

BACKGROUNDS INTO THE FOREGROUND



Co-op's campaign to advocate
for social mobility in business
and how to get involved.



OWNED BY YOU.
RIGHT BY YOU.



As the UK's largest co-operative, togetherness is in our DNA. This is why we want to share our experience of promoting social mobility to encourage other businesses to join our journey.

Only by moving forward as a collective can we unlock the UK's full economic and social potential."

A handwritten signature in white ink on a blue background.

Shirine Khoury-Haq,
CEO, Co-op Group

WHAT YOU'LL FIND HERE

On 22 October, we will launch the Backgrounds into the Foregrounds Campaign.

[Click below to jump to section:](#)

WHY?

WHY CO-OP IS ADVOCATING FOR BETTER SOCIAL MOBILITY IN BUSINESS.

(And ultimately seeking to change the equality act.)

At our AGM in 2021, our members called on us to 'campaign and advocate for change, to tackle the inequality we see today and challenge Government to address the root causes of these issues and enable social mobility throughout our society'.

Too often our life chances are defined by our backgrounds - by gender, ethnicity, disability, or socio-economic background. It cannot be right that those from less privileged backgrounds are almost twice as likely to end up in lower paying jobs than others from more privileged backgrounds.

As an organisation, we are looking inwardly to understand how we can improve social mobility across our businesses. That is why, in 2023, we published research in partnership with the charity Making the Leap to better understand social mobility, inclusion and belonging for colleagues at our Co-op.

This led us to publish our own socio-economic pay gap report earlier this year, followed by a new report commissioned in partnership with Demo's, called The Opportunity Effect, to better understand the economic arguments for improving social mobility.

And while we remain on our own social mobility journey, we want to share our experience to support other businesses in taking their own steps to improve social mobility outcomes for workforces.



FINDINGS FROM INDEPENDENT ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Our new report commissioned in partnership with Demo's - called The Opportunity Effect - takes a fresh approach to social mobility by exploring the economic benefits of better social mobility practices. Our research demonstrates that breaking down barriers to opportunity can have a transformative impact on the UK's economy.

Financial benefits

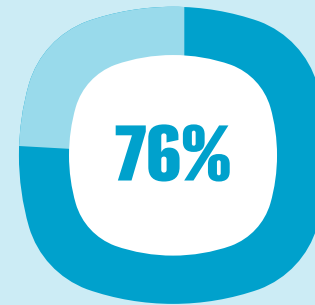
At the upper end of our estimate, we find that the economic impact of all businesses investing significantly in the promotion of social mobility in their workforce would be £19 billion to GDP, generating around £6.8 billion in yearly tax revenues and boosting profits by over £1.8 billion a year.

This would be the equivalent of adding a city the size of Glasgow or adding over 540,000 full-time jobs to the UK economy overnight.

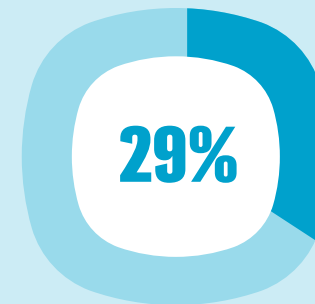
Workforce benefits

According to the Open University Business Barometer, 62% of organisations currently face skills shortages, while the 2022 Employer Skills survey found that skills shortages accounted for more than a third (36%) of all vacancies.

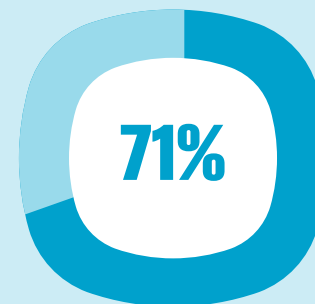
Promoting social mobility at both individual and national levels has clear benefits, and there is also a business case for it, as it can help businesses tap into the full talent pool and boost productivity and innovation.



OF BUSINESS LEADERS INTERVIEWED FELT THAT PROMOTING SOCIAL MOBILITY WOULD HELP ATTRACT AND RETAIN STAFF.



OF UK ADULTS SAY THEY WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO PURCHASE A PRODUCT OR SERVICE FROM AN ORGANISATION PROMOTING SOCIAL MOBILITY.



OF UK EMPLOYERS FELT THAT PROMOTING SOCIAL MOBILITY WOULD HELP ACHIEVE BETTER BUSINESS RESULTS.



NOW

HELP US CREATE NOISE ON SOCIAL MEDIA. TOGETHER, WE CAN SPARK THE CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER.

Whether you're a success story yourself, you're proud of friends and family who are, you're in a business excelling in this space, or you're simply passionate about the movement to improve social mobility, we'd love to hear your voice.

In this section, we have created some draft social posts and provided some suggestions to help you join in on LinkedIn and X.

Whatever your part in the story and whatever you choose to share, please join the conversation using **#BackgroundsIntoTheForeground**





You can bring your connections and colleagues on the journey by nominating two others to post after you.

Together we can bring [#BackgroundsIntoTheForeground](#) and work together for a fairer society.

A picture tells a thousand words, so if you'd like to take it one step further, we'd love to see a picture from your childhood as your LinkedIn banner or alongside your story of your own background and the impact it's had on your career journey.



WE'VE DRAFTED SOME SUGGESTED POSTS HERE AS A STARTER-FOR-TEN

Example LinkedIn post 1:

A Sample
 123,456 followers
 1w

Did you know that those from less privileged backgrounds are twice as likely to end up in lower paying jobs?

Too often our life chances are defined by our backgrounds, and it's impacting our society, workforce and economy.

By amplifying underrepresented backgrounds, we can break down barriers to opportunity and open the door to a talent pool that deserves to be discovered.

Join me in supporting @co-op
#BackgroundsIntoTheForeground campaign.
 I nominate **XXX** and **XXX** to share their support. Together we can bring visibility to all backgrounds and create a fairer society.

79
 2 comments
 8 repost

Example LinkedIn post 2:

A Sample
 123,456 followers
 2w

Did you know that those from less privileged backgrounds are twice as likely to end up in lower paying jobs?

Too often our life chances are defined by our backgrounds, and it's impacting our society, workforce and economy.

By amplifying underrepresented backgrounds, we can break down barriers to opportunity and open the door to a talent pool that deserves to be discovered.

The power of social mobility is real - I'm one of the lucky ones who's experienced it.
 [Placeholder to share insights into your own background and career journey].

Join me in supporting @co-op
#BackgroundsIntoTheForeground campaign.
 I nominate **XXX** and **XXX** to share their background. Together we can bring visibility to all backgrounds and create a fairer society.

101
 4 comments
 10 repost



You can bring your connections and colleagues on the journey by nominating two others to do the same.

Together we can bring [#BackgroundsIntoTheForeground](#) and work together for a fairer society.

A picture tells a thousand words, so if you'd like to take it one step further, we'd love to see a picture from your childhood alongside your story of your own background and the impact it's had on your career journey.



WE'VE DRAFTED SOME SUGGESTED POSTS HERE AS A STARTER-FOR-TEN

Example X post 1:



Example X post 2:



Example X post 3:





We all have the opportunity to advocate for change. Amongst our own colleagues within our own businesses, and also with our customers, clients, partners and suppliers.

Join us by adding some simple messaging to your email signature strip that could spark a thought or get conversation going.



WE'VE DRAFTED A SUGGESTED MESSAGE BELOW TO ADD TO YOUR EMAIL SIGNATURES AS A STARTER-FOR-TEN



From: A Sample

To: Contact

Subject: The subject



Cc Bcc

Priority ▾



I am supporting Co-op's #BackgroundsIntoTheForeground campaign.

Too often our life chances are defined by our backgrounds. Together, we can break barriers and open the door to talent that deserves to be discovered.

Join me in prioritising social mobility, learning from others and helping create change [here](#).



NEXT

HELP SHAPE OUR BUSINESS TOOLKIT. TOGETHER, WE CAN CREATE CHANGE.

From our own experience, we understand there are challenges associated with improving social mobility in the workplace, and we have lots of learnings to share from improving the social mobility of Co-op colleagues. But we can't do this alone. No one organisation has all the answers, so we want to collaborate with businesses across the UK to create a resource to support a nationwide effort to improve social mobility practices.

In 2025 we will be launching a business toolkit designed to do just this, offering practical steps businesses can take, informed by the needs of organisations across the UK.

We want to hear from you!

Perhaps it's your job to encourage social mobility in your organisation and you are looking for practical advice to help shape your strategies. Or, perhaps you're an organisation already excelling in this area and you're happy to share your learnings to enable better practices for other businesses. Please fill in this form to share your experiences: <https://coop.uk/socialmobilitysurvey>



SOCIAL MOBILITY BUSINESS TOOLKIT

Our Social Mobility Business Toolkit will act as a first step in sharing our experiences, and those of others, with business leaders from across the UK. It will provide a one-stop shop of resources for businesses to access to begin - or continue - their own social mobility journey.

We aim to include:

- Key findings of The Opportunity Effect report and what we can learn from it.
- Best practice learnings from Co-op's experience implementing better social mobility practices.
- Ideas of internal HR events and workshops.
- Information on how to implement socio-economic pay gap reporting.
- Creative collateral including social media assets.

This is our starting point. Crucially, the toolkit will be shaped by what you tell us you need.

We are passionate about promoting the life chances of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and hope this toolkit sets out the practical steps businesses can take, and how businesses can support Co-op's wider mission.

By acting as a collective, we truly believe the business community can create real change, now.



WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INSPIRATION AND INFORMATION

coop.co.uk/backgrounds-into-foreground

The Co-op's own social mobility campaigning.

socialmobility.org.uk

An advisory public body monitoring progress towards improving social mobility.

[Co-op x Barnardos partnership: Youth opportunities tracker](#)

An insight into the experiences and life chances of 10-25-year-olds across the UK.

makingtheleap.org.uk

A partner charity that improves social mobility by raising the aspirations of and increasing opportunities for young people.

Disclaimer: We are providing you with a campaign toolkit to get involved with Co-op's Backgrounds into the Foreground campaign, advocating for social mobility in business. The campaign launches on Tuesday 22nd October 2024 - we kindly request that you do not use the assets and resources until this date. If you and your business would like to get involved in the campaign, please do not hesitate to contact us at pressoffice@coop.co.uk

Co-operative Group Limited

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