Communities and Local Government

department for children, schools and families

Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities

Analysis and discussion paper
December 2008

Summary of key findings

Findings:

- Young people's aspirations and those of their parents influence their educational attainment and later life outcomes. **11-14** is a key age range, when young people move from idealistic to more realistic ambitions.
- Young people are more likely to achieve positive outcomes when they develop ambitious, achievable aspirations, combined with the **self-esteem, self-efficacy, information and inspiration** they need to persevere towards their goals.
- Aspirations vary by gender, ethnicity, social class and area. **White boys** have the lowest aspirations. Their educational attainment is also failing to improve at the rates of most other ethnic groups.
- **Parents are the most important influence on children**. However, young people and their parents are also influenced by the people and places where they live.
- **Communities matter**. Young people in **certain types of neighbourhood** are less likely to develop ambitious, achievable aspirations. These neighbourhoods tend to have **high levels of deprivation**.
- **However deprived communities are not all the same.** Young people in some very deprived communities have high aspirations.
- Certain community characteristics are associated with low aspirations – such as close knit social networks, a sense of isolation from broader opportunities and a history of economic decline. High levels of bonding social capital and low levels of bridging social capital* can restrict young people's horizons and access to opportunities.
- These communities often have lower levels of educational attainment than might be expected given their level of deprivation.
- Evidence suggests that a **locally-tailored behavioural change approach** could be effective in shifting attitudes, changing behaviours and improving outcomes. This would mobilise the community around the goal of doing the best for their young people. It would provide a new model for **constructive local partnership** working.

- **Bonding social capital** – characterised by strong bonds (or "social glue") among group members such as close friends and family; **Bridging social capital** – characterised by weaker, less dense but more cross-cutting ties ("social oil") (Putnam, 1995)

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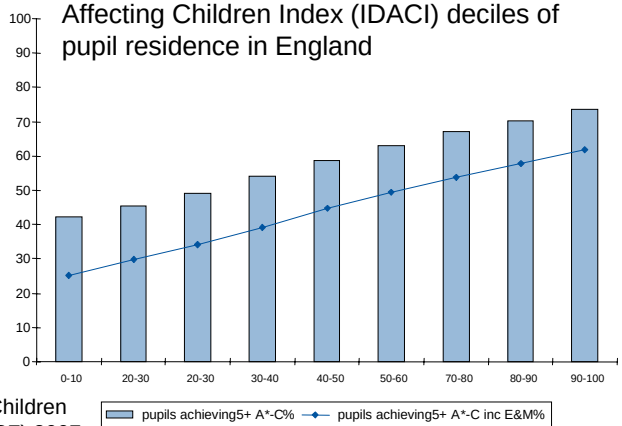
Background: fair chances

The Government wants all young people to fulfil their potential, regardless of family background or the places where they live.

- Achieving good results at school is an important step on the way to success across a broad range of future life outcomes.
- **Progress** has been made in narrowing the attainment gap between the most deprived areas and the rest of the country. However, **educational attainment remains lower in deprived areas** and is strongly associated with area deprivation.
- **The type of neighbourhood in which a pupil lives is significantly associated with their GCSE results**. In addition, certain types of neighbourhood perform better (or worse) than would be expected given their Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranking.
- Young people's **aspirations -** the goals they set for the future, their inspiration and their motivation to work towards these goals - have a significant influence both on their educational attainment and their future life outcomes.
- This study explores the influences on young people's aspirations**. Parents and families** have the most important influence. However, this study focuses on the less-explored impacts of community-level characteristics and attitudes on the aspirations of both parents and children. It looks at the potential to raise educational attainment in deprived areas through building up the aspirations of young people, families and the wider community.

25.3% pupils achieve 5 A*-C GCSEs (including Maths & English) in the lowest decile compared to 68.4% in the highest decile.

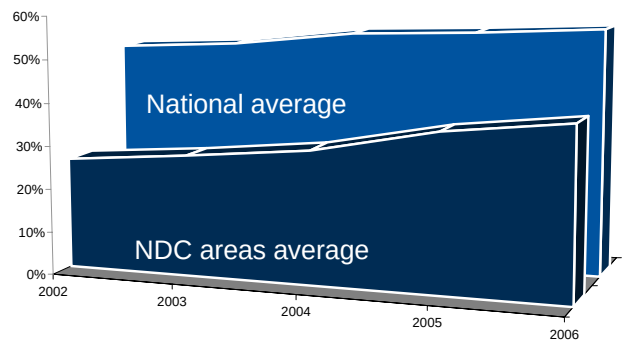
Key stage 4 attainment by Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) deciles of pupil residence in England



Source: Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF) 2007

The percentage of pupils in NDC areas achieving 5 A*-Cs has risen from an average of 26% in 2002 to 40% in 2006. However, the gap against the national average remains substantial.

Key Stage 4 attainment 2002-2006 by New Deal for Communities (NDC) area average and national average



Source: DCSF/ Department for Communities and Local Government

Building on progress: a shared agenda

department for children, schools and families

In recent years, the Department for Children, Schools and Families has placed increasing emphasis on the motivations, attitudes and behaviours that enable children to fulfil their potential. In particular, policies have focused on the impact that young people's aspirations (and those of their parents) can have on educational attainment.

Education policy has been increasingly concerned with what happens outside the classroom – recognising the crucial role of parents and families. Increasing attention has been paid to school readiness, parenting capacity and the home learning environment, especially in the early years.

However... there could be a new emphasis on the broader influences on young people and their attitudes – particularly those within communities.

Communities and Local Government

Over the past decade, neighbourhood renewal policy has aimed to close the gap on a range of outcomes, including educational attainment. It has sought to ensure that no one is seriously disadvantaged by where they live.

Neighbourhood renewal and community empowerment policies have recognised low levels of self efficacy and self esteem in some deprived communities. They have sought to build community pride, skills and confidence.

Explicit emphasis has yet to be placed on challenging low educational aspirations and expectations within deprived communities. The influence of communities on aspirations should be further explored.

Common priorities

This study brings together the priorities of the Department for Children Schools and Families and Communities and Local Government.

It looks at the role that communities play in shaping the attitudes and experiences of young people and the ways in which social norms, aspirations and values can influence outcomes.

It examines the content and impact of current policies and the potential to align existing initiatives and funding streams better in order to maximise impact.

It asks whether delivering policy through local communities can help young people to develop ambitious, achievable aspirations and support them to fulfil their potential.

Lines of enquiry:

1: What is the nature of the relationship between young people's aspirations and their educational attainment?

2: Are aspirations and attainment levels lower in deprived communities?

3: How do community level characteristics and attitudes influence young people's aspirations and attainment?

4: Which interventions can help to raise community aspirations and expectations?

5: Can a more focused and better co-ordinated approach to raising aspirations in deprived communities help to raise educational attainment?

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See Annex A for details

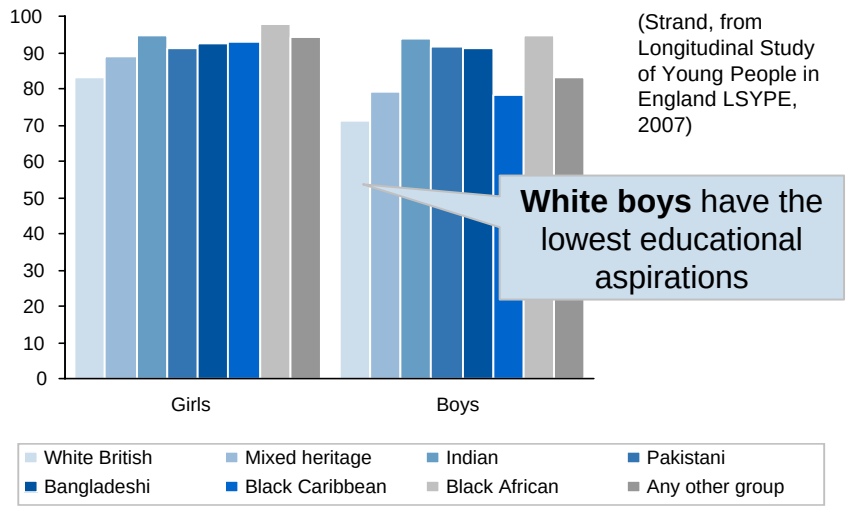
Aspirations and expectations: key patterns

Much of the existing data on 'aspirations' is actually measuring educational intentions or expectations. Questions most commonly investigate intentions to stay on in education post 16, or to go on to higher education. In this report we call these 'educational aspirations'. Key trends are summarised below.

*Aspirations are distinguishable from expectations; there is a difference between what people **hope** to achieve and what they **expect** to achieve.* (Lupton and Kintrea, 2008).

- Children's educational aspirations are strongly correlated with those of their parents and also with those of their peers.
- Educational aspirations vary according to age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status.
- **Girls** consistently have higher educational aspirations than boys. Parents also have higher aspirations for their daughters than their sons, reversing the trends of previous generations.
- **White** young people have **lower educational aspirations** than most other ethnic groups. Similarly, the educational attainment of white boys is failing to improve at the rates of most other ethnic groups.
- Parents with few financial resources tend to hold lower educational expectations for their children. Young people from **socially disadvantaged backgrounds** also tend to have lower expectations.
- Both parents and young people in **deprived areas** tend to have lower educational expectations.
- Aspirations change as children get older. **11-14 is a crucial age group**, when young people form solid aspirations that inform their future life choices and outcomes.

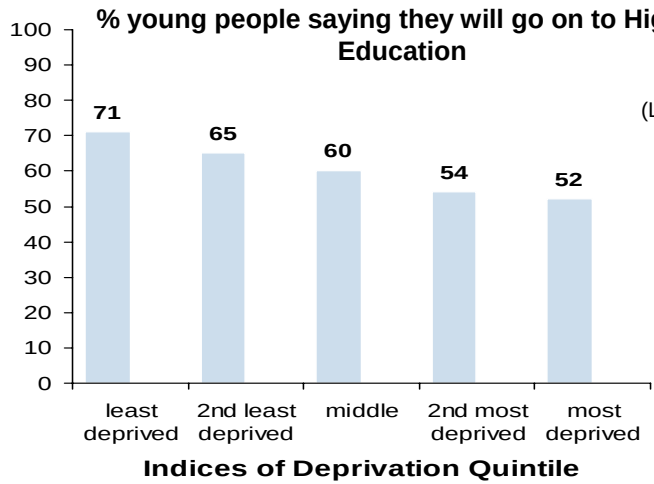
% of 14 year olds who say they will stay on in Further Education after Year 11



(Strand, from Longitudinal Study of Young People in England LSYPE, 2007)

White boys have the lowest educational aspirations

% young people saying they will go on to Higher Education



(LSYPE, 2006)

A significant relationship between aspirations and attainment

Aspirations are important because they influence outcomes. There is robust evidence to suggest that:

Young people with higher educational aspirations have greater motivation and higher educational attainment than their peers, as do those whose **parents** hold higher educational aspirations for them. (Gutman and Akerman, 2008b)

Educational and career aspirations developed during adolescence can have lifelong significance, influencing future occupational outcomes. (Schoon and Parsons, 2002)

Parental aspirations have a positive influence equivalent to four additional terms progression at school.

Strand (2007) found that young people (aged 14) whose parents aspired for them to stay on post 16 achieved Key Stage 3 progression scores on average 4 points higher than young people whose parents did not have these aspirations. This is equivalent to four additional terms of learning. This finding had been controlled for the effects of family background.*

Similarly after taking into account the affect of their parents' aspirations, young people's own aspirations to stay on post **16 also had an effect equivalent to 1 and a half terms additional learning** or 1.6 additional points compared to those young people without these aspirations.**

However the relationship between educational aspirations and attainment is complex and non-linear.

- **Establishing causality is difficult.** High aspirations are both a cause and effect of prior achievement. *'[aspirations] are both a predictor and a product of one's abilities, personal attributes, socialisation and experiences'* (Gutman and Akerman, 2008b).
- **High educational aspirations don't necessarily predict high attainment,** particularly for some ethnic minority groups. For example, Black Caribbean and Black African pupils from high socio economic backgrounds had high aspirations and academic confidence, but their attainment was significantly lower than similar white British pupils (Strand, 2007).
- **The relationship between aspirations and attainment is dynamic and changes throughout the school years.** Young people's aspirations are shaped by their prior attainment. They also change as they grow older. Key Stage 3 tends to be the period in which young people's aspirations begin to become more grounded in (perceived) realities. (Gottfredson, 2002)

This suggests a need to look **more broadly** at young people's aspirations, **how they are formed**, and **the process** by which they influence outcomes.

** When prior attainment was taken into account young people whose parents had aspirations for them to continue in full time education at 16 scored 1.2 points higher than their peers whose parents did not have these aspirations. ** When prior attainment and parental aspirations had been taken into account there was a 0.5 point difference in KS3 progression.*

Aspirations are complex and multi-dimensional

Certain groups of parents and young people tend to have lower educational expectations. However, when we broaden our definition of aspirations, the picture becomes less clear cut.

In real life most people tend to think more holistically about their futures. **Nearly all parents** have **positive general aspirations** for their children. Half of young people state that their main ambition is to '**be happy**' (Young People's Social Attitudes Survey, 2003). Several studies have found that **disadvantaged young people do not have fundamentally different** aspirations from their more advantaged peers. (Turock et al, 2008; McKendrick et al, 2007; Calder and Cope, 2005).

A cross departmental team sought to gain a deeper understanding of aspirations through **qualitative research** with over 150 professionals, parents and young people in three deprived communities.

Nearly all of the young people wanted to do well in life and most had high hopes for the future. However, there was a strong consensus that **high aspirations are not always about good exam results and going to university**.

Many young people wanted to follow the life and career choices of the people around them. In some cases, their awareness of options appeared to be limited by a lack of diverse role models.

Many of the young people and parents lacked **information** about how to achieve their goals. A lack of confidence, or sense of fatalism, also seemed to be discouraging some young people from aiming high.

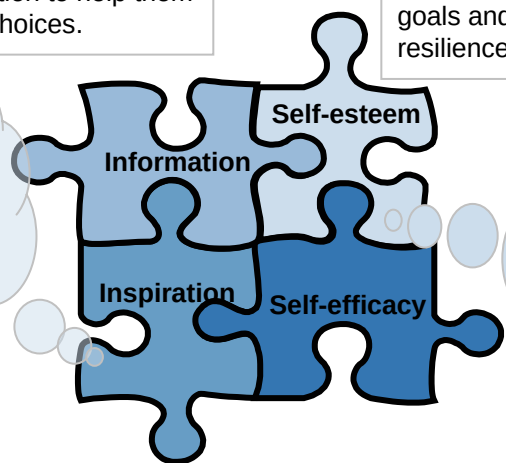
This supports research suggesting that young people's **expectations**, sense of **self efficacy**, **self esteem**, **confidence** and **motivation** are affected by their circumstances (Lupton and Kintrea, 2008).

Inspiration, information, self-esteem and self-efficacy are all important components of high aspirations.

Young people and their parents need appropriate and reliable advice and information to help them to make informed choices.

Young People need to feel confident that they have the skills and aptitudes to achieve their goals and to develop the resilience to cope with set backs.

'I want to be like my uncle. He's a builder and everyone respects him.' Young Person, changing suburb



'I want to be an electrician, but I don't think that's going to happen.' Young Person

Young people need diverse sources of inspiration – through meeting new people, trying out new experiences and broadening their horizons

Young People need to believe that they can achieve their goals through working hard and to feel confident that they have a fair chance of success.

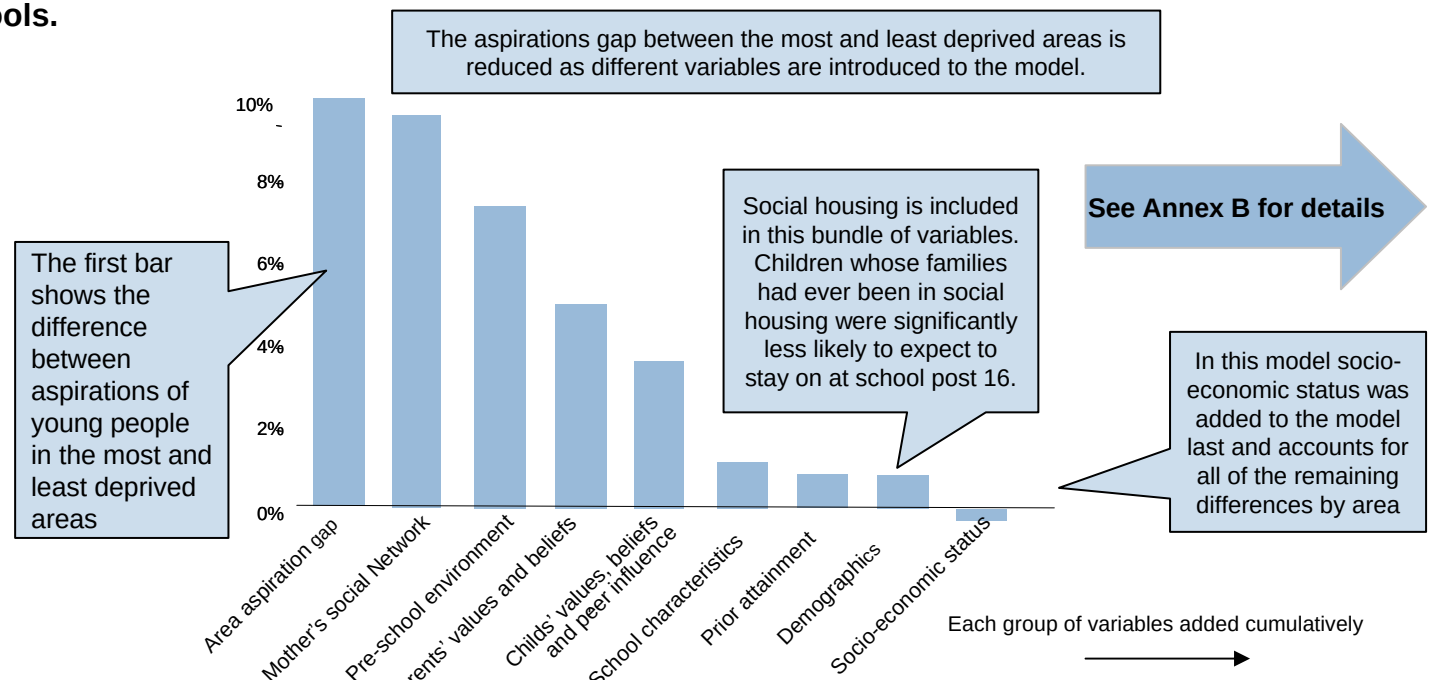
Original analysis of the factors explaining differences between young people's educational aspirations in different areas

Original analysis of the ALSPAC* data set for this study seeks to explain the difference between the aspirations of young people **aged 14** in the most and least deprived areas. It concludes that **the strongest factors** predicting children's aspirations were: the **value** they attach to school; their **ability beliefs** and **prior attainment**; **mother's aspirations** for their child to go to university; and a family's **socio-economic status**.

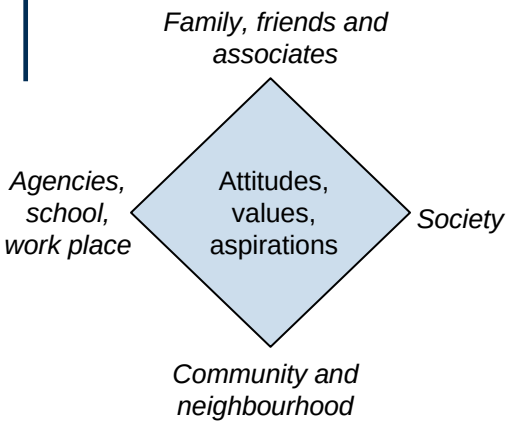
There was a strong association between **children who talked to their friends about GCSE choices** and young people who have high educational aspirations. The analysis also found that children were less likely to expect to stay in post 16 education if, during their early years, their family (mother) had ever been in social housing.

We investigated whether the places where the young people lived, were influencing their aspirations. In this analysis **no direct 'neighbourhood effect'** on aspirations was identified. However, it did suggest that the effect of community level factors may be indirect, occurring via their association with children's **pre-school environment, parents' and children's values and beliefs**, as well as the **characteristics of children's schools.**

* Original analysis of the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) data set, conducted in collaboration with the University of Bristol, demonstrates the ways in which **parental attitudes, peers, school characteristics, social networks and housing type** all help to explain the difference between the aspirations of young people in the most and least deprived areas.



Insights into the formation of young people's aspirations



11-14 is a key age group

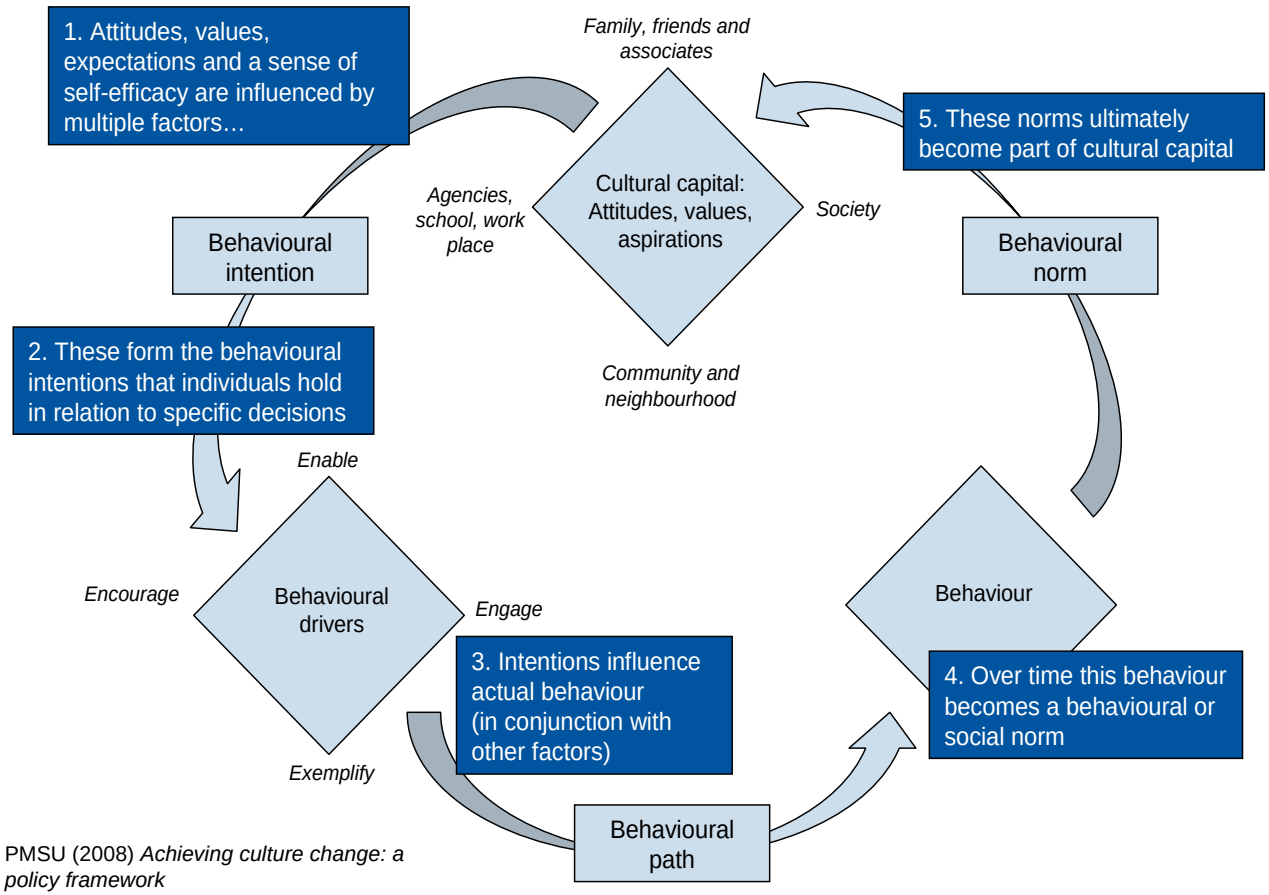
At around the ages of 11-14 aspirations develop from idealistic to more realistic ideas *(Gottfredson, 2002).*

The influence of peers and wider society increases in importance in the early teenage years. This is also a period in which young people are particularly prone to disengagement from school.

- There are **multiple influences** on young people's aspirations.
- The previous slide demonstrates the strong association between **a mother's aspirations** and those of her child. It also highlights the importance of **family socio-economic circumstances.** Parental attitudes and circumstances play the most influential role in the formation of a child's aspirations, especially in the early years.
- Parents' attitudes are informed by the society that they live in. For example women considering whether to breastfeed their baby may be influenced, positively or negatively, by the experiences of friends and family (Dyson et al, NICE, 2005). Young people's aspirations are being **indirectly influenced by their environment** from before birth.
- **Friends and peers** become increasingly important during the teenage years, peaking in influence at around the age of 15 (Asmussen et al, 2007). Within their peer groups, young people experiment with, and develop, their sense of self-identity, mirroring their friends' behaviours and attitudes, both positive and negative (Nurmi, 2004). Two thirds of 14 year olds intending to leave school at 16 say their friends intend to do the same (LSYPE, 2004).
- **Schools** also influence young people. Teachers expectations are known to be a key determinant of school effectiveness and pupil progress (Feinstein et al. 2004). Schools have been shown to account for between and 8-15% of differences in attainment (Lupton, 2006).
- Young people's attitudes are affected by the **media and by wider societal values** – including gender or racial stereotypes. They may also feel held back by the area that they live in; by conceptions of what 'people from round here' can do.
- Attitudes are also formed **in response to experiences**. Amongst disadvantaged young people in one study the aspiration to have 'an interesting job' declined 12 % between the ages of 14-17 and 22-25 (Calder and Cope, 2005).
- Evidence demonstrates the influences of schooling, local employment and economy, neighbourhood ties, environments and reputation, information and family finances on young people's attitudes. (Lupton and Kintrea, 2008).

The cultural capital framework

- The cultural capital framework below offers a helpful model to explain the process by which attitudes, aspirations and values can influence behaviours and outcomes.
- The extent to which cultural capital influences behaviour, and hence outcomes, depends on the strength of the relationships between attitudes and the desired outcome.



PMSU (2008) *Achieving culture change: a policy framework*

Attitudes, values, aspirations and sense of self-efficacy – our cultural capital - are developed by our interaction with the immediate environment around us (our parents, peers and role models, neighbours, schooling and workplace) and the wider society-wide influences acting upon us (such as the economy, technology, media and development of new ideas and innovations).

Cultural capital has an important influence on the actions and behaviours we choose. These actions and behaviours, in turn, influence outcomes.

A behaviour change approach may be effective in shifting the aspirations and broader attitudes that can prevent young people from fulfilling their potential. This is investigated in more detail later in the slide pack.

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Communities Matter

This study has examined the relationship between young people's aspirations and the communities in which they live. It concludes that communities are important for the following reasons:

i) Young People with low educational aspirations often live in certain types of (deprived) neighbourhood

- In general, young people in deprived areas tend to have lower aspirations. However, in some types of deprived neighbourhood, young people aim high. For this reason, geodemographic approaches may be more effective than measures of deprivation alone, in identifying and targeting support to clusters of young people with low aspirations.
- Areas in which young people tend to have low educational aspirations and those in which they tend to under-achieve in school often overlap.
- Close knit local social networks, low population mobility and a history of economic decline appear to characterise neighbourhoods where young people are less likely to develop high educational aspirations.

ii) Young people and their parents are influenced by the people and places where they live

- Family background is the strongest influence on young people's educational aspirations.
- However, both young people and their parents are influenced by the people around them. In some deprived areas, people's social networks tend to be less wide ranging. This may mean that relationships with local people are particularly influential.
- Neighbourhood characteristics such as housing, the local environment, crime rates and the quality of services, are also likely to influence the attitudes and outcomes of young people, though these effects are hard to measure.

iii) A neighbourhood approach to raising aspirations makes sense

- To engender positive attitudes, it is important to mobilise the community. Working at local neighbourhood level makes this practical.
- Attitudes to education and work tend to be affected by local contexts. Coordinating service delivery at a local neighbourhood level may be the most effective way to influence these attitudes.
- Raising aspirations is complex and requires a multi-agency approach. Working together is often easier at the most localised level.

i) Young people with low educational aspirations are more likely to live in certain types of neighbourhood

Earlier evidence demonstrated that young people in deprived areas tend to have lower educational aspirations. However, **not all deprived areas are the same**.

This study has merged information on **young people's aspirations to stay in full time education post 16** (from the LSYPE data set) with MOSAIC neighbourhood classifications*. The chart below shows levels of educational aspiration within the 12 most deprived MOSAIC neighbourhood typologies (by IMD ranking).

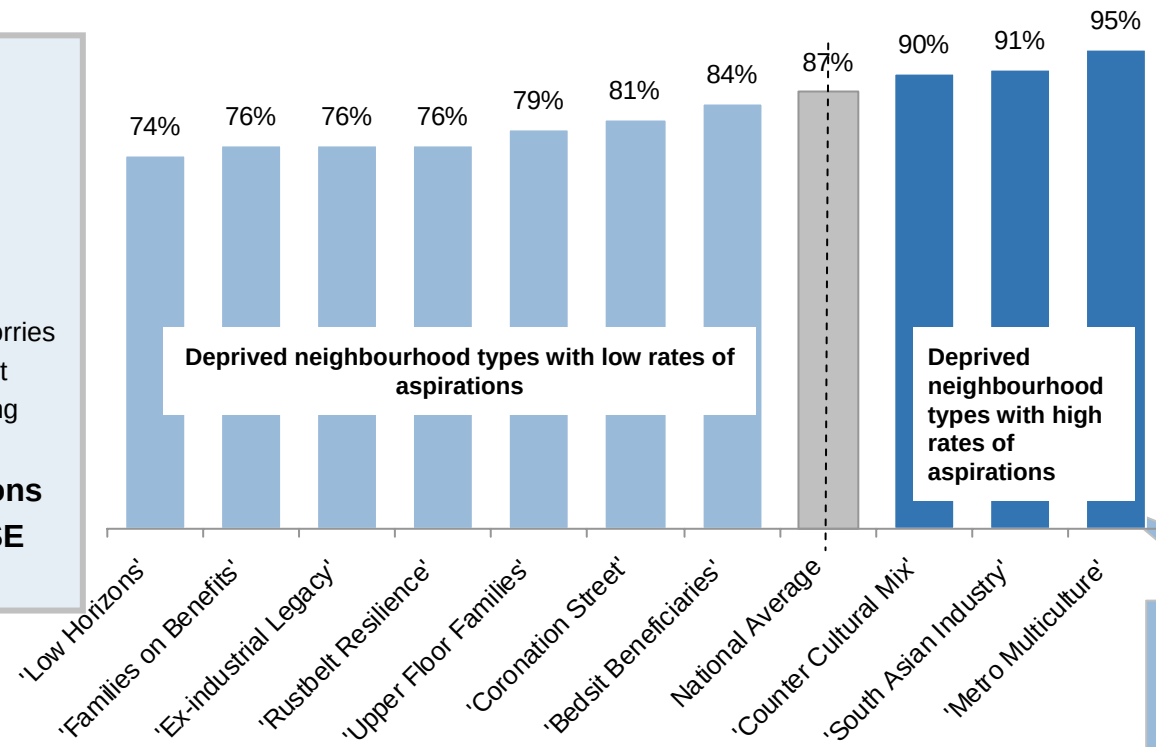
Although all of these types of neighbourhood are deprived, they **vary widely** in their levels of educational aspiration.

'Low Horizons'

Large cities in North
Active family and support networks
Most deprived area type
Families with school age children
Income support, money worries
High use of public transport
High levels in social housing

Lowest level of educational aspirations

Lowest average GCSE scores



'South Asian Industry'

Large families
Some overcrowding
Low qualifications
Modest incomes
Free school meals
Terraces in provincial cities
Religion important
Sense of community
Fear of racism

Higher GSCE scores (than would be expected given deprivation levels)

Three types of neighbourhood – all deprived urban areas with ethnically diverse populations – have aspirations higher than the national average. The lowest educational aspirations are found in ex-industrial, communities, often in the north of England.

*MOSAIC, an Experian dataset used in the public and commercial sector, classifies local areas into 61 ideal types using a range of commercial and socio-economic data. More information about these neighbourhood typologies is included at Annex A. This analysis of LSYPE is not methodologically comparable with Strand's analysis of LSYPE, quoted earlier in this report.

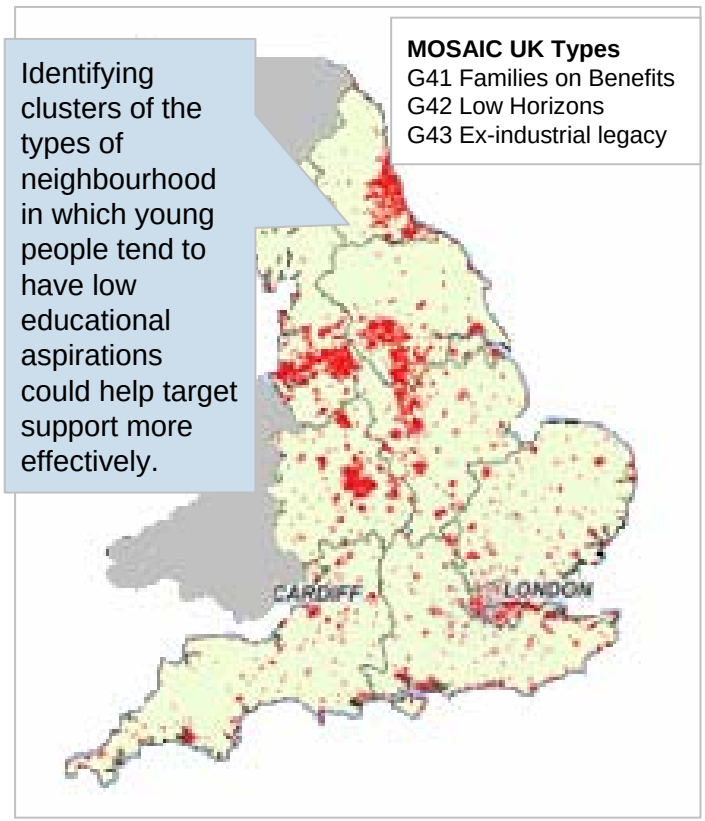
Geographical clusters of low educational aspiration

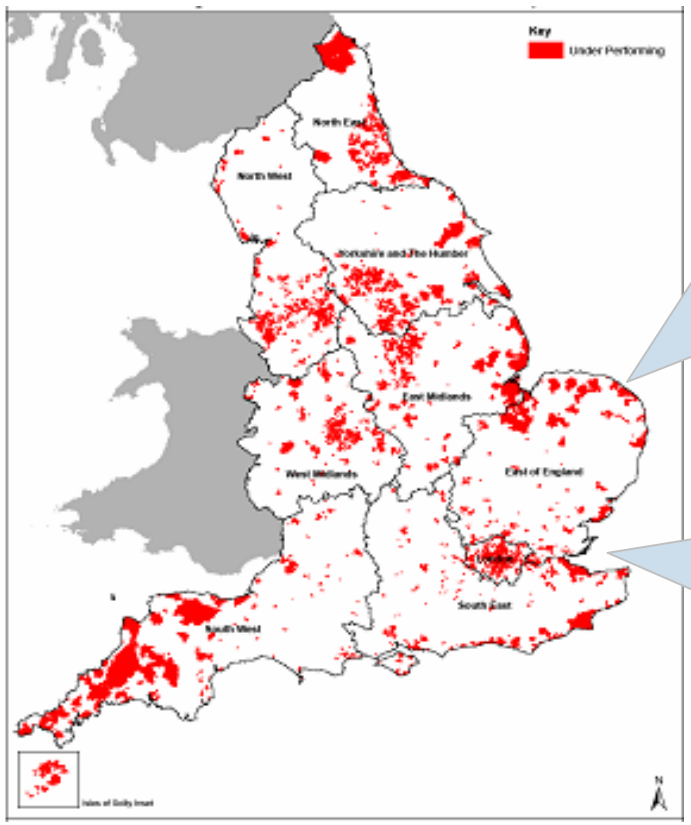
The geographical spread of the three types of neighbourhood with the lowest educational aspirations, '*low horizons*', '*families on benefits'* and '*ex-industrial legacy'* is shown below left.

The map on the right depicts the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods (Lower Super Output Areas) in which young people achieve significantly lower at Key Stage Four than would be expected given their level of area deprivation.

A range of factors influence young people's educational attainment. However, we can see a clear pattern between the types of neighbourhood in which young people have low aspirations and those in which they under achieve.

Identifying clusters of the types of neighbourhood in which young people tend to have low educational aspirations could help target support more effectively.





There are clusters of neighbourhoods where attainment is lower than expected; this is visible in East Anglia and the West Country.

These areas share some of the characteristics of communities with an 'aspirations gap.' Many are rural areas with close knit social networks, stable populations and poor transport links.

The geographical spread of neighbourhoods with lower than expected attainment is shown in red. There are clear overlaps with clusters of neighbourhoods in which young people tend to have low aspirations.

Community dynamics: young people in areas where people are moving onwards and upwards have higher educational aspirations

Neighbourhoods change over time. Whilst there is a large degree of continuity in deprivation, some areas have seen their fortunes change. For example, some seaside towns and old industrial areas have experienced economic decline, whilst some inner city neighbourhoods have become more prosperous.

The **populations of neighbourhoods also change**. People move into and out of areas, both responding to and contributing to changes in neighbourhood circumstances. This can make it difficult to evaluate the impacts of regeneration policies. Improvements in the outcomes of existing residents can be hard to disentangle from an influx of more prosperous newcomers.

The **type of population mobility** in an area is associated with the aspirations of its young people. 'Isolate' areas are disconnected from the wider (better) housing market and in and out moves are largely restricted to similar or poorer areas. Young people in 'isolate' areas tend to have the lowest educational aspirations. In contrast, young people in 'escalator' areas, generally have higher aspirations. This is reflected in the social mobility of the wider population, who frequently move onwards and upwards.

AMION Consulting has classified deprived neighbourhoods according to the type of population mobility –by whether moves are from/to areas that are similarly deprived, less deprived or more deprived. We have examined the educational aspirations of young people living in these different types of neighbourhood.

Gentrifier areas – these are areas 'on the up'. There is a degree of social improvement. Most in-movers come from less deprived areas and most out-movers go to similarly or more deprived areas.

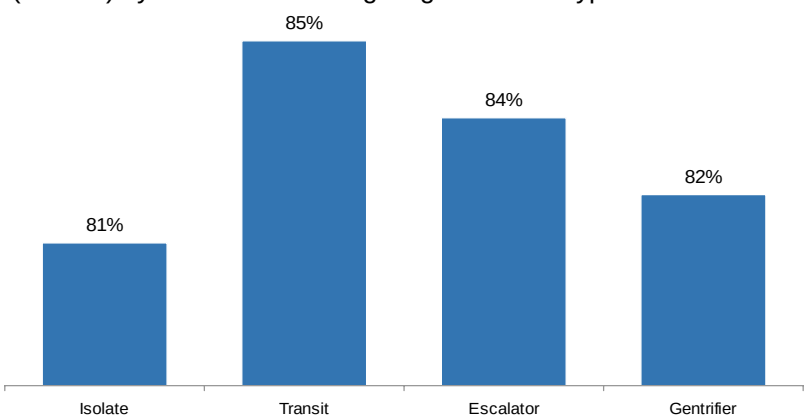
Escalator areas – these are areas which people tend to leave as they become successful. The East End of London has historically been a classic example of an escalator area.

Transit areas – these areas tend to have a higher population turnover. Both in-movers and out-movers come from and go to less deprived areas.

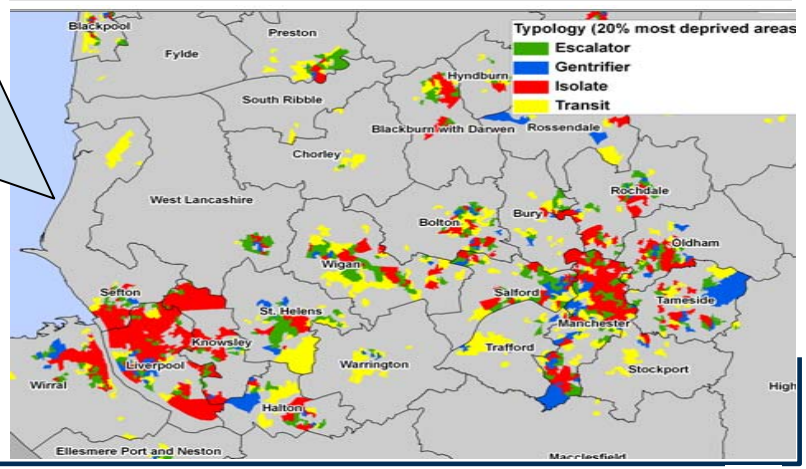
Isolate areas – these areas are associated with a degree of entrapment of poor households who are unable to break out of living in deprived areas.

(Robson, Lymperopoulou and Rae for CLG, forthcoming 2009)

Young people's aspirations to stay in full time education post 16 (LSYPE) by AMION Consulting neighbourhood type.



'Isolate' neighbourhoods (in red) are common in areas such as Knowsley or Rotherham. These areas also have high proportions of the 'Low horizons' neighbourhood type in which young people have the lowest aspirations.



The characteristics of communities with low educational aspirations

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation help to identify the communities where young people may fail to develop high aspirations. However, not all deprived communities are the same.

'disadvantaged communities in the UK are very diverse; they differ in their economic structure, location, transport and connectivity, historical evolution, identity and current social and demographic mix' (Lupton and Kintrea, 2008)

To target support effectively, we need to go further to identify the characteristics of local communities in which young people are less likely to develop high aspirations.

Our in depth research focused on three deprived areas with low attainment levels; 'northern town', 'changing suburb' and 'inner city'. The adjacent table summarises some of the characteristics of these communities.

Young people in two of our case study areas ('northern town' and 'changing suburb') appeared less likely to have clear goals in life. They lacked diverse sources of inspiration and information, and often appeared to have low levels of self esteem and self-efficacy. In the other area ('inner city') young people tended to be more confident about achieving their goals in life. In the inner city area, aspirations did not appear to be a barrier to success.

The following three slides give more insight into the neighbourhood characteristics observed within these case study communities. The summaries bring together findings from qualitative research with parents, young people aged 12-14, analysis of local data and interviews with representatives from local agencies at both strategic and practitioner level.

Area characteristics	'Northern town'	'Inner city'	'Changing suburb'
Low bridging social capital	✓	✓	✓
Low collective efficacy	✓	✓	✓
Poor perceived n'hood quality	✓	?	✓
Strong local social networks	✓	×	✓
Low occupational expectations	✓	×	✓
Negative peer culture	✓	✓	✓
Sense that things are getting worse	✓	×	✓
High levels of deprivation	✓	✓	✓
Stable, settled population	✓	×	✓
High worklessness	✓	✓	✓
Homogenous housing stock	✓	×	✓
Poor transport links	?	×	×
History of economic decline	✓	×	✓
Aspirations Gap?	✓	×	✓

Low levels of bridging social capital and low levels of population mobility were particularly important characteristics in our qualitative work

Note: For 'outer suburb', the case study focused on the majority white population. For inner city, it focuses on the large Pakistani heritage community.

The most common MOSAIC types in this area are 'Low Horizons' and 'Ex-Industrial Legacy'

'Disadvantage is used as a reason or an excuse – we need to believe these children have the capacity to achieve just as well as children in other parts of the country'.
Local authority officer

Traditional northern town

This case study area is a suburb of a northern ex industrial town with a **97% white British population**. The area was previously one of the most **deprived** neighbourhoods in the country, but has improved in recent years. However, it still has a high rate of worklessness.

There is one local secondary school for 11-16 year olds, which offers **full extended services**. The vast majority of young people in the local area attend this school. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (including Maths and English) is 10% lower than the national average.

People in this area have a **shared memory** of a time of strong social ties and sense of community linked to the old mining and steel industries. Parents seemed to know their neighbours well, although they sometimes struggled to identify with other groups including ethnic minority groups, teenagers and the elderly living in the area.

The local community was viewed by professionals and residents as **close knit** and cohesive. Many of the parents had been to the local secondary school and kept the same friends they had known at school. Young people presented a **very localised** view of their social connections, with mental maps focused on home, extended family, school, the local shops, park and friends. A high proportion of households in this area have no car.

All of the parents had **positive aspirations** for their children's futures. However, some felt that they lacked the material resources to give their children wider experiences or take up extra curricular activities. Some felt that they lacked the connections and advantages that make it easier for affluent children to become successful.

Professionals had their own common narrative about the local community, describing a '**programmed sense of acceptance**' that was ingrained by narrow experiences. Some professionals felt that these assumptions about the community were themselves reinforcing negative attitudes. Housing and local jobs were also raised as important influences on the local community's attitudes.

Most young people associated occupational success with moving away from the area. Vulnerable young people depicted the **local area as a barrier to their success** with negative peer pressures and a lack of opportunities influencing their self esteem and ambitions.

The impact of **negative labelling** was seen as a huge barrier to engendering a proud and aspiring common identity. However, the external and internal association of the area with the negative economic consequences of losing major industrial employers is being gradually challenged by a positive, aspirational and challenging vision at the local authority strategic level.

The most common MOSAIC type in this area is 'South Asian Origins'

Diverse inner city

This case study is of a small inner city neighbourhood and focuses on the **large ethnic minority population** –a third of residents are of Asian origin and one fifth Afro-Caribbean. The area is one of the **3% most deprived** in the country. Neighbouring areas are similarly deprived places, but only a bus ride away from a vibrant city centre. The neighbourhood has high rates of worklessness.

There is one small secondary school in the neighbourhood for 11-16 year olds, which offers **full extended services**. English is not the first language of 70% of students. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (including Maths and English) is 17% lower than the national average but results are improving. Attendance is very good and there are good links with industry and the local university. However the majority of local children do not go to this local school. Instead they attend a variety of different schools in the city.

This is a small neighbourhood surrounded by major trunk roads and characterised by professionals as feeling like **an island**. There is an even mix of modern housing and light industrial business so the neighbourhood doesn't have a very residential feel. There is not a strong sense of community attached to the place and **population mobility is high**. However **pockets of strong community ties** do exist and the area is recognised locally as being part of a well established Asian district within the City.

People felt that the local Asian community here has high aspirations. The young people in the area had a **strong sense of self efficacy**, they believed in hard work to achieve goals. Young people were generally optimistic about their futures and there was no strong sense that they would be held back by where they were living.

Parents were ambitious and optimistic about their children's futures. Their aspirations for their children were often centred around **responsibilities to the family**. Parents' aspirations for their sons tended to revolve around jobs that would allow them to financially support their families. Fathers perceived themselves to be strong influences and the local Mosque provided educational support for the local community.

Different views are held on the best way to raise educational aspirations; some professionals believed successful young people would move out of the neighbourhood whilst other practitioners were committed to improving the area as a place to live. Other policy solutions to tackle low educational aspirations were targeted support to tackle worklessness in the neighbourhood and intensive support for families.

'Kids do have aspirations…but don't know how to get there.' Head teacher.

There were a mix of MOSAIC types in this area. 'White Van Culture' was the most common type. 'White Van Culture' is not one of the most deprived MOSAIC types but has slightly below average rates of aspiration. 'Metro Multiculture' was also one of the most predominant types.

Changing city suburb

This case study area is an outer **suburb** of a city with a growing ethnic minority population. It is one of the 20% most deprived areas in the country. Levels of worklessness are above average for England, some of the large employers in the area –manufacturing industries - **shut down some time ago**. However, **a wide range of job opportunities in the city are within travelling distance** (a bus and a train ride) and the area is on the outer edges of a major regional regeneration programme. The area is mainly residential with most people living in social housing. Three tall tower blocks are surrounded by medium rise blocks of flats.

There are two non-selective secondary schools in the area. One of these schools has a **high national reputation** and, following a sustained drive by its headteacher, is bucking the trend of poor attainment. The school focuses on raising the aspirations of pupils.

Incomers, including a significant black African population are settling in the area, because of its **affordable housing** and **good transport links** to the city. Black adults and young people described **strong social networks**, particularly based around local churches. In contrast, many of the white families have lived in the area for several generations. Many reported a sense of **decline and loosening of social ties** following the downturn in manufacturing industries. Some long term residents felt excluded from new facilities in the area. This connected to a general mistrust of local services and authority figures. Some also complained that there is little space for intergenerational mixing.

Whilst most young people had dreams of **future success**, some were not looking outside their local area for job inspiration. Their peer groups exerted a strong influence and there are high rates of teenage pregnancy in the area. In white British households the intergenerational experience of worklessness and traditional views of women's role in the home could be influential social frameworks.

Some of the white British young people in the area reported **rarely travelling outside** their area (although others visited family members who had moved to more affluent areas). Concerns about young people's safety contribute to a sense of **insularity**. Young People felt there was a **stigma** attached to where they were from and that this would affect their job chances. Some young people themselves saw the area as 'run down' and depressing.

Professionals felt that negative perceptions of young people were affecting relationships with adults and young people's confidence and morale. The high performing local school has created a strong community and is improving educational attainment but, despite successes, is still struggling to mobilise the broader population to get behind it.

ii) Young people and their parents are influenced by the people and places where they live

Our analysis of the ALSPAC data set found that **families and socio-economic background explain the majority of the aspiration gap between deprived and non deprived areas**. Whilst acknowledging the central role of these influences we now look further into the influence of neighbourhood and community.

Evidence from our qualitative research suggests that the **communities in which young people grow up can influence their aspirations and attainment.**

Although few studies centre on the **influence of place on aspirations**, there is some evidence to support this. Quantitative evidence also suggests that there is a **neighbourhood effect on attainment**, over and above the effect of individual and household characteristics, but that this is small relative to these other characteristics. However there is no consensus on **which neighbourhood effects are most important**, upon **whom they impact most strongly** and at **what life stage.** (Lupton and Kintrea, 2008).

Conceptualising neighbourhood effects is problematic and findings can often be inconsistent for several reasons:

•**neighbourhoods are not fixed**, they do not have objective characteristics that are experienced in the same way by all their inhabitants

•it is the **interaction of people and place that creates neighbourhood characteristics**

•**neighbourhoods cannot be seen in isolation**, they are also shaped by their relationship with other areas

•**Communities influence individuals both directly, and indirectly** through their friends, family and associates. These indirect effects are very difficult to **measure** [adapted from Lupton, 2003]

"*individuals interact with their neighbourhoods in complex ways which may in the end make it difficult to disentangle the individual from the area either conceptually or in terms of data***"** (Buck, 2001:p2258).

Theories about how neighbourhood effects operate include:

•**Collective socialisation**: behaviours and attitudes are directly influenced by neighbours and influence outcomes in education and employment.

•**Environmental/external influence**: the physical environment, housing and other external factors, like access to job markets and poor services, encourage and discourage social behaviours that affect attitudes.

For example cramped housing conditions may mean young people are more likely to be exposed to negative peer attitudes when socialising on the streets**.** Narratives of decline and poor reputations can permeate everyday life and effect self esteem**.**

•**Institutional resources**: schools among other institutions are a key local institution where peers matter for educational outcomes and motivation**.** (Adapted from Lupton and Kintrea, 2008).

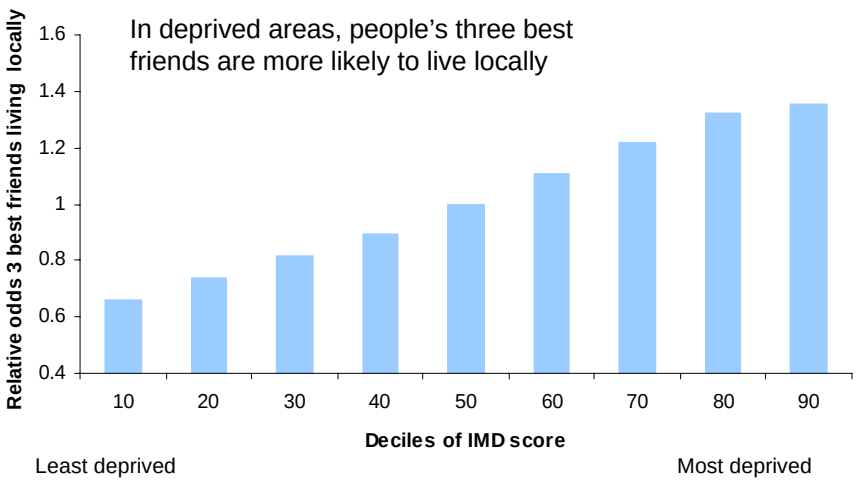
The influence of social networks

Social capital refers to the features of social life – **networks, norms and trust** – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives. There are two main types of social capital:

Bonding social capital – characterised by strong bonds (or "social glue") among group members, such as close friends or family members.

Bridging social capital – characterised by weaker, less dense but more cross-cutting ties ("social oil"). For example, with business associates, acquaintances, friends from different ethnic groups, friends of friends

(Putnam, 1995).



After accounting for individual factors, using waves 9 & 13 British Household Panel Survey matched to 1998 IMD, (Buck, 2005)

Deprived communities with high concentrations of low aspirations tend to have high levels of **bonding social capital** but lower levels of **bridging social capital**. Social interactions can be more frequent, but generally the geography of these interactions is far more limited in scale (Buck, 2005).

This matters because **young people's social networks influence their expectations**. Our quantitative analysis showed that peer interactions and a mother's social networks both affect young people's educational aspirations or expectation to stay on in education.

'family, friends and social networks play an important role in influencing attitudes, aspirations and behaviour, the relationships can be uneven, multiple and complex' (Green and White, 2007)

Strong local networks are often a source of empowerment, strength and support. However they can also constrain individuals to familiar choices and locations. **Bonding networks** may predispose individuals to **eschew experiences that might build other forms of social capital** and **precipitate change** (Raphael-Reed et al, 2007).

An absence of a broader and more diverse network of contacts outside the immediate neighbourhood can mean that **young people lack access to valuable sources of inspiration, information and opportunity**. Similarly, 40% of employers use informal methods of recruitment. Therefore, poor links to employment markets can make it more difficult to find employment (Sanderson, 2003).

Improving bridging social capital may help to broaden the range of influences on young people, raise their aspirations and give them access to broader opportunities.

iii) A neighbourhood approach to raising aspiration makes sense

The immediate neighbourhoods in which people live appear to have stronger influences on their outcomes than their wider area or region. For example, rates of unemployment among the 500 people living nearest to an individual, have a stronger effect on their likelihood of escaping poverty than rates among the population of the wider surrounding area. (SEU, 2004). An area-based approach, focused on a small geographical area also makes sense for the following reasons:

Mobilising the community

There is untapped potential in every community. In some deprived communities, local people have worked together to stand up to anti-social behaviour and have achieved impressive results.

New Deal for Communities engaged and empowered residents. The Community Empowerment White Paper published in July aims to go further by passing power to communities and giving real control and influence to more people.

At neighbourhood level, a high visibility campaign can be combined with outreach techniques, to ensure that a large and representative section of the community is engaged.

Changing attitudes and behaviours

Raising aspirations in deprived neighbourhoods requires an in depth understanding of the attitudinal and behavioural barriers encountered within different segments of the community.

Attitudes are informed by social norms and networks. They respond to local economic and employment histories.

These attitudes are often very localised. Evidence suggests that campaigns to shift attitudes need to be precisely targeted, often to a very small geographical area.

A co-ordinated multi-agency approach

Aspirations are complex. Shifting attitudes and behaviours requires a multi-agency, intensive and sustained response. Interventions need to work with young people, their parents and communities. They need to address a range of inter-related issues and influences.

Working at a neighbourhood level makes joining up services easier. There is greater potential to align different services around a common goal that is meaningful to young people and reflects their priorities.

A neighbourhood approach enables interventions to be designed around the particular circumstances of each community. However, although every community is different, the problems and challenges that it faces will be common to other areas and will be primarily addressed through mainstream service provision.

The barriers within a particular neighbourhood will have their roots in factors operating at a much wider geographical scale. It is, therefore, crucial that neighbourhood-based approaches are aligned with existing and mainstream provision and that they are informed by increasing evidence on what works. The following slides summarise national policies that aim to raise aspirations within deprived communities.

1: Introduction

Background and key aims

2: Aspirations and attainment

Aspirations and expectations: key trends
The formation of aspirations and the processes by which they influence outcomes

3: Communities matter

i) Young people with low educational aspirations are concentrated in certain types of (deprived) neighbourhood
ii) Young people and their parents are influenced by the people and places where they live
iii) A neighbourhood approach to raising aspirations makes sense

4: What works
A review of national initiatives and approaches to raising aspirations
Joining up provision

5: Annexes

A: Evidence review on aspirations
B: Background to original quantitative analysis on aspirations
C: National policy context

6: References

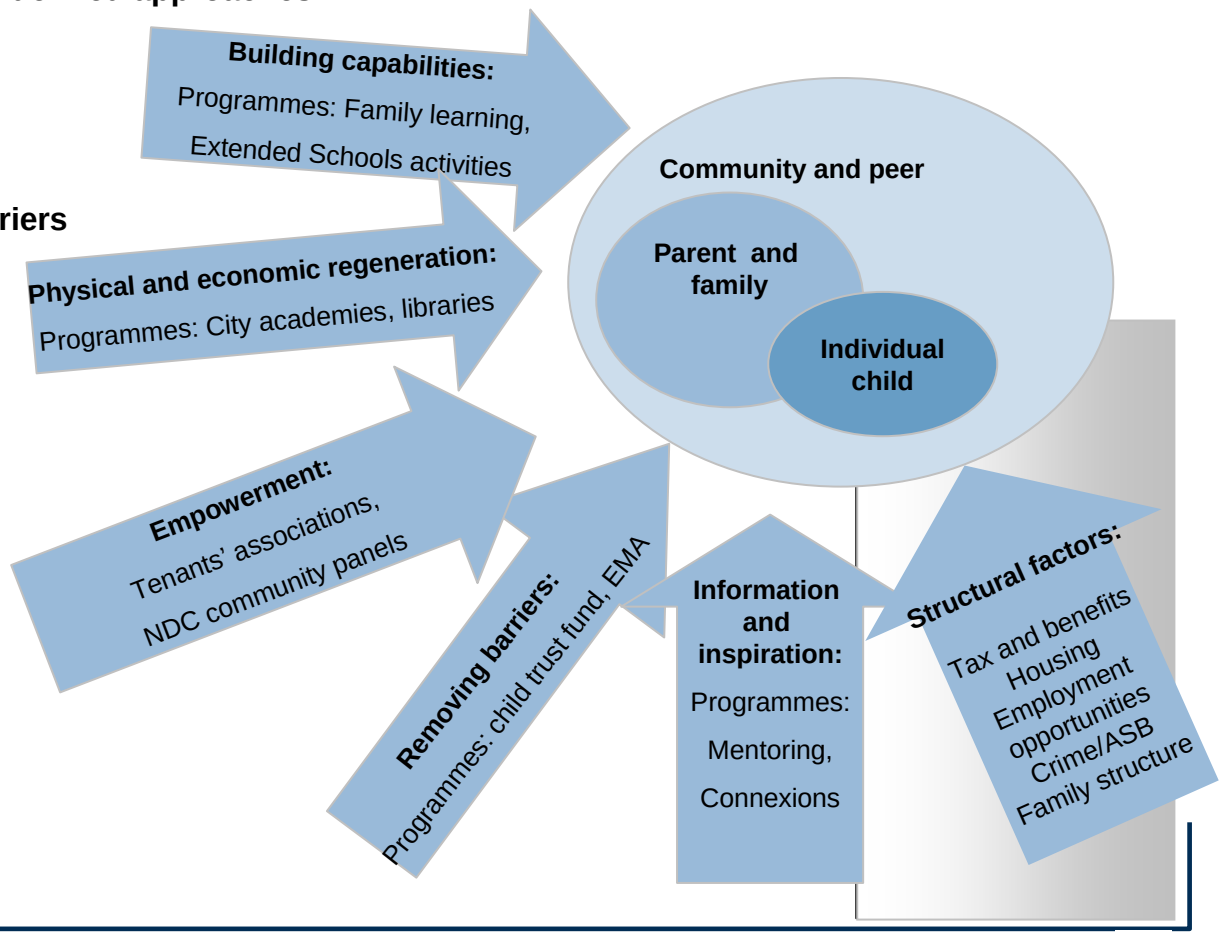
See Annex C for details

An overview of national initiatives

- A range of government departments and voluntary and community sector providers are funding initiatives that help to raise aspirations and tackle attitudinal barriers. Policy agendas focused on education, regeneration, criminal justice and health and welfare all include initiatives that contribute to raising aspirations in deprived communities.
- However, raising aspirations is most often an implicit rather than explicit programme aim. There are different approaches to raising aspirations and it is possible to identify **five broadly defined approaches**:

- **Building human capabilities**
- **Physical and economic regeneration**
- **Empowerment**
- **Providing incentives and removing financial barriers**
- **Information and inspiration**

- There is little evidence of a **cultural change approach** being taken towards raising aspirations.
- Interventions work directly with young people, and indirectly through their parents and communities.
- Evaluation evidence from education and regeneration initiatives suggests that greater co-ordination between schools, businesses and communities could be effective in raising aspirations and attainment.
- Significant investment across different policy agendas and diverse approaches suggests potential for better and more efficient alignment of interventions.



Interventions aiming to raise aspirations

Current Interventions	Community Building pride, self efficacy, optimism, expectations, bridging social capital	Parent and family Improve home learning environment, raise aspirations, increase value on education, self-efficacy, broaden horizons	Individual young person Raise aspirations, self esteem, self-efficacy, broaden horizons
Human capabilities Building up the skills and confidence of young people, their parents and the wider community	Extended Schools; Sure Start; Narrowing the Gap; Community development learning; Communities for Health; Skills for Health; Working Neighbourhoods; NRF; NDC; Digital Inclusion; Grassroots Grants;	Parenting Experts; Respect Parenting Practitioners; Family Intervention Projects; Parenting Early Intervention Projects; Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy; English for Speakers of Other Languages; Money Guidance Pathfinder; Financial Inclusion Champions; Tax Credit Advice in SSCCs; Informal adult learning; Multi Systemic Therapy; Family Nurse Partnership	City Challenge; Gifted and Talented; Raising Attainment of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and Turkish Heritage Pupils; Raising Attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils; New Arrivals Excellence Programme; Extended Schools Every Child a Reader and Every Child a Writer; PSHE; 14-19 Diplomas; Aim Higher; In Harmony; Recruit into Coaching; Positive Futures; My Money; Creative Partnerships
Physical and economic regeneration Raising community pride and confidence through improvements to buildings, environment and economic outlook.	Working Neighbourhoods; NRF; NDC; Local Enterprise Growth Initiative; City Strategies; Cleaner, Safer, Greener; Digital Inclusion; Rural Development for England; Community Assets; Grassroots Grants;	Decent Homes programme	Building Schools for the Future; Primary Capital Programme; MyPlace
Providing incentives and removing financial barriers enable and encourage people in deprived communities to access opportunities and develop higher aspirations.	Grassroots grants; Community Chest	Childcare element of Working Tax Credit; Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit; Child Development Grants; Childcare Affordability Pilots; Incentives for parents in London to return to work; in work credit for additional earners and partners for JSA claimants; Better off in work credit; Rent deposit scheme	Education Maintenance Allowance;
Empowerment Enabling local people to take more control of services and community assets.	Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders; Take Part Local Pathfinders; Community Pledge banks; Empowerment Fund; Community Builders Fund;	Parent governors	National Body for Youth Leadership; Young Advisors; *Youth Councils; School Councils*
Information and inspiration Making people aware of opportunities and showing them they can achieve		Work focused services in Children's Centres; Parenting Experts	Reach; Connexions; Youth Mentoring Initiative (Media Trust); Respect Athlete Mentoring Scheme; Positive Futures; Creative Partnerships;

Opportunities for future provision

Current interventions and future opportunities	**Community** Building pride, self efficacy, optimism, expectations, bridging social capital	**Parent and family** Improve home learning environment, raise aspirations, increase value on education, self-efficacy, broaden horizons	**Individual young person** Raise aspirations, self esteem, self-efficacy, broaden horizons
Human capabilities Building up the skills and confidence of young people, their parents and the wider community	Extended Schools could provide more opportunities for community learning and capacity building.	We may be able to build on the success of family learning, to engage and build the skills of parents at their children's transition to secondary school.	Interventions targeted at young people aged 11-14 are a priority. We need to ensure that we support those in the middle – not just the most challenging, or most talented.
Physical and economic regeneration Raising community pride and confidence through improvements to buildings, environment and economic outlook.	Working Neighbourhoods; NRF; NDC; Local Enterprise Growth Initiative; City Strategies; Cleaner, Safer, Greener; Digital Inclusion; Rural Development for England; Community Assets; Grassroots Grants;	Decent Homes programme	Futures; My Money; Creative Partnerships Building Schools for the Future; Primary Capital Programme; MyPlace
Providing incentives and removing financial barriers enable and encourage people in deprived communities to access opportunities and develop higher aspirations.	Grassroots grants; Community Chest	Childcare element of Working Tax Credit; Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit; Child Development Grants; Childcare Affordability Pilots; Incentives for parents in London to return to work; in work credit for additional earners and partners for JSA claimants; Better off in work credit; Rent deposit scheme	Education Maintenance Allowance; Incentivising disadvantaged young people to take up 'horizon-broadening' opportunities, may help to raise their aspirations.
Empowerment Enabling local people to take more control of services and community assets.	Applying commercial and social marketing techniques could help to empower local people. Participatory budgeting could help to engage and mobilise the community.	governors	National Body for Youth Leadership, *Youth Councils; School Councils*
Information and inspiration Making people aware of opportunities and showing them they can achieve	Increasing levels of bridging social capital in deprived communities and engaging businesses in innovative ways can help to provide inspiration	Young people and their parents could benefit from more information about potential career options.	Young people in deprived communities may need a broader range of role models.

A joined up approach to raising aspirations

The wide range of initiatives that may influence young people's aspirations can, if not co-ordinated, be a barrier to implementing a successful approach on the ground.

Evidence from regeneration programmes suggests that effective community policy requires looking beyond specific projects into how they can be more broadly embedded in the local landscape and community. This requires an inclusive and integrated approach with strong leadership and project management to bring local partners and communities together (CLG, 2007). Evidence also suggests that simplified access to funding streams, for example by using pooled budgets locally, can radically improve local delivery (DfES/DH, 2007). A community-based approach to raising aspirations should learn from these lessons.

The diagram below explores the potential to align a locally-tailored and intensive package of interventions around a behaviour change framework. It illustrates how a potential package of interventions might fit within the 4es model of behaviour change (originally developed by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs).

It is possible to go beyond targeting on the basis of deprivation. Building on the analysis presented in this report we could take a new approach to identifying and targeting communities at a local and national level.

How can we mobilise the community to support its young people to aim higher Could commercial marketing and product development techniques help? What about participatory budgeting?

To design an effective approach to raising aspirations, it will be important to understand the attitudes and behaviours within each community. Local agencies will need to work in partnership, shaping and aligning funding streams to address the area's particular circumstances.

Enable

Provide capacity and alternatives; remove barriers; establish trusted sources of information; develop skills and capability of users; put in place support and brokerage services

Engage

Engage with citizens and develop mechanisms for co-production; build citizen-generated information channels; create deliberative fora; connect through media and marketing campaigns

More interventions to build the self esteem, and self-efficacy and aspirations of young people (focusing on 11-14s).
More community and family learning opportunities.

Ensure that young people and their parents have access to appropriate, timely and high quality careers advice.
Use media and marketing techniques in a high profile campaign to change attitudes.

Interventions to build 'bridging social capital' at a community level.

Diverse role models for 11-14 year olds.

Provide financial support to encourage young people, parents and communities to take up new opportunities

Lead by example; establish compelling and consistent messages

Exemplify

Incentivise individuals, groups and providers (both financial and non-financial); use legislation and regulation; establish contracts; recognise and reward success; enforce penalties and sanction where necessary

Encourage

1: Introduction

Background and key aims

2: Aspirations and attainment

Aspirations and expectations: key trends
The formation of aspirations and the processes by which they influence outcomes

3: Communities matter

i) Young people with low educational aspirations are concentrated in certain types of (deprived) neighbourhood
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Project methodology summary

Desk-based research

In-house literature review

Engagement with experts

- Academic seminar and independent academic papers
- Seminar with community organisations
- Meetings with Whitehall and external stakeholders

National mapping exercise

- Overview of initiatives taking place to challenge low aspirations and expectations in deprived communities involving ten government departments and key providers including the Big Lottery Fund
- Review of evaluation evidence on what works

New analysis of data

- In-house: MOSAIC, Amion typologies Families and Children Survey and the Citizenship Survey
- Longitudinal Study of Young People in England; in partnership with Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Institute of Fiscal Studies
- Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children; in partnership with Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the University of Bristol

Community-based research

Interviews with local practitioners, middle managers and strategic directors

- 10-15 interviews held in each of three local areas: one inner city; one changing suburb; one northern town
- Including Councillors, Local Strategic Partnership Chairs Directors of Children's Services, Directors of Regeneration, Head Teachers, Youth Workers, Neighbourhood Managers, Connexions Personal Advisors, Children's Centre Managers, Police Officers and more…

Qualitative workshops with parents and young people

- Working in partnership with Opinion Leader Research
- 12 workshops in total: two with young people aged 12-14 and two with parents of young teenagers in each of these areas

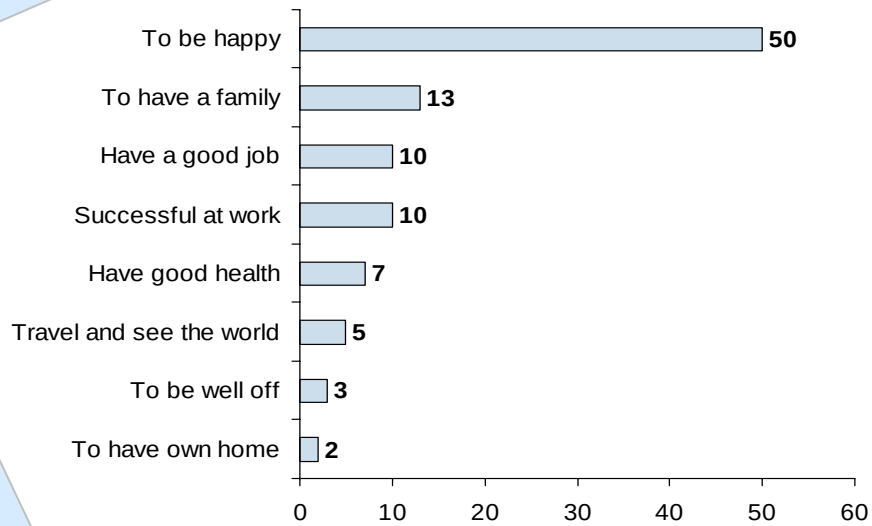
Mapping local initiatives and information

- Collating key neighbourhood statistics and summarising strategies

Annex A: What do we know about levels of aspiration?

- In general, young people have broad aspirations for the future – simply 'being happy' is the main goal for many.

% 12-19 year olds' main ambition in life
Young People's Social Attitudes Survey, 2003 (Park et al 2004)



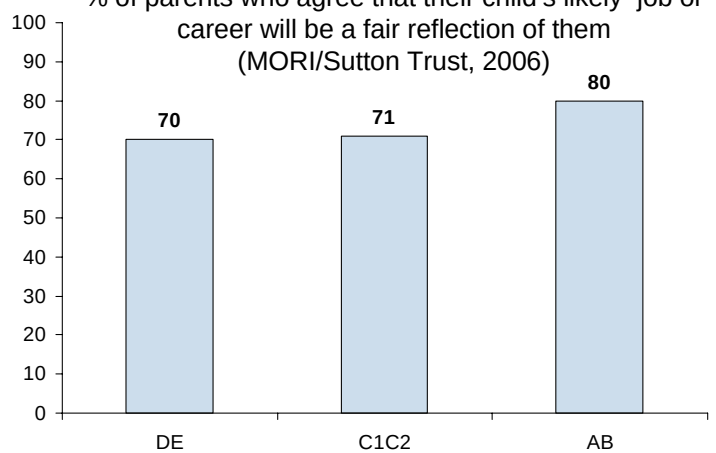
Idealistic and realistic aspirations

- Many disadvantaged young people lack understanding about how they would achieve their aims in life (Raphael-Reed et al, 2007).
- There is a distinction between **idealistic** aspirations and **realistic** aspirations. This is supported by high proportions of disadvantaged young people in our community-based research, reporting that '*I need more support to reach my goals in life*.'

'Wanting your child to do well' is a basic universal aspiration

- Almost all parents have high general **aspirations** for their children.
- But those from lower socio-economic groups are likely to have lower occupational **expectations**. 48% of parents from high social classes expect their child to work in a professional role compared to only 21% of parents from lower classes (MORI/Sutton Trust, 2006)
- Parents in professional occupations are more likely to expect that their child's likely job or career will be a fair reflection of them (MORI/Sutton Trust, 2006).

% of parents who agree that their child's likely job or career will be a fair reflection of them
(MORI/Sutton Trust, 2006)



Dynamics: aspirations develop as children grow older

This study focuses on young people aged 11-14 because this is a crucial age group, when young people form solid aspirations that inform their future life choices and outcomes.

Occupational aspirations often change as children grow older and they begin to distinguish idealistic from realistic aspirations. The Prince's Trust found that amongst disadvantaged young men the aspiration to have 'an interesting job' declined 12% between the ages of 14-17 and 22-25 (Prince's Trust, 2004).

Children's desire to carry on in full time education post 16 increases between the ages of 11 and 12 from 44% to 59% suggesting a greater recognition of the importance of education, among those in secondary school (Gilby et al, 2008).

'Aspirations are not fixed; they change over time' (Lupton and Kintrea, 2008)

Ages 3 - 8	Ages 9 -13	Ages 14+
• Orientation to sex roles • Viewing occupational aspirations through concrete visible attributes • Career decisions based on more nuanced complex factors including viewing their own capabilities and interests and social value of different professions	• Circumscription - progressive elimination of least favoured alternatives • Awareness of constraints on occupational choices • Recognition of floors and ceilings of aspirations resulting from socio-economic circumstances • Limitations from own views of abilities and risk of failure • Occupations dismissed for being wrong sex, low or high level or beyond capabilities	• Consider occupations that would be fulfilling and acceptable in social spheres • Compromise – acceptance of barriers to choice like limited knowledge, non accessibility and compatibility to life circumstances • Concept of idealistic aspirations distinguished from realistic aspirations

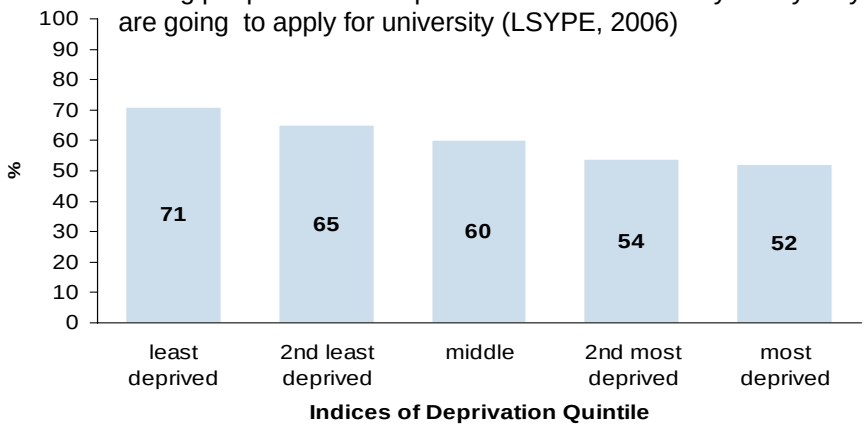
Adapted from Gottfredson, 2002

Clear patterns can be seen between measures of aspirations (educational expectations) and Indices of Multiple Deprivation

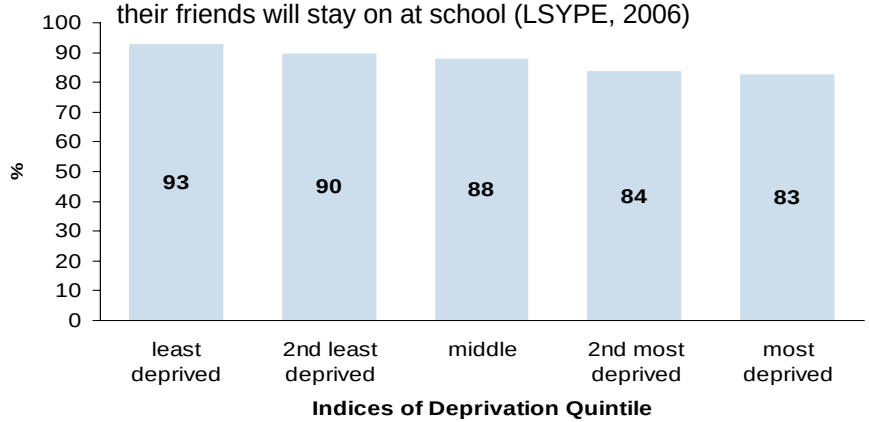
Young people in **deprived areas tend to** have **lower lower educational aspirations,** although the picture is complex**.**

Analysis of the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) shows a relationship between deprivation and educational expectations.

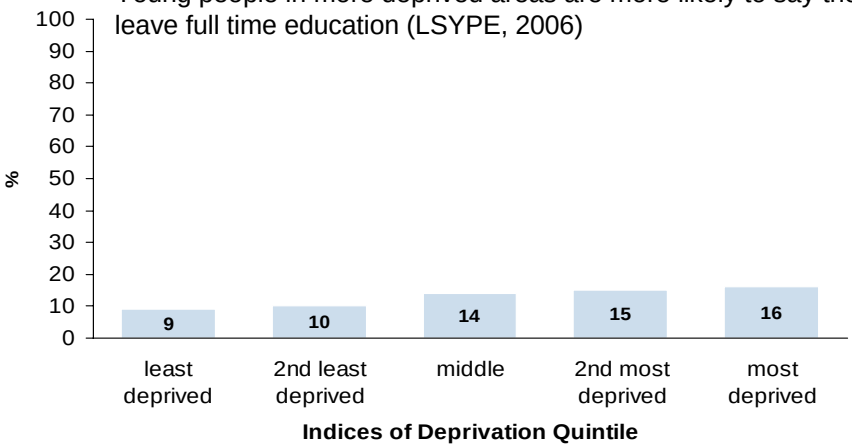
Young people in more deprived areas are less likely to say they are going to apply for university (LSYPE, 2006)



Young people in more deprived areas are less likely to think that their friends will stay on at school (LSYPE, 2006)



Young people in more deprived areas are more likely to say they want to leave full time education (LSYPE, 2006)



Educational aspirations or expectations are associated with social background. Young people from working class families are less likely than their more privileged peers to want to continue education after the minimum leaving age, or to aspire to a professional career. In developing their ideas about appropriate occupations, young people orientate themselves to social class reference groups, and are guided by their parents aspirations for them (Vondraceck et al, 1986; Schoon and Parsons, 2002)

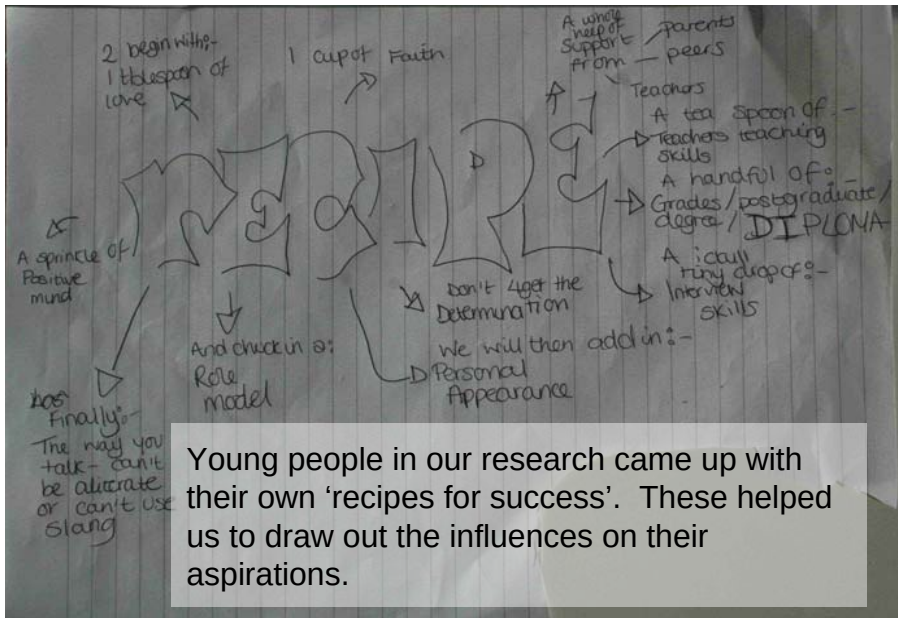
Influences on young people's aspirations

Parents & family

Parents were perceived to be the strongest influence on aspirations – providing role models and giving young people confidence to succeed.

However, their influence can also be negative. Stereotypes around gender roles could limit young people's horizons and severe family problems could supersede thoughts about the future.

'A child comes back from school and there's no electricity, mum is lying on the floor because of domestic violence… aspirations go out the window.' Practitioner



Young people in our research came up with their own 'recipes for success'. These helped us to draw out the influences on their aspirations.

Friends

Friends were also important in forming young people's attitudes to education and future plans.

'All my friends from school are still living round me, so moving away wasn't really an option.' Parent

Two thirds of young people intending to leave school at 16, say their friends intend to do the same (Longitudinal Study of Young People in England 2004).

Media and society

Many young people related to TV or film personalities and based their future career aspirations on people from the media.

Parents worried about the pervasiveness of a violent youth culture. Practitioners spoke of the difficulty of changing young people's attitudes when 'they see gang culture all around them on the media and in the wider society.'

Teachers

Teachers can be inspirational, but there was a sense that they put too much emphasis on academic qualifications.

'They want you to be clones of them.' practitioner

The importance of teachers' roles in providing advice on exam and career options, was widely recognised. However, many young people and parents found it difficult to distinguish between good and bad teachers.

Community

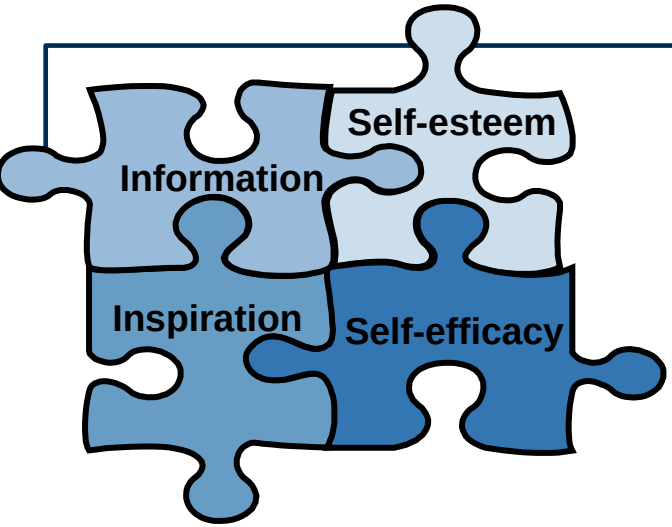
Professionals emphasised the influence of community attitudes, including a culture of worklessness, on young people's aspirations.

'*you've got three generations who've never worked. That's the people who are their role models.'* Practitioner

Some young people also spoke of the stigma attached to being from their area, and the ways in which this limited their outlook.

'The way the area looks. Rubbish… it makes you feel ashamed that this is where you're from.' Young person

Insights into young people's aspirations



Aspirations are complex and multi-dimensional.

Aspirations are inextricably linked to a range of other social and environmental factors and it is helpful to understand them in this broader context.

Our research in local communities has allowed us to unpick some of these complexities through qualitative work with parents and young people. During the project, we spoke to over 150 young people, parents and practitioners about aspirations in three deprived communities. Clear themes about **self esteem**, **self efficacy**, **inspiration** and **information** came through when we talked about aspirations with these people.

High aspirations are about more than going to university.

There was a strong consensus in all three communities that high aspirations are not always about doing well at school and going to university. In real life, people tend to think more holistically about their futures.

Young people had a range of ambitions including being 'an inspiration to others', being 'a good person', having a big family, making lots of money, moving to America, working in Africa, becoming an electrician, being a footballer or celebrity, starting an IT business, becoming president of Jamaica and studying architecture and medicine. Others found it difficult to articulate their aspirations, stating that they 'hadn't thought about it much', or didn't know.

Parents across all three communities valued their children's happiness above their educational achievement.

'I would never push him; some parents are like "oh you've got to go to college"…. I want my children to do whatever makes them happy' Parent

However, many parents – particularly those we spoke to from ethnic minorities – hoped that their children would get a good education and be successful. Going to college was also included by some of the young people, as a step on the way to achieving their goals.

Aspirations are linked to young people's sense of self esteem and self efficacy

The most motivated and ambitious young people were those who believed that they could achieve their goals with hard work.

'If you work hard at school, then I think you can get to be whatever you want.' young person, '*inner city*'

These young people, tended to value education highly and have more belief in 'the system'. They believed that they would overcome barriers. In contrast, the young people with the lowest aspirations and most pessimistic outlook, were those with the lowest sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem.

'I want to be an electrician, but I am going to go to prison... I don't want to. That's just what's going to happen.' young person, northern town

'There's no point in trying, because I am no good at anything.' young person, '*northern town*'

Some articulated a fatalistic view of the future, in which they were doomed to failure because of their background.

'If it says [on a job application] you're from [my area], then they are going to think you're no good and you're not going to get anywhere.' young person, '*changing suburb*'

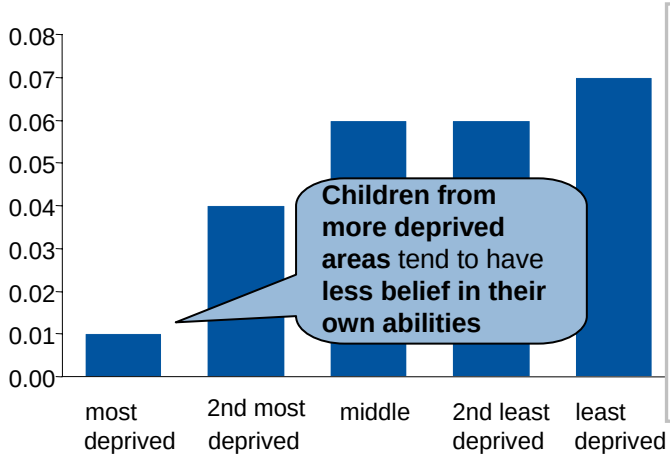
Similarly, some young people and parents appeared to place limited faith in the education system.

'*teachers aren't interested in us.*' young person, '*northern town*'

BELIEF in ABILITIES: Young People's beliefs about how clever, and how good at school work.

Abilities belief scale measured at ages 8 / 13

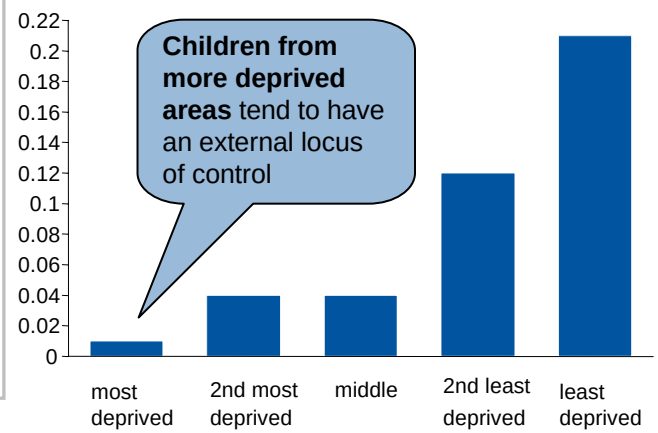
Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents And Children by Indices of Multiple Deprivation



LOCUS of CONTROL: Young People's beliefs about whether outcomes are determined by oneself or external forces

Locus of Control Scale measured at ages 8 / 14

ALSPAC by Indices of Multiple Deprivation



Aspirations are influenced by direct experiences and contact with others

Aspirations are linked to sources of inspiration – who you know and your knowledge of what's out there

Many of the young people in our research appeared to have limited knowledge of the opportunities that might be available to them. They lacked diverse sources of ideas and inspiration and often had limited opportunities to experience life outside their own communities.

Their career aspirations tended to be shaped either by the media or by the jobs done by extended family and community members.

'I want to be like my uncle. He's a builder and everyone respects him.' Young person, changing suburb

'My second cousin is an architect and he likes it. That's what made me think I'd like to be one.' Young person, changing suburb

'I want to be a psycho-therapist. I saw it on a film.' Young person, inner city

A lack of role models

Some parents and practitioners recognised that a lack of diverse role models and limited experiences, could restrict young people's ideas and ambitions for the future. This is consistent with a number of recent studies (eg Green and White 2007) which comment on the relatively narrow geographical and social horizons of young people who live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and thus their lack of exposure to wider opportunities.

'some of the young people here have limited life experiences. How can they have aspirations when they don't know what's out there?' Practitioner, northern town

Young people themselves also recognised the importance of being inspired by a clear vision or goal, or by a role model to look up to. Local role models such as an England footballer, famous singer and sports champion, were cited by several participants.

'*you need to have a vision to concentrate on*' Young person, changing suburb

'[it would help] if someone from here, or from a similar area, could come and talk to you and make you believe you could do it.' Young person, inner city

Young people lacked awareness of how to achieve high goals

A lack of information and advice

Many young people, and their parents, had relatively high aspirations but lacked **awareness about the steps needed to achieve them.** The parents of an aspiring vet, for example, had no knowledge of the GCSE options, or higher education requirements needed to fulfil this dream.

A lack of understanding about the routes to different occupations can reduce the motivating power of high aspirations. Instead of working towards short-term, instrumental goals or seeking specific and relevant experiences, the young person can be left with only a vague desire to succeed. Without advice, they may also fail to take into account their own aptitudes and abilities.

Evidence shows that young people often start out with high aspirations but little knowledge of how to achieve them (Prince's Trust, 2004). When they realise that they have not taken the right steps or gained the right qualifications, to achieve their initial goal, they can become disillusioned and stop aiming high.

Parents, young people and practitioners all complained of **a lack of advice and information** about career options, especially for younger teenagers.

A lack of opportunities

In all three areas, there was a sense that **young people did not have enough opportunities to learn new skills, try out new experiences and broaden their horizons.**

There were also examples of young people not taking up opportunities because they were afraid or worried about failure. Others didn't recognise or value the longer term benefits of learning new skills. This was linked to a lack of aspiration and a failure to fulfil their potential.

'the children aged seven who are too afraid to go to the swimming baths are the ones who, aged 17, leave education because they won't go out of the neighbourhood to go to the college.' primary Head Teacher

Most deprived MOSAIC typologies

The evidence pack illustrates the educational aspirations of young people in the twelve most deprived MOSAIC neighbourhood typologies. These have been selected based on their Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranking. A brief summary of these neighbourhoods is included below.

G42 '*Low Horizons*' (most deprived)

Families with school age children living in very large social housing estates on the outskirts of provincial cities

F37 '*Upper Floor Families*'

Young families living in upper floors of social housing

D26 '*South Asian Industry*'

Communities of lowly paid factory workers, many of them south Asian descent

G41 '*Families on Benefits*'

Families, many single parent, in deprived social housing on edge of regional centres

F36 '*Metro Multiculture*'

High density social housing, mostly in inner London, with high levels of diversity

F35 '*Bedsit Beneficaries*'

Young people renting hard to let social housing often in disadvantaged inner city locations

G43 '*Ex-industrial legacy*'

Older people, many in poor health from work in heavy industry, in low rise social housing

D24 '*Coronation Street*'

Low income families living in cramped Victorian terraced housing in inner city locations

E28 '*Counter Cultural Mix*'

Neighbourhoods with transient singles living in multiply occupied large old houses

H44 '*Rustbelt Resilience*' (less deprived)

Manual workers, many close to retirement, in low rise houses in ex-manufacturing towns

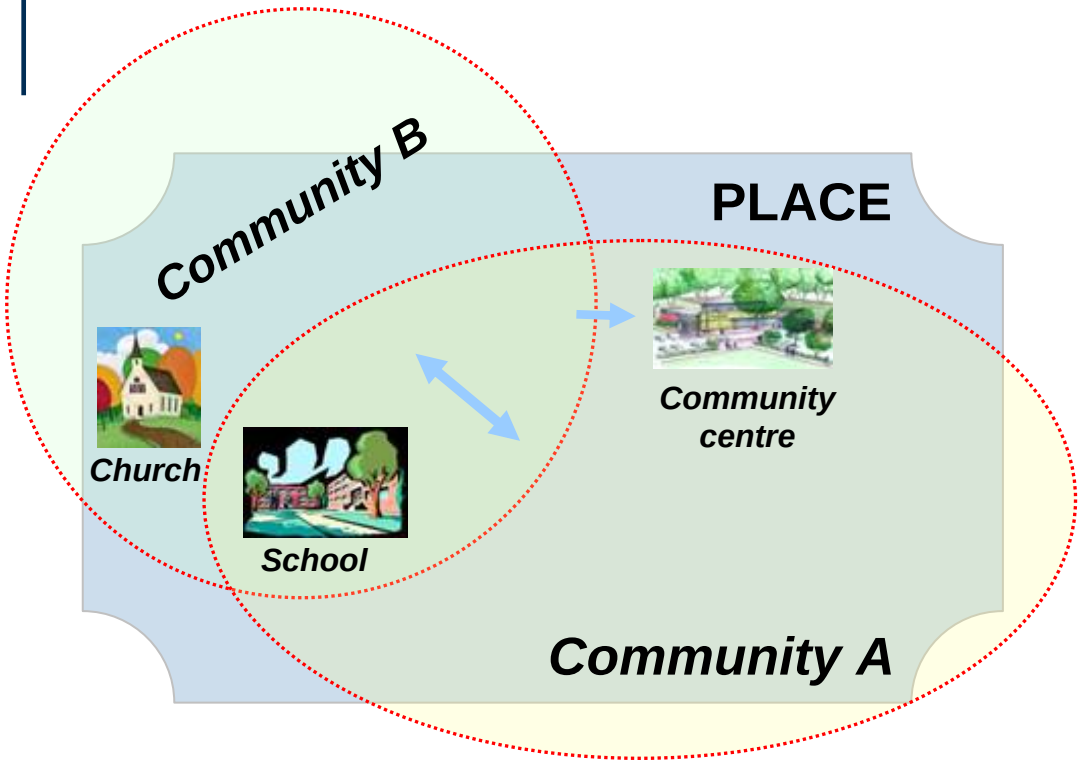
H46 *'White Van Culture'*

Residents in 1930s and 1950s council estates, typically in London, now mostly owner occupiers. This is not one of the most deprived area types. However, it is the predominant typology in our case study area 'changing suburb'.

To note:

'Tower Block Living' and **'Old People in Flats'** were excluded from the top 12 most deprived types as they occur only in very low frequencies across England and Wales and LSYPE covers England only.

Annex B: Original quantitative analysis



"Neighbourhoods are sites of social construction of identities" Lupton and Kintrea, 2008

This project focuses on a place-based definition of community. However, it is also important to recognise the huge influence of communities of interest, in particular cultural and ethnic identities.

Place/Neighbourhood

- Physical environment
- Housing and planning
- Transport and infrastructure
- Institutions and public spaces
- Places to work
- Places to learn
- Places for play and leisure

Communities

- Social connections
- Age and generation
- Race and culture
- Interests
- History and traditions
- Dynamic and evolving
- Virtual and technological

Exploring community effects

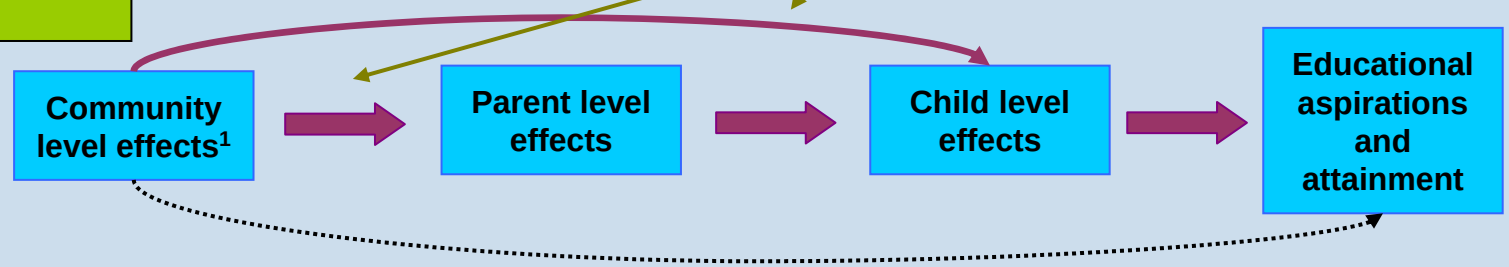
- In seeking to explain the gap between the aspirations of young people in the most and least deprived areas, there are many influences to be considered. We know that parents and socio-economic background have a major influence, but we were also interested in exploring the potential influence of community-level characteristics.
- Much of the evidence we have seen on the measurement of neighbourhood effects on educational attainment has sought to demonstrate the **direct influence** of community processes on individual behaviour after taking account of parent and individual level factors, as well as structural factors.

"Overall, quantitative evidence tends to suggest that there is a neighbourhood effect on attainment, over and above the effect of individual and household characteristics, but that this is relatively small" Lupton and Kintrea (2008)

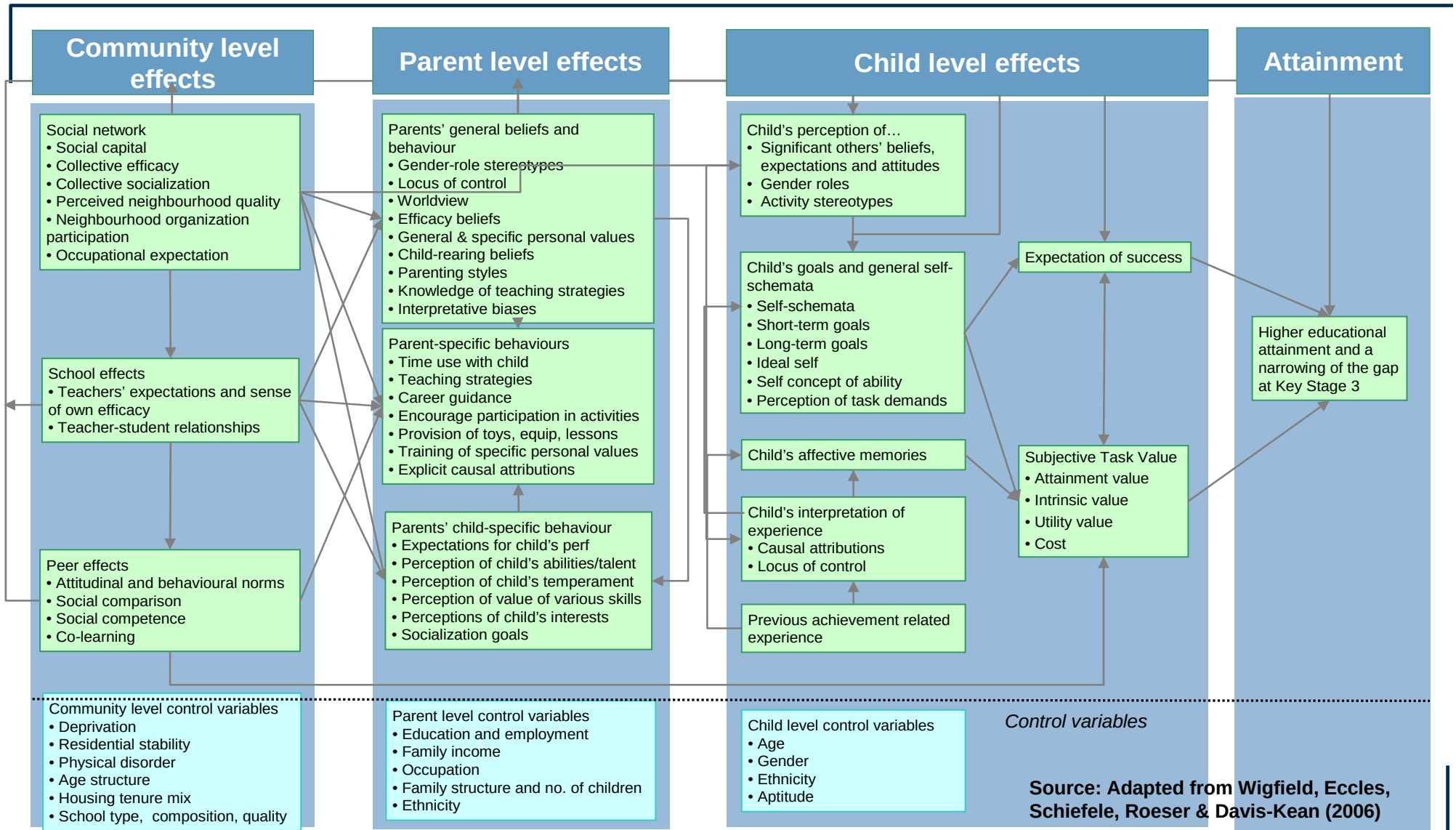
- At best, this relationship has been shown to be weak. However, such research has overlooked the indirect influence of community level effects. In particular, it has not captured the way in which community level processes are mediated through parent and individual level processes to influence children's educational aspirations and attainment.
- McCulloch and Joshi identified neighbourhood effects on test scores for children aged 4-5 (McCulloch & Joshi, 2000). In the US, neighbourhood effects have been identified on development outcomes at age 3 (Brooks-Gunn et al, 1993)
- These findings are interesting because children at this age had little exposure to education and neighbourhoods. This work suggests neighbourhood **effects may be working indirectly through parents**.

Previous research has examined the direct relationship between community level effects and individual outcomes and found a relatively weak relationship

Our framework seeks to examine the way in which community level effects on educational aspirations are mediated through parent and child level effects



We examined the way in which community level effects on educational attainment are mediated through parent and child level effects using the following conceptual framework



Source: Adapted from Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser & Davis-Kean (2006)

Explanation of the conceptual framework

The proposed influence of community level effects on educational attainment:

The conceptual framework proposes that community level effects (i.e. neighbourhood, school and peer effects) are mediated through parental and individual level processes to influence children's educational attainment. In other words, community level effects influence parents' general behaviours and beliefs, parent-specific and parents' child-specific behaviours, and children's perceptions, goals and interpretations, which in turn influence children's educational attainment.

This model sets out three levels of influence on children's educational attainment. The child and parent level aspects of the model are based on the Expectancy-Value Model developed by Eccles and colleagues (see Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, Davis-Kean, 2006). The community level aspect, which is the primary focus of the current project, is based on the work of Putnam (1995), Sampson et al (2002), Wilson (1987) and colleagues. The model specifically seeks to demonstrate the way in which the processes and mechanisms at each level operate and are linked to influence educational attainment.

The **three levels of the model** are described below:

Child level: Eccles and colleagues Expectancy-Value Model of achievement related choice and performance provides a comprehensive account of the social psychological and social cognitive processes that influence educational attainment. Her model proposes that expectations of success (e.g., in achieving educational attainment) and subjective task value directly influence performance, persistence and task choice. Expectations and values are in turn assumed to be influenced by task specific beliefs such as perceptions of competence, perceptions of the difficulty of different tasks, and individual's goals and self-schema. These in turn are influenced by individuals' perceptions of other peoples' attitudes and expectations for them and by their own interpretations of their previous achievement outcomes. Individuals' task-perceptions and interpretations of their past outcomes are assumed to be influenced by significant others' behaviour and beliefs (such as parents and peers) and by the community context.

Parent level: Eccles and colleagues also developed a theoretical model to describe the processes and mechanisms by which parents influence their children's aspirations and performance. Their model proposes that parent or family demographic characteristics influence children's outcomes, expectations, perceptions, goals and interpretations primarily through social cognitive mediational processes, including their general behaviour and beliefs, their parent-specific behaviours and their child-specific behaviours. While some components of the parent level model have been extensively tested, very few studies have attempted to provide a comprehensive assessment.

Community level: This aspect of the model is based on the work of Putnam, Sampson, Wilson and colleagues who have sought to provide an account of the social processes and mechanisms by which communities or neighbourhoods affect individual behaviour. It includes three aspects: **neighbourhood effects; school effects;** and **peer effects**. The neighbourhood effects literature is of particular relevance to the current project, however, it is characterised by a lack of conceptual clarity and methodological difficulties. The major concepts in this literature are described below, as are the concepts underpinning the school and peer effects.

Explanation of the conceptual framework (continued)

Neighbourhood effects:

- Social capital: This concept is defined as the features of social life – networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives. In short, it refers to social connections and the attendant norms and trust (Putnam, 1995). There are three main components to social capital:
  - Social networks or ties – who knows who;
  - Social norms – the informal and formal 'rules' that guide how network members behave to each other;
  - Sanctions – the processes that help people to ensure that network members keep to the rules.

Three main types of social capital have been distinguished:

- Bonding social capital – characterised by strong bonds (or "social glue") among group members;
- Bridging social capital – characterised by weaker, less dense but more cross-cutting ties ("social oil"). For example, with business associates, acquaintances, friends from different ethnic groups, friends of friends, etc;
- Linking social capital – characterised by connections between those with differing levels of power or social status. For example, links between the political elite and the general public or between individuals from different social classes.

It is important to note that the distinction between bonding and bridging capital or between strong and weak ties is crucial. The impacts of social capital, which can be positive or negative, depend on the form it takes in different circumstances.

- Collective efficacy: This concept refers to the collective capability of neighbourhood residents to enact change.
  - Collective socialisation: Refers to the processes that shape the type of role models that young people and children are exposed to outside the home. Wilson argued that communities where most adults have steady jobs foster behaviours and attitudes that are conducive to success in both school and work.
  - Perceived neighbourhood quality: An individual's perception of the social and physical aspects of their neighbourhood, including such things as neighbourhood disadvantage, problems and disorder. Perceived neighbourhood quality has been shown to influence a range of social and health outcomes. It also includes external perceptions of the area and the potential for stigma and territorial responses.
  - Neighbourhood organisation participation: Refers to residents' formally organised collective activity for addressing neighbourhood issues and is another potential source of influence for children's educational outcomes.

Explanation of the conceptual framework (continued)

Neighbourhood effects (continued):

- Occupational expectations: Refers to children's perceived occupational opportunities that may result from performing well at school. If children perceive that there are good jobs available to them as a result of achieving good educational outcomes then they will be motivated to perform well at school. Ainsworth (2002) found evidence for this effect using a measure of the type of job or occupation that the youth expected or planned to have in later life.

School effects:

- Teachers' general expectations and sense of own efficacy: Research has shown that both teachers' general expectations for their students' performance and teachers' confidence in their own teaching efficacy predict students' school achievement (the effect appears to occur via its impact on students' sense of competence (Eccles et al., 1993).
- Teacher-student relationships: Positive teacher student relationships and a sense of belonging for children's development in school can help students to engage and persist on academic learning tasks and to develop positive achievement-related self-perceptions and values (Eccles et al., 1998).

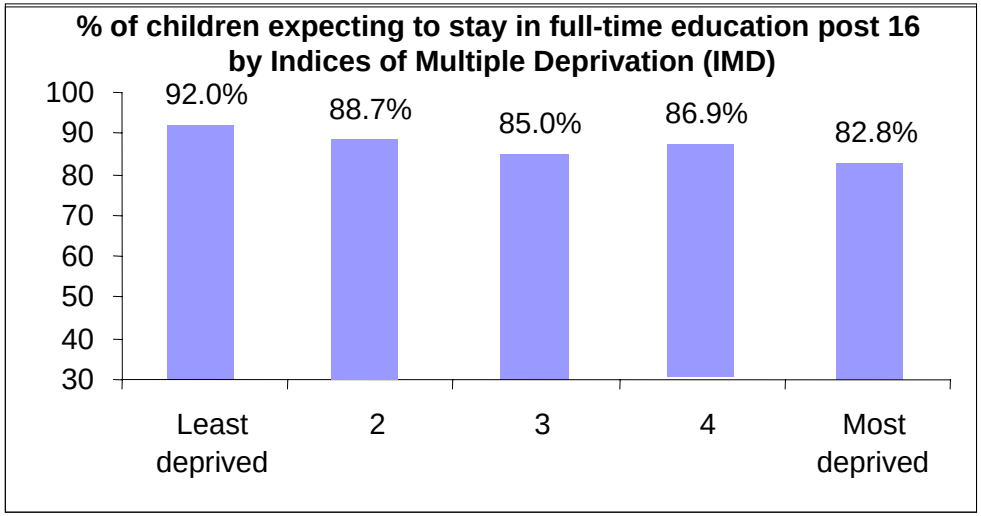
Peer effects

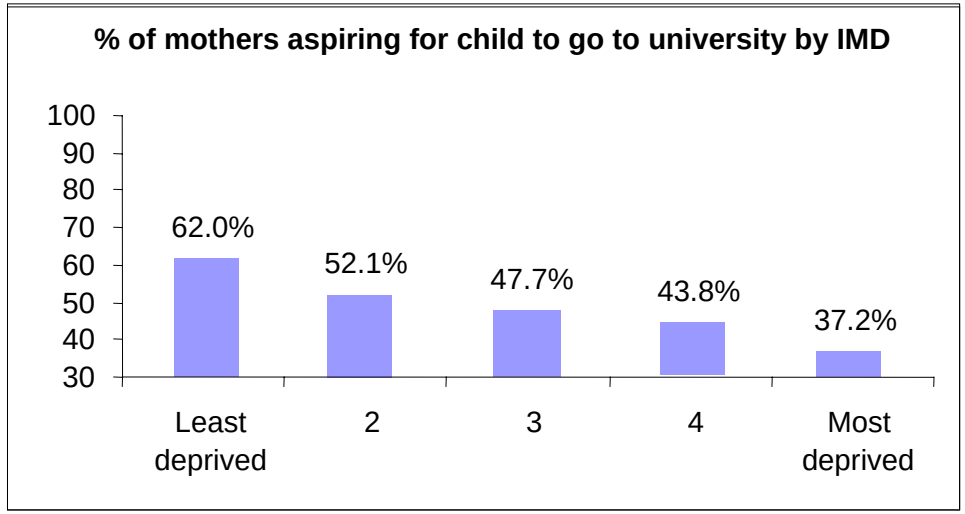
- Attitudinal and behavioural norms: The attitudes and behavioural norms of a child's peer group can have either positive or negative effects on educational aspirations and performance. Social identity theory argues that individuals will act in a manner consistent with the norms of a behaviourally relevant group membership (such as a peer group) to the extent that they hold that group membership as important to their self-concept. In other words, the more an individual values a particular group identity, the more they will act in accordance with the norms of that group.
- Social comparison: Older children and adolescents use social comparison to inform their own self-evaluations, which is likely to impact on their self concept of their ability and their interpretations of their experiences.
- Social competence: Good social skills have been found to be associated with better performance and higher motivation in school.
- Co-learning: Learning activities conducted within a social context (i.e. with peers) can influence understanding and learning through sharing of resources, modelling academic skills, and interpreting and clarifying tasks. Each of these can influence achievement through its impact on children's expectations for success and their valuing of the activity.

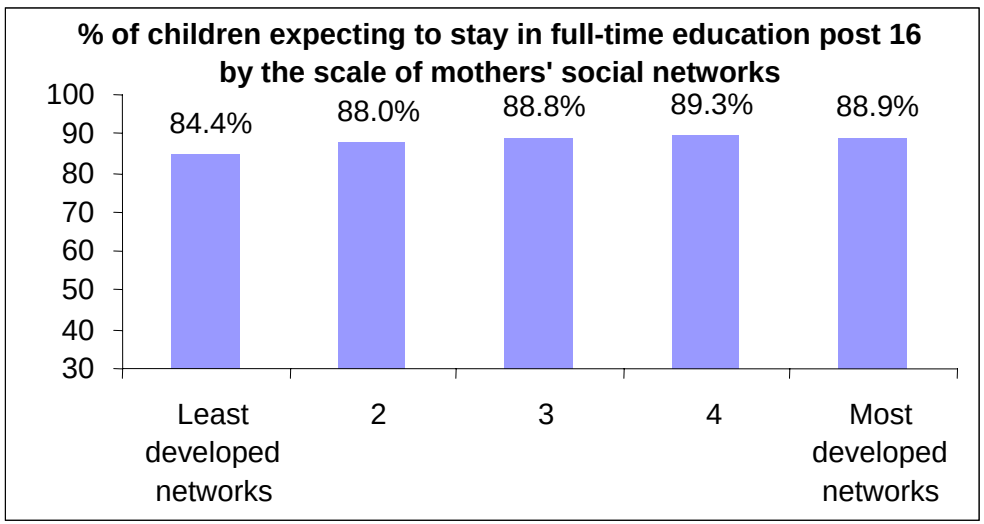
Analysis of the ALSPAC dataset

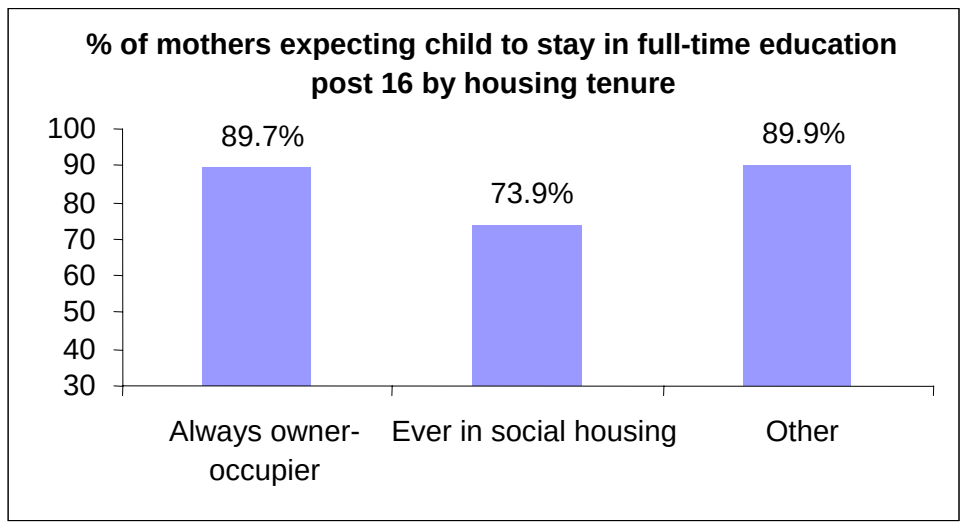
- We worked with the University of Bristol to undertake original research on the ALSPAC cohort study (Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children) in order to test the conceptual framework. The **results of this analysis are featured in the main body of this report.**
- The analysis examined the extent to which community level factors, such as area deprivation, social capital, school characteristics and the influence of peers, affects children's educational aspirations at age 14 directly, as well as indirectly via their influence through parent and child level factors, including values and beliefs.
- The initial analysis found an **association between children's aspirations to stay on in full-time education post 16 and area deprivation and social capital**. The proportion of children aspiring to stay on in education was significantly lower in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived, and was also lower where mothers' social networks were least developed.
- After taking account of all the parent and child level factors, most of the community level factors were not found to have a significant influence on children's aspirations. Rather, **the strongest factors predicting children's educational aspirations were: a child's belief in their scholastic ability and locus of control; mother's aspirations for their child to go to university; a family's socio-economic status; and the gender of the child (female).**
- However, **the full analysis suggested that the effect of community level factors could be indirect, occurring via their association with children's pre-school environment, parents' and children's values and beliefs, as well as the characteristics of children's schools.**
- **Furthermore, it showed a strong association between children who talked to their friends about GCSE choices** and young people who have high educational aspirations.
- The analysis also found that mothers who had ever been in social housing were less likely to expect their child to stay in post 16 education.

Children's educational aspirations vary by area deprivation and the scale of their mother's social networks. Mothers' educational aspirations for their child also varies by area and housing tenure.







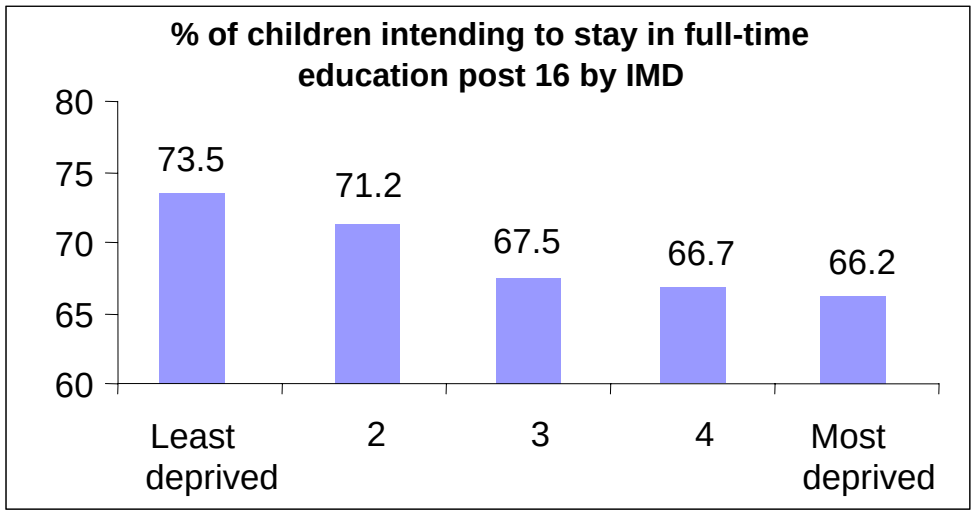


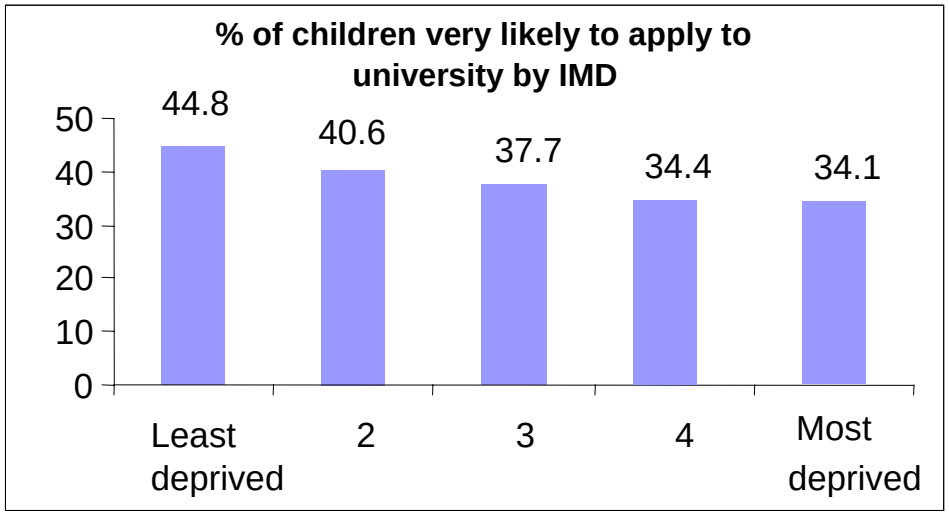
Source: Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children

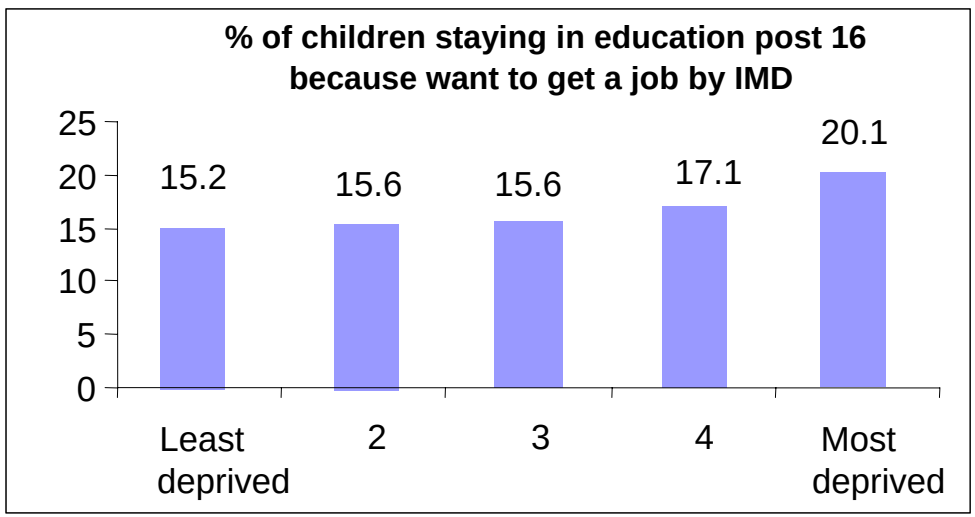
Analysis of the LSYPE dataset

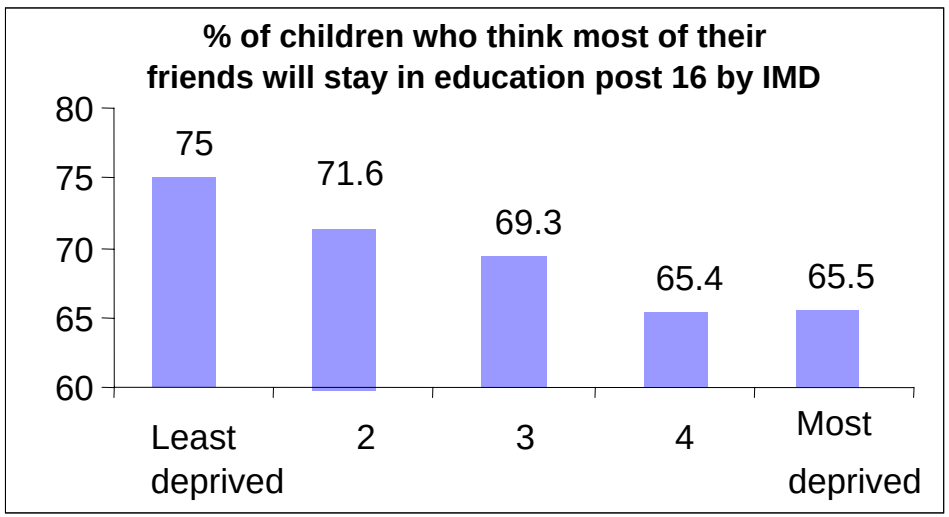
- Further tests of the conceptual model were undertaken using the Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England (LSYPE). This analysis was undertaken in collaboration with the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) and focused in particular on the influence of area deprivation, school and peer effects (i.e. community level factors) on children's educational aspirations.
- The initial analysis found an **association between area deprivation and children's aspirations to stay on in full-time education post 16 and likelihood of applying to university.** The proportion of children (and their peers) aspiring to higher education was lower in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived. However, a higher proportion of children in the most deprived areas reported their reason for staying on post 16 was to get a job compared to children in the least deprived areas.
- After taking account of all parent and child level factors, most of the community level factors were not found to have a significant influence on children's educational aspirations. Rather, **the strongest factors predicting children's educational aspirations were parent's aspirations for their child and family background characteristics.**
- **Young people's own educational aspiration appears to be highly correlated with those of their peers.**
- Certain school characteristics were also found to be directly associated with children's educational aspirations. Children attending grammar schools and schools with a sixth form had higher post 16 and university aspirations. Surprisingly, post 16, children attending schools with a higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals had higher aspirations to continue on to higher education. Children attending schools with a higher proportion of boys from a Black ethnic group and girls from an Asian ethnic group had lower post 16 and university education aspirations respectively.

Consistent with the previous findings, a lower proportion of children and their peers from the most deprived areas have high educational aspirations. However, more children from the most deprived areas want to stay in post 16 education in order to get a job.









Source: Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England (LSYPE).

Annex C: National policy context

The project has looked at a wide range of initiatives that both explicitly and implicitly aim to raise aspirations. We have mapped over 80 initiatives, funded by ten government departments and key third sector organisations. We have also looked at the local initiatives underway in our three case study areas.

1. Ten different government departments are funding initiatives that aim to raise aspirations. Policy agendas ranging from education, regeneration, criminal justice and health and welfare are investing in initiatives that contribute to raising aspirations in deprived communities. However, raising aspirations is most often an implicit rather than explicit programme aim.
2. There are a wealth of different approaches to influencing attitudes, values and expectations and it is possible to identify five broadly defined interventions and approaches:
    - Building human capabilities
    - Physical and economic regeneration
    - Providing incentives and removing financial barriers
    - Empowerment
    - Information and inspiration
3. There is little evidence of a **cultural change approach** being taken towards raising aspirations.
4. The programmes we reviewed work with children, parents and communities and are therefore engaging with important influences on children's attitudes, values and expectations.
5. There are examples of programmes targeted at a range of ages across the life course but there is a gap in provision at around ages 11-14.
6. Significant investment across different policy agendas and a multitude of approaches to influencing attitudes, values and expectations relevant to aspirations suggests potential for alignment of interventions, especially those engaging with families. The impact of stand-alone, isolated interventions may be restricted because of the lack of alignment and integration with complementary approaches which together, are more likely to deal holistically with achievement gaps.

Approaches: Building human capabilities

These programmes aim to:

- Give young people and their parents the confidence to aim high
- Increase parenting and life skills and improve literacy, language and numeracy
- Build up the social skills, self esteem and emotional resilience needed to get on in life
- Build up the academic and practical skills that young people and adults need to work towards fulfilling their ambitions

Example programmes

PARENTS: Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN)

Target: Parents/carers with Skills for Life needs who live in the most deprived Local Authorities in England.

Cost: £25m per annum

Aims: To raise literacy, language and numeracy skills of parents, improve parents' ability to help their children and to improve children's acquisition of literacy, language and numeracy.

Activities: FLLN courses have intergenerational elements, with children and adults learning together.

Impacts: England study on impacts of family literacy programmes on learners currently being undertaken – due to report in July 2009.

YOUNG PEOPLE: Gifted and Talented - City Challenge

Target: Highest achieving 10% of secondary pupils in London, Greater Manchester and the Black Country

Cost: £5m per annum

Aims: To raise attainment, motivation and self esteem of gifted pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Activities: Gifted students who are eligible for free school meals identified in Years 10-13 for a tailored four year support programme to equip them with the knowledge and skills they require to secure a place on a course at their target university. Teach First teachers provide links with top universities.

Impacts: New programme however, international evidence shows combining mentoring with improved teaching strategies is associated with improved outcomes.

Physical and economic regeneration

These programmes aim to:

- Improve physical environment, taking a **'bricks and mortar**' approach. Evidence suggests that improved physical environment, including for example, improving housing and schools is associated with positive child/parental attitudes, behaviour and expectations
- Improve the **economic environment** by encouraging business and enterprise. Improving employment opportunities helps to change the career expectations of both young people and their parents.
- **Establish and/or improve access to community hubs** as designated spaces for young people/community members to gather and/or to give ownership of community 'assets' to community and third sector organisations.

Example programmes

YOUNG PEOPLE: Building Schools for the Future (BSF)

Target: All secondary schools in England

Cost: £3.9 billion

Aims: BSF aims to provide secondary schools in England with world class teaching and learning facilities for all pupils, teachers and communities.

Activities: Capital investment to re-build and renew all of England's 3,500 secondary schools

Impacts: Price Waterhouse Coopers (2001, 2003) found that schools reported instances of building improvement having a significant effect on pupil behaviour / motivation and teacher morale. The Steer Report on Learning Behaviour (2005) noted some specific instances where improved building design could help to reduce poor behaviour.

COMMUNITY: National Coalfields Programme (NCP)

Target: 101 former coal related sites

Cost: £647 million *(*anticipated lifetime expenditure figure)

Aims: NCP aims to regenerate the coalfields areas, providing new jobs, enterprise and decent homes.

Activities: The programme is creating new uses for around 4,000 ha of former coalfield land; 42,000 new jobs; 2 million sq m of commercial floorspace; 8,000 new homes; over £1 bn of private-sector investment; and far-reaching benefits for local communities.

Impacts: The programme is on track to exceed all of its targets. The three coalfield regeneration programmes have made considerable headway with the physical renewal of the coalfield areas and significant progress has been made in some coalfields with regard to their employment, skills and community development.

Providing incentives and removing financial barriers

These programmes aim to:

• **Remove barriers to participation** in education, training and/or employment and provide incentives to take part in beneficial programmes - 'something for something.' Evidence shows that conditional cash transfers influence behaviours, attitudes and expectations.

• Remove financial barriers through **re-distribution** using the tax system but without any corresponding obligations to participate in a programme/activity. Evidence suggests that increases in income influence behaviours, attitudes and expectations.

• **Offset financial costs** of childcare, to encourage parents into work. Evidence suggests that being in employment has a positive effect on behaviour, attitudes and expectations.

Example programmes

PARENTS: Tax Credits

Target: Families and low earners

Cost: £20 billion annually

Aims: To support families/workers on low incomes

Activities: Tax credit

Impacts: By guaranteeing working families a minimum income, it is expected that some of the impacts of poverty will be reduced. There is a large evidence base around impact of poverty on behaviour, attitudes and expectations. Poverty also poses risks of poor child health, lower educational attainment and lower aspirations. Young people who have grown up in poverty are more likely to have very low levels of savings or assets, which is associated with a range of poor outcomes over the longer term.

YOUNG PEOPLE: Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

Target: 16-18 year olds from lower income households

Cost: £536m per year

Aims: To raise participation in post 16 education for those from lower income groups.

Activities: There are 3 EMA weekly payment bands of £30, £20 and £10 depending on household income. To receive an EMA, a young person must agree to sign an EMA contract which sets out what is expected of them in terms of attendance, behaviour and progress.

Impacts: EMA pilot evaluation findings suggested that EMA led to increases in participation nationally by 3.8% points for 16 year olds and 4.1% for 17 year olds. Recent evaluation evidence shows significant positive impacts on young people's attainment at Level 2 and Level 3. These positive impacts have been particularly strong among more disadvantaged groups including those from the most deprived neighbourhoods.

Empowerment

These programmes aim to:

• **Establish/facilitate networks of citizens**, enhancing intra-community and/or inter-community networks. Evidence suggests that strong and diverse social networks are positively associated with high aspirations.

•**Improve participation in community activities**, local affairs and giving power to citizens and community groups. Participation in 'public pursuits' is positively associated with high aspirations.

Example Programmes

COMMUNITY: Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders

Target: Local authority areas with more than one ward in the 10% most deprived in England

Cost: £100m

Aims: Neighbourhood management tackles problems at the neighbourhood level.

Activities: Priorities vary locally, but might include better management of the local environment and housing, increasing community safety, improving healthcare, job prospects and education. Community engagement is key and helps create more inclusive and cohesive communities.

Impacts: Community involvement and leadership – with residents taking a hands-on part in making decisions to improve their neighbourhood – helps to build a sense of shared responsibility, and ensure that solutions are owned locally, rather than being imposed externally.

COMMUNITY: New Deal for Communities (NDC)

Target: 39 neighbourhoods in deprived areas with typically 4,000 or fewer residents.

Cost: approx. £2bn over 10 years

Aims: Improving local services, increasing community capacity and addressing poor job prospects. high crime levels, educational under achievement, problems with housing and the physical environment.

Activities: Community involvement and ownership and joined-up thinking and partnership solutions. Action based on evidence about 'what works' and what doesn't.

Impacts: Improving attitudes towards the community, crime and the area. Greater improvement in employment and education outcomes in NDC areas than in non-NDC comparator areas.

Information and inspiration

These programmes aim to:

- **Exemplify positive behaviours.** Evidence suggests that positive role models are associated with higher aspirations and improved outcomes.
- **Provide trusted and appropriate sources of information** and guidance. This can motivate young people and help them to develop realistic (as opposed to idealistic) aspirations.
- **Mentor and support young people** to make positive life choices. Research has shown that mentoring can broadly support children's growth and academic achievement.
- **Broaden horizons.** Evidence shows that exposing young people to new experiences builds their confidence and can raise their career aspirations.

Example programmes

YOUNG PEOPLE: Connexions

Target: Young people aged 14-19

Cost: Part of the local Area Based Grant

Activities: Information, advice and guidance on careers plus a broad range of other issues.

Impacts: Provision of careers education is patchy. Early evidence suggests when provision is good it has a positive impact on young people (Howieson and Semple, 1996). There is some suggestion that socio-economic background may modify the effect of careers education, with young people in areas of high urban deprivation being particularly hard to reach.

Young People: REACH

Target: Black boys and young men

Cost: 2008/09 £1 million with further £1million over 2009/10 and 2010/11

Aims: To raise the aspirations and attainment of Black boys and young Black men

Activities: National role modelling programme, advice, guidance and other non monetary support for mentoring organisations, creating stronger links between Black families and schools, improving reporting on race equality in schools, encouraging VCS organisations to share expertise so that they can achieve more.

Impacts: The role models strand of the programme was launched in December 2008 with the announcement of 20 national role models and the organisation who will receive a grant to run the programme for the next 3 years. Evaluation of the role model activity is planned to take place across 2009 with a preliminary report due early in the year and interim report over the summer.

Social marketing

Social marketing is the systematic application of marketing concepts and techniques to achieve specific behavioural goals, for a social or public good. This approach has been successfully applied in health contexts to influence behaviour through both high profile national campaigns and focused local activity. *(*National Social Marketing Centre, 2008)

Social marketing techniques have been used to address issues such as sexually transmitted infection rates and anti-social behaviour. However, to date these techniques have not been used to address community attitudes and aspirations.

Key stages of social marketing:

1: Segment the market.

2. Target the segments where the “most good can be accomplished.”

3. Determine desired behaviours.

4. Develop a rich understanding of their wants, needs, beliefs and barriers to these behaviours.

5. Develop strategies using range of marketing tools.

6. Monitor and evaluate results.

Case studies:

Reducing smoking in pregnancy: This project aimed to increase the uptake of smoking cessation services and quit rates among pregnant women in Sunderland. Qualitative research led to support for smoking women via a dedicated worker, home visits, design of new marketing material and information and role play training for health professionals to engage more effectively with smoking women. The impact of the project was impressive. During the intervention, there was a 10-fold increase in the number of women setting a quit date and quitting whilst pregnant.

Increasing breast cancer screening rates: This project worked in Tower Hamlets. Customer insight work found that the Bangladeshi and white British populations had different reasons for not being screened and responded to different interventions. White women responded positively to case studies of women like them, whereas Bangladeshi women preferred a directional approach from their GP. Social marketing campaigns were designed to respond to these different needs. There were impressive results. 30% awareness of the campaign was achieved in the target audience, 94% believed it was important women attend screening. Publication of results is forthcoming.

Australia has resourced a sustained effort to change smoking behaviours by applying many social marketing principles. In the 1970s, Australia and England had comparable smoking rates. England is unlikely to reach the point at which no more than 5% of the adult population is smoking until around the year 2060. Australia is set to reach this goal 40 years earlier, in 2020 (source: National Social Marketing Foundation). Moreover, in contrast to the UK, Australia does not have universal smoking bans, few smoking cessation clinics and no national nicotine replacement service.

A summary of evaluation evidence: key learning

Regeneration

- **Highly visible and neighbourhood level presence increases confidence in services.** Satisfaction rates are highest when implementation agencies have a highly visible presence.
- **Making services more responsive to local needs is a key to success.** Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders have been successful in engaging local services, especially schools, with issues that matter to local people.
- **Understand the community.** Coalfields regeneration success helped by unique connections to communities. Some NRF programmes criticised for failure to understand BME communities.
- **Take a strategic approach.** Make sure all agencies working to a coherent strategy for change and form a package of interventions that complement each other.
- **Regeneration programmes need clear goals.** Some regeneration programmes have suffered from having too many disparate aims, for example around community engagement.
- **Importance of funding evidence-based programmes.** There needs to be a clear process setting out how programmes put their package of interventions together and an emphasis on using evidence base to support choices.
- **Opportunities to influence mainstream priorities or 'bend the spend'.** Regeneration funding is generally used to fund add-on programmes. The most effective programmes will shape capital projects and mainstream services to address local needs.

Education

- **Inter-agency collaboration is essential for good services.** Evaluations of Sure Start Local Programmes and Family Intervention Projects emphasise this.
- **Powerful partnerships with communities can transform schools**. Schools need outreach staff and the right infrastructure in order to reach out to the community effectively.
- **Out of school hours provision can overcome barriers to learning.** Extended school activities can mitigate against family and community disadvantage.
- **Success is often built on strong leadership.** Disadvantage of this is that progress can be too dependent on individuals. It can be hard to attract the best teachers to schools in the most challenging areas, for example.
- **Business links with schools can increase pupils' motivation**, especially business mentoring programmes.
- **Information, advice and guidance needs improvement.** Evidence shows it is least effective with the most disadvantaged.

Stronger links and increased learning between education and regeneration policy would have clear benefits.

1: Introduction

Background and key aims

2: Aspirations and attainment

Aspirations and expectations: key trends
The formation of aspirations and the processes by which they influence outcomes

3: Communities matter

i) Young people with low educational aspirations are concentrated in certain types of (deprived) neighbourhood
ii) Young people and their parents are influenced by the people and places where they live
iii) A neighbourhood approach to raising aspirations makes sense

4: What works

A review of national initiatives and approaches to raising aspirations
Joining up provision

5: Annexes

A: Evidence review on aspirations

B: Background to original quantitative analysis on aspirations

C: National policy context

6: References

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