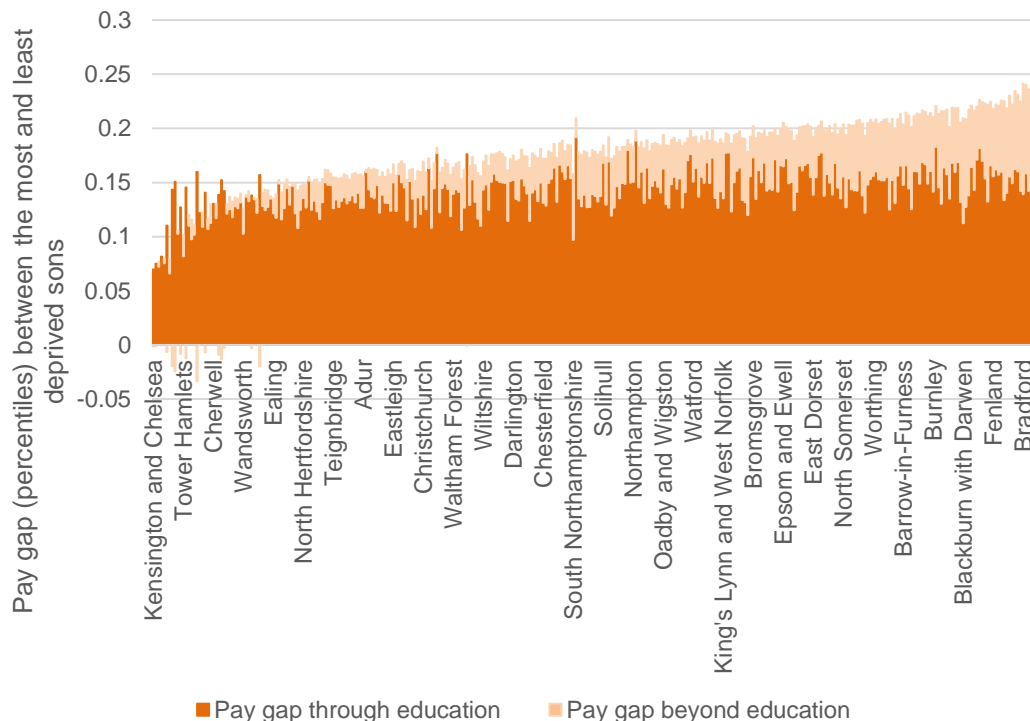
- Big differences across local authorities within broader regions

2. In the least mobile areas family background casts a long shadow



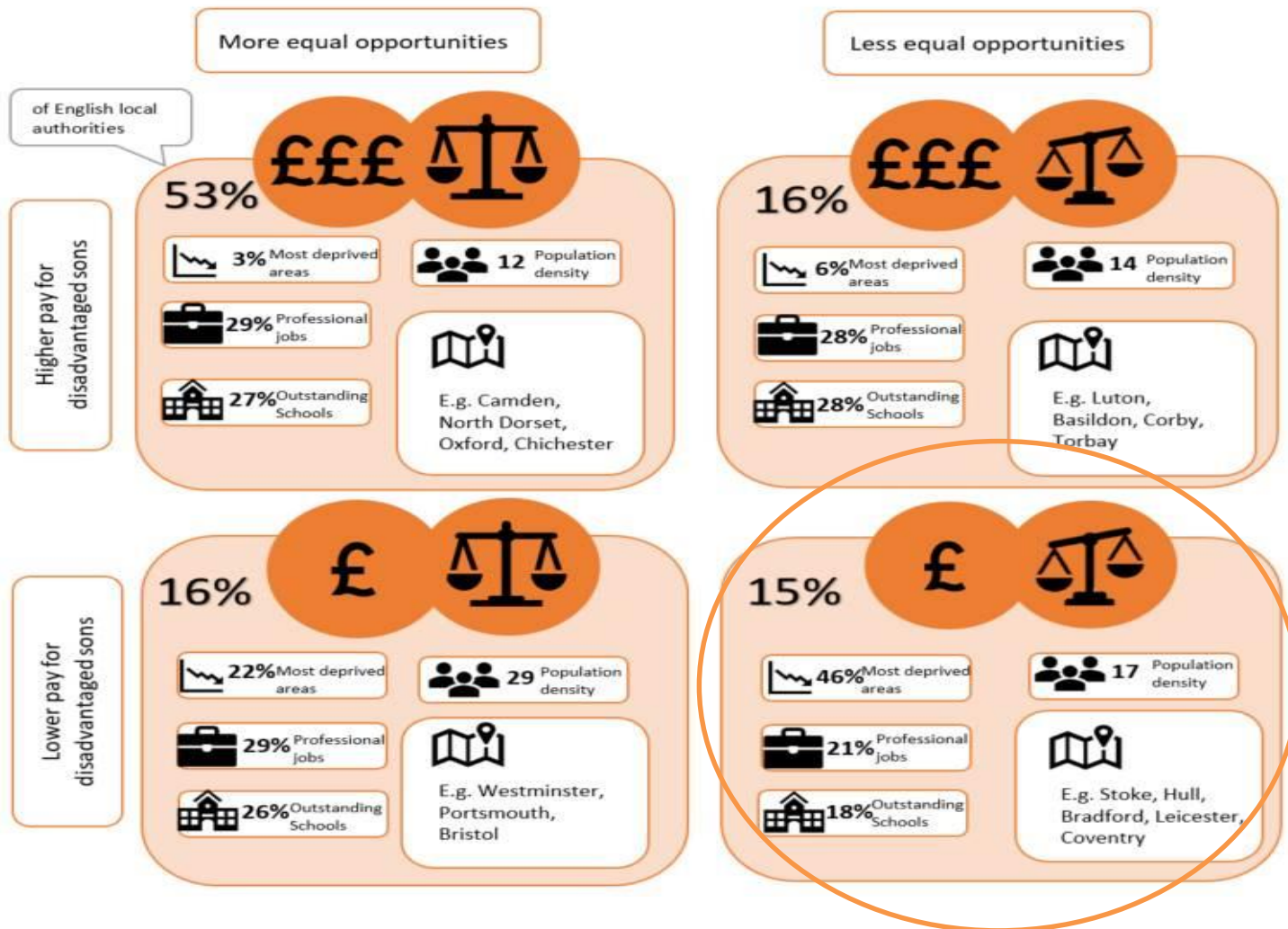
3. Education is a key driver of opportunities but doesn't account for *differences across places*

Relative contribution of education and wider labour market factors to differences in pay gaps across England



- Education gaps account for stable 10-15 percentiles everywhere
- While education gaps explains most of the pay gap in the most mobile areas...
- In the least mobile areas, around 1/3 is explained by non-education factors

4. In order to 'level up' we need a combined approach of education policy and labour market initiatives



4. In order to 'level up' we need a combined approach of education policy and labour market initiatives

- **Towns Fund:** majority of the 50 LAs in bottom right quadrant are named in the list of initial 100 towns deals across England (inc. Bolton, Dudley, Hastings, Rochdale, St. Helens, Wolverhampton)
- **Opportunity Areas:** 9 of the 12 'Opportunity Areas' fall into our low social mobility localities
- Our findings support a broader approach that extends beyond education opportunities
- Post-COVID-19 recession: If this reinforces the importance of family background, we might expect to see growing inequalities across the country.



Social Mobility Commission

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This document is also available from our website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/social-mobility-commission>



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