

Social Mobility in Shire Counties: A Joint Inquiry by the County APPG, CCN and Localis

Call for Evidence

Introduction

The County All Party Parliamentary Group (County APPG) is undertaking an independent inquiry into social mobility in county and rural areas with the County Councils Network (CCN) and Localis.

The **County APPG** was established to act as an influential forum to raise county issues – and opportunities – in Parliament and around Westminster, and is currently chaired by Peter Aldous, the MP for Waveney. For information, see www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/advocacy/ccn-in-parliament/county-appg/.

The **CCN** is the national voice of England's 37 county authorities. A cross-party organisation, CCN develops policy and commissions research on behalf of counties and provides the secretariat for the APPG. For information, see www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk.

Localis are an independent, leading not-for-profit think tank that was established in 2001. Their research and policy programme is guided by the concept of neo-localism. Their work promotes giving places and people more control over the effects of globalisation. For more information see <http://www.localis.org.uk/>.

Background

A recent report from the Social Mobility Commission raised concerns about attainment and university attendance in rural and coastal areas and the difficulties in being able to access the jobs market. 52 of 65 social mobility cold-spots they identified were located in counties or county unitaries. A similar point has also been made by Localis with their work on "stuck communities".

Evidence shows that counties are facing the some of the highest demand pressures for Children's Services, and funding per pupil is lower in county schools than other types of local authority. Educational attainment of children in receipt of free school meal and looked after children is significantly lower in county areas. They also face employment barriers such as reductions in rural and community bus services, skills gaps and low productivity.

The County APPG therefore intends to undertake an inquiry into Social Mobility in County Areas, considering what opportunities are available to young people in our areas, focussing on:

- provision and impact of early years
- education
- transport

- skills and jobs.

Key Lines of Inquiry:

The County APPG invites written submission of no more than 3,000 words, specifically on:

1. What are the barriers and challenges facing counties and local partners in securing greater levels of social mobility?

Points you may want to cover include:

- the opportunities and challenges of delivering high quality early years education
- how well current education provision supports young people and the local economy
- the impact of changes to funding mechanisms for school transport and rural transport services
- how well are young people able to access the labour markets in counties
- the challenges caused by migration of younger people to urban areas

2. How visible are opportunities in counties for opportunities that could improve social mobility, such as higher/ further education, skills training and apprenticeships, or employment?

3. How do county councils, unitary councils and partners currently support social mobility in rural areas?

The deadline for written submission is **Thursday 10th May.**

Please send your evidence as a Word Document or PDF to james.holden@local.gov.uk

We welcome contributions from the full range of public sector agencies, their national representative bodies, public and private sector providers, business, third sector, and community groups. We are particularly interested in hearing about case studies setting out how counties, county unitaries and partners are seeking to improve social mobility in their areas.

Stakeholders will be invited to contribute to oral evidence sessions during June. Please indicate in your written evidence whether your organisation would be willing to take part.

Follow the inquiry on twitter: @CountyAPPG. For more information on the County APPG please see our webpage www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/CountyAPPG.