Cabinet Office

Engagement Document: Developing a Common set of Measures for Employers on the Socio-Economic Backgrounds of their Workforce and Applicants

May 2016

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Overview of this Engagement

Aim

This engagement document seeks views to inform the development of a set of socio-economic background (SEB) measures, for employers to measure the SEB of their workforce and applicants.

Who we are working with

This engagement is being led by the Cabinet Office, working with the Bridge Group, an independent charity that researches and promotes social mobility, and with advice from employers recognised as Champions in the Social Mobility Business Compact, the BIS Compact team, the Social Mobility Commission, organisations specialising in social mobility, academics, and supporting employers. We extend our sincere gratitude for the support, advice, and enthusiasm provided to ensure this work is as robust and effective as possible.

Views sought

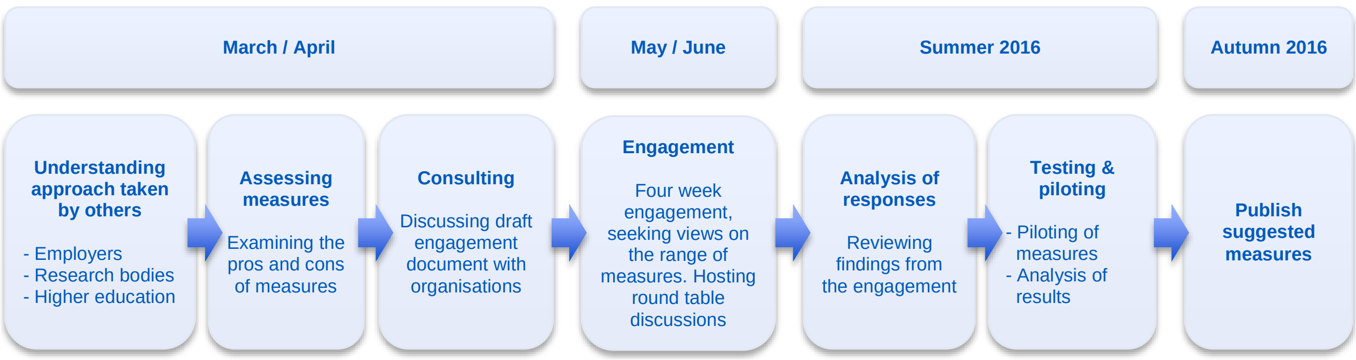
During the engagement period, we will seek views on:

- A broad range of possible measures, set out in Annex A;
- Additional measures not currently considered in this engagement document;
- The most effective method of producing a composite measure (i.e. collating numerous measures into a single output);
- Whether two distinct approaches should emerge to identify the socio-economic background of new entry level hires, compared to experienced hires and the existing workforce; and
- Other considerations in relation to the tools and approaches that might be required to collate and analyse data in order to produce the measures, detailed in the additional response questions.

Deadline for responses

Views are welcomed from Thursday 26 May until Friday 24 June 2016.

Overview Timeline



Section 1: Business case

1. There is a clear business case for increased diversity of our workforces. Recent findings from McKinsey show that "inherent diversity" (gender, race and socio-economic background) and "acquired diversity" (experience and skills) leads to improved business outcomes, including companies with such "two dimensional diversity" having 45% more market share. These findings align with a report by Boston Consulting Group for the Sutton Trust in 2010, which found that failing to improve low levels of social mobility will cost the UK economy up to £140 billion a year by 2050 – or an additional 4% of Gross Domestic Product. Having a dependable and consistent measure for socio-economic background is an essential element in attempting to address unequal access to education and the workplace.

2. We therefore believe that this work in developing a common set of measures for SEB will enable us to establish evidenced interventions to achieve a more inclusive workforce. Researchers have already established tools looking at a range of factors to determine SEB and there are good practices from many employers, academics and within the higher education sector. We intend to build on these established practices by identifying a set of nationally accepted measures for employers to identify the SEB of applicants, and their workforce. These measures need to be a sensible balance of robust and practicable.

3. Continuing to improve the capability and talent of the Civil Service is vital to deliver the commitments of Government. The Civil Service workforce should reflect the diversity of the communities it serves, with the Civil Service at the heart of the efforts to create a one-nation higher education and professional employment system. Access to top jobs and the best universities should be fair and based on aptitude and ability, not background or birth. A crucial part of this plan is to attract and support the best talent, including those joining from outside the current traditional academic routes. Just over a year ago the Cabinet Office published the Talent Action Plan, setting out measures to remove the barriers preventing talented individuals succeeding in the Civil Service. On 24 March this year we published our Talent Action Plan 2016. It responds to findings from a report by the Bridge Group into socio-economic diversity in the Civil Services flagship graduate recruitment programme, the Fast Stream.

4. We want to make sure that we are accessing the widest pool of talent. We therefore believe that collecting robust and accurate data on the socio-economic backgrounds of applicants and the workforce is essential. To address fundamental barriers to social mobility, we must first understand the problem, and use data to make informed decisions through insightful analysis and ongoing monitoring. This data can be used to establish evidenced interventions to achieve a more inclusive workforce.

Section 2: The scope of this engagement

The question at the heart of this engagement is: 'what is the most robust and practicable way to measure socio-economic background amongst applicants and the wider workforce'.

5. This document seeks views from stakeholders on measures for identifying the socio-economic background (SEB) of employers' applicants and existing workforce. This is designed to build on the tools and approaches already established amongst some employers and professional bodies, and from the many years of thought and practice in the Higher Education sector.

6. For clarity, socio-economic background (SEB) is the set of social and economic circumstances from which a person has come. This should be differentiated from measuring social mobility and socio-economic status (SES) (a measure of a person's current circumstances), which are out of scope of this engagement.

7. How we measure SEB is both important and challenging. It is important because in order to be able to monitor and improve it, we need first to be able to measure it. But it is challenging for a range of reasons, including the fact that no single measure can comprehensively reveal an individual's SEB.

8. Current measures used by employers include those taken from the Social Mobility Toolkit, developed by Professions for Good under the last Parliament, as well as those developed by a number of professional bodies and associations.

9. At the time of writing, the Universities UK Social Mobility Advisory Group is currently exploring the most appropriate measures of disadvantage. A separate review of the UK performance indicators for widening participation of underrepresented groups is also being undertaken by the UK Performance Indicator Steering Group, which included a roundtable discussion on measures of disadvantage used in current and future potential widening participation UK performance indicators. Additionally, the Medical Schools Council has commissioned some research into the use of contextual data in medical school selection processes, which is also looking at identification of different measures that could be used to identify applicants from a disadvantaged SEB from across the UK and systems to employ them in the admissions process. This is due to report in the summer 2016. We will maintain close contact with these groups throughout this engagement.

10. The socio-economic circumstances affecting progression in the workplace come in multiple forms (e.g. financial, cultural, educational and community). The Bridge Group indicated that while no single measure can reveal the multiple forms of socio-economic disadvantage, multiple indicators (or a basket of measures) could be used to construct a composite measure.

11. We are seeking your views as part of an open approach to developing a common set of measures of SEB for employers to use. This document forms one part of our broader engagement, which includes:

    - Discussions with organisations on the social mobility business compact to co-develop the set of proposed measures;

    - Engagement with academic experts and organisations with significant experience in this area including the Bridge Group, Professions for Good, Social Mobility Commission, Sutton Trust, the higher education sector and the BIS Social Mobility Business Compact; and

- A series of roundtable discussions with employers hosted in partnership with the Bridge Group on 15th and 17th June in London.

12. As part of this document, we outline a range of measures which respondents are invited to consider and to provide their views, and a set of criteria against which they could be assessed. There is no pre-determined outcome, and, given this, we have included a broad range of measures of SEB, and invite views on these.

13. In addition to seeking views on the best set of measures of SEB, this document invites views on the most effective method of producing a composite measure (i.e. collating numerous measures into a single output).

14. In identifying the most appropriate set of measures (and the methodology for reaching a composite measure), we also invite views in the response on whether two distinct approaches should emerge:

    - A set of measures to identify the socio-economic background of new entry level hires, e.g. graduate / apprenticeship; and
    - A set of measures to identify the socio-economic background of experienced hires and the existing workforce.

15. We recognise that some of the measures (and the associated databases, e.g. for postcode) will not be applicable for international candidates. We invite respondents in their responses to state how important this is.

16. There are a number of characteristics against which we believe any such measure should be tested, outlined in the figure below, adapted from the Bridge Group report.

Figure 1: Characteristics of effective measures of socio-economic background

Accurate measure of disadvantage	Reflects what it purports to measure, i.e. socio-economic background, such that lower status can be reasonably assumed to have the potential to adversely affect educational progression and access or progression in the workplace.
Accessibility	Businesses, including those small in size, are able to collect and analyse measures for themselves, at reasonable cost.
Comparability	Measures can be compared across employers, by an employer over time, and against eligible candidate populations (e.g. populations in higher education).
Verifiability	Can be objectively verified without prohibitive costs (most likely in the form of spot checks, especially in higher volume recruitment) – most relevant where measures are being used beyond monitoring to help inform selection processes.
Likely to elicit a response	Measures are not considered so sensitive or intrusive that they lead to a low response rate, or the information may be hard to recall. Answers to the measures could easily be recalled or obtained.
Clarity of the measure	The measure is easily understandable, allowing consistent application by employers and consistent interpretation by employees and applicants.
Longevity of measure	The measure (and where relevant its underpinning data) will be available and relevant in the foreseeable future.

17. We have provided links to key pieces of research against some of the measures, in order to point colleagues towards significant aspects of the evidence base. This is not intended to represent a full literature review (which is outside the scope of this engagement), but rather to highlight key references that are likely to be of interest to respondents.

Section 3: Responding to this engagement document

18. There are specific questions highlighted in section 5 of this document, which provide a structured way to respond to this engagement document.

Audience

19. Anyone may respond to this document and we will give full consideration to all responses. We will particularly be interested to hear from: employers and businesses on the social mobility business compact; professional bodies who are signatories to Professions for Good; universities, schools and FE colleges; charitable trusts and umbrella bodies with expertise in this area; academics with an interest in social mobility; and public sector bodies with an interest in social mobility.

Duration

20. This open discussion is live for four weeks from 26 May 2016. The deadline for responses is 24 June 2016.

Submitting your response

21. The response form is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications. This should be emailed to SEBmeasures@cabinetoffice.gov.uk. Any questions should be sent to this email address.

22. When responding, representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent, and where relevant who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions.

23. All information in responses, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004). If you want your response to remain confidential, you should explain why confidentiality is necessary and your request will be acceded to only if it is appropriate in the circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the department.

Section 4: Outline plans beyond this engagement

24. Once the engagement process closes, we will review all responses. In considering the responses, we will apply appropriate weight to those from organisations and individuals with specialist knowledge of the subject area, and those organisations that have already undertaken work to develop measures of SEB, so as to build on progress made to date. We will also consider this in the context of the academic evidence available.

25. Throughout the process, significant consideration will be given to the practicability of using a particular set of measures, and any costs associated with collecting, analysing and reporting. We have listened to early feedback that simplicity of measures is important in ensuring employees engage with any data collection, and will seek to balance this with the need to capture the complexities of measuring an individual's SEB through a composite set of measures.

26. We will refine the proposed measures and pilot through a SEB census of the Senior Civil Service during the summer of 2016, with a view to publishing the agreed measures in the autumn. We will share the measures that we intend to use in this pilot, inviting other organisations to also pilot these to contribute to the final recommendation. This will help us to sample different segments and demographics of workforces and we welcome all employers to contribute to this.

27. Our aim is to publish a summary of insights from this engagement in the autumn, together with the refined set of measures for SEB in light of responses. We will also share how the Civil Service will implement these measures in the workforce, and guidance for employers on how they can use the new measure, including proposed wording for the question(s) associated with each measure.

28. A full set of responses will not be published, though we ask in the questions below if you would be happy to be quoted and / or referenced in the final report and in associated media.

29. When we publish a recommended set of measures, we will include reflections on the methods of analysing the data. This will include the experience of the Civil Service pilot, and any other pilots undertaken. Following publication we encourage employers to use the common set of measures and develop solutions together that further the national debate on social mobility.

30. Once developed, the measures of SEB will be voluntary, and act as a toolkit, but we will seek to ensure this process is as collaborative as possible to maximise consensus. The greater the use of common measures, the greater the benefit for us, as a collective, in benchmarking and progressing this national debate.

31. We also recognise that any recommended measures could be subsequently employed to establish robust approaches to contextual recruitment, though this subject is out of scope of this particular engagement exercise.

Section 5: Response form

What is your name? ____________________

What is your e-mail address? ____________________

What is your job title? ____________________

When responding please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation:

I am responding as an individual ☐

I am responding on behalf of an organisation ☐ (name of organisation)

If your organisation has undertaken published research in this area or trialled measuring socio-economic background, please detail this below.

Please check the box that best describes you as a respondent:

Respondent type
- ☐ Business representative organisation / trade body
- ☐ Central government
- ☐ Charity or social enterprise
- ☐ Individual
- ☐ Large business (over 250 staff)
- ☐ Legal representative
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ Medium business (50 to 250 staff)
- ☐ Micro business (up to 9 staff)
- ☐ Small business (10 to 49 staff)
- ☐ Trade union or staff association
- ☐ Other (please describe)

If you are responding as an employer, which sector is your organisation most typically associated with?

- ☐ Not relevant (e.g. not responding as an employer)
- ☐ Public Sector
- ☐ Accounting or Professional Services
- ☐ Law
- ☐ Banking and Financial Services
- ☐ IT / Telecoms
- ☐ Retail
- ☐ Fast Moving Consumer Goods
- ☐ Energy, Water, Utilities
- ☐ Engineering, Industrial
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Charity sector
- ☐ Creative industries
- ☐ Other (please state)

Question 1

Figure 1 (page 5) sets out our thoughts on the important characteristics for the socio-economic background measures. Which of these are most important to you?

	1 Not important at all	2	3	4	5 Highly important	Don't know
Accurate measure of disadvantage						
Accessibility						
Comparability						
Verifiability						
Likely to elicit a response						
Clarity of the measure						
Longevity of measure						

Are there any other characteristics that you think should be considered?

Question 2

For each measure at Appendix 1, summarised below, please indicate with an X how suitable you consider each measure to be. To support your responses, further information about the measures is set out in Appendix 1. For some measures, the age at which a measure may be relevant is still to be determined, as there is no current consensus. If you have a view on a particular measure, please provide this information in the comments section.

Where you do not feel that you are in a position to judge the appropriateness of a particular measure, we invite you to indicate this using the 'don't know' option. 1 indicates not at all suitable, 5 indicates highly suitable.

	1 Not at all suitable	2	3	4	5 Highly suitable	Don't know	Include as a key measure? (Yes / No / Don't know)	Comments
Parental income or wealth								
Parental income or wealth								
Parents / guardian / carer eligible for income support								
Parents / guardian / carer received income support								
Respondent was eligible for free school meals								
Respondent received free school meals								
Housing tenure								
Amenities								
Access to Internet at home whilst at secondary school.								
Working during term time at University to support own living costs								
Level of University maintenance loan								
Parental job								
Parent / guardian / carer's occupation								
Parent / guardian / carer's job title								
Parent / guardian / carer unemployed for more than 6 months								
Parental qualifications								
Parental / guardian / carer completion of degree								
Highest parental / guardian / carer qualification								
Individual's education								
Proficiency in English (or language educated in).								
Type of primary school attended (state, state selective, independent) If independent, whether over 75% of fees were a government assisted or funded via a bursary / scholarship)								

	1 Not at all suitable	2	3	4	5 Highly suitable	Don't know	Include as a key measure? (Yes / No / Don't know)	Comments
Type of secondary school attended (state, state selective, independent. If independent, whether over 75% of fees were a government assisted or funded via a bursary / scholarship)								
Type of institution completed further education (age 16-18)								
Name of school attended (primary, secondary and further education institution)								
Living in area of deprivation								
Home postcode at age X								
Personal disadvantage								
Whether time has been spent in care								
Whether ever had refugee or asylum status								
Whether was a carer								
Overall subjective measure of SEB								
Closed self-assessment of SEB								
Open self-assessment of SEB								

Please list any additional measures that you think should be considered.

Question 3

Should the same measures be used for both new entry level hires (e.g. graduate / apprenticeship) as experienced hires and the existing workforce?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Please explain your answer:

Question 4

Please indicate with an X how important you think it is for these measures (or alternative measures to be identified) to be applicable to those who grew up overseas. 1 indicates that you consider this to not be important at all, and 5 indicates you consider this to be essential.

1 Not important at all	2	3	4	5 Essential	Don't know

Please explain your answer:

Question 5

If you consider a composite measure (i.e. collating numerous measures into a single output measure) to be important, do you have any views on the most suitable methodology (e.g. scoring / flagging) for developing a composite measure? Are there any important interactions between measures that you believe should be noted?

Question 6

What are the main barriers to your organisation collecting socio-economic background data?

	1 Not a barrier	2	3	4	5 Major barrier	Don't know
Lack of expertise to analyse findings						
Inflexible ICT or HR systems						
Lack of board / senior sign-up						
Concerns about staff response						
Size of organisation						
Lack of business case for change						
Lack of resources						
Other – please state below						

Question 7

What would make it more likely for your organisation to adopt a socio-economic background measure?

Question 8

Would you be willing to publish anonymised data on the socio-economic background of your workforce, or to deposit your data in a secure database that academics and researchers could access?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Question 9

Do you believe that the collection of socio-economic background information would be beneficial to your organisation and the wider social mobility agenda?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Please detail your comments below.

To promote greater transparency we may want to attribute some comments to the person providing them when we report the outcomes of this engagement. If you do not wish your name or organisation to be identified in this way, please tick this box. ☐

Appendix 1: Possible measures of socio-economic background

The table below sets out some potential measures of socio-economic background, and associated pros and cons of the measures. The precise wording of the question and options for response would need to be considered further prior to piloting a survey.

As stated above, we have provided links to key pieces of research against some of the measures, in order to point colleagues towards significant aspects of the evidence base. This is not intended to represent a full literature review (which is outside the scope of this engagement), but rather to highlight key references that are likely to be of interest to respondents.

Parental income or wealth
As part of the last Child Poverty Strategy, the government produced a comprehensive evidence review, detailing the multiple aspects of child poverty that have greatest effect on an individual's outcomes. **Parental income or wealth at age X.** *Pros* ✓ The measure is likely to be easily understood by employers and employees ✓ Responses, when put in real terms, would be comparable across employers ✓ Responses, with adjustment, would be comparable over time ✓ As responses are scalar, they would provide a sense of scale of deprivation. *Cons* ✗ Income and wealth are highly sensitive topics, which may affect response rates to the question posed ✗ The individual may not have known, or may not remember their parent's income or wealth ✗ To compare across individuals / organisations / time, the income / wealth would need to be understood in context. This would require an additional question about the date this related to or current age of the individual to be posed. Given the adjustments which will need to be made to the values, firms which are smaller in size may find this measure more difficult to analyse. **A proxy measure of income- whether the parent / guardian / carer was <u>eligible</u> for income support at age X** *Pros* ✓ Measure may be less intrusive than asking for parental income, so may elicit a higher response rate ✓ Small businesses are likely to find this question easy to deploy and analyse

✓ Allows for some comparison across employers

Cons

✗ Would not provide a sense of scale of deprivation, only whether or not they were eligible for income support

✗ Income support has changed over time, which may make comparison difficult. Over the long term, if further changes are introduced, this may make comparison over time particularly challenging. Additionally, there are concerns that respondent may not understand what is referred to as income support.

✗ The individual may not have known, or may not remember whether their parents were eligible to receive this support.

A proxy measure of income- whether the parent / guardian / carer <u>received</u> income support at age X

As above. Whether income support was received may be more likely to be known by the respondent, but would give a less robust measure of deprivation.

A proxy measure of income- whether the respondent was <u>eligible</u> for free school meals (FSM) at age X

Pros

✓ Measure may be less intrusive than asking for parental income, so may elicit a higher response rate

✓ Small businesses are likely to find this question easy to deploy and analyse

✓ Allows for some comparison across employers

Cons

✗ FSM is a crude measure of household income, since it does not distinguish between low income and very low income, or between those households just above and far above the threshold for eligibility.

✗ The eligibility criteria for FSM has changed over time, which may make comparison difficult. Over the long term, if further changes are introduced, this may make comparison over time particularly challenging.

✗ The individual may not have known, or may not remember whether their parents' income meant that they were eligible to receive this support. Analysis in 2012 from the Department for Education demonstrated that 14% of pupils entitled to FSM were not claiming them. One of the implications is that a reasonable proportion of pupils who are entitled to FSM may not be aware of this, which may lead to underreporting of deprivation.

A proxy measure of income - whether the respondent received free school meals at age X.

Whether FSM were received may be more likely to be known by the respondent, but would give a less robust measure of deprivation.

Other proxy measures of income

- ✓ housing tenure (rent, own, social housing)
- ✓ amenities such as central heating, facilities shared with other households and home possessions (books, telephones, furniture, car ownership)
- ✓ internet access at home at age X.
- ✓ whether worked during term time at University to support own living costs
- ✓ level of university maintenance loan received

Pros

- ✓ Measures of this types may be less intrusive than asking for parental income, so may elicit a higher response rate
- ✓ Small businesses may find question of this type easy to deploy and analyse
- ✓ Allows for comparison across employers
- ✓ The measures are likely to be easily understood by employers and employees
- ✓ Answers are likely to be known by the respondent

Cons

- ✓ Could be considered to be crude measures of household income
- ✓ Housing tenure and amenities may differ depending upon the region in which you live (e.g. car ownership is likely to be less common in London) as well as differing over time.

Parental job

There is much academic literature on the link between an individual's outcomes and their parental occupation (see e.g. Sturgis and Buscha: 2015). The Office for National Statistics has also published on this topic, and it was summarised in the recent State of the Nation report from the Social Mobility Commission.

Parental / guardian / carer's occupation against the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC)

NS-SEC is a measure of employment relations and conditions of occupations, published by the ONS. These are central to showing the structure of socio-economic positions in modern societies and helping to explain variations in social behaviour and other social phenomena.

Pros

- ✓ The measure is likely to be easily understood by employers and employees
- ✓ Broadly comparable over time, across employers and across eligible populations

✓ Responses would provide some sense of scale of deprivation

Cons

✗ Occupational groups may not be consistently understood by respondents

✗ Changes in occupational codes over time may make analysis of responses more difficult for some small businesses

✗ Changes in the occupational makeup of society over time may require the data to be contextualised, so that the relative position in society at a point in time can be understood. This may require additional questions to be posed alongside this measure.

Parent / guardian / carer's job title.

For example, "At the age of X, what was your job title of your highest earning parent"

Pros

✓ More specific than occupation, which may allow a greater segmentation of responses

✓ May be easier for some individuals to specify

Cons

✗ May not be cost effective as would require a matching exercise for the job title; this may be more difficult for small businesses to analyse.

✗ May be difficult to monitor over time if types of job change, or they are described in different ways.

✗ Jobs may be described in different ways, which may make interpretation difficult

Parent / guardian / carer unemployed for more than 6 months between the ages of X and X.

Pros

✓ The measure is likely to be easy to understand by employers and employees.

✓ Small businesses are likely to find this question easy to deploy and analyse.

Cons

✗ Does not give a sense of scale beyond whether or not they were unemployed.

✗ Individuals may not know the answer to this question.

Parental qualifications

Longitudinal work from the Department for Education – the LSYPE and the EPPSE – both provide good evidence on the enduring importance of parental qualification on outcomes.

Whether parent / guardian / carer has completed a University degree

For example “Did any of your parent(s) or guardian(s) complete a university degree course or equivalent (e.g., BA, BSc or higher)?”

Pros

✓ The measure is likely to be easy to understand by employers and employees.

✓ Small businesses are likely to find this question easy to deploy and analyse

✓ Individuals are likely to know whether their parents completed a University degree.

✓ Individuals are used to giving out information related to qualifications, so it may be considered to be less intrusive than some other potential measures.

Cons

✗ Does not give a sense of scale beyond whether or not a degree course was completed.

✗ Widening university attendance may make this measure difficult to compare over time, and across companies with a different age breakdown of employees.

Highest parental / guardian / carer qualification obtained

Pros

✓ The measure is likely to be easy to understand by employers and employees

✓ Small businesses are likely to find this question easy to deploy and analyse

✓ Individuals are used to giving out information related to qualifications, so it may be considered to be less intrusive than some other potential measures.

✓ Gives more of a sense of scale than just asking about parental degrees

Cons

✗ Widening university attendance may make this measure difficult to compare over time, and across companies with a different age breakdown of employees.

✗ Individuals may find it more difficult to recall the highest qualification of their parents if this is not at the degree level.

Individual's education

A wide variety of data sets reveal how educational experience is linked to outcomes and progression – e.g. Department for Education destinations data.

Proficiency in English (or language educated in) at age X

Cons

- ✗ Information may need to be provided about proficiency levels (e.g. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages levels) to allow individuals to judge how they would be categorised.
- ✗ It may be difficult for the individual to judge their proficiency level, particularly at a previously point in time.
- ✗ The element of self-assessment required may lead to inconsistencies in response.

<u>Type</u> of primary / secondary / further education (16-18) school / college attended by the individual at age X

(State, state selective, independent. If independent whether over 75% of fees were government assisted or funded via a bursary / scholarship)

Pros

- ✓ The measure is likely to be easy to understand by employers and employees
- ✓ Small businesses are likely to find this question easy to deploy and analyse
- ✓ Enables the assessment of average performance at the type of school attended. Lower SEB pupils tend to be overrepresented in schools that add least value to their performance, in terms of both formal attainment and progression to higher education.
- ✓ May be easier to compare over time than the school attended.
- ✓ Individuals are used to giving out information related to their education background as part of job applications, so it may be considered to be less intrusive than some other potential measures.

Cons

- ✗ Not based on the performance of an individual school. The performance of schools in each group will vary significantly, and the categories may be too broad to be meaningful.

Name of primary secondary / further education school or college <u>attended</u> at age X

Pros

- ✓ The measure is likely to be easy to understand by employers and employees

✓ Enables the assessment of average performance at the type of school or college attended, which can be assessed against the relative national performance in the given year. Lower SEB pupils tend to be overrepresented in schools that add least value to their performance, in terms of both formal attainment and progression to higher education.

✓ Based on individual school, rather than type of school. Responses would provide a greater sense of scale than just asked about the type of school

✓ Individuals are used to giving out information related to their education background as part of job applications, so it may be considered to be less intrusive than some other potential measures.

Cons

✗ Would require matching of data to contextualise the results, which may make it more difficult for smaller employers to analyse.

✗ Performance of schools may change over time, school names may change, schools may close and new schools open, which may make comparison over time more difficult than the type of school.

Highest qualification achieved

Pros

✓ The measure is likely to be easy to understand by employers and employees

✓ Individuals are used to giving out information related to their qualifications when applying for a job, so it may be considered less intrusive than some other potential measures.

✓ Small businesses are likely to find this question easy to deploy and analyse

Cons

✗ Widening university attendance may make this measure difficult to compare over time, and across companies with a different age breakdown of employees.

Living in area of deprivation
The Social Mobility Commission recently produced a report that sets out the differences between where children grow up and the chances they have of doing well in adult life. The Higher Education Funding Council for England produce the POLAR index which shows how higher educational participation differs substantially between areas. Various government data sets such as attainment of level 2 and 3 by 19 report against the Index of Multiple Deprivation (or income deprivation affecting children index). **Home postcode at age X** *Pros* ✓ The measure is likely to be easy to understand by employers and employees ✓ Individuals are used to giving out information about their previous address, e.g. for credit checks, so it may be considered to be less intrusive than some other potential measures. ✓ Can be assessed against well-established socio economic indices (e.g. the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)). Progression rates to university and into the professions are lower amongst candidates whose postcodes are ranked lower in these indices. ✓ Postcodes can be searched on the internet, so if it cannot be recalled, it can be obtained with relative ease. *Cons* ✗ Not an individual measure. An affluent individual may live in a deprived area and vice versa. ✗ Some postcodes see rapid change. As a result, additional questions may need to be posed to link a postcode with a point in time. Indices need to be regularly updated to prevent misleading results about deprivation in an area. ✗ May be difficult for those that moved around regularly to remember their previous address at a given age. ✗ Each UK country has its own IMD measure, and although they are similar, there is variation in the indicators used, the weighting assigned to each indicator, the frequency of updating, and the size of the geography being measured. IMD scores are therefore not strictly comparable across countries and the Office of National Statistics recommends not using IMD as a UK wide measure. ✗ Due to the difficulties in understanding the deprivation of a postcode at a certain point in time, the measure could be considered to lack clarity and could lead to an inconsistent application by employers. It may also be more difficult for small employers to assess against the socio-economic indices.
Personal disadvantage
Have you ever personally spent longer than 3 months in care? *Pros* ✓ The measure is likely to be easy to understand by employers and employees ✓ Small businesses are likely to find this question easy to deploy and analyse

Cons

✗ Could be considered to be more sensitive than some of the other measures posed

Have you ever personally had refugee status or asylum status?

Pros

✓ The measure is likely to be easy to understand by employers and employees

✓ Small businesses are likely to find this question easy to deploy and analyse

Cons

✗ Could be considered to be more sensitive than some of the other measures posed

Were you classed as a carer between the ages of X and X?

Pros

✓ The measure is likely to be easy to understand by employers and employees

✓ Small businesses are likely to find this question easy to deploy and analyse

Cons

✗ Could be considered to be more sensitive than some of the other measures posed

Overall subjective measure of SEB

Closed self-assessment question focusing on an individual’s socio-economic background

As an example, the question could set out a view on how each socioeconomic group is characterised (use of free schools meals, occupations etc.) and then ask ‘On the basis of these classifications, how would you rate your socio-economic background”.

Pros

✓ Simplicity- only one question required rather than a basket of measures

✓ Small businesses are likely to find this question easy to deploy and analyse

✓ May be less sensitive than some of the other measures

Cons

✗ Will not lead to an objective measure.

✗ Requires a judgement about how to characterise each group.

Open self-assessment question focusing on whether an individual is from a lower socio-economic background

As an example, “Do you consider yourself to be from a lower socio-economic background? On what basis was this view formed?”

Pros

✓ Simplicity- only one question required rather than a basket of measures

✓ Small businesses are likely to find this question easy to deploy and analyse

✓ By asking what has formed the basis of the decision, we can gain a greater understanding about how social background is perceived.

✓ May be less sensitive than some of the other measures

Cons

✗ Will not lead to an objective measure

✗ Norms over time and across employers may affect the response given