

SOCIAL MOBILITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL IN A TIME OF CRISIS



Social Mobility
PLEDGE





About this report

This report has been produced by the Social Mobility Pledge. It details how energy company SSE plc is working to reduce the opportunity gap in the UK and Ireland through its existing social mobility initiatives and is committed to further action in the wake of the coronavirus crisis. SSE is a signatory to the Social Mobility Pledge and the C-19 Business Pledge.

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It's time for business to grasp the nettle and take leadership on levelling up, and help deliver a fairer society as we recover from this pandemic.

FOREWORD

Rt Hon Justine Greening

Over the last few months the tragedy of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has challenged us all across virtually every aspect of our lives – our work life, our home life, and our social life. We’ve faced the very grave threats to our public health; and now we’re beginning to see the socioeconomic impacts.

We face the reality of a deep recession and potentially rates of unemployment that haven't been seen for decades. Meanwhile more broadly across our society, coronavirus has taken many of the inequalities that existed before, that we already knew we need to tackle and has made them even worse, deepening the unfairness that exists in society for too many people.

History tells us that at such a time of challenge, this can be a time of change too. Because what shapes the future can be less the challenge we face today, and far more crucially how we respond to them. This can be a moment to recast how our economy, our businesses and society work. If we choose we can use this moment to build a stronger economy that is cleaner, fairer and more resilient.

We can bring together our collective goal of net zero by 2050 and a levelled up country by pursuing an economic recovery that is focused on both people and planet. One that creates opportunities that are spread out across the country, tackling inequality,

but centred around decarbonisation. Too often, these goals of benefitting both people and planet are presented as being in conflict with each other. But people and planet are two sides of the same coin.

We have an opportunity now to energise a recovery that creates opportunities for people while meeting our promises on the planet agenda through a Clean Industrial Revolution. Our national target for net zero by 2050 requires the best of all our efforts.

It will require substantial investment in new carbon capturing technologies, many of which don't yet exist; it will require investment in refitting homes, to improve our national energy efficiency; and it will require a shift from fossil fuels and natural resources, towards renewable power generation. All of these have at their core two vital aspects - they will create a demand for new skills, and in doing so create new jobs and opportunities. In the backdrop of one of the deepest recessions in

living memory, bringing net zero and levelling up together as one plan has never been more important.

I founded the Social Mobility Pledge to deliver grass roots change through the organisations that deliver more opportunities on the ground than another others - businesses. Because ultimately, politicians can only do so much. Delivering net zero and levelling up requires a national effort, well beyond the walls of Holyrood and Westminster and business has a crucial role to play.

If this is a time of change, then how we shape the future lies in the hands of businesses and business leaders as much as it does in anyone else's.

It's time for business to grasp the nettle and take leadership on levelling up, and help deliver a fairer society as we recover from this pandemic.

I'm proud to have many businesses working with the Social Mobility Pledge that are doing just that, businesses like SSE that are in the vanguard.

Crucially, as this action plan sets out, SSE is showing what leadership in practice really means, through its sustained work on the ground and the wholesale way in which it approaches its business day to day. At a local level, it has demonstrated the importance of taking its communities with it on its journey of an energy transition - its efforts in schools and the skills development agenda, progression within the business. While at a national level it is setting out a strategic vision for the future of energy in its 'greenprint', a direction that would create jobs and opportunities through a Clean Industrial Revolution.

In setting out its aims to go further through this action plan, SSE shows that businesses are how this country can not only rise to the challenge that today presents, but most importantly drive the change that this country so badly needs for a sustainable and successful future. Through the Social Mobility Pledge we will work collectively to bring more businesses on that same journey.

STATEMENT

From John Stewart, Director of HR at SSE

Delivering our promise of a green recovery

At the turn of the year, hardly anyone had heard of coronavirus – now a day does not pass without hearing of its impact on lives in every part of the world. As well as the direct human cost, there are many more social and economic consequences yet to come.

To aid the economic recovery needed, there is a powerful social and environmental case for green investment to accelerate the race to 'net zero' carbon emissions and prevent dangerous climate change.

Since June this year, SSE has announced over 1,000 new direct, contractor and supply chain jobs linked to the £3bn Seagreen Offshore Wind Farm near Angus, the £580m Viking Onshore Wind Farm on Shetland and the £630m subsea power cable connecting the island to the Scottish mainland. These are just some of the investments which make up part of our five-year £7.5bn programme to spur a green recovery from the pandemic, with other projects including building the world's largest offshore wind farm off the coast of Yorkshire. These are skilled, long-term roles which will benefit people and businesses right across the UK and Ireland at a remarkable scale and pace.

I am acutely aware of what a privilege it is to be the Director of

HR for a business which can create employment opportunities at this time. What that means is that I'm determined for SSE to use its position to make sure we do things better than we did before and deliver on the promise of a green recovery by creating job opportunities that are accessible to everyone from all different backgrounds. In short, we need to seize the opportunity to build back a fairer economy and society.

This report details many of SSE's social mobility initiatives which have been an important part of our business for years, from our Barnardo's employability programme for 16-24 year olds to our partnership with Career Ready to help support secondary school students in areas of deprivation gain real workplace experience and mentorship.

Our 'Opportunity Action Plan' seeks to reassert existing programmes this year and beyond, with increases in the number of apprentices and graduates recruited in 2020.

Most of all, supporting a response to the current crisis, we are introducing new routes into SSE for those who may have been impacted by the coronavirus crisis:

- Removing qualification entry requirements for apprentices, making the programme much more inclusive to those who've faced barriers to learning;

- Working closely with organisations like Skills Development Scotland to develop guidance for people looking to transition into renewable energy; and
- Launching of a 12-week 'STEM returners' pilot to help people with STEM skills restart their career, with all returners taking part being given the opportunity to gain a full-time position with SSE.

The combination of SSE's existing programmes that support social mobility, the enhancement and adaptation of those schemes plus new programmes will support, in a direct and practical way, the recruit of a diverse range of new entrants into SSE. These actions reflect the reality of the economic environment we are in and supports SSE's future growth plans too.

It is inevitable that the impact of the coronavirus crisis will be profound both socially and economically and there is a real risk that its consequences will drive increased inequalities across society. As leaders for the net zero future, we can invest in the green economy at the same time as working to limit those inequalities and play our part to help the country 'build back better'.

So, at SSE we are delighted to support Justine Greening and her team in bringing about a greater focus on increased social mobility in business and industry and we are grateful for the words of encouragement and inspiration she provides.



1 INTRODUCTION

SSE is one of the UK and Ireland's largest energy companies and, as the leading renewable energy provider across these countries, it is committed to making a wider social impact throughout the energy transformation and beyond.

The story of SSE is very much one of an energy transformation but one which benefits people too. For over a decade, SSE has been undergoing a major transition, now placing a net zero mission at the core of its business strategy.

This transition to net zero has been hardwired into the business, and drives decision-making across the group, with the company's stated vision now is to be a leading energy company in a net-zero world, while its purpose is to "provide energy needed today while building a better world of energy for tomorrow".

An approach aligned with SDGs

SSE has also aligned its strategy to four of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 13 Climate action; SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy; SDG 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure; and SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth. Core to this has been the setting of four 2030 Goals for the

business, with performance directly impacting executive pay, which linked to the four SDGs:

SDG 13: Cut the carbon intensity of electricity generated by 60%.

SDG 7: Treble renewable energy output.

SDG 9: Help accommodate 10m electric vehicles on GB roads.

SDG 8: Champion Fair Tax and a real Living Wage.

The company has taken this focus on climate and applied the same enthusiasm for making a wider social impact, and namely boosting social mobility and opportunities while tackling some of the foremost social problems facing the UK and Ireland.

SSE believes it should have a strategy for a sustainable business, rather than a strategy for sustainability. It recognises that a sustainable company is purpose-led; and a purpose-led company is one that offers profitable solutions to the world's problems.

SSE understands that to transform energy successfully, and to have real purpose, they need to take their people, and people in communities with them on this journey.

The transition comes at a time when the world faces unprecedented challenges as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. This means it has never been more important that businesses across the United Kingdom, and the world, play a leading role in helping society and our economy recover.

The public health efforts to control the virus have led to significant economic consequences. With global lockdowns in place for months, many businesses are facing difficult decisions but even when tough short-term decisions have to be made, these are made with the long-term horizon in mind.

A green recovery

As we continue to navigate through this crisis, SSE is setting out how to ensure it's a 'green recovery' from coronavirus in the UK and Ireland.

SSE believes that a just transition for the energy sector can deliver opportunities along the way, with private capital investment into renewables and supporting infrastructure that will create jobs and opportunities, and the demand for new skills. Indeed, SSE is already addressing many of the country's pressing socioeconomic challenges such as the skills gap, and it has ambitions to step this up even more.

Every period of change and crisis presents an opportunity to reassess how things were before, and how they can be in the future. SSE is determined that beyond the recovery, we emerge out of this crisis with a fairer economy and more just society. A society with a smaller opportunity gap for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, where young people have fairer access to opportunities and where being born in a certain place, or circumstances, has less of an influence on where you end up.

Like SSE's overarching sustainability goals, its social mobility drive is pursued because it has a clear and provable business case.

SSE is already addressing many of the country's pressing socioeconomic challenges such as the skills gap, and it has ambitions to step this up even more.

An action plan shaped by strong foundations

This Opportunity Action Plan highlights many examples of SSE's leading practice as identified by the Social Mobility Pledge, and how the company's experiences contribute to the wider understanding of social mobility, from which other businesses might take learnings.

Its overall lesson is how SSE's activities are leading in the green recovery from the pandemic, building the skills and providing opportunities to build back better from the crisis.

SSE has a track record of demonstrating thought leadership and genuine environmental, social and governance (ESG) advocacy. Many of its outreach and engagement activities in schools and communities are contributing to tackling the wider skills gap across the UK; and it is widening pathways into employment within the sector for those from different backgrounds who wish to pursue those careers. In understanding that social mobility doesn't stop at the

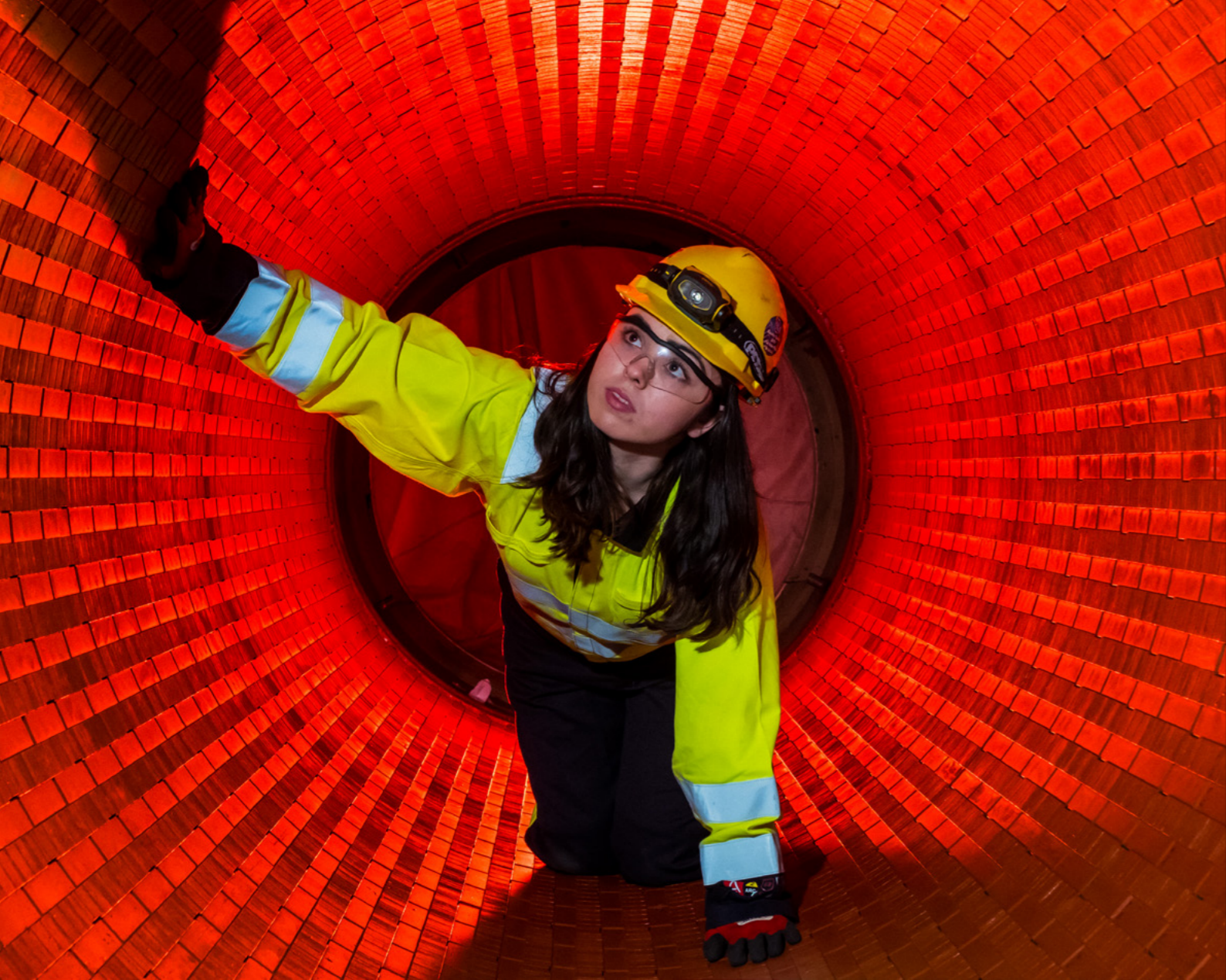
point of entering employment, SSE is focused on creating an inclusive working environment for those who join the business, ensuring people from all backgrounds can develop and progress, and achieve their own potential.

SSE has also prioritised ensuring that it takes local communities along on the energy transition journey, creating opportunities and investment for areas where it has a footprint, across some of the most remote places across the UK and Ireland.

In its purest form, boosting social mobility is about removing barriers to opportunity, and ensuring the circumstances of where someone starts in life does not determine where they end up. The Social Mobility Pledge has identified SSE as a company that others can learn a lot from in its efforts to do this, and is a blueprint for leading practice.

This Opportunity Action Plan will also consider how, building on this blueprint, SSE can progress its work even further to some of the areas and demographics that have the widest gaps, where it has an influence.





2 A PURPOSE-LED PEOPLE STRATEGY

Culture isn't something that can be created or implemented, it's something that a company lives through its people every day.

SSE is committed to having an inclusive culture contributing to being a great place to work. It wants to create a workplace where people can thrive and be themselves, with a workforce that is diverse and inclusive.

It understands that this all starts with engagement, but also the business case. Getting the most talented people from all backgrounds with the right skills and attitudes, and retaining that talent and therefore being the best possible business, only results from being a place where people want to work.

2.1 The case for boosting inclusivity and diversity

Having a diverse workforce, and ensuring everyone feels included and engaged, is more than just a good thing to do, it's also good for business.

SSE has sought to demonstrate that doing the right thing by boosting diversity and inclusion has clear benefits for businesses. In keeping with its outcomes-focused approach, SSE has worked with inclusion experts Equal Approach over a number of years to measure the impact of its investment in diversity and inclusion and, in doing so, created a comprehensive business case for the inclusion agenda.

SSE's calculated returns per £1 invested in inclusion initiatives have increased significantly, rising from £4.52 in 2017, to £7.51 in 2018, increasing again to £9.85 in 2019.

SSE's overall inclusion and diversity business driver can be summed up by what it refers to as "*The Four Ds*": "*Greater Diversity*, brings broader *Debate*, which leads to better *Decisions* and ultimately better business *Delivery*."

Ultimately, the company recognises that decarbonisation, electrification and the new infrastructure needed in the future is going to require continuous innovation and new ways of thinking. It just so happens that boosting social mobility, by the means of being a more diverse and inclusive business, is a fundamental means to result in that end.

2.2 SSE's Inclusion Strategy

SSE aims to create a more diverse workforce by building an inclusive culture.

SSE's inclusion strategy is built around proactively recruiting people with different backgrounds and experiences into the organisation, encouraging them to stay with SSE and also supporting them to move up to the highest levels of the company. This includes a plethora of inclusion activities and working sessions, led by specialists and aided by working groups in every division of the business, which ensures these three stages are fair, transparent and open to all. Crucial to each stage is the measuring of results, changing behaviours and managing the many relevant processes through which talent flows into and within the organisation.

The company is the final year of a three-year forensic review of these processes, analysing and adjusting every aspect of the company with inclusion in mind, including in the way it:

- Identifies talent
- Manages succession
- Develops managerial talent
- Embraces working-differently practices.

SSE has moved from skills-based recruitment towards strengths-based, which ensures it brings in people with the best potential, rather than those who might simply have had the privilege to learn skills in the beginning.

It is also working in partnership with industry peers through bodies such as the United Nations Global Compact, EU Skills and Powerful Women, to learn from best practice and review and compare its own practices, which can lead to its own improvements.

Having levelled out the playing field in recruitment, SSE's attention rightly then turns to ensuring they retain this talent, and this is done by creating an inclusive workplace. SSE consistently reviews for signs of bias within performance management, succession planning and mentoring and coaching protocols.

It has created inclusive behaviour-focused 'Byte Size' education modules written by and for colleagues, as well as establishing an 'Inclusion Hub' for all employees to access materials to grow their own awareness of aspects of diversity and how to boost inclusiveness. It has also established exit interviews when colleagues leave the business to gain an honest insight to their experiences within the company.

But social mobility goes beyond ensuring people can be connected to opportunity and stay in those roles, it's about ensuring people from all backgrounds can develop and progress within the wider organisations.

The Social Mobility Pledge encourages all companies to think about how it can ensure progression, and commends SSE for its focus on this aspect of the social mobility pipeline too.

SSE has set out clear targets for gender balance at all levels of the company, from middle management to SSE's most senior leadership levels; as well as providing clarity on selection criteria, broader thinking on what is really needed in order to do any role well, ensuring open selection criteria and advertising, and understanding the barriers and motivators for employee progression.

2.3 Boosting inclusivity through flexible working

A large part of creating inclusive dynamics at work are by creating inclusive processes that people work within, particularly in terms of working hours and where people can work. Flexible working is a key enabler of social mobility for individuals with additional challenges and responsibilities in their lives that make a rigid nine to five or daily commute unviable.

This is why SSE has focused on flexible working, which is loosely defined as empowering staff to work where, when and how they choose. Following a successful pilot of its agile working office in Reading, the company has now rolled out agile working across the group. It actively encourages and challenges its leaders to think differently when recruiting by considering flexibility in advertised roles. This particularly supports working parents, and those who might face wider barriers to staying in work.

Almost all job adverts now contain the "happy to talk flexible working" logo. This is an important step to boosting inclusivity not only in jobs, but also opening up people to considering a potential career, knowing that working conditions can be flexible, and is another strong example of how SSE can successfully open itself up to cohorts of people it wouldn't have reached before.

The number of people who said they can “work differently” in SSE increased from 34% in 2017 to 61% in 2019. It is evident that SSE’s long-standing commitment to flexible working meant that it was well-equipped to deal with the effects of the coronavirus lockdown in March 2020. The changes that have occurred in the working lives of SSE employees throughout 2020 have, in many cases – and more often than not – been ones that have enhanced their working lives, focused on safety, and brought about a flexibility that has unleashed, and often harnessed, the vast talent pool in the SSE employee base.

Looking ahead to the future world of work, SSE has established a working group tasked with developing and implementing a future way of working for the company which is safe, sensible, realistic, and flexible, taking into account the challenges of a pandemic, but also harnessing the positive momentum and change that the remarkable team across SSE Group has developed.

SSE’s focus on introducing flexible working arrangements should be commended for helping support all parents and carers in progressing in their careers within the company; and should lead the wider sector in adopting the same approach. It ensures that everyone can have flexibility and progress in their careers, and reduces the risk of people leaving their career due to other responsibilities.

2.4 Greenprint

SSE published ‘A greenprint for a cleaner, more resilient economy’ in May 2020.

The greenprint included a five-point action plan, submitted to the UK Government, which had the aim of meeting twin objectives of helping the economy rebound from the coronavirus pandemic, while also taking climate action to meet the Government’s own net-zero ambitions.

The greenprint’s five key proposals include: a net zero power system by

2040; strategic investment ahead of need in electricity networks; a clean industrial revolution; leading the charge on electric vehicles; and green buildings for green jobs.

In the midst of the economic fallout resulting from the pandemic, now is the time for the UK Government to turbocharge the journey towards net zero and give the go-ahead for the private investment that will create jobs and opportunities for communities across the UK and, in turn, make the UK a global leader in the green energy transformation.

This focus – and the go-ahead for projects ripe for investment – is exactly the type of boost the economy and energy sector need to support long-term, sustainable jobs and contribute to UK GDP. For example, SSE’s Transmission business has a minimum £2.4bn investment plan of near shovel-ready network upgrade projects ready to go subject to regulatory approval by Ofgem. Putting these business plans into action will enable large capital

investments to kickstart employment and supply chain opportunities in the green recovery, improve resilience and boost connectivity at a local, regional and national level.

Whilst tackling coronavirus continues to be the national priority, the climate emergency has not gone away and a failure to deal with it could result in even greater challenges. Indeed, it is possible to speed up the energy transformation in a way that mitigates the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic by generating such investment.

2.5 The Living Wage and Living Hours

SSE has been an accredited Living Wage employer since 2013 and a member of the Living Wage Scotland Leadership Group since it was created in 2014, demonstrating its record as a first mover in key areas of boosting social mobility.

The real Living Wage sets a minimum standard for pay that meets the real

costs of living. However, a salary people can live on is also dependent on the number and security of hours they work – in other words, people need Living Hours to provide security alongside a real Living Wage.

As a champion for the Living Wage since 2013, SSE was keen to support the Living Wage Foundation’s efforts to act against insecure working arrangements such as exploitative use of zero-hour contracts which have become entrenched in some parts of the economy.

Living Hours is a new accreditation which sets the standard on responsible working hour practices.

It comprises two key commitments from employers for both their direct employees and sub-contracted workers. Firstly, a right to a contract with ‘living hours’, which consists of a guaranteed minimum of 16 hours a week (unless the worker opts out), with a right to switch to a contract that reflects accurate working hours for those regularly working above

their contracted hours. Secondly, fair notice periods for shifts of at least four weeks’ notice, with guaranteed pay for cancelled or changed shifts.

SSE’s focus on introducing flexible working arrangements should be commended for helping support all parents and carers in progressing in their careers within the company

One study indicated that flexible work practices can result in higher rates of employment, and better matches between qualifications and job skill-level, for women and mothers.

It demonstrated positive broad associations between the adoption of reduced (and part-time) hours and the female employment rate. This means that more flexible working arrangements increase the probability of retaining women in careers, and boosts progression.

It showed that, while we know women and mothers are a group that are underrepresented in workplaces across Europe (particularly in senior management and director levels within European businesses) compared to their representation in the general population; improving the scale and quality of their representation in the labour market promises significant net gains for the economy, as well as having significant gains for socioeconomic inclusivity, and gender equality.



3 WIDENING PATHWAYS INTO EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Improving recruitment: a fairer, more level playing field

SSE has made significant changes to its recruitment processes in order to ensure it reaches talented people from all possible backgrounds, and in line with its commitment to social mobility and diversity, is consistently reviewing and improving its methods.

While this shift is ongoing and continually being assessed, strong progress has been achieved so far. SSE has reviewed all levels of its processes, from qualifications preferences, the access points into the company, accessibility issues, flexible working and embedding inclusion in the recruitment channels.

3.1.1 Strengths-Based Recruitment

SSE has partnered with external expert Cappfinity to enable it to design an entirely “strength-based” recruitment approach for its 2020 engineering apprentice cohort.

This builds on changes made in 2018/19 to apprenticeship recruitment, with qualifications asked for as a preference rather than as mandatory for the first time.

These changes are designed to attract and retain more diverse candidates, giving those from more challenging backgrounds, and therefore with a lower chance of a good education, a better opportunity to join SSE.

This is part of a shift within SSE from recruiting for skills to innate strengths and demonstrates how SSE is shifting towards a more sophisticated approach which enables it to recruit talent from all backgrounds.

3.1.2 Inclusion and diversity embedded within recruitment channels

SSE recently launched an Inclusion and Diversity at SSE webpage, on

which its commitment to inclusion and diversity is explained.

This means potential candidates can see as early as possible that SSE is committed to inclusion for all. Where applicable, SSE uses the recognised “happy to talk flexible working” logo on job adverts, encouraging people to engage to find out more about the flexibility on offer at SSE.

3.2 Opening access at all levels

Senior managers with hiring responsibilities and influence are now charged with building inclusive role profiles focused on experience and transferable skills, rather than simply qualifications, degrees and technical expertise. Standard job advert templates are used during the recruitment process to drive consistency and offer a ‘belt and braces’ approach to challenge thinking around the key job requirements.

SSE has also committed to ensure all vacancies are openly advertised, ensuring attraction and selection processes are transparent and that opportunities are available to all. This is incorporated into monthly reporting so they can check the percentage of: roles not openly advertised by exception; roles that carry the Flexible Working logo; and, hiring managers who have completed pre-recruitment inclusion training.

SSE also uses the gender decoding platform Katmatfield.com to test job adverts for gender-coded wording. The tool ensures the use of gender-neutral wording on all job adverts. Inclusive role profiling is also being used for all roles, while information about it is widely available to staff via SSE’s internal document library, which also has further information on gender neutral wording.

3.3 Accessibility and adjustments

SSE has reworked its job adverts to ensure they all have a key point of contact, offer special requirements/ adjustments at all stages and include an Equal Opportunities statement. The company’s resourcing team has also completed inclusive hiring training. Hiring Managers are expected to complete this training before commencing recruitment and are given guidance on their responsibilities regarding inclusive recruitment throughout their hiring journey.

These things combined mean that candidates who wish to discuss any adjustments they may require or ask about the role requirements can do so confidently.

Such adjustments, however small, can make the difference between an individual being able to access an opportunity – or being unable to do so – and can really open up a company to cohorts of people that they wouldn’t have reached otherwise.

3.4 Supporting all kinds of backgrounds

3.4.1 Armed Forces Covenant

SSE’s association with the Armed Forces can be traced back to the pioneers of its hydro projects, the Tunnel Tigers, many of whom were former members of the services themselves.

The business already employs veterans and reservists in a wide variety of roles from operating renewable assets such as windfarms and hydro plants to maintaining the flexible electricity grids to transport clean energy.

In December 2019, SSE demonstrated its support for serving and ex-services personnel by signing the Armed Forces Covenant.

As part of this, SSE has committed to a package of support for serving and ex-forces personnel and their families.

It includes additional leave for training, support for those with family away on service and recruitment efforts to support ex-servicemen and women considering a career in energy.

3.4.2 STEM returners programme

In August this year SSE partnered with STEM Returners to launch a new pilot

jobs programme aimed at helping recruit people into the industry in the wake of the coronavirus crisis.

The 12-week programme, run jointly by SSE Renewables and SSE Transmission, supports people who have taken a career break or are looking to return to the sector.

With placements across Scotland, applicants will have the opportunity to gain a full-time position with SSE.

CASE STUDY The Armed Forces Covenant

Jonathan Switzer, SSEN Technical Delivery Engineer, was recruited by SSE’s networks business, SSEN, after leaving the forces in April 2014. The former Royal Marine spent seven years in the military as a heavy weapons specialist. He said: “I’m proud to work for a business that is playing its part in supporting people like me who are ready for their next career.”

Veteran and former Reservist, Colette MacLeod who served with the RAF from 1983-87, works in HR as a Project Business Change Manager in Perth. She said: “SSE’s signing of the Armed Forces Covenant is a demonstration of care and commitment the business has for veterans, reservists and their families, ensuring welfare and wellbeing needs continue to be supported. Alongside the Living Wage and Fair Tax Mark recognition, it shows SSE’s commitment to fairness and commitment to do the right thing by those who have served their country. There is also a wealth of talent and experience which the Armed Forces community can bring to the energy industry, particularly in addressing specific personal and technical skills gaps.”

Charlotte Ryan, works as a project coordinator within SSE Enterprise. She left the army in 2014 and joined SSE the same year, after serving in Northern Ireland, Germany, Iraq and Afghanistan. She said:



“I believe the Armed Forces Covenant is of huge significance and was really happy to hear SSE would be signing up to it. Many Veterans and Reservists are placed at a disadvantage due to their time in the Service and the sacrifices they made. The covenant is a way of acknowledging this and ensuring any disadvantages they may face are reduced much as possible.”



4 RECRUITING THE GREEN WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

SSE is determined that it anticipates the skills needed for the future of energy and the wider STEM economy, and prepare young people for the different skills required.

SSE recognises that the transformation that will be brought about by the decarbonisation of the UK economy will require new skills for the future.

This means that young people growing up in schools and communities across the UK must be engaged with and learn about this transformation – and the new opportunities and careers that lie ahead – and the skills and qualifications required to reach those exciting possibilities.

SSE is determined that it anticipates the skills needed for the future of energy and the wider STEM economy, and prepares young people for the different skills required.

This is why SSE's education and employability approach influences change at the primary, secondary and graduate level of education; and is also strategically targeted among

demographics of young people that are the furthest away from opportunity, such as those not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

According to recent findings by the Confederation of British Industry, the majority of businesses have reported they find it difficult to fill skilled roles, with just under two-thirds (64%) of businesses cited not being 'work ready' as the reason for this¹.

This means that there is a worrying deficit between the demand for and the supply of skilled labour. It is clear that not enough is currently being done to equip our young people with the skills for the jobs and opportunities that are available across the country.

But to dig deeper than this, opportunities exist, but young people, and people of all ages, are not being matched up to supply the demand.

There isn't a silver-bullet solution for these significant socio-economic problems. There is a strong need for businesses to not only work together across the private sector and invest in young people. But to engage with schools, colleges and universities to ensure that the next generation of talent that will be entering the workforce is aware of the opportunities, and those young people can acquire the right skills for those opportunities.

The skills gap has been analysed by Engineering UK in its 2019 annual review. When considering forecasted demand against Level 3+ engineering-related apprenticeship completions and the current and potential supply of engineering skills arising from higher education, it estimated a shortfall of between 37,000 and 59,000 in meeting the annual demand for core engineering roles requiring Level 3+ skills required².

SSE has demonstrated how it is engaging with young people, promoting STEM disciplines and careers, through its school and community engagement with Teach First, Career Ready, Barnardo's Works and SSE Works; alongside its involvement in the Scottish Government's Developing the Young Workforce initiative.

4.1 School engagement: Promoting STEM disciplines and careers

Many of the barriers to accessing opportunities begin in the classroom of schools across the country. There are fewer examples of this being more true than with gender and STEM subjects, with significant gender differences in take-up of some GCSE STEM subjects, including engineering (10.5% female), computing (20.2% female), design and technology (32.9% female) and ICT (37.0% female)³. SSE have now signed the PwC Tech SHE Can charter to help address this along with many other companies and organisations to attract more females

into tech roles, develop them and retain them.

Indeed, while around 50% of GCSE Physics pupils are female, this falls to 22% for A-Level Physics. Meanwhile, just 11% of engineering and technology first degree entrants and eight% of engineering apprenticeship new starters are female. In the workplace, just 12% of people working in engineering are women.

However, there is a wider lack of STEM capital and awareness among both genders. For example, just 23.6% of young people aged 11 to 14 and 25.5% of those aged 14 to 16 reported knowing what people working in engineering do⁴.

Without the right role models or influences, it's easy to see how a lack of understanding of future careers as specific as engineering can become distant from young people, particularly for those from less privileged backgrounds.

By engaging with local schools and having those conversations with young people about the day-to-day of STEM careers, SSE aims to inspire ambition that can set young people on the path to a future career within STEM industries, building STEM capital among young people generally, as well as addressing the STEM gender gap early.

SSE uses its education programme to promote STEM subjects, academic and vocational, as well as promoting STEM careers, connecting up how education leads to these opportunities, and creating direct hire opportunities to more strategically connect up school engagement with pathways into careers.

These efforts are undertaken against the context of a shortfall in the level of new engineering talent coming out of the education system versus demand. A disproportionately low number of women in the sector is of particular concern.

SSE has delivered this engagement with a number of strategic partnerships, such as its involvement in the Scottish Government's Developing the Young Workforce initiative, and its strategic delivery partnerships with Teach First,



Barnardo's, and Career Ready, all whom are equipped with the relevant expertise to effectively deliver SSE's engagement in schools on the ground.

4.1.1 SSE's STEM Ambassadors

SSE has increasing governance in the quality of material used in schools outreach programmes, and ensuring more support for colleagues who visit schools.

The SSE Education Programme offers a variety of engagement from inspirational career talks to STEM projects and challenges. The company currently has more than 200 employees who volunteer as STEM Ambassadors across all disciplines and geographic locations. Local strategic partnerships are currently being formed across priority locations, working with feeder schools who have identified themselves as needing the support of an employer. This selection has been made on indicators such as Free School Meals, areas of deprivation, BAME or rural location.

SSE works with a variety of partners to support schools. The Gatsby Benchmark in England and the Careers Education mark in Scotland lay out the minimum requirements for schools to offer a number of employer engagements and meaningful work experience. SSE is looking to find virtual solutions to ensure these requirements are met during the coronavirus crisis period.

SSE has partnered with Teach First across three 'partnership hubs' that are being developed in Plymouth, Swindon, Hayes, London.

4.1.2 Developing the young workforce

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) is the Scottish Government's Youth Employment strategy to better prepare young people for the world of work.

The employer-led Developing the Young Workforce Regional Groups set up across Scotland are connecting employers with education.

SSE leadership is actively involved as both members and chair of the Perth and Kinross Advisory Board of the initiative. This builds on its fundamental commitment to developing young people and preparing them to be work-ready and connecting them up to opportunities through a range of strategic delivery partnerships.

SSE seeks to build on the ethos within Developing the Young Workforce in its work with young people across schools and local communities and engage with strategic schools identified by the regional DYWs.

4.1.3 Tackling entrenched inequalities with Teach First

As demonstrated previously in terms of gender, classrooms across the UK are home to some of the most entrenched, deep-rooted inequalities. All too often, the circumstances of a child's start in life determine its outcomes.

In 2018 43% of children entitled to free school meals did not reach a good level of development at age five, compared to 26% of their more advantaged peers⁵. Later on in the educational life, in Key Stage 4 (KS4) at around age 16, pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) gain an average of 243 points (in GCSE and equivalent qualifications) compared to 319 for non-eligible pupils⁶.

The scale of these problems is stark, and while many businesses might see attainment in schools as outside of their remit, SSE has set out to help support education and schooling in some of the most challenging areas.

This is why the first segment of SSE's strategic engagement and

support for education is with Teach First, a social enterprise registered as a charity which aims to address educational disadvantage across England and Wales, through specialist training for aspiring and training teachers.

SSE has partnered with Teach First across three 'partnership hubs' that are being developed in Plymouth, Swindon and Hayes, London. Additional activities are also taking place elsewhere in southern England.

In terms of what this partnership delivers on the ground, SSE supports Teach First in delivering its strategic aims of placing teachers in underperforming schools. Specifically, the partnership with SSE is designed to influence an increase in STEM subject teachers and more inclusion and diversity among teaching personnel.

SSE's involvement in the partnership includes the appointment of 'career leads' to work closely with careers advisers and teachers in target schools. The company also provides

work experience placements and site visits for STEM teachers and careers advisors to help shape careers discussions in schools.

SSE has also created careers videos and a game to inspire pupils to think about careers in the energy sector, to promote the possible career pathways across STEM in an engaging, accessible way.

In line with SSE's approach of measuring impact, the outcomes of SSE's involvement with Teach First has already been significant.

Data from the 2019 cohort of student teachers supported through the partnership – numbering 1,735 trainees – shows the significant impact of the partnership:

- A 78% growth in the number of STEM teachers year-on-year
- The steepest year-on-year growth came in subjects where shortages exist: Design and Technology (+100%), Modern Foreign Languages (+98%) and Science (+92%)

- The proportion of BAME trainees was 22% in 2019 – compared to 15% in 2015
- The proportion of LGBT+ trainees was 12%, versus 6% in 2015
- The number of trainees with disabilities rose from nine% to 17% in the four-year period
- The proportion of trainees who changed career to join Teach First made up 30% of the 2019 cohort, compared to 22% in 2015
- 30% of 2019 trainees attended a school in a disadvantaged area themselves, compared to 16% in 2015.

This is a strong example of how businesses can go beyond doing good by doing the simple yards of going into schools and talking about careers, but following SSE's approach of adopting a more long-term approach, focused on developing relationships with select schools in less privileged areas, making clear the early career pathways available and focusing on outcomes and impact.

4.1.4 Supporting academic ambition through scholarships

The SSE Airtricity Scholarship

SSE is also supporting wider academic and vocational education ambitions in local communities through the provision of scholarship financing. The SSE Airtricity Scholarship was first established in 2014 and has provided funding to over 200 students with a total of £670,000 awarded to date. It provides 50% funding support towards the cost of third level fees for students commencing first year studies at SSE's partner colleges.

Although funding is available for a broad range of subjects, including business, media and design, there is a particular emphasis on STEM subjects.

Through the Scholarship programme, SSE is working with Ulster University, South West College and North West Regional College.

Its aim is to create greater awareness and diversity in STEM subjects, and to ultimately increase employment in those areas in Northern Ireland.





This is more than just a business doing good, it is also good business, and the business case for programmes like this is compelling.

The Galway Wind Park Scholarship

Galway Wind Park in Ireland became fully operational in October 2018 and is now generating enough renewable energy to power around 140,000 homes, while offsetting over 220,000 tonnes of harmful carbon emissions annually.

But beyond the benefits for the climate, SSE is determined that many of its sites can have benefits for local communities too, and the Galway Wind Park Scholarship is a key example of how they want to integrate benefits for local communities in a way that goes beyond creating opportunities for work, but supporting wider development by supporting and facilitating education.

The Galway Wind Park Scholarship, now in its second year, was set up to support students who live close to the wind park in their college education. More than 30 scholarships were awarded to recipients in 2019/20 with over €130,000 awarded.

The scholarship was created to help local students, living within 20km of Galway Wind Park, with their student fees and living expenses whilst creating a pool of well-trained and experienced professionals, transforming career prospects in regional communities and positively impacting future generations. It provides 50% grant support towards a student's annual fees for a maximum of three years.

The Scholarship supports students attending Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) and National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway as well as other educational institutions across the island of Ireland.

In order to qualify for the scholarship, recipients have to demonstrate how receiving the scholarship will add benefit to one of the following areas; energy efficiency, safety, social and environmental sustainability, recreation and tourism with education and skills development.

4.2 Boosting employability

One of the most significant factors underpinning low social mobility is low employability. This can be considered in two ways.

Firstly, in terms of individual employability, whereby individuals might have lower employability, for instance, due to lower levels of education. Secondly, in terms of group employability, where collectively groups of people in certain geographic places, or groups from certain demographics, might have lower levels of employability collectively.

In recognising this complex relationship between employability and social mobility, SSE has set out to increase equality of opportunity by forming strategic partnerships to boost employability for young people and adults.

It has formed a relationship with Barnardo's to help those classified as NEET, with Career Ready to help young people build the skills they need to prepare themselves for the workplace, and has built on the success of these partnerships by forming its very own SSE Works employability programme with Business in the Community Ireland.

4.2.1 Barnardo's Works

SSE formed a strategic partnership with Barnardo's, as part of its 'Barnardo's Works' initiative, in which Barnardo's identifies and engages with young people (aged 16 to 24) who are NEET to help them find employment, by engaging, training and mentoring them.

Being unemployed for a prolonged period is among the many barriers of social mobility. The scheme is specifically designed for young people out of work or on a zero hours contract for more than six months.

SSE recognises that in order to make a real impact, this can't be done as an ad-hoc programme, but must have a long-term approach to build relationships and trust in those communities. That's why SSE has worked with Barnardo's since 2008, investing almost £1m into the scheme and providing quality work placements and supporting young people towards employment.

The programme aims to enable the young people to overcome the challenges keeping them out of employment including a lack of vital skills, an inadequate CV or challenging personal circumstances.

Barnardo's works with job centres and skills bodies to help get participants job ready. SSE placement

managers, meanwhile, are matched with the young people for a six-month paid work placement. During this often-transformational period for the young person, they learn vital workplace skills and receive a respected certificate which can help them to secure a permanent job or training or education opportunity.

This is more than just a business doing good, it is also good business, and the business case for programmes like this is compelling.

In a study carried out by SSE on the programme showed that approximately 70% of young people on the programme go on to full-time employment – around half of them with SSE.

Within SSE's 'Changing lives, growing value' report on the Barnardo's Works programme, SSE showed that for every £1 invested by the company, there is a return of £7.67 over five years split between gains for the company, increased wages for the individual, increased tax payments and lower benefits payments for government. But there are clearly additional returns to the individual, their local community and wider society too.

In terms of real life outcomes, the programme has given around 300 young people the opportunity to turn their lives around.

CASE STUDY

Barnardo's Works employability programme

After graduating from university, Emily Bradley-Parrish was unable to find employment after seven months of searching. She found out about Barnardo's Works at SSE and, after a successful interview, joined the SSE Resourcing Team through the programme. Emily has now secured a permanent job in SSE's Renewables business.

Emily said about her experience: "Those seven months of job searching were extremely disheartening. I kept wondering what was wrong with me and why wasn't I getting hired. I had done everything 'right' – so why couldn't I get a job?"

"Thankfully, I found out about the Barnardo's programme and was accepted onto it. The group spent a month building skills, preparing us for employment and our interview with SSE."

"The interview with SSE was a bit daunting, so it was a huge relief to find out I had been accepted into a position in the SSE Resourcing Team that evening.

"I accepted the position in SSE because I wanted to gain general administrative experience so that I could gain the skills and experience that I kept being told I needed. I didn't expect that I would enjoy working in Resourcing and in SSE so much. My colleagues are incredible: they made me feel welcome, didn't put unrealistic expectations on me, and I was given excellent training. I have gained far more than just administrative skills during my placement. I think I have grown a lot as a person and feel confident in myself and my work.

"I had a few unsuccessful interviews within the company while still on my six-month Barnardo's programme, but my interview feedback got more positive with each one. Towards the end of my placement I was offered the position of Project Administrator working on the Seagreen Project. I was so happy – not only did I have a permanent job but it's in a business area that I'm extremely interested in. This job meant I could move to Glasgow where I'll be based, and I finally feel like I am making progress on my goals. I know that without the opportunity I was given by SSE and Barnardo's I wouldn't be in this position, doing a job I'm passionate about."



SSE is consistently learning and looking to evolve its work, building on successes, and learning from where things can be improved.

4.2.2 SSE Works

Owing to the success of SSE's Barnardo's Works partnership, the company partnered with Business in the Community Ireland in 2017/18 to introduce a new social inclusion initiative, 'SSE Works'.

SSE Works was initially a pilot employability programme which provided a six-month fully paid work placement to people facing various long-term barriers to accessing the workplace.

After its first run, it was extended and full-time contracts were offered to participants instead of just a six-month placement. This immediate improvement offered more than just an opportunity to get an experience, but the opportunity to step on a progression pathway towards a future career within SSE.

On its third iteration, part-time positions were also considered, taking into account participants who may be in a caring or parenting role and unable to take up full-time employment.

SSE Works is a best in class example of an employability programme, on-par with the very best examples of leading practice that the Social Mobility Pledge has seen across the UK.

Due to the constraints which coronavirus has put on the running of this programme in 2020, SSE Works is scheduled again for 2021 when appropriate measures can be put in place to ensure participants are fully supported in their transition back into the workplace.

In the intervening period, a virtual educational programme is being developed which is targeted at women from migrant communities who are qualified primarily in engineering roles but who are experiencing barriers to entering roles in this field. The programme will consist of weekly sessions with

contributions from: employees across SSE's businesses who will share information on the company within an Irish energy context; and from HR and Engineers Ireland who will provide networking opportunities for the women as well as other supports such as information on ensuring their accreditations are recognised in Ireland.

4.2.3 Career Ready

SSE has partnered with Career Ready since 2013 as another part of its wider aim of opening up the world of work to young people.

The charity works with young people ages 16 to 18 and SSE's employees volunteer as mentors, with the company providing further opportunities which help students to increase their awareness of working life whilst they are still at school.

These opportunities span various business areas within the group, providing access to a wide range of potential career options.

Career Ready's programmes take the form of rolling two-year cycles, supporting individual students that require extra support, beyond the schools-based and parental influences in their lives, into pursuing a career. A large part of these programmes don't just focus on supporting academic attainment in school but seek to build wider cultural capital that is not easily attained in the classroom environment.

Throughout the two-year rolling programme, students typically attend six masterclasses focused on developing their personal skills and understanding of the workplace.

Topics include self-awareness, effective communication and networking, success at interviews, preparing for work, success at assessment centres and "brand you"; exploring their own career brand and understanding how important it is for future success.

Participants have the opportunity to take part in a paid, four-week internship, which upon completion they are required to present their experiences and what they gained from the programme, which seeks to invest an increased understanding of their own self-awareness, confidence and achieved a better understanding of their own long-term goals. This is a key example of the wider cultural capital that is gained throughout the process, seeking to boost employability and wider, less tangible personal skill-sets.

In line with SSE's outcomes-focused approach, the impact of the partnership with Career Ready has also been measured. As of 2019, SSE mentors have supported over 100 students and in doing so have helped those young people during their time with the company, wider career choices and opportunities, and potentially in their progression to higher education.

In total, SSE has invested the equivalent of approximately £84,000 in salary costs to ensure each student experiences a worthwhile and valued internship with the company.





4.3 Entry-level programmes for all

4.3.1 Technical Apprenticeship Programme

SSE invests millions of pounds each year in its annual intake of technical apprentices and technical skills trainees. Since 2007, SSE has offered apprenticeships and technical skills traineeships to around 2,000 people.

SSE's Technical Apprenticeship Programme is a great pathway of entry into the sector for school leavers and young adults to progress into a career at the company, particularly for those who choose not to attend university.

Apprentices predominantly work in the Networks and Enterprise business units, with a small number also taking

Year	Total No. of Technical Apprentices	SSEN	Enterprise	Renewables	Thermal
2019	72	42	20	9	1
2018	69	39	21	2	7
2017	57	17	34	6	0

up apprenticeships within Renewables and Thermal. Apprentice intake data for the last 3 years is as follows:

Around 80% are based in the South of England during what is typically a three to four-year programme offering nationally recognised qualifications as part of a formal apprenticeship pathway.

Furthermore, in 2016 SSEN also launched an apprenticeship

programme focused on adult learners. This programme provides

a structured route for people looking for a different career path, to retrain and join the energy sector on a well-thought-out development programme, and while opening pathways into the sector to wider talent pools, enables SSE to help address the wider skills gap across the UK, and boost social mobility and opportunities.

CASE STUDY

Career Ready

In July 2019, SSE welcomed Perth and Kinross students in to the business for a four-week Summer Internship as part of the Career Ready Programme. One of these students was Kirsty, who joined the Onshore Wind Operations and Maintenance team during her placement.

Laney Armstrong, Kirsty's mentor during the placement said:

"SSE and Career Ready have supported this amazing opportunity for Kirsty to come in to SSE and use this time to develop her existing skills base and become a confident young adult."

Transitioning from education to rewarding employment or on to further education can be a daunting experience

and it has been great to support Kirsty through the first year of this programme. Between the LEAN 5S events, a site visit to Griffin Wind Farm, an 'End of Internship Presentation' and delivering a Health and Wellbeing engagement piece, Kirsty has really been pushed out of her comfort zone. I am very proud of how Kirsty has embraced the opportunity, and her attitude towards the challenges we have given her."

"My internship went really well" Kirsty explained "I learned beneficial skills and made amazing new friends who were involved in the programme. I got an insight to working in an office and how long a shift can feel in comparison to a day at school (very long!). I enjoyed meeting new people from other schools in the programme and getting to hear about some of the things employees do across SSE. I was proud of myself for sticking at this programme – before it began, I had huge doubts and was even considering pulling out! During my internship I have gained more confidence in myself, I was able to present in front of a group of adults which I never thought I would be able to do. I would just like to thank EVERYBODY who has helped me during my internship, it has been an amazing experience that I will always remember."

CASE STUDY

SSE's technical apprenticeship programme

Jasmine Allen and Braidon Nurse are making their first forays into their careers in the energy industry. Both are working towards qualifying as wind turbine technicians, and will work on SSE's Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Farm off coast of Suffolk.

With SSE pledging £7.5bn of investment in ambitious low carbon investments across the UK and Ireland they are setting out at arguably the sector's most exciting moment.

Speaking about what attracted them to a career in renewables, Jasmine said:

"Being a part of an industry that is set to play such a huge role in the future of energy. It's exciting to be involved in maintaining and creating a better future for everyone. It's also fantastic to be able to face new challenges every day as the industry grows."

On the growth of renewables and the opportunity that presents Braidon said: "I think that this industry is only going to continue to grow and its great news that SSE is

at the centre of that in the construction of Dogger Bank and Seagreen Offshore Wind Farms. As well as generating clean green energy, these projects will also create jobs for people constructing the sites and the for the people who will maintain and run the windfarm."



CASE STUDY

Delivering a return on investment from training programmes

SSE has a track record in quantifying the benefits of its training and employability programmes. Within its 'Valuable people' report, SSE showed the positive impact of investing in training programmes and growing talent for not just the company, but for the individuals and wider society too. This value comes from increased wages for individuals, increased productivity and output for the company, and increased tax revenue which benefits the whole of society.

SSE found that for every £1 invested in its technical apprentice programme, there was a return on investment of £4.29 and for its technical skills trainee programme, there was a return on investment of £7.65.



Since 2007, SSE has recruited 275 Technical Skills Trainees across our SSEN, Renewables and Thermal business areas.

4.3.2 Technical Skills Trainee Programme

SSE's 'Technical Skills Trainee' programme is a trainee engineer programme which provides an opportunity for trainees to earn a good salary while learning, combining work-based skills with academic study. Since 2007, SSE has recruited 275 Technical Skills Trainees across our SSEN, Renewables and Thermal business areas.

Over three years the trainee's course-based learning includes risk assessment and management, workplace projects to develop academic learning, technical skills training within SSE's Training Schools,

high level technical competence and project management.

They will also undertake various work placements to put their newly-learned knowledge into practice and gain practical, hands-on experience.

They will undertake the study element of the programme with a selected academic provider whilst receiving mentoring and support at a designated SSE site.

For Technical Skills Trainees working within the SSEN business area, progression onto a Higher Level Apprenticeship in Project Management is also built into the programme during Year 3.

4.3.3 Graduate Programmes

On an annual basis SSE welcomes graduates from a broad range of backgrounds onto its Graduate Development Programmes – and these schemes are growing rapidly.

During the programmes, graduates experience several challenging and interesting placements, where they will receive early accountability for key activities.

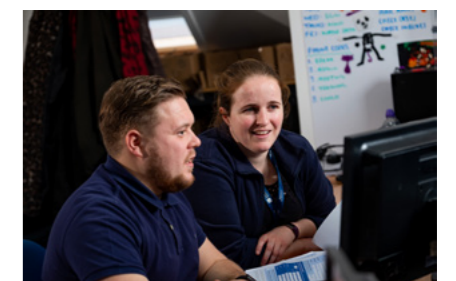
Each programme offers different learning opportunities providing practical skills, hands-on experience and relevant professional qualifications.

Previously, SSE has recruited 10 to 20 engineering and IT graduates per year, principally across SSE's networks and SSE Renewables businesses.

Then in 2019, it recruited just over 40 graduates right across the business and also from more diverse degree disciplines, including business and commercial, telecoms, project sales engineers, IT and Cyber as well as more traditional electrical, mechanical, civil and other energy-related degree disciplines.

This year, the company will further increase this intake, recruiting just over 60 graduates, with even more business areas looking to bring on new talent.

To enable a more diverse intake, while finding vital talent for the business, SSE is also opening up its engineering programmes to consider candidates with a Bachelor's level degree; whereas previously some businesses in the group have only considered those with Masters level degrees.





CASE STUDY

Learning for Life

The SSE Renewables 'Learning for Life' Skills Fund is funded from local wind energy across Tyrone, Fermanagh and Derry-Londonderry through the SSE Renewables Regional Fund.

In November 2019, SSE Renewables were delighted to partner with The Workspace Group Northern Ireland (NI) through the provision of £75,000 awarded to the group for an employability, mentoring and training programme over a five year period.

The Workspace Group NI delivers programmes and services aimed at boosting local regeneration, community cohesion and grassroots development in and around Mid Tyrone. The £75,000 funding will facilitate their work in engaging people to improve their quality of life by investing in people and places and by supporting community-led regeneration plans and sustainability initiatives.

Following the recent coronavirus pandemic, it is hoped that this funding can help provide practical solutions to major challenges by working in partnership with local communities, key funding bodies, statutory authorities and other agencies.

5 COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

A key focus is on supporting the progression of social mobility and equality of opportunity.

5.1 Direct investment in social mobility

In 2019/20, SSE Renewables invested £8m into rural communities across the UK and Ireland, supporting 1,102 community projects. Overall, the past five years have seen SSE provide more than £30m in community and charitable giving or benefits-in-kind, including employee time.

The vast majority was granted through SSE's community benefit funds which deliver financial support to a diverse range of community projects near to SSE's renewable developments in the UK and Ireland. Over the lifetime of its current assets, SSE Renewables will invest around £80m in the Scottish Highlands alone through its community benefit funds.

A key focus is on supporting the progression of social mobility and equality of opportunity. Since 2012, at least £4m has been invested in projects linked to social mobility such as apprenticeships.

For example, around £200,000 per annum for the past two years has been awarded to the RISE project (Respect, Innovate, skills and Employment) to improve opportunities for young people excluded from school or from a disadvantaged background.

Additionally, Wiston Lodge received £97,000 from the Clyde Wind Farm to enable people from disadvantaged backgrounds to experience outdoor education.

5.1 The Simon Community

In May 2019, SSE Airtricity announced a three-year partnership with the Simon Community.

SSE is supporting the charity in its mission to provide care, accommodation and support for people affected by homelessness, through employee-led initiatives and its marketing and sponsorship activities.

The announcement came after a company-wide vote, in which SSE Airtricity employees chose to put their energy into fundraising and volunteering for the homelessness charity.

50 SSE Airtricity employees in Dublin took part in a sleep out in November to raise funds for the charity with over €15,000 raised in total. Employees in the Belfast offices took part in employee-led fundraising activities. The Home Energy Services visited one of Dublin Simon's homeless hostels with a view to reviewing potential retrofitting opportunities for the charity.

The Business Energy Services division of the business also provided Dublin Simon with a quotation for electricity to minimise cost to the charity.

Homelessness is a major barrier to gaining secure employment – and therefore one of the many contributors to social immobility.

More recently, in August 2020 SSE Airtricity donated €15,000 to the Simon Community to support its work during the coronavirus outbreak. The effects of the coronavirus emergency on Simon Communities have been costly and wide-ranging. Simon Communities are already seeing the impact of this loss on their services and are experiencing a significant reduction in fundraising income as a direct result of coronavirus. This donation will support the Simon Community in assisting those more marginalised and vulnerable members of society.



6 INSIGHTS

SSE is a company which lives its values and delivers on its purpose. It has demonstrated how its leadership in the energy transition is more than just about preserving the planet: it's about people too.

SSE has consistently shown itself to be a first-mover and an advocate for progressive change, from leading in renewables, to campaigning for wider investment in clean growth to create jobs and opportunities.

SSE is taking its employees in the company, those in local communities, and people across the UK and Ireland with it on its journey, as it seeks to make a wider social impact, boosting opportunities, and tackling pressing socioeconomic problems such as the national skills shortage, as it progresses in tackling climate change.

It has clearly demonstrated that as one of the largest energy companies in the UK and Ireland, it can use its size and scale, as well as its leadership in renewables, to be an advocate for responsible business.

During the coronavirus pandemic, when both public health and socioeconomic challenges are greater than before, SSE is a clear example of how the transformation in energy can be harnessed for wider social impact.

It has demonstrated this through its thought leadership, from initially

being one of the first-movers on supporting the Living Wage campaign in 2013, to providing practical solutions for the Government in aiding a clean and green economic growth, with the publication of its 'greenprint' in early 2020.

It has shown a comprehensive and chronological approach to boosting social mobility and addressing the national skills shortage, or 'skills gap,' and also in recognising that the transformation in Britain's energy sector will require new skills for the future.

It has delivered this through a programme of engagement with schools, and partnering with specialists such as Teach First; and partnering with Barnardo's on its 'Barnardo's Works' and Career Ready initiatives to reach young people from circumstances where barriers to opportunity are the highest and prepare them for the world of work.

From these programmes, it has also sought learnings to widen its impact, and has developed its own 'SSE Works' programme, which is an employability programme which provided a six-month fully paid work placement to NEETs facing various

long-term barriers to accessing the workplace. This is an approach that has a proven focus on outcomes, rather than purely being a means to increasing employability skills, and is a stand-out example of boosting social mobility.

Beyond its successful outreach and engagement, SSE has a strong record of creating wider and more accessible pathways into employment, building on its flagship employability programmes.

It has worked to create a more level playing field at the point of recruitment, by shifting from skills-based recruitment practices, to focusing on strengths-based recruitment practices. This means recruitment focuses on potential, rather than those who might have had the privilege of being in a position to have learned those skills already.

SSE's apprenticeship programmes are a key entry pathway for school leavers and young adults to progress into a career at the company, particularly for those who choose not to attend university; which also sit alongside its graduate programmes entry pathways.

The company has shown that it is leading by example in creating an inclusive culture and ensuring everyone feels included and engaged. Ultimately, diversity and inclusion is more than just a good thing to do, it's also good for business, and SSE is delivering on this in an impact-focused way.

For example, SSE's impressive focus on shifting working practices to a majority of flexible working can benefit not only parents, but all colleagues who have caring responsibilities, or health and accessibility issues that might make going to and working in a set workplace more challenging than those who don't.

But SSE has gone one step further and set out to strengthen the business case for the benefits of diversity inclusion. It began benchmarking the benefit to the business of investing in inclusion initiatives, and has calculated that since it began benchmarking, returns have risen from £4.52 in 2017, to £7.51 in 2018, and to £9.85 in 2019.

SSE's work in proving the business case has made diversity and inclusion tangible and outcomes focused, and has proven a business case that should inspire other employers to take a similar approach. This is another strong example of SSE providing genuine advocacy on social mobility and wider responsible business.

Thought leadership, and leading with action, is one of the key differentiators between the old style of Corporate Social Responsibility of self-promotion, to actually being a real advocate for change. This is a quality the Social Mobility Pledge believes SSE has firmly established in its approach to sustainability.

SSE has shown a strong record of best practice in boosting social mobility by tackling the skills gap, and demonstrating how the energy transition presents opportunities for people, and opportunities to dispel inequalities of the past.

This Opportunity Action Plan has set out some recommendations for SSE to take this commitment further, and expand on its best practice in practical ways with an even greater and positive social impact.

Beyond its successful outreach and engagement, SSE has a strong record of creating wider and more accessible pathways into employment, building on its flagship employability programmes.



7 RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Social Mobility Pledge has set out three pillars of recommendations for SSE. This builds on the strong record of best practice that SSE has demonstrated.

These recommendations encompass community impact, advocacy and leadership.

Community Impact

SSE has a long track record of best practice in supporting communities and boosting outcomes throughout its programmes in local communities.

The Social Mobility Pledge recommends that SSE considers where the widest opportunity gaps are in life outcomes around its main sites and offices.

The Social Mobility Pledge has provided an overview and analysis of the key characteristics of life outcomes across some of SSE's key sites, as shown in the Appendix.

It recommends that SSE uses such an approach and consideration to inform future community engagement and make an impact on opportunity gaps that exist.

This can include:

- targeting school engagement to areas identified with relatively lower outcomes such as Glasgow and Reading;
- targeting mentoring programmes to areas identified with relatively lower life outcomes;

- targeting work experience placement with to areas identified with relatively lower life outcomes;
- forming strategic partnerships to address the specific gaps in local areas and scaling out best practice. For example, it could scale up its work with Teach First and apply to other areas with significant gaps in outcomes;
- expanding the best practice of the scholarship programme in Galway to other areas with significant gaps.

Advocacy Impact

Addressing the Opportunity Gap through the Clean Industrial Revolution

The issues of the people and planet are two sides of the same coin.

Dealing with the threat of climate change offers huge economic opportunities for people and communities across Britain.

Britain is well placed to lead the world in industrial decarbonisation, which in addition to lowering carbon emissions and worsening climate change, it would boost UK industry and create skilled, sustainable jobs.



With existing expertise in oil and gas, and world leading technological innovation, it can pioneer Carbon, Capture and Storage capacities.

But Britain will only benefit from a Clean Industrial Revolution with the right amount of investment to kickstart it - and this requires direction from people, businesses and Government.

Due to the regulatory set up of the energy sector, investment is dependent on Government direction, and careful planning by the regulator.

Therefore, while members of the private sector like SSE stand ready to invest in a Clean Industrial Revolution, it needs the Government to set out its own plan leading the way.

But timing is important. In the backdrop of a deep recession following the tragedy of the coronavirus pandemic, this investment in boosting the energy transition with a Clean Industrial Revolution is more important than ever before.

The Government has already outlined its plan to make Britain net zero by 2050, and during this time of economic downturn, there is a strong case to bring forward this investment significantly.

This would have wider economic benefits outside of the energy sector too, from manufacturing to engineering sectors and their supply chains.

Therefore, the Social Mobility Pledge recommends that SSE should be an advocate for the benefits to social mobility by Government support in kickstarting a Clean Industrial Revolution.

In a time of deep economic recession, canvassing for support for a Clean Industrial Revolution would preserve and increase opportunities; and enable levels of social mobility not to stagnate further.

It is clear SSE is already committed to making the case for this through the lens of ensuring communities and people feel the benefit of a green recovery.

In summary:

- SSE should make the case for the need for Government investment in green infrastructure for green jobs, the creation of opportunities;
- work with stakeholders, from other businesses across sectors, regulators including Ofgem, and inform policy makers to help deliver this through the lens of levelling up and boosting social mobility.

Leadership

In many senses SSE is already a leader. As one of the country's largest energy companies, constituents of the FTSE100, and as a company that has put responsible business at the heart of its agenda, it has recognised how it can use its scale and take leadership in being a force for good.

SSE can also take leadership on addressing the challenges in social mobility and opportunity this country faces, based on its community impact and its advocacy for a green recovery that creates jobs and opportunities.

Through its community impact in areas across the UK and Ireland that face the most significant barriers in life outcomes; to its advocacy on boosting social mobility through the clean industrial revolution and the creation of green jobs - SSE will demonstrate leadership in and across sectors on the social mobility agenda.

With a strong record of innovation in energy, and best practice in boosting social mobility, SSE's vision for the future will set the pace for the energy sector and wider national agenda.

This leadership will be drawn in examples of its own impact, and building on its vision for a net zero future in Britain.

The Social Mobility Pledge recommends that SSE should be an advocate for the benefits to social mobility by Government support in kickstarting a Clean Industrial Revolution.

8 APPENDIX: DATA ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY GAPS

SSE Community Gaps – Data Analysis

SSE’s main offices in the United Kingdom are located in Perth and Glasgow in Scotland; and Reading and Havant in England.

These areas will be used as an examples of ways that SSE can match its footprint, and where it has a significant physical presence, and target its community engagement work to those areas.

It will useful examples of how gaps can be identified in areas where SSE has reach by using key measures on opportunity and social mobility; such as employment, workless households, and the social mobility index.

It’s important to note that the comparability between measures in Scotland and England differ. For example, the standard Social Mobility Index produced by the Social Mobility Commission in England, is not directly comparable with Scotland, due to Scotland having free school meals universally.

Therefore in Scotland FSM is not an indicator of non-privilege, and thus the standard Social Mobility Index has not been used as a comparable measure here.

8.1 Glasgow City and Perth and Kinross

This section looks at three areas of performance on the delivery of opportunities across SSE’s main offices in Scotland, in Glasgow City and Perth and Kinross.

It considers employment and unemployment; workless households; and Youth Social Mobility Index.

8.1.1 Employment and Unemployment

Employment and unemployment (Apr 2019–Mar 2020)	Glasgow City (%)	Perth and Kinross (%)	Scotland (%)	Great Britain (%)
All People				
Economically Active	68.6	82.9	77.1	79.1
In Employment	65.7	80.4	74.5	76.0
Employees	58.1	67.6	65.4	64.9
Self Employed	7.5	12.5	8.8	10.8
Unemployed (Model-Based)	4.5	2.4	3.3	3.9
Males				
Economically Active	71.4	88.7	80.6	83.4
In Employment	67.8	86.1	77.8	79.9
Employees	57.2	70.1	65.9	65.4
Self Employed	10.4	15.6	11.6	14.3
Unemployed	4.9	-	3.4	4.1
Females				
Economically Active	65.8	77.8	73.7	74.9
In Employment	63.6	75.4	71.3	72.1
Employees	58.9	65.4	65.0	64.4
Self Employed	4.8	9.7	6.2	7.4
Unemployed	3.2	-	3.1	3.6

8.1.2 Workless Households

Workless Households (Jan–Dec 2019)	Glasgow City	Perth and Kinross	Scotland	Great Britain
Number Of Workless Households	58,900	5,500	319,000	2,854,000
Percentage Of Households That Are Workless	24.1	12.0	17.7	13.9
Number Of Children In Workless Households	-	-	97,500	1,184,900
Percentage Of Children Who Are In Households That Are Workless	-	-	11.1	9.6

8.1.3 Social Mobility Index

Rank out of 32	Local Authority	% 16 - 19 year olds participating (Scotland = 91.1%)	% school leavers going on to higher education (Scotland=40.3)
Youth SMI Stage			
1 (HS)	East Renfrewshire	95.7	60.9
2 (HS)	East Dunbartonshire	95.1	57.1
3 (HS)	Eilean Siar	95.4	40.9
14	Perth and Kinross	92.2	35.2
30 (CS)	Glasgow City	85.9	31.2
31 (CS)	Dundee City	86.7	30.5
32 (CS)	Clackmannanshire	87.2	22.4

Rank out of 29	Local Authority	Median weekly salary (Scotland = £419.45)	Average house prices compared to median annual salary (Scotland = 6.2)	% of people in local area with managerial/professional jobs	% of jobs paid less than the applicable real living wage (Scotland = 20.1%)
Working Lives SMI Stage					
1 (HS)	Edinburgh	£457.80	7.9	40.1	14.4
2 (HS)	East Dunbartonshire	£488.57	7.2	40.9	24.1
3 (HS)	South Lanarkshire	£436.60	5.0	27.1	18.1
6 (HS)	Glasgow	£410.47	5.3	30.7	17.0
25 (CS)	Perth and Kinross	£412.87	7.5	29.4	23.9
27 (CS)	Angus	£396.53	6.9	27.9	29.2
28 (CS)	Moray	£352.57	7.4	21.9	22.7
29 (CS)	Dumfries and Galloway	£365.47	6.3	21.8	29.8

Social Mobility Commission (2017): State of the Nation

Analysis

It is more complex to measure the typical indicators of social mobility in Scotland.

While the Social Mobility Index in England uses the simple and relatively reliable tracker of free school meal eligibility to measure performance of the most disadvantaged pupils, the Scottish government operates a universal entitlement to free school meals, meaning that while of great benefit to children attending school in Scotland, it means the FSM data in Scotland can not be used as a variable to measure social mobility through education.

What we can clearly see is that within Scotland, place matters when it comes to social mobility. Rural and semi-rural areas of Scotland generally report better outcomes than cities (with the exception of Edinburgh) and ex-industrial towns tend to report the worst outcomes of all.

This is echoed in some of the findings of this report. While rates of economic participation in Perth and Kinross, a rural area, are high at 82.9%, rates in Glasgow are much lower at 68.6% - worse than both the average Scottish and British rates. In both locations, women are

under-represented in employment and over-represented in self-employment.

Glasgow is considered a hotspot at the working lives stage of the Scottish social mobility index, and Perth and Kinross is considered a cold spot. Both Glasgow and Perth and Kinross have median salaries below the Scottish average of £419.46 weekly.

In Glasgow, houses are more affordable than across Scotland generally, at only 5.3 times the annualised salary. In Perth and Kinross, although salaries are slightly higher than in Glasgow housing is much less affordable, at 7.5 times the annualised salary. Perth and Kinross also suffers from a much greater number of jobs paying less than the living wage, at nearly a quarter. In Glasgow, only 17% of jobs pay less.

Going to the youth stage of the Scottish index, Glasgow becomes a 'coldspot', while Perth and Kinross is a fairly average location. Both areas have lower than average numbers of school leavers going on to study higher education. And while Perth and Kinross has a relatively strong 16-19 participation rate of 92.2%, Glasgow has a particular problem in this area, with only 85.9% participating.

8.2 Reading and Havant Offices

This section looks at three areas of performance on the delivery of opportunities across SSE's main offices in Havant, Reading and the South East.

It considers employment and unemployment; workless households; and Youth Social Mobility Index.

8.2.1 Employment and Unemployment

Employment and unemployment (Apr 2019-Mar 2020)	Havant (%)	Reading (%)	South East (%)	Great Britain (%)
All People				
Economically Active	74.9	82.8	82.3	79.1
In Employment	73.5	80.8	79.6	76.0
Employees	58.5	71.3	67.3	64.9
Self Employed	15.0	9.3	12.1	10.8
Unemployed (Model-Based)	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.9
Males				
Economically Active	83.4	87.9	85.8	83.4
In Employment	81.5	86.1	82.8	79.9
Employees	55.4	72.9	67.5	65.4
Self Employed	26.1	13.3	15.1	14.3
Unemployed	-	-	3.4	4.1
Females				
Economically Active	68.1	77.3	78.9	74.9
In Employment	67.0	75.0	76.5	72.1
Employees	61.1	69.6	67.1	64.4
Self Employed	4.8	9.7	6.2	7.4
Unemployed	-	3.1	2.9	3.6

8.2.2 Workless Households

Workless Households (Jan-Dec 2019)	Havant	Reading	South East	Great Britain
Number Of Workless Households	58,900	5,500	319,000	2,854,000
Percentage Of Households That Are Workless	24.1	12.0	17.7	13.9
Number Of Children In Workless Households	-	-	97,500	1,184,900
Percentage Of Children Who Are In Households That Are Workless	-	-	11.1	9.6

8.2.3 Social Mobility Index

Early Years: 509	Havant	England
Percentage of Nursery providers rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	89	93
Percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a good level of development	47	53

School: 316	Havant	England
Percentage of children eligible for FSM attending a primary school rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	86	83
Percentage of children eligible for FSM achieving at least the expected level in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2	38	39
Percentage of children eligible for FSM attending a secondary school rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	71	72
Average Attainment 8 score for pupils eligible for FSM	36	39

Youth: 455	Havant	England
Percentage of young people eligible for FSM that are not in education, employment or training (positive destination) after completing KS4	86	88
Average points score per entry for young people eligible for FSM at age 15 taking A-level or equivalent qualification	25	26
Percentage of young people eligible for FSM at age 15 achieving two or more A-Levels or equivalent by the age of 19	23	34

Adulthood: 346	Havant	England
Median weekly salary of all employees who live in the local area	407	443
Average house prices compared to median annual salary of employees who live in the local area	9	8
Percentage of people that live in the local area who are in managerial and professional occupations	29	30
Percentage of jobs that are paid less than the applicable Living Wage Foundation living wage	22	25
Percentage of families with children who own their home	61	65

*Most recent HC Library Social Mobility Index (2018)

Analysis

With none of its indicators in the top 100 rankings and three in the bottom 100; across all life stages, Havant ranks at 504/533 on the Social Mobility Index. Havant is a social mobility coldspot.

Early Years

At the early years life stage, Havant performs most poorly at 509/533. Only 89% of nurseries in the constituency are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted, worse than the national average of 93% and ranking Havant as 469/533 for this measure. In the other measure for this life stage, the percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a 'good level of development', Havant is ranked 466/533; 47% of those children achieve a good level compared to the national average of 53%.

School Year

Ranking at 316/533 at the school stage, Havant is in the bottom half of constituencies. Although 86% of pupils eligible for free school meals attend good or outstanding primary schools, only 38% of them achieving the expected level in reading, writing, and maths at the end of Key Stage 2, the national average being 39%. At secondary level, attendance of FSM eligible pupils at good or outstanding

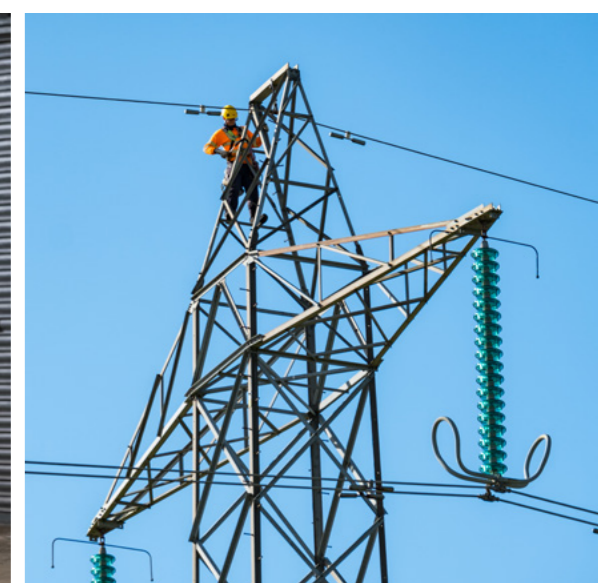
schools is 71%, making Havant the 302nd best constituency, but an average Attainment 8 score of 36 places Havant at 411/533.

Youth Life Stage

The youth stage sees Havant fall to rank at 455/533. 86% of young people who were eligible for free schools find themselves in a positive destination (defined as being in education, employment, or training) after completing Key Stage 4. Only 23% of FSM-eligible young people will achieve two or more A Level or equivalent qualifications by age 19, those that do take A Levels will have an average points score per entry of 25. Havant ranks at 492 and 366 for these measures respectively.

Adulthood Life Stage

At the adulthood life stage, Havant ranks at 346/533. Although only 22% of jobs pay less than the real living wage, average earnings are £407 weekly – the English average is £443. Housing is nine times the annualised salary, the 162nd least affordable area in England (where houses are eight times the annualised salary), and home ownership is lower than average at 61%, the 397th best area for this measure. The percentage of jobs in the area that are managerial and professional stands at 29%, ranking Havant at 293/533 for this measure.



Reading East

Early Years: 226	Reading East	England
Percentage of Nursery providers rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	92	93
Percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a good level of development	56	53

School: 152	Reading East	England
Percentage of children eligible for FSM attending a primary school rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	81	83
Percentage of children eligible for FSM achieving at least the expected level in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2	41	39
Percentage of children eligible for FSM attending a secondary school rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	82	72
Average Attainment 8 score for pupils eligible for FSM	42	39

Youth: 218	Reading East	England
Percentage of young people eligible for FSM that are not in education, employment or training (positive destination) after completing KS4	93	88
Average points score per entry for young people eligible for FSM at age 15 taking A-level or equivalent qualification	24	26
Percentage of young people eligible for FSM at age 15 achieving two or more A-Levels or equivalent by the age of 19	30	34

Adulthood: 37	Reading East	England
Median weekly salary of all employees who live in the local area	504	443
Average house prices compared to median annual salary of employees who live in the local area	9	8
Percentage of people that live in the local area who are in managerial and professional occupations	43	30
Percentage of jobs that are paid less than the applicable Living Wage Foundation living wage	16	25
Percentage of families with children who own their home	67	65

*Most recent HC Library Social Mobility Index (2018)



Analysis

With four of its indicators in the top 100 rankings and none are in the bottom 100; across all life stages, Reading East ranks at 106/533 on the Social Mobility Index. Reading East is a social mobility hotspot.

Early Years

At the early years life stage, Reading East performs least well at 226/533. 92% of nurseries in the constituency are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted, slightly worse than the national average of 93% and ranking Reading East as 316/533 for this measure. In the other measure for this life stage, the percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a 'good level of development', Reading East is ranked 173/533; 56% of those children achieve a good level compared to the national average of 53%.

School Years

Ranking at 152/533 at the school stage, Reading East is in the top 30% of constituencies. 81% of pupils eligible for free school meals attend good or outstanding primary schools, with 41% of them achieving the expected level in reading, writing, and maths at the end of Key Stage 2, the national average being 39%. At secondary level, attendance of FSM eligible pupils at good or outstanding schools is 82%, making Reading East the 203rd best constituency, and an average Attainment 8 score of 42 places Reading East at 118/533.

Youth Life Stage

The youth stage sees Reading East fall to rank at 218/533. 93% of young people who were eligible for free schools find themselves in a positive destination (defined as being in education, employment, or training)

after completing Key Stage 4. 30% of FSM-eligible young people will achieve two or more A Level or equivalent qualifications by age 19, those that do take A Levels will have an average points score per entry of 24. Reading East ranks at 301 and 414 for these measures respectively.

Adulthood Life Stage

At the adulthood life stage, Reading East ranks highest at 37/533. Only 16% of jobs pay less than the real living wage, average earnings are £504 weekly – the English average is £443. Housing is nine times the annualised salary, the 141st expensive area in England (where houses are eight times the annualised salary), but home ownership is at 67%, slightly higher than average. The percentage of jobs in the area that are managerial and professional stands at 43%, ranking Reading East at 48/533 for this measure.

Reading West

Early Years: 503	Reading East	England
Percentage of Nursery providers rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	85	93
Percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a good level of development	54	53

School: 491	Reading East	England
Percentage of children eligible for FSM attending a primary school rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	77	83
Percentage of children eligible for FSM achieving at least the expected level in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2	37	39
Percentage of children eligible for FSM attending a secondary school rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	33	72
Average Attainment 8 score for pupils eligible for FSM	34	39

Youth: 224	Reading East	England
Percentage of young people eligible for FSM that are not in education, employment or training (positive destination) after completing KS4	94	88
Average points score per entry for young people eligible for FSM at age 15 taking A-level or equivalent qualification	22	26
Percentage of young people eligible for FSM at age 15 achieving two or more A-Levels or equivalent by the age of 19	30	34

Adulthood: 137	Reading East	England
Median weekly salary of all employees who live in the local area	490	443
Average house prices compared to median annual salary of employees who live in the local area	9	8
Percentage of people that live in the local area who are in managerial and professional occupations	33	30
Percentage of jobs that are paid less than the applicable Living Wage Foundation living wage	17	25
Percentage of families with children who own their home	63	65

*Most recent HC Library Social Mobility Index (2018)

Analysis

With only two of its indicators in the top 100 rankings and four in the bottom 100; across all life stages, Reading West ranks at 449/533 on the Social Mobility Index. The area is a social mobility coldspot.

Early Years

At the early years life stage, Reading West performs worst at 503/533. 85% of nurseries in the constituency are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted, worse than the national average of 93% and ranking Reading West as 517/533 for this measure. In the other measure for this life stage, the percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a 'good level of development', Reading West is ranked 228/533; 54% of those children achieve a good level compared to the national average of 53%.

School Years

Ranking at 491/533 at the school stage, Reading West is in the bottom 10% of constituencies. 77% of pupils eligible for free school meals attend good or outstanding primary schools, with 37% of them achieving the expected level in reading, writing, and maths at the end of Key Stage 2, the national average being 39%. At secondary level, attendance of FSM eligible pupils at good or outstanding schools is 33%, making Reading West the 32nd worst constituency, and an average Attainment 8 score of 34 places Reading West at 487/533.

Youth Life Stage

The youth stage sees Reading West rise to rank at 224/533. 94% of young people who were eligible for free schools find themselves in a positive destination (defined as being in education, employment, or training) after completing Key Stage 4. 30% of FSM-eligible young people will achieve two or more A Level or equivalent qualifications by age 19, those that do take A Levels will have an average points score per entry of 22. Reading West ranks at 280 and 488 for these measures respectively.

Adulthood Life Stage

At the adulthood life stage, Reading West ranks highest at 137/533. Only 17% of jobs pay less than the real living wage, and average earnings are high at £490 weekly – the English average is £443. Housing is nine times the annualised salary, and home ownership is at 63%, slightly lower than average. The percentage of jobs in the area that are managerial and professional stands at 33%, ranking Reading West at 180/533 for this measure.



Disclaimer: Photographs within this report represent SSE's business and not necessarily the company's social mobility programmes. All photographs were taken before the coronavirus pandemic and consequential social distancing measures were implemented.



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