

Briefing Note:

The Social Mobility Index 2016

The Social Mobility Index¹ compares the chances that a child from a disadvantaged background will do well at school and get a good job across each of the 324 local authority district areas of England. It examines a range of measures of the educational outcomes achieved by young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and the local job and housing markets to shed light on which are the best and worst places in England in terms of the opportunities young people from poorer backgrounds have to succeed.

16 indicators are used to create the Social Mobility Index. A standardised score for each indicator is calculated based on the difference between the outcome achieved in the local area and the outcome achieved in a median local authority. Those that do better than average are given a positive score; those that do worse than average are given a negative score. This was used to develop rankings of the different local areas and categorise them as “social mobility hotspots” (top ranking 20 per cent of authorities) or “social mobility coldspots” (lowest ranking 20 per cent of authorities).

Cambridge is given a Social Mobility Rank of 275, which is a rank difference of -113 compared to the median local authority. **This score places Cambridge amongst the “social mobility coldspots”** (the worst performing 20 per cent of local authorities) with a rank of 50 out of the 65 local authorities in this group. Also within this group is Fenland at 6th and East Cambridgeshire at 14th.

Table 1: Overall ranking for Cambridge and rankings for component headings

Indicator Name	Area Name	R...	R... Diff	Rank Diff	162
▼ Overall					
Overall (Rank)	Cambridge	275	-113		
Early Years (Rank)	Cambridge	251	-89		
School (Rank)	Cambridge	285	-103		
Youth (Rank)	Cambridge	320	-158		
Adulthood (Rank)	Cambridge	68	94		

The overall index can mask a lot of variation across the different components of the Index. Many local areas that do well in terms of ranking in the Index can perform relatively badly in some components. Similarly, many local areas that do badly in the Index overall can have areas of real strength. For example, where educational outcomes for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are relatively poor, strong job markets can provide more opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to do well as adults.

¹ The Social Mobility Index, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496103/Social_Mobility_Index.pdf

Cambridge falls into the category of “weaknesses in education for disadvantaged children but relatively good performance on adulthood measures”.

Table 2: Early Years, School and Youth components of Social Mobility Index 2016

▼ Early Years				
% of nursery providers rated 'outstanding' or 'good' by Ofsted (Rank)	Cambridge	117	45	
% of children eligible for FSM attending a secondary school rated 'outstanding' or 'good' by Ofsted (Rank)	Cambridge	286	-124	
▼ School				
% of children eligible for FSM attending a primary school rated 'outstanding' or 'good' by Ofsted (Rank)	Cambridge	52	110	
% of children eligible for FSM attending a secondary school rated 'outstanding' or 'good' by Ofsted (Rank)	Cambridge	249	-87	
% of children eligible for FSM achieving at least a level 4 in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2 (Rank)	Cambridge	303	-141	
% of children eligible for FSM achieving 5 good GCSEs including English and maths (Rank)	Cambridge	272	-110	
▼ Youth				
% of young people eligible for FSM that are not in education, employment or training one year after completing their GCSEs (Rank)	Cambridge	263	-101	
Average points score per entry for young people eligible for FSM at age 15 taking A-level or equivalent qualifications (Rank)	Cambridge	320	-158	
% of young people eligible for FSM at age 15 achieving 2 or more A-levels or equivalent qualifications by the age of 19 (Rank)	Cambridge	167	-5	
% of young people eligible for FSM at age 15 entering higher education by the age of 19 (Rank)	Cambridge	151	11	
% of young people eligible for FSM at age 15 entering higher education at a selective university (most selective third by UCAS tariff scores) by the age of 19 (Rank)	Cambridge	231	-69	

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds in Cambridge that do relatively badly at school are helped by a strong labour market (more jobs and higher than average wages) to convert their disadvantage into better outcomes as an adult, although this is hampered by a high cost of living and limited access to the “good jobs” in the city. This is symptomatic of significant inequalities between rich and poor in the city.

Table 3: Adulthood component of Social Mobility Index 2016

▼ Adulthood				
Median weekly salary of employees who live in the local area (Rank)	Cambridge	88	74	
Average house prices compared to median annual salary of employees who live in the local area (Rank)	Cambridge	299	-137	
% of people that live in the local area who are in managerial and professional occupations (SOC 1 and 2) (Rank)	Cambridge	9	153	
% of jobs that are paid less than the applicable Living Wage Foundation living wage (Rank)	Cambridge	24	138	
% of families with children who own their home (Rank)	Cambridge	290	-128	

Within the Social Mobility Index report it states that “Many of the richest places in England are doing worse for their disadvantaged children than places that are much poorer. While there is undoubtedly a link between the affluence of a local area and the life chances of disadvantaged young people – with richer areas tending to do better against the Social Mobility Index and poorer areas worse (especially those outside London) – there are many affluent areas that fail young people from poor backgrounds.” Cambridge could be considered to be one of these affluent areas failing its children.