

Question	Discussion
What is the Panel tasked to look at?	The Panel will look at the processes and structures that govern recruitment into the key professions. It will identify actions that the professions, supported by government where required, could take to widen access.
What do we mean by 'professions'?	<p>There is no single agreed definition of what a profession is. Typically, however, we can think of 'professions' as careers or occupations that include several of the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong emphasis on common entry qualifications, often gained at a postgraduate level; • Governed by accreditation or professional oversight bodies which may, for example, set codes of conduct, regulate professional standards and knowledge, or manage new entrance; • A requirement to develop specific, and advanced, skills and experience particular to that profession; and • Comprised of members who tend to spend a significant part of their career developing recognisable professional capabilities. <p>There are currently over 130 professional bodies in the UK representing a very diverse range of professions.</p>
What does social mobility mean?	<p>Social mobility relates to the degree to which people's social and economic status can change throughout their life or between generations of their family. There are two aspects of social mobility¹:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, social mobility can be facilitated by the creation of more high quality professional and other jobs (i.e. an absolute measure) • Second, social mobility can be facilitated by promoting fairer chances for all to realise their potential (i.e. a relative measure)
What is the background to the Panel?	The Panel was announced on 13 th January as part of a package of measures contained in the New Opportunities White Paper. This followed analysis that alongside measures to improve skill levels and invest in work opportunities, more might be done to address barriers to fair access to high status professions.
Who is running the Panel?	The Panel will be chaired by the Rt. Hon. Alan Milburn MP. It will be supported by a secretariat based in the Cabinet Office.
What is and isn't in scope?	The Panel are to look at the processes and structures that govern recruitment and progression into high status professions. It will identify the contribution to fair access that can be made by the professions themselves, supported by government where required. The Panel will not be looking at depth at issues such as school or university curriculum, employment law, illegal discrimination, or focus on wider issues of inequality such as gender or race.

¹ Cabinet Office (2008) 'Getting on, getting ahead'.

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What is the status of the Panel?	The Panel is an independent body of twenty expert representatives from major professions. It will report to government by summer 2009.
How will the Panel actually work? What will be the likely outcome of the work?	<p>The Panel will meet three times between now and summer 2009. The output will be a policy statement setting out actions that the professions, supported where required by government, can undertake to improve fair access.</p> <p>The Panel will be considering evidence from a range of experts, stakeholders, and professional bodies, including (but not limited to) through an open call for evidence.</p>
Why isn't profession [x] represented in the Panel?	The Panel is comprised of twenty representatives from a range of professions. They will provide expertise from the perspective of their particular profession but additionally look at issues of fair access to professions as a whole. In collecting evidence and developing proposals the Panel will consult widely with the more than 130 professional bodies in the UK. For practical purposes it was not possible for representatives from each and all profession to sit on the Panel, although issues specific to their profession will be appropriately reflected.
How will the recommendations of the Panel be implemented?	The purpose of the Panel is to identify measures that work for employers and government – with professions signing up to specific pledges. As such it is envisaged that recommendations will be taken forward by individual professions and employers and will not place unnecessary burdens on either.