



# HOUSE OF LORDS

Revised transcript of evidence taken before

## **The Select Committee on Social Mobility**

Inquiry on

### **SOCIAL MOBILITY**

*Evidence Session No. 8*

*Heard in Public*

*Questions 63 - 75*

WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2015

10.35 am

Witnesses: Ms Alice Memminger, Mr David Pollard and Ms Anne Spackman, OBE

#### USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

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#### Members present

Baroness Corston (Chairman)  
Baroness Berridge  
Baroness Blood  
Lord Farmer  
Lord Holmes of Richmond  
Baroness Howells of St Davids  
Earl of Kinnoull  
Baroness Morris of Yardley  
Lord Patel  
Baroness Sharp of Guildford  
Baroness Steadman-Scott  
Baroness Tyler of Enfield

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#### Examination of Witnesses

**Ms Alice Memminger**, Chief Executive, UpRising, **Mr David Pollard**, Chairman for Education, Skills and Business Support, Federation of Small Businesses, and **Ms Anne Spackman, OBE**, Executive Director, Career Ready.

**Q63 The Chairman:** Thank you very much for your attendance here today for the eighth evidence session of the Select Committee on Social Mobility and the transition from school to work, on a day when the new head teacher of Eton said: “The whole point of school is to prepare young people for happiness and success in their personal lives and working lives. There’s more awareness of emotional intelligence and of mental health, of young people building confidence and resilience to manage themselves in a fast-changing, challenging environment”. It seems as though there is one message but many voices.

This session is open to the public. A webcast of this session goes out live and is subsequently accessible via the parliamentary website. A verbatim transcript will be taken of your evidence and that will also be put on the parliamentary website. A few days after this session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy, but if you have any corrections we would be very grateful if you would advise us as quickly as possible. If, after this session, you want to clarify or amplify any points or have any additional points to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary written evidence to us. Perhaps you could just introduce yourselves for the record and then we will begin questions.

**Ms Memminger:** I am Alice Memminger, Chief Executive of UpRising.

**Mr Pollard:** I am David Pollard. I am a member of the FSB and I lead their policy work on education, skills and business support.

**Ms Spackman:** I am Anne Spackman. I am the Chief Executive of Career Ready.

**Q64 The Chairman:** Thank you very much. One of the recurrent themes in this inquiry is life skills and character traits, such as positive attitude and communication, being so vital for young people. The trouble is, for some young people they do not come naturally. In your experience, what are the most effective ways to teach these people life skills so that they are more employable?

**Ms Memminger:** Shall I start? Thank you very much for inviting UpRising to present oral evidence today. Before I answer that question, as CEO I would like to give you a few words about the rationale behind the existence of UpRising, who we are and our achievements to date regarding social mobility. UpRising was developed and launched in 2008 in east London by the Young Foundation. The Young Foundation identified a number of barriers that prevent young people from under-represented communities achieving their potential. These included a lack of confidence, skills, connections, education and social capital. UpRising was developed to address these barriers. Through peer-to-peer interaction as well as access to wider networks, UpRising aims to increase the social capital of participants, address issues of social mobility amongst young people and increase life skills so that young people can play a significant role in an increasingly diverse Britain. We offer a range of leadership and employability programmes for 16 to 25 year-olds that build these skills and capacities. Over the last year alone we delivered 68 programmes to over 2,000 young people in eight cities across the UK and have a large and growing network of alumni. We have evidence that UpRising works and that our impact is both immediate and long-term.

To answer the question, as we all know soft skills are difficult to teach through academics. These are usually learnt behaviour and those who tend to have polished traits will be those with most access to social capital. We work with young people who have high levels of potential but low levels of social capital. The USP of our programme in its core element is action learning, which has been tried and tested for the past eight years. As a programme, the success of our young people has been based on providing them with knowledge sessions, skills sessions, action learning, which is a social action project done in groups to put learning into practice, coaching, mentoring from senior professionals and continuing support through an alumni network of peers. It has proven to work. Ninety per cent of young people

who have gone through our programme report that they have access to a network of professionals across different professional backgrounds which they would not have had and did not have when they came into the programme. Ninety per cent report an improvement in confidence to aspire to leadership positions, which again they did not have when they came into the programme. Seventy-five per cent report that it raised their career ambitions. Two-thirds report gaining employment after completing the programme.

**Mr Pollard:** I take the point that you cannot teach social skills, employability skills through formal examinable courses, which is why within the FSB we are not in favour of people who suggest that we have to have a qualification in employability skills or whatever. We think it is necessary to embed within the school working day and the school curriculum activities that engage young people in the sorts of things that will develop their various social skills. Rather than always sitting in a classroom and having a teacher at a blackboard teaching them mathematics, history, or whatever, there has to be a use of project learning where the students go away, work as a team, research something, come up with solutions to problems, develop their ideas and then present those ideas to the class, or whatever group they are working in. In this way, they begin to develop, without being told they have to learn these skills; they just do it. They find it enjoyable, get engaged and develop those skills that some children get automatically through their life outside school but which an awful lot do not. I think that is the key thing to do.

**Ms Spackman:** I think that it is a misnomer to call these soft skills. I have been at work for 30-odd years and it seems to me the people who get on best are those who have those skills irrespective of whether they got an A\* in physics. We call them core skills. We have something called our skills for career success, and they are a very comprehensive set of things you need to know to get on in life. They are written in language that young people understand. For example, we have a whole section on “managing myself” and we get the students to understand that that includes knowing that they need to turn up to work on time, which is the number one reason for people not being able to get and keep a job, as I am sure you all know. Everything that we do is based on delivering those skills, but all of them are delivered in the same way that David described: through actual activities.

It is interesting that you mention Eton, because there is a lot of focus at the moment on trying to have evidence-based research of what works. Up to a point, we do have a control group of people who have had access to all the things that all of us exist to provide to our

young people, and they are exactly the things that people at Eton will have, which are networks, role models, confidence, access to all kinds of additional clubs and societies, and we can see how well it works. We can see a pattern there of people who have dominated certain professions—including the one I used to be in—who were overwhelmingly privately educated, despite being a small proportion of the population. I would completely echo David: everything we do is by getting the students to do things, so they lead at every event we have, they are the lead speakers, they practise networking, we hold mentor networking events, their mentors do interview techniques and practices with them, and we get them into offices, factories and places of work as often as possible. They absorb certain things just by osmosis, by hearing how people behave in an office, seeing that nobody is wearing flip-flops, that they are conducting their behaviour in a certain way, understanding they have deadlines, all of that. Everything we do is through that very regular contact and experience of work.

**Q65 Baroness Sharp of Guildford:** Ms Spackman, are you working with schools to do this or is this post-school training? As a supplementary, traineeship programmes have been introduced; I believe they are still being piloted. Could all three members of the panel comment on whether these traineeships are worthwhile and doing the sorts of things they would like to see?

**Ms Spackman:** The programme runs in schools and FE colleges, sixth-form colleges, so we are working with 16 to 19 year-olds as our core group of people. It runs alongside their studies. A very large number of them are completing BTECs and they will do this programme as an additional part of their study. That is the answer to the first part. I do not know enough to answer the second part properly. We are encouraging all our students, who all have some GCSEs—we go for middle achievers with the potential to do well who, if they were from middle-class families, would get a proper shove and be encouraged to go to university—to go on to senior level apprenticeships or university, so we are moving them in that direction. Our students are not going on traineeships, so I am not qualified to answer that.

**Mr Pollard:** I am not an expert on traineeships, but I have been involved with them to a fair degree. They seem to be doing a very good job of helping people who have come out of school without a lot of these soft skills, to develop them in such a way that they can move on to an apprenticeship or a job or whatever.

**Baroness Sharp of Guildford:** This is the idea behind them.

**Mr Pollard:** What I would say about the traineeships is, in a sense, they are correcting a mistake that was made before. We are spending a lot of money to run traineeships to give young people the skills they should have been getting at school. I mentioned embedding it in the curriculum. We have really got to put it in the curriculum from primary school onwards. If at primary school young people work in groups, in teams, and are given the opportunities to take the lead in doing things, they develop the confidence and interpersonal skills to start to progress, and when they go into secondary school and beyond that to FE, university and everything else, they are developing those skills and building those networks which will serve them well as adults in the world of work.

**Q66 Baroness Morris of Yardley:** This might be for Alice and Anne, I am not sure, but I would welcome answers from everyone. Interestingly, both of you said that your programmes are targeted at high achievers or potential high achievers from disadvantaged backgrounds. I can see why you said “middle” and I think your idea was networks for people who are likely to do well, so it is not a criticism. My question is, do you think what you do would work with that group of students who are not high achievers and are from disadvantaged backgrounds? I suppose there is an argument that, if they have become high achievers, whatever the shortfall in these skills compared with others, they are probably greater than those of people who have not achieved at any level at GCSE. I am not asking you to justify specialising, because I appreciate that and understand that; this is just a reflection on whether you think what you do would work right across the ability range.

**Ms Memminger:** We work with a very wide group of young people. Some of those would be young people who are heading towards university but may not be successful afterwards because of their lack of social capital; but we also work with school leavers, people who have left education quite early, so we know it is proven across the board. Young people need some drive, passion or motivation to succeed in order to be successful. When they do not have that, you need to reach out to them in a different way and engage them before they go on this sort of programme, otherwise it will not work.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Have your students got that sense of passion no matter what qualification it is?

**Ms Memminger:** When they come on our programme, yes.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** That is an entry requirement?

**Ms Memminger:** We do run employability programmes for young people from jobcentres who do not necessarily have that. We run a two-week intensive programme to get them into jobs, although they are not necessarily the best jobs that are going to improve social mobility.

**Q67 Baroness Blood:** Just following on from Baroness Morris, you talk about achievers and middle achievers. How important are numeracy and literacy? I take your point about work experience, which is the most important thing you can give a young person; just exposing them to the work. How important is it to have a recognised qualification in numeracy and literacy even to take part in what you are doing?

**Ms Spackman:** Can I just come back in on Baroness Morris' question and answer both of those at the same time? We do not go for high-achieving students, because there are quite a lot of programmes for them because charities follow the money and there is a lot of widening participation money that funds that kind of work and is very, very valuable. That is not in any way a criticism; it is extremely valuable and you can see a lot of people do that. We work with middle achievers because most people do not, and we feel they are the ones who could end up unemployed even though they would never be unemployed if they came from a different background, so we are in a different place.

On your question, would it work for everybody, there is scarcely a week goes by in our office when I do not think one of us needs to go on part of our own programme—and quite often it is me! I think those skills are common to all of us; we all need to know them. My colleagues who have the most experience of working with unemployed people, particularly the long-term unemployed, always describe how you have to put in an enormous amount of very specific work just to get them to the point where they can start gaining the kind of positivity Alice described, which they get once they think, “I could be something and I’m going to be it”.

To answer the numeracy and literacy point, that is absolutely essential. One of the problems we see in some of our young people who have become confident and really ambitious is they do not study enough of what everybody outside that world considers to be core subjects, and they do not recognise the value difference that is applied by employers and universities to different subjects. It is still a bit of a secret world to them.

**Q68 Lord Farmer:** I am talking about social skills and social intelligence, which is increasingly on the radar screen and we all admit is more important today than we recognised before. It

seems to me we are talking about disadvantages in schools, but it starts earlier than that; it is the family background where so many of these advantages or disadvantages start, and you and the school are picking them up once they have been established in the child. Can you recommend how your charities or government policy could work with the families, underlining the importance of social skills and encouraging families to build them up in their children just by talking?

**Mr Pollard:** The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education—NIACE—has a programme they call family learning, which is where they bring the young people, their parents and their carers together on learning activities and help to teach the parents what the youngster is doing at school, why it is important, et cetera, with the idea that that lifts up the whole family and then the parents/carers can be more active in supporting the young people. That seems to have had some very good results. I do not think there is the funding to roll it out across the whole country but it is a programme that works, because once the parents feel more confident that they understand what the young person is doing at school and how they can help and contribute, that helps to tackle the problem that the parents have not given them the start before they get to primary school. Clearly, the biggest place at which Government can intervene and have an impact is at primary school. We cannot just overnight wave a wand and get all our parents to be good parents—many of those who are not good parents want to be good parents—but there are some programmes that will work, yes.

**Ms Spackman:** I would say our young people often have really supportive parents and they are good parents, but they just do not live in the world in which all of us here live. I do not think it is the lack of skills. I was very struck by one of our Muslim boys when he was talking about his first work visit. I said, “So what was it like when you went to PwC?” and he said, “We were with people who wore suits and we went to Pret A Manger for our sandwiches”. It was not that they were not courteous, that they did not have the sorts of things we would want in our children; it was the fact that child could actually see the offices in Canary Wharf from his playground and it was a completely alien landscape. What they need is the tools to navigate that landscape. I know there will be parents who are not so supportive, but our parents generally are very supportive of their children.

**Q69 Baroness Berridge:** May I talk about the school environment? We started with a quote from Eton, and as peers here we do dip into certain schools and get a taste of the

environment very quickly from the way the staff are dressed and all of that. Is there a place where your programme is not just a bolt-on, but where you have seen good examples of that modelling in the activities the school is teaching young people? Is there work to do with some schools in the way the school is run; teaching some of these skills along the way, how to engage with people in authority, how to present yourself, et cetera, just by the way the school is run?

**Ms Spackman:** Totally, I would say. I can think of an example: All Saints Catholic High School in Knowsley is surrounded by tower blocks, as everybody who knows Knowsley will know, and in 2014 they did not have any NEETs from that school. We run our programme in the school but they take employability and life after school so seriously that other people work in the same way that we do with different groups of children. You can feel the ethos of the school when you go in there; this is a calm and organised place with lots of ambition. The first thing you see when you walk into the school is a Land Rover cut in half, because Jaguar makes them down the road and they want to encourage people to understand how a Land Rover works. It is such a striking image as you walk into the school; it is literally cut in half. I always think that is a great example. At the moment, schools like that do not really get the credit for what they are doing in the way schools do for academic achievement; and in any case, the two things go together quite often.

**Q70 Earl of Kinnoull:** I want to ask about business engagement, which we have heard from a number of sources is a very important factor in the teaching of life or employability skills. What do you think are the best ways of getting businesses to engage with teaching these skills and other schemes such as mentoring and coaching?

**Mr Pollard:** There are lots of schools which have very good programmes for working with their local businesses to bring businesses into school to explain to young people what their career opportunities are, what skills and qualifications are needed, but there are an awful lot of schools that are impenetrable; you cannot get into them, they are not interested. They are so fixated by the school performance measurement systems and the quite catastrophic consequences for the head and the management team if they do not do well, that they feel they do not have the time to do those sorts of things in the curriculum; they want the young people to be concentrating purely on the academics.

I met a woman last year at an event I was chairing and her daughter had just started her GCSE year. She had got a phone call from school when the teachers had discovered she had

a Saturday job. Saturday jobs are very rare these days and yet work experience is a great thing for getting on in life. The school wanted her to persuade her daughter to give up the job so she could concentrate on her GCSEs. That attitude is very common in many schools and is driving out the time to introduce the various activities we have talked about, like project working, that develop the skills people need. While you have that attitude and pressure on schools from the system, you will have a lot of schools who just do not want to engage with businesses because it is taking time away from education.

For those who change their mind and say, "Yes, we want to", there is the difficulty of organising it. In Southampton, in Hampshire, which is my neck of the woods, some of the schools have people they call work experience co-ordinators. It is a part-time job; full-time during work experience periods, at other times maybe two or three days a week. These people come in from a business background, so they come in with a business network, they know and understand businesses. More importantly, within the school the school secretaries, the admin staff, know that person exists, know their email address and extension number, so if a business phones up and says, "We'd be interested in working with you, who should I contact?", they say, "That's the person", and the whole thing gets going. Without that, everything gets lost. One of our local branch members from a north Hampshire branch has been trying to get a meeting for him and me with the business studies head at a school in Winchester, to see how we could get businesses working with the students on that programme so they could get some real life examples. Every time we get a meeting set up it gets cancelled, things get pushed aside, and I think that is because although the teacher wants to do it, the head of department, the top management, is not really interested in it.

**The Chairman:** That is exactly what happened to my father in 1928 when the local factory wrote to a school, so it is not new.

**Q71 Baroness Berridge:** Some large employers have taken it upon themselves to change their recruitment practices to try to improve social mobility; for example, they have been removing the requirement for qualifications. What changes do you think would best promote the employment of young people?

**Ms Memminger:** We believe that large employers are making great strides in this area but research with our young people suggests they need to do a lot more. Businesses need to do more to understand the barriers young people from less privileged and diverse backgrounds

face in accessing jobs, to understand how they are perceived by young people as a result of things like their marketing and recruitment practices, if they want to reach out to more diverse talent. We are seeing more businesses consulting with young people from UpRising, for instance, to develop recruitment, diversity and retention practices to ensure they are fit for purpose. For instance, we had a session with Mayer Brown, a big law firm, with 200 of our young people. They presented their blind CV practice to our young people. They got instant feedback that it was not fit for purpose and have gone back to the drawing board and found holes in it that put up a barrier to young people from diverse backgrounds applying. Practically all our young people tell us that businesses can provide more handholding throughout the application process.

If you are not familiar with the world of work, if you do not know what the norms are, it would be helpful to have digital content on websites showing what a cover letter looks like, what they should wear to an interview, what they do when they access the building, how they shake hands with the person when they meet them—very basic things that prevent many young people from under-represented or diverse backgrounds from getting employment. Businesses are doing more to ensure diversity and recruitment to tackle things like unconscious bias in the workplace, recruitment and promotion, such as anonymising CVs and displaying the CV recruitment process, and these are all great initiatives that give young people more confidence in the recruitment practices today. It would be great to evidence the results of these practices to show the value of having a more diverse workforce in Britain.

**Ms Spackman:** To echo David, we are entirely about employers and schools. Everything we do is done through business volunteers, and all the problems are on the school side. The pipe that links the two goes from very wide to very narrow at that point for very understandable reasons, as it is because they're dealing with children there. On the employers' side there is a chasm between the employers leading the kind of work you are talking about, the vast majority of whom are professional services—EY, KPMG, PwC, Deloitte, people like that—and the world of most businesses which are not large. We have to be realistic about how far businesses can invest time, particularly smaller businesses. I am sitting next to the expert on this. The amount of time it takes can be quite considerable. I do not think there is any lack of willingness to do that, but there is also the cost of recruitment and training.

It is very welcome to see the big professional companies because where they lead, others may follow, but the area which really needs to be looked at more is how you attach young people to the small and medium-sized businesses where most of them are likely to find work. The companies who lead in this field are always those in the professions that are quite high profile, so you end up, which I am sure you are aware of, with far too many people applying to be accountants, lawyers and doctors, not knowing there are lots of jobs in search engine optimisation and all the new sorts of professional fields. The companies are smaller in all those growth areas—life sciences, engineering, digital technology—and that is where we have to concentrate on the recruitment practices. The thing we have started which seems to work—I cannot say “work fairly well”; we think it has so far, but it is too new for us to test—is insight days, whereby you get an industry to say, “At half-term in February a series of logistics companies will do something in one of their premises for one day during that week”. The students go through all those days so the input can be less for the company and more realistic, but the experience for the student, which is our prime target, is good and strong and they are visible to lots of employers. We are trying to find those kinds of solutions in the industries which are not in a position to lead on this.

**Mr Pollard:** After I was 15 and had done my O-levels, I had some friends from council estates and working-class backgrounds who went off to become accountants and lawyers because they did the posh apprenticeship—they signed articles with them. That was facilitated because the companies—they joined small practices locally—came into school and said, “We’re looking to recruit apprentices for the coming year. Who have you got in the school who is interested?” The school saw it as their job to help those pupils who were going to leave at 15 and not stay on and do A-levels to get into a job, to have some form of training and career development. It was not very structured but there was a transition programme from school to what comes after education: work, et cetera. That does not happen these days in Britain.

If you compare the way it is done in Germany or some other European countries, transition from education into work is part of the education system. There are various steps along the route where young people are given opportunities to sample different trades, different careers, to see what jobs there are, to get an understanding of the fact that if you want to go into marketing you do not necessarily have to work for a big marketing agency in London: you can go and work as a marketing person in the local engineering company, because they

need to market themselves just as much as everybody else. There are very structured programmes that do that. We have to get those going and get back to the idea that it is at the end of the academic year when you recruit your school leavers, your college leavers, your university leavers. We need to get companies thinking like that and saying, “Right, come August/September, how many apprentices do we want? How many graduates do we want? How many people coming out of FE colleges do we need to recruit?”, and to start thinking about it in February or even possibly in December, so they have decided who they are going to recruit before the exams are sat and the students have done them.

**Q72 Baroness Sharp of Guildford:** The Government have set up the Careers Enterprise Company. Can you tell us what it is doing at the moment? Do you think it is doing the right things?

**Mr Pollard:** I think there is quite a lot of potential in that company. They have to get themselves established and started. They are offering funding to local LEPs. The LEPs can bid for funding and certainly the LEP that I am involved in has put in a bid. That will provide them with co-ordinators who will work with schools and individuals in those schools and with local businesses to bring them together to introduce into the schools a lot of the things that we have been talking about this morning. These initiatives are fine; sometimes they fail and sometimes they succeed. It is early days yet. They are putting resources and the money they have been given into some practical activities like that.

**Ms Spackman:** We have been very heavily engaged with them. We have been almost unofficial advisers, in that they have asked us about what they are doing. I am optimistic about their chances because the LEPs provide a sort of civic pillar for what is going on. The place where we operate most effectively is Scotland, and that is because we have the employer, the school and the civic pillar of the local authority, which means you can say, “We will do this in all our schools” and you can spread things and it has a different structural basis. I think the LEPs could provide that in England. They have already rolled out their first lot of funding to 26 LEPs plus the six pilots, which is more than half of them.

Given that there is a framework there, one of the positive things it may not have had as its motivation but which has happened, is that it is making all the charities such as us—most of whom are too small to scale up to reach enough children quickly enough—work in partnership, which is really essential. I am quite optimistic about the way they are doing that. The other good thing they are doing is to separately have an investment fund for what

they call the “cold spots”. We were set up to work in urban areas of social deprivation because that was where most social deprivation was. I suspect if we were set up now, we would be working in coastal towns and rural areas. Because we are all small, we do not have the financial ability to take the risk to say, “Right, we’re going to take a new programme into this area”, not knowing whether it is going to work. I think it will allow us, in partnership with other organisations, to do that.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Just a follow-up to that question. This idea of some sort of national strategic approach to this is crucial, but from what David was saying teachers essentially do not have time to do it. Probably the answer to this is no, but I have been around long enough to remember the last attempt at that, which I think was called Education Business Partnership. I am really pleased to hear you speak so positively about the present initiative, that is really good, but do you remember the Education Business Partnership? I want you to say a bit more about what works at national strategic level. All of you have brilliant practice, and that is a feature of our education system; there is loads of brilliant practice—the problem is rolling it out nationwide and making it an entitlement.

**Ms Spackman:** My colleagues, who are more cynical about the Careers and Enterprise Company because they have been around the block more times doing all those things, are a reflection of what you ask. If people think the LEPs will stay, then that is fine. The question is whether or not every five years you will get a new Government who will say, “We’re not having LEPs any more; we’re having something else”.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** It used to be the local authority in the old days.

**Mr Pollard:** On the point about the civic pillar, there are still some EBPs active and some of them are rejuvenated at the moment, but they have had to keep going and become yet another part of this very fractured landscape. Going back to your point, it means you have some good stuff happening in places but we miss too many young people.

**Q73 Baroness Blood:** We have talked a lot about getting young people into employment. In your experience, once they are in work what kind of post-recruiting training and support do they need, and are they getting that, particularly middle achievers?

**Ms Spackman:** I asked one of my colleagues who works at Freshfields, the law firm, about this because they are exceptionally good on this. They have a buddy system for their interns which is really effective, but she said they are not doing it for the new recruits because there is an assumption that everybody knows everything if they have come through that sort of

channel. She thinks that is a very powerful thing, and I would agree with that. Also, one of the biggest things is giving people regular feedback. Especially if they have come in to work at 18, they are used to having things marked, to having that order in their school lives. If somebody says to you at the end of each week, "How do you think you did at this? What do you think you did well?", or "I noticed x happened and perhaps it would have been better if you had done y; what do you think?", and uses that like a mini appraisal, that makes more gradual coming into an environment where suddenly everybody is a grown-up and you are supposed to understand how things work.

**Ms Memminger:** I agree with what Anne said. Our young people tell us that mentors are key to success in the workplace both at a senior and peer level. Senior mentors can transfer their tacit knowledge and provide help with career progression to young people. Young people who have not been exposed to the world of work through family and personal networks do not have the knowledge of the unwritten rules of the workplace, so it is really important for them to have that senior person to guide them through their career and how they progress. It is not always about being the best one in your job; there are other things that you need to be doing. Just as important are peer mentors within the workplace, just like the buddy system. We know that often, our young people get into a job and they have a senior mentor, but they are afraid to ask what they think are stupid questions. It is important they have a peer they can go to to ask those questions, so again, a buddy or maybe someone who is one year in the company who can guide them through some of the more basic things like what you wear, when you take lunch, whether you are allowed to take lunch; those really basic things they do not know.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Just building on the last question, getting a job is one thing; keeping it is another. We hear lots about mentors and coaches to get young people in the right shape to get the job, but then the support seems to go because they think the job is done. Do you have any evidence that leaving that person in place for six or 12 months afterwards really consolidates the job and stops people falling out early? Have you had any experience of mentoring being provided to the employer, as well, so that it consolidates the process and makes it work better, so that getting the job is an output but keeping it is the outcome?

**Ms Memminger:** Our experience of working with corporates, and we work with many across sectors, is they are having problems retaining diverse talent. They may have lots of initiatives

to get them in but keeping them longer than one year seems to be a challenge. We think it is really important they have a mentor during that time who can help them navigate that first year of employment because it is a new world to them and they do not have the personal networks who can support them in that way. We have a lot of evidence. One case study we had was someone from Mayer Brown mentoring a young person trying to get into Clifford Chance. They did get into Clifford Chance but that year was extremely difficult, and I think without that mentor that person would have fallen out of that programme for sure. We have numerous examples of that.

**Mr Pollard:** We have a concept in Britain, or certainly in England, that everything revolves around a qualification. When you take somebody into a company as an apprentice, for instance, there is a qualification that they get at the end, whether it is an NVQ or something else. How quickly that qualification can be delivered is the determinant of how long the apprenticeship is. That is totally different on the continent. There, they set the length of the apprenticeship to be adequate for the young person being trained to get the experience across a whole series of different situations, so that when they finish that job they are competent, they can cope with uncertainty, they can cope with complexity, they can cope with pressure because they have had the time to do it.

I sat on the advisory panel that looks at the trailblazer apprenticeships and we had a very interesting discussion when one came up on training people for the financial services industry. Some of the people, particularly from the provider background, were saying, "Is this rigorous enough and demanding enough that it will take 12 months to do it?" We had a person on the panel who was a specialist on European apprenticeships and she said, "I've looked at the content of the English trailblazer and I've looked at the content of the German one and they're almost identical. The only difference between the two is the duration of the English one is one year and the duration of the German one is three years". At the end of that three years, that person is really established in the job; they have the confidence because they have been doing it so long, and by the end of it they are almost operating on their own, but they are still on the apprenticeship so they can go for help and support and they will be reviewed. I think that is one of the things to do.

You also mentioned the question of support for the employer and that is very important. The apprenticeship reform programme we are going through at the moment and the improvement that will bring will change the whole system of apprenticeships. I suggested

yesterday at a conference of training providers that one of the opportunities they have in the reform programme is not just doing the on-the-job training for the apprentice, but selling some added-value services to the small employers who are taking on apprentices. So they can say, "This is your introduction to apprenticeships. We'll come in and do some training for your staff on how to help the on-the-job training of apprentices. We can train somebody to be a buddy, someone to be a mentor, et cetera, and give them a greater understanding of what the apprenticeship is about, what the employer is going to have to do to make it a success for the employer and for the apprentice".

**Ms Spackman:** Our young people have more problems going to university and dropping out than going into work and dropping out. We are looking to do research about this because it is obviously quite a worrying trend. Young people all have networks, they have platforms on Facebook usually, and we introduce them to LinkedIn and they start using that while they are on the programme because that is a professional network. If we have students who have gone into jobs, they will come back to us on LinkedIn and to other people they have met in the peer group they have formed on LinkedIn for help and advice about their work. They are very good at doing that and it is part of their normal skills. It is really useful for them to be networking in that way, and to teach them how to do that professionally.

**Baroness Berridge:** I am just drawing you back to your comments about the cold spots. It is probably not a question for you, Mr Pollard, but for the voluntary sector. In some of those areas a lot of the local employment will still be through the public sector. The NHS employs an enormous number of staff who are not clinical staff and there are lots of local services that these young people at 18 might join, where they might find employment. Have you done any work with not just businesses but those statutory providers about their recruitment practices at 18?

**Ms Spackman:** Yes, we have done some. Perhaps the most interesting recently was with the NHS in Yorkshire and Humberside who took on, I think, 30 of our young people for paid internships last summer, because it was deliberately about recruitment. We find that whether an employer is public or private sector—they used to work with us for CSR reasons 12 years ago, and now it is absolutely recruitment or CSR-blended. They took the students on because they knew those students were interested in working in the health sector and they were looking to recruit people not into nursing or doctor roles, because people know

about those, but into the plethora of specialisms. We are hoping to roll that out to other NHS areas.

**Ms Memminger:** We work with hundreds of employers across all sectors and we would engage all those, bringing them in to speak to our young people about opportunities depending on the area. We would also work in cold spots as well, and those are much harder-to-reach young people who usually need a lot of work prior to connecting them with employers.

**Baroness Berridge:** Are they making the same comments about the lack of social capital, the social skills? Is that the same?

**Ms Memminger:** Yes.

**Ms Spackman:** It is about logistics. For hard-to-reach people in hard-to-reach places it is all about getting them to work, whether it is a child in a wheelchair trying to get into an event or a young person in the Fens who cannot drive and cannot get into Cambridge, where the jobs are. It is logistics, mainly.

**Q74 Lord Holmes of Richmond:** I would like to focus on small employers, if I may. What support and guidance is on offer for small employers recruiting young people? Crucially, what support and guidance should be available?

**Mr Pollard:** I think the honest answer is there is not an awful lot of support for small businesses in recruiting, certainly through any government programmes. All our members have access to a whole raft of services to help them with the mechanics of recruiting, so when it comes to the niceties of employment contracts we have model contracts that we can use, we have a legal advisory service they can use to get information and advice on a particular issue regarding recruitment. There is not a lot on how you go about recruiting and ways of doing that.

I have been having a campaign where I meet members around the regions and they are talking about doing apprenticeships, for instance. We say to them, "You've got to remember that an apprenticeship is a job with training, so you're taking on the apprentice; you have to make the final decision as to who the person is". There are an awful lot of instances where the training provider, the college, will say, "We'll select an apprentice for you" and that is not the way it should be done for a small business. The providers have access to the candidates; they have expertise in helping to select; they can judge whether the candidates will actually be able to cope with the training; but they should then be presenting a shortlist

of candidates to the employer to interview on-site with his or her team to decide who fits with them. However, it is an area we all have to look at, ourselves included, as to how we can improve that support.

**Ms Spackman:** We were in Manchester a couple of weeks ago at an event and there were about eight different construction companies there; they formed a construction hub. They were big names that you have heard of—BAM and Balfour Beatty—and they were saying that actually, their real recruitment problems were in their supply chain in the small businesses, and so they were trying to help their own supply chains do their recruitment. They could attract candidates because they have marketing budgets and things like that, and that seemed a very good way of doing it. I know there has been a lot of talk about how to make things work down the supply chain. I know that everybody believes in it and yet it does not happen, so there is obviously some reason that is stopping it.

**Ms Memminger:** If small employers want to recruit young people, we would suggest they work in partnership with the voluntary sector as well, because we have access to young people but we can also provide mentors, coaches, or some of the training that young people require that small employers may not have the capacity to deliver.

**Q75 Lord Patel:** There must have been many times when you thought, if there was some change in the policy decision, that would improve upward mobility, employment outcomes and opportunities for school leavers. If you were to give us one key recommendation that you have probably often thought would bring about a change in policy, what would that be? One from each of you will do.

**Mr Pollard:** I can kick it off if you want. I reiterate what we put in our manifesto that we sent out to the parties for the election: to explicitly define the first priority and responsibility of the education system as being to prepare all our young people for adulthood and the world of work. We say that on the basis that, if we accept that that is what education is for, it raises the question of what we have to teach them and what skills we have to develop. If we go through that whole exercise, I think we would come out with a very different system from the one we have now, and one that would do much more of what we want.

**Lord Patel:** Phrase that into a short recommendation.

**Mr Pollard:** The short recommendation is that we have to go back and question what our education system does, because it is working on a Victorian model and we are in the 21st century with lots of technology.

**Ms Memminger:** I suggest the same, but since you have taken that one I will throw in another one. One thing we would like to see is that every young person in the UK who is unemployed or under-employed has access to a professional mentor. Businesses are best placed to provide some of this, so by working with them they can play a critical role in developing and preparing our young people for the future. That is my one: to make sure that every young person has access to a mentor.

**Ms Spackman:** My one would be to have a unique pupil number, which is something that has been talked about in the two years I have been in this job, and every time I try to find it I cannot. If you have a unique pupil number, you can really track the progress of individual students all the way through. You can show what works—our Big Sister organisation in America has done this very well—and if you have a unique pupil number you can put employability experiences on your school dashboard and do proper random controlled trials. For example, “Here is the child who had no employability; here is the child who had all of this, and look what’s happened. The child with lots of employability has not only got a job; they’ve got better grades, their absenteeism rate has fallen, and they stayed on at school longer”—that kind of evidence, which is not being imposed from outside. I know a lot of our head teachers say, “Things work when they’re done by us for us”, whereas with things that are imposed there is always a degree of, “Oh, not something else being landed on my table”. This is something Scotland has. We know exactly where our students are in Scotland when they have gone through the programme, because they have that number. I know that somewhere in the bowels of the DfE, it sort of exists, because people tell us, and we say, “Great! Can we start using it?”, and suddenly everything goes a bit muddy. It is a small thing, but I think it would be very valuable.

**Lord Patel:** That is a good one.

**The Chairman:** Thank you, that is very helpful. Thank you very much for giving your time to come before us today, sharing your expertise and enthusiasm.