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Psychology of social class-based inequalities

Policy implications for a revised (2010) UK Equality Act

REPORT

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Executive summary

The UK is currently facing a social and economic crisis in which social class-based inequalities continue to deepen, with psychological consequences and precursors that are not widely understood. Evidence for the asymmetric impact of the Covid 19-pandemic and related crises, an ongoing Equality Act (2010) Review, and a policy context focused on 'levelling up' opportunities converge to demonstrate the need to take stock of the evidence base concerning the psychology of social class-based inequalities.

This report provides a first of its kind rapid review and synthesis of research in psychology on social class-based inequalities with an orientation toward the UK policy context. It reviews primary and secondary research published within the discipline of psychology (within the UK or a related context), examining the impact of class-based prejudice and discrimination, and/or the psychological processes that contribute to social class-based and wider socioeconomic inequalities. A central aim is to synthesise the disparate evidence base around three core UK policy areas common to the research (Education, Health and Work), and to consider the implications for the inclusion of social class as a protected characteristic into the Equality Act (2010).

Social class – defined as a social category into which we are socialised that affords differing amounts of economic, social, and cultural resources – is conceptualised and measured as being composed of both objective and subjective components. In the context of education, health and work, findings illustrate that psychological dimensions of prejudice and discrimination contribute to class-based inequalities which, in turn, can further influence classism, the experience of which has a significant and detrimental psychological impact on working class and low socioeconomic status people. Social class identity and psychological responses to socioeconomic conditions start to take shape in early childhood and continue throughout the lifespan, affecting how an individual experiences their daily life, their relationships, how they perceive themselves and how they are treated by others, including educational institutions, public services, and professional organisations.

Class-based stereotypes circulate throughout society and influence the perceived competence and status of people from different class backgrounds, in addition to the predominant norms and values which become embedded in education, wellbeing, and workplace contexts. Class-based inequality in the domains of education, health, and work thus partly reflect psychological processes that arise from structural socioeconomic success/adversity, feelings of belonging (or not) in different settings, and the privileging/disfavouring of particular ways of communicating and behaving that are associated with our social class. Tackling social class-based inequalities and class-based prejudice and discminination entails recognising the complex processes involved in the protection and incorporation of behavioural expectations and norms and recognising the importance of the wider socio-political context to which psychological wellbeing and day to day practices respond.

A vital first step to tackle social class-based inequalities is the inclusion of social class as a protected characteristic in the Equality Act (2010). Directly changing the wider socio-political context by outlawing discrimination based on social class or socioeconomic status would create an immediate and clear legal mandate for initiatives to reduce class-based discrimination and a standardised, widely implemented method of data collection on publicly reported social class-based outcomes. This mandate has the potential to see a medium to long term reduction in exclusion and discrimination in practices routed through; law change driven societal norm shifts around what is right and wrong, increased individual and shared literacy around class-based

prejudice and discrimination, and a shift in social class-based role stereotypes. Finally, a reduction in prejudice and discrimination could not only see an improvement in education, heath and work related outcomes for working class people, but also a longer term reduction in the psychological damage this causes and the detrimental impact of this damage on our society.

Keywords: *Review, Social Class, Classism, Psychology, Education, Health, Work, UK Policy, Equality Act.*

Section 1: Introduction

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STRUCTURE OF REPORT

This section outlines the aims and the context of the report, sets out the political and legal context for the aims, summarises the complexities in how social class is conceptualised, measured and theorised, proposes working definitions both for social class and for class-based discrimination, and finally, sets out the methods and inclusion criteria used in the rapid review conducted for this report.

Following sections will present a synthesis of research extracted across three key UK policy areas: Education (Section 2), Health (Section 3) and, Work (Section 4). Each will summarise key insights and highlight implications for the inclusion of social class as a protected characteristic in an updated UK Equality Act (2010) (hereafter 'the Act'). The report will end with an appendix table that outlines the main measures of social class utilised within the evidence base.

OVERALL AIMS OF THE REPORT

A growing but currently disparate body of research in psychology exists which focuses on the production and causes of social class-based inequalities. This report aims to provide a first of its kind synthesis of this evidence base around three core UK policy areas to consider implications for the incorporation of social class as a protected characteristic into a revised Act (2010).

CONTEXT OF REPORT

This report forms part of the British Psychology Society (BPS) 2021/2022 campaign activities which had the broad objective to focus on the psychology of social class-based inequalities and the implications for a revised Act that would incorporate social class as a protected characteristic. The campaign further aimed to organise this information across highly pertinent areas of government policy both at a UK level and across the four nation governance structures.

This present report was part of these campaign activities and was led by a UK team of academic experts in psychology and social class-based inequalities across a wide range of areas within psychology (including education, health, and work and business) and a wide range of quantitative and qualitative methodologies and modes of analysis. This team includes senior academic leaders (Dr Bridgette Rickett), eminent Professors (Professor Paula Reavey) and Associate Professors (Dr Matthew Easterbrook), mid-career (Dr Maxine Woolhouse) and early-career academics (Dr Jennifer Sheehy-Skeffington) and doctoral students (Lewis Doyle, Ian Hadden and Isobel Thomas).

To ensure an inclusive process, where gaps in expertise were identified, the team invited contributions from additional experts and contacted relevant BPS divisions and sections for further expert contributions (see full list of contributors on the title page with section authors listed in each section).

SOCIAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

A synthesis of social class-based inequalities research within psychology is timely. The UK government has publicly communicated a strategy to 'level up' outcomes across richer and poorer regions of the UK[1] and set out a legislative agenda with the stated goal of realising opportunities for all social class groups in relation to education, health and wellbeing, and working lives[2]. These governmental-level goals arrive against the backdrop of emerging evidence that the Covid-19 pandemic had greater educational,[3] health,[4] and economic[5] impact on the most socioeconomically disadvantaged, opening up what has been termed a 'new class divide'.[6] Importantly, the Act (2010) Review Campaign has outlined specific aims to engage with social class and is looking to include class as a protected characteristic in a revised version of the Act.[7] These three features of the current context mean there is now an opportunity for policymakers to engage with research that aims to address social class-based inequalities.

LEGAL CONTEXT

The timeliness of a synthesis of social class-based inequalities research in psychology also reflects the current UK legal context regarding the Act.[8] The Act provides protection against discrimination in respect of nine protected characteristics. These include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.[9] However, across England, Scotland and Wales, the Act does not legally protect against social class-based discrimination, leading to potential discrimination on the basis of income, accent, education, and/or family background. In Northern Ireland, which does not enjoy the benefit of a single equality and anti-discrimination legislative framework,[10] the law is also bereft of a prohibition against

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1 Her Majesty's Government (2022).
2 Prime Minister's Office and HRH The Prince of Wales (2022).
3 Goudeau et al. (2022).
4 Green at al. (2021).
5 Smith et al. (2021).
6 TUC (2019); Arrieta (2022).
7 Bi (2021).
8 The Act does not currently apply to Northern Ireland, any benefits identified are founded on the support for a single consolidated equality act for NI which also contains class as a protected characteristic.
9 Equality Act (2010), chapter 1.
10 E.g. anti-discrimination law in Northern Ireland is dispersed across a number of legislative enactments including the Race Relations Order (1997), Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations NI (2006).

class-based discrimination. In recognition of the limitations of the existing legal framework pertaining to anti-discrimination law, leading scholars have cogently argued for the inclusion of an express prohibition against class-based discrimination on the basis that 'reliance upon existing standards has proven grossly inadequate'[11] and that, in the absence of a prohibition against class-based discrimination in the UK, individuals are left to 'squeeze claims into the [existing] protected characteristics'.[12]

The public sector equality duty (PSED) was created under the Act to require public bodies to adopt transparent and effective measures to address social class-based inequalities.[13] However, while Scottish[14] (2018) and Welsh[15] (2021) public bodies now have a legal obligation to consider the PSED to reduce inequalities caused by 'socioeconomic disadvantage', no comparable legal obligation exists in England. This is because section 1 of the Act, which contains the PSED, and which was designed to ensure public authorities address inequality and socio-economic disadvantage when making decisions, has never been enacted or implemented. Similarly, in Northern Ireland, although section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a statutory obligation on all public bodies to have due regard to the need to promote 'equality of opportunity' and 'good relations' between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinions, racial groups, age, marital status, sexual orientation, sex, disability, and those with dependants, no express prohibition against class or socio-economic based discrimination exists.[16] Therefore, across all four nations in the UK, anti-discrimination and equality law does not preclude class-based discrimination. In addition, a recent evaluation of the impact of the PSED concluded that there was a need for UK law to be more ambitious to achieve a reduction of socioeconomic disadvantage.[17]

In the UK as it currently stands, organisations and companies can decide not to employ or promote a person because of, for example, their regional accent,[18] school background,[19] or where they or their families live.[20] Put another way, discrimination based on one's social class or socioeconomic status is immune from direct challenge, as such behaviour is permissible within the legal confines of the law across all regions of the UK. Additionally, teachers can make assumptions about children and their abilities[21] due to the way they speak,[22] their postcode[23] or their motivation to participate in fruitful extracurricular activities.[24] All these practices are legitimated within the current legal frameworks pertaining to equality and anti-discrimination law.

Furthermore, while international and regional human rights law does not explicitly include class as a protected characteristic in relation to equality and non-discrimination guarantees, several international treaties do prohibit discrimination on the basis of 'social origin', 'birth' and 'other

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[11] Van Bueren, G. (2021, p.149).
[12] Benn (2020, p.31).
[13] Equality Act (2010), section 149.
[14] The Fairer Scotland Duty, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (2018).
[15] The Equality Act (Authorities subject to a duty regarding Socio-economic Inequalities) (Wales) Regulations, 2021.
[16] For review of section 75 public sector duty in Northern Ireland, see McLaughlin & Faris (2004).
[17] See Equality and Human Rights Commission (2018).
[18] E.g. Sharma et al. (2021).
[19] E.g. Boliver & Powell (2021).
[20] E.g. de Vries et al. (2022).
[21] Batruch et al. (2017); Campbell (2014); Doyle et al. (2022).
[22] Sharma et al. (2021).
[23] Denedo & Ejiogu (2021).
[24] Crouzevialle & Darnon (2019).

status'.[25] [26] [27] However, as has been noted by legal experts in social class and discrimination law, for example, the rights enshrined within the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which are domestically enforceable in the UK, by virtue of the Human Rights Act 1998, must be delivered without discrimination on numerous grounds including 'social origin… birth or other status'.[28] Additionally, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, who oversee and monitor the implementation of the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which the UK government ratified in 1976, has provided important guidance on the legal parameters of the meaning of 'social origin'. In stating that the phrase encapsulates 'a person's inherited social status'[29] the Committee clearly align social origin with a person's wider socio-economic and class background. However, the ICESCR is an unincorporated treaty under the constitutional design of the UK and the Committee's guidance, though relevant, is non-binding in nature. In addition, as Van Bueren argues, although it is possible to interpret the phrase 'social origin' to include class, 'this has not generally been the approach of national courts and regional and global human rights'.[30] As such, there is little discernible published or available research on the impact of any international protection of 'social origins' on specific social class-based outcomes around education, health, work, or otherwise.

Finally, under the existing legal framework in the UK, most private bodies do not have a duty to attend to the need to eliminate social class-based discrimination, while public bodies in England, such as healthcare providers, are not legally obliged to do so. Importantly, even reporting class-based inequalities, such as gaps in education, healthcare and pay is not mandatory. Consequently, this creates a significant data deficit in that it prevents the compilation of robust disaggregated data, whereby potential class-based discriminatory practices could be uncovered. Organisations and institutions are thus not motivated to collect data or implement training and recruitment practices that acknowledge social class-based discrimination, inhibiting the ability of working-class or low-income people to legally challenge such discrimination. Therefore, the clear legal lacuna which currently exists under UK equality and anti-discrimination law, which permits class-based discrimination to occur with impunity, represents a legal anomaly requiring rectification. By including social class as an additional protected characteristic within the Act (2010) and within future amendments to the domestic legislation in Northern Ireland, these concerns would be addressed directly. This would also put the UK at the forefront of international advances toward the explicit prohibition of discrimination based on socioeconomic origin.[31]

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[25] E.g. see Article 2(2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); Article 2(1) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

[26] European Convention on Human Rights, 1948, Article 14.

[27] UN, CESCR (2009), General comment No. 20: Non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights (art. 2, para. 2, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), UN Doc. E/C.12/GC/20, 2 July 2009, para 24.

[28] For example, see Article 2(2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); Article 2(1) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

[29] UN, CESCR (2009), General comment No. 20: Non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights (art. 2, para. 2, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), UN Doc. E/C.12/GC/20, 2 July 2009, para 24.

[30] Van Bueren (2021), n(3), 279.

[31] See https://pace.coe.int/en/news/8688/tackling-discrimination-based-on-social-origin

HOW IS SOCIAL CLASS CONCEIVED WITHIN UK PSYCHOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP?

The research discussed in the following sections of the report presents social class as a multifaceted construct,[32] this need not be a barrier to grappling with social class empirically and legislatively, with criminal law experts noting that 'class is no harder to define than two very familiar grounds of discrimination law: (i) race and (ii) religion or belief'.[33] Furthermore, from a lay perspective, British citizens have a clear sense of what social class is,[34] they report a strong identity within a particular social class category and feel their perceived social class affects the way they are treated.[35]

[36]Established measures of social class are often based on socioeconomic status (SES) typically using objective measures that focus on economic resource levels such as eligibility for state benefits (e.g. free school meals[37]) and current income[38] to represent individual, childhood or family economic disadvantage. Additionally, family education level (e.g. parent's highest educational qualification)[39] is often used as an objective means to capture an individual's economic, social and cultural disadvantage. Finally, community level socioeconomic background is commonly used to represent social class neighbourhood background (e.g. Deprivation Index)[40] capturing elements of economic, social, and cultural disadvantage.

On the other hand, subjective indicators can be a more personally meaningful way to measure social class as they capture how and where we see our position in society, including perceptions of our relative socioeconomic standing (compared to others in one's organisation, community or country), and our self-identification as working class, middle class, or upper class.[41] Subjective measurements can also illuminate individual level asynchrony between how class is measured and self-identification in regards to social class (e.g. self-identifying as working class versus our current socioeconomic status as middle class)[42] and capture context and the intersectional nature of social class more readily[43].

WHAT EXPLANATORY FRAMEWORKS ARE USED?

This report will review a range of theories employed within UK psychology that view structural inequalities as producing variable socio-economic conditions which enable or limit access to different types of resources. Access to resources, in turn, shapes our social class identities and psychological responses, causing class-based stereotypes to circulate through society and become embedded in education, health and work structures and processes. These embedded stereotypes then become norms that influence the perceived competence of people from different class backgrounds, creating and maintaining class-based prejudice and discrimination.

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[32] See, e.g. Antonoplis (2022); Day (2020).
[33] Benn (p.35, 2020).
[34] Evans & Mellon (2016)
[35] Social Mobility Commission (2019).
[36] See appendix for overview of measures table.
[37] E.g. Hunt et al. (2022).
[38] E.g. Friedman & Laurison (2019).
[39] E.g. Davis-Kean (2005).
[40] E.g. Williamson et al. (2017).
[41] Kraus & Keltner (2009); Schwartz et al. (2009); Vliestra et al. (2021).
[42] See Diemer & Rasheed Ali (2009).
[43] Rubin et al. (2014).

In this way social class acts as an identity category into which we are socialised[44] to shape our material affordances,[45] our perceptions,[46] values,[47] practices[48] and how we are perceived and treated by others.[49]

DEFINITIONS

SOCIAL CLASS

This report defines *social class as a category into which people are socialised, which affords particular amounts of economic, cultural, and social capital.* Capital is an established concept in the social sciences and now employed by UK psychologists to aid psychologically informed understanding around social class.[50]

A main facet of social class is SES understood as *economic capital*[51] and assessment of a person's access to income and financial assets. In UK research this often involves collecting data on both childhood access to assets (e.g. free school meal eligibility;[52] main breadwinners' job at age of 14[53] and attendance at state versus fee-paying school) and current access (e.g. current income; current occupation/job grade).[54]

Cultural capital, a second facet, is the legitimacy of a person's interests, preferences, and cultural knowledge according to dominant groups in society. This is most often measured via childhood measures (e.g. parental level of education; proportion of number of young people from each area who enter higher education aged 18 or 19) in addition to subjective social class measures.

Social capital, the third facet, is the economic and cultural value of the personal ties and networks that a person develops or inherits. Currently within UK psychology scholarship, this is captured via parental level of education and subjective social class measures.

CLASSISM

Following the above, this report defines *classism* as the systems and processes that create and maintain inequality (including prejudice and discrimination) based on social class.[55] Often measured via measurements of bias (e.g. teacher judgments;[56] biased responses to a vignette)[57] and experiences of classism (e.g. experience of classism questionnaire).[58]

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44 Manstead (2018).
45 Adams et al. (2012).
46 Kraus & Stephens (2012).
47 Liu et al. (2004).
48 Manstead (2018).
49 Lott, B. (2012).
50 See Wagner & McLaughlin (2015).
51 Savage (2015), drawing on conceptualisation from Bourdieu (1986).
52 E.g. Hunt et al. (2022).
53 E.g. Friedman & Laurison (2019).
54 E.g. Friedman & Laurison (2019).
55 Benn (2020).
56 Campbell (2015).
57 Holman (2015).
58 Allan et al. (2021).

This report is informed by legal[59] and psychological[60] scholarship that understands class as a social category that simultaneously intersects with multiple other social categories and classism as the systems and processes that simultaneously discriminate based on multiple other social categories, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability. See report policy area sections for insights on intersecting processes, outcomes and findings within education, health and work.

METHODS OF THE RESEARCH SYNTHESIS

To enable a synthesis of the current research within psychology on social class-based inequalities, in addition to empirically informed implications for legislative change in the Act (2010), we selected a rapid review as a streamlined systematic approach given the campaign timeline.

Following this, we arrived at predefined inclusion criteria for the evidence review which met the following: the evidence was judged as high quality in that it was clear, verifiable and had the levels of information that would enable peer-review; was primary research (e.g. peer reviewed published studies) utilising qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods or secondary research (e.g. reviews; government reports); was conducted within the current UK context (authors; data collection; location) or was judged to be pertinent to current UK context and understanding; was the most recently published, high impact and relevant research finding (note: theory scholarship was included irrespective of date of publication); and contained evidence that contextualised or contributed to current understanding of the influence of class-based inequalities and discrimination on psychology and/or the psychological processes through which social class-based inequalities play out.

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[59] Lewis & Grzanka (2016).

[60] Cole (2009).

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Section 2: Psychology of social class-based inequalities – Policy implications for a revised (2010) UK Equality Act: Education

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MEASUREMENT

For school students, research in the UK usually measures social class rather narrowly via a single element of their socioeconomic status (SES) i.e. parental income. This is usually indicated by their eligibility for free school meals (FSM), either currently or at any point within the last six years (note that the number of years of eligibility for free school meals is a more reliable indicator of childhood poverty but is not usually available[61]). For students above secondary school level, any type of FSM data from their school years is usually not available and so other measures are used, such as their parents' highest educational qualification (usually a binary indicator of whether one of their parents attended university) or, considerably less effectively, measures based on the economic characteristics of the local area where they grew up.[62] Measures of subjective perceptions of social class are rarely used.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Children from working class families have worse educational outcomes than their peers. This is evident from the very earliest years of education and becomes more pronounced as children progress through the education system.

When starting school, 'disadvantaged' children – defined by the Department for Education as those eligible for free school meals (FSM) at any point within a six-year span – are estimated to lag behind their peers by the equivalent of five months of learning.[63] By the end of primary school, this increases to nine months of learning, and, by GCSE-level, to at least 18 months.[63] At A-Level, disadvantaged students' attainment is, on average, over three full grades lower than their peers'.[63] Since disadvantaged students tend to choose A-levels and alternative qualifications with lower

[61] Jerrim (2021).
[62] Jerrim (2021).
[63] Hunt et al. (2022).

value in the labour market, this gap rises to the equivalent of four and a half A-level grades when adjusted for estimates of economic returns.[64]

The absence rates of students eligible for FSM are almost double that of their peers, their suspension rates are four times higher, and their permanent exclusion rates yet higher.[65] FSM eligible students are 41% less likely to progress to higher education, and 70% less likely to progress to high status universities that provide degrees that give the largest returns in lifetime earnings.[66] [67]

These socioeconomic inequalities are seemingly intractable, are likely to increase post-pandemic[68], and are considerably larger than inequalities between genders, or between White, Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnic groups. However, there are large variations in the size of the social class attainment gap across the UK, and there are complex interactions between ethnicity, social class, and gender. For example, boys eligible for FSM tend to have lower attainment than girls, and the ethnic groups with the largest social class gaps in attainment (White British and mixed White and Asian) have gaps that are nearly three times those of the groups with the smallest gaps (Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black African students). This may be in part because parents of many minority ethnic groups may have higher aspirations for their children's education, regardless of their social class,[69] whereas working class White parents may have lower aspirations as a result of chronic factors such as the multiple impact of marginalisation and intergenerational poverty.[70]

ECONOMIC AND STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES

Wider structural and economic inequalities in society make it harder for students of lower social class to excel in education. The 'digital divide', for example, describes how low SES families have less access to technology and high-speed internet. These technologies support educational activities, and so the digital divide makes completing academic work more challenging for lower SES students, usually measured in these studies by parental reports of their SES and their children's eligibility for FSM.[71]

Differences in the home environment also feed into inequalities in educational outcomes. Lower SES families, as measured by household income and parental reports of their level of education, tend to have fewer books at home, read fewer stories to their children, and are less engaged with their children's education.[72] Lower SES parents, as measured by their children's eligibility for FSM, are more likely to indicate that noisy and cramped conditions make learning at home more difficult,[73] and provide less support, spend less time, and are less confident and effective at helping their children with their schoolwork.[74]

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64 Hunt et al. (2022).
65 Department for Education (2021; 2022).
66 Hubble et al. (2021).
67 Goudeau et al. (2021).
68 Department for Education (2022).
69 Davis-Kean (2005).
70 Strand (2014).
71 Andrew et al. (2020); Clark & Hawkins (2010); Easterbrook et al. (2022); Goudeau et al. (2021); Sammons et al. (2015); Shield & Dockrell (2008).
72 Blevins-Knabe & Musun-Miller (1996); Bradley et al. (2001); Gaddis (2013).
73 Easterbrook et al. (2022).
74 Daw (2012); Easterbrook et al. (2022); Guryan et al. (2008); Hill & Stafford (1974); Rønning (2011).

Consequently, when the arena of learning is shifted from the school to the home, the progress of low SES students suffers more than their peers. Summer learning loss is particularly pronounced among lower SES children, as measured by a range of indicators of SES,[75] and school closures actioned as part of the Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic are expected to drastically increase social class attainment gaps.[76]

Although schools are often thought to level the playing field, they do not offer equivalent learning opportunities for those of low and high SES. Within-school factors, such as setting and streaming practices and low teacher expectations of low-SES students, play an important role and we will consider these shortly.[77] But between-school factors also play a role, with low SES students, as measured by a range of indicators of social class, tending to attend schools that, compared with other schools, have less impact on students' educational achievement.[78] There are many reasons for this. Low-SES students tend to be clustered in a relatively small number of schools, with half of all FSM students educated in only 14% of all schools.[79] Such schools attract a greater percentage of early-career teachers, who tend to be motivated to 'make a difference' but who are still evolving the effective teaching practices that their more experienced colleagues have already developed.[80] This matters because the difference in learning of those taught by a less effective teacher and those taught by a more effective teacher can be equivalent to an entire year's progress.[81]

Schools with a high percentage of low-SES students also tend to have higher teacher turnover – especially of high-performing teachers[82] – and higher levels of vacancies, creating day-to-day pressures on the existing workforce so that, for example, more students are taught by out-of-subject teachers.[83] A vicious circle can ensue, where a school becomes 'demonised', encouraging affluent families to engage their economic, social, and cultural capital to ensure that their child attends a school with a more affluent intake.[84] Indeed, the 500 comprehensive schools with the highest GCSE results in England are socially selective, taking around half the national average percentage of students eligible for FSM,[85] a figure that is in large part explained by large house price premiums in the catchment area of the highest-performing schools.[86] Low-SES parents also tend to be less able to provide their children with access to high-quality private tutoring,[87] reducing their chances of gaining entrance to academically selective schools.[88]

These and other structural inequalities make engaging and succeeding in education more challenging for students with low SES, especially during times of school closures. Yet, they also contribute to our perceptions and treatment of low SES or working class students, further compounding educational inequalities.

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[75] Alexander et al. (2007); Cooper et al. (1996); Stewart et al. (2018).
[76] Goudeau et al. (2021).
[77] Shaw et al. (2017).
[78] Early et al. (2020); Hobbs (2016).
[79] Department for Education (2017).
[80] Allen & Sims (2018).
[81] Hanushek (1992, 2011); Sutton Trust (2011).
[82] Goldhaber et al. (2011).
[83] Allen & Sims (2018); Goldhaber et al. (2011).
[84] Montacute & Cullinane (2018); Reay & Lucey (2010).
[85] Cullinane et al. (2017).
[86] R. Jones (2018); Warwick-Ching (2018).
[87] Jerrim (2017); Montacute & Cullinane (2018)
[88] Jerrim & Sims (2018)

STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes are in part generated through the representations of particular groups in different social positions and roles.[89] The middle/upper class are heavily overrepresented among the establishment and elite of UK society, while the working class are vastly underrepresented. For example, while around half the adult population identify as working class, just 4% of doctors, 11% of new Oxford undergraduates, and 8% of Labour MPs are from working class backgrounds.[90] Statistics like these, along with widespread belief in meritocracy – that individuals are responsible for their own position in life – fuel stigmatising stereotypes of working class individuals, who are seen as lazy and unmotivated and blamed for their low status.[91]

Teachers absorb society's stereotypes in the same way as everyone else, and thus are liable to hold negative stereotypes about working class, disadvantaged students.[92] These stereotypes can fuel direct instances of classism[93] but can also influence teachers' implicit evaluations of and interactions with working class students in ways that reinforce those stereotypes.[94]

Evidence suggests that, on average, teachers may be less encouraging towards working class students. Studies have found that they are less likely to encourage them to engage in fruitful extra-curricular activities,[95] and, despite oral participation being highly valued, that they are less likely to encourage low SES students to speak in class,[96] compounding early differences in language ability.[97] Developing research suggests that teachers, on average, give a student's piece of written work a lower grade, rate them as having less potential, and recommend that they be placed in a lower ability set or track, if they believe that they were economically disadvantaged.[98] Similar biases have been found in the assessment of children as young as seven years old.[99]

Bias has been found to contribute to the overrepresentation of working class students in lower ability sets or streams,[100] which can have a lasting impact on learning[101] as 88% of children placed into ability sets at age four stay in the same-ability-level set throughout their education.[102] Lower sets can be 'psychological prisons'[103] that reduce expectations, motivation, self-esteem, academic enjoyment, and thus academic performance.[104] Early ability setting makes the association between social background and attainment stronger,[105] and can make low attainment appear fixed.[106]

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89 Eagly & Koenig (2021).
90 Social Mobility Commission (2016); O'Grady (2019).
91 Browman & Miele (2019); Cozzarelli et al. (2001); Kuppens et al. (2018); Lyndqvist et al. (2017).
92 Dunne & Gazeley (2008).
93 Walkerdine (2021).
94 Pit-ten Cate & Glock (2018).
95 Crouzevialle & Darnon (2019).
96 Goudeau et al. (2022).
97 Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2019).
98 Batruch et al. (2017); Campbell (2014); Doyle et al. (2022).
99 Campbell (2014).
100 Cassen & Kingdon (2007); Dunne et al. (2007); Kutnick et al. (2005).
101 Gazeley & Dunne (2007).
102 Dixon (2002).
103 Boaler (2005, p.5).
104 Boaler (1997); Boaler et al. (2000); Boliver & Capsada-Munsech (2021); Gillborn & Youdell (2000); Hallam & Ireson (2006); Ireson et al. (2005); Parsons & Hallam (2014); William & Bartholomew (2004).
105 Van de Werfhorst & Mijs (2010).
106 Francis et al. (2017).

Those in lower sets are also more likely to be taught by inexperienced and less effective teachers who also expect less of them,[107] further dampening their chances of educational success.

It is important to note that not all teachers will demonstrate bias, and research suggests that biases can be reduced if both the individual and institution are invested in bias reduction.[108] For example, bias seems more likely to influence teachers' judgements at times when they are under strain,[109] and when there is no clear evaluation rubric.[110] Schools and education boards should work with their teachers to develop practices, environments, and workloads that are conducive to equitable teaching.[111]

PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

Given the structural and social barriers to educational success that lower SES students face, it is perhaps not surprising that those students also report lower expectations of their own success and less belief in their own ability.[112] Low SES students worry more about the possibility of performing poorly in comparison to their peers and about being judged negatively based on their performance, especially when assessments are frequent.[113]

Simply believing that people expect you to perform poorly because of your social background or circumstances can ignite *stereotype threat*; a concern that your behaviour will confirm others' negative expectations about 'people like me'. This induces anxiety, interferes with learning,[114] reduces performance, and increases disengagement from education.[115]

Indeed, stereotype threat has been evidenced among those with lower SES as early as age six[116] and on into adulthood.[117] It can be triggered among lower SES students by seemingly innocuous yet ubiquitous classroom practices like raising hands,[118] ability testing,[119] and the presence of books and furniture associated with affluence.[120] As stereotype threat affects only individuals who are members of negatively stereotyped groups, it increases educational inequalities. Interventions that reduce the negative impact of stereotype threat have been shown to reduce the gap in maths performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students at age 11–14 in England by up to 62%.[121]

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[107] Allen & Sims (2018).
[108] Stephens et al. (2020).
[109] Feldon (2007).
[110] Quinn (2020).
[111] Murphy et al. (2018).
[112] Bruno et al. (1999); Gibbons & Borders (2010).
[113] Jury et al. (2015); (2019); Smeding et al. (2013).
[114] Schmader et al. (2008); Lyons et al. (2018).
[115] Croizet & Claire (1998); Schmader et al. (2008); Spencer & Castano (2007).
[116] Désert et al. (2009).
[117] Croizet & Claire (1998); Spencer & Castano (2008).
[118] Goudeau & Croizet (2017).
[119] Croizet & Claire (1998).
[120] Goodale & Huo (2020).
[121] Hadden et al. (2020).

DIFFERENT CULTURES

Working class contexts tend to be characterised by a strong focus on interdependence, with individuals' choices, obligations, and agency intertwined with those of their families and communities. In contrast, middle/upper-class contexts and, correspondingly, education institutions, tend to be characterised by a focus on independence, whereby individuals are understood as free, autonomous, self-directed, and independent of social contexts.[122]

Working-class individuals can therefore experience a clash between the interdependence with which they are familiar and the independence that many educational institutions expect and promote. This can make the language, tasks, and assessment styles used by educational institutions feel unfamiliar and excluding, reducing working class students' capacity to perform to the best of their ability, inducing stress, and discouraging them from utilising the academic support available to them, thus decreasing their academic performance.[123]

Typical assessment styles are also biased towards independence, which disadvantage working class students and so contribute to social class gaps in attainment. Assessment styles that are more interdependent in nature, such as those that adopt group-based work, increase the performance and sense of fit of working class students and so can decrease the social class attainment gap.[124] Indeed, the type of individual, competitive motivation that individualised assessment encourages in students, known as performance-approach goals, fuels a sense of threat among working class students and can increase the social class attainment gap.[125] In contrast, emphasising interdependence and knowledge mastery in messages and assessment styles can raise the performance of working class students yet has no detriment to middle/upper class students.

Educational institutions that promote independence can create an excluding culture towards working class and low SES students.[126] A decision to pursue education can therefore be perceived as countercultural for working class students and entail the risk of becoming alienated from their families and communities.[127] Pursuing and succeeding at education are also counter to working class ideas of masculinity and femininity, which can discourage working class students from pursuing achievement or progression in education.[128]

Concerns about belonging and fitting in are not trivial; they predict hard academic outcomes including GCSE grades,[129] the ranking of the universities that students apply to, and their achievement at university, even after prior academic performance has been accounted for.[130] Interventions that boost feelings of fit and belonging at school and university can raise the performance of working class students and improve their educational trajectory.[131]

[122] Stephens et al. (2012).
[123] Phillips et al. (2020); Stephens et al. (2012).
[124] Dittman (2020).
[125] Crouzevialle & Darnon (2019), Dittman et al. (2020); Jury et al. (2015); Smeding et al. (2013).
[126] Murphy et al. (2018).
[127] Ball et al. (2002); Reay et al. (2001).
[128] Archer (2001); Archer et al. (2001); (2013); Hutchings & Archer (2001).
[129] Easterbrook et al. (2022); Walton & Cohen (2011).
[130] Jerrim et al. (2015); Nieuwenhuis et al. (2018); Veldman et al. (2019).
[131] Oyserman et al. (2006); Walton & Cohen (2011).

FINANCES

Investing in education involves more risk for working class students. Financially, lower SES individuals are more averse to risk and debt, deterring them from entering higher education.[132] Indeed, financial concerns among low SES university students increase stress, reduce belonging, erode focus and mental and physical health,[133] contribute to a lack of social integration,[134] and reduce academic performance.[135]

SUMMARY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ACT (2010) REVISION – SOCIAL CLASS AS A PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC IN LAW

To tackle class-based educational inequalities, we advocate that the Act 2010 be updated to include social class as a protected characteristic, for the following reasons.

1. **An updated Act 2010 would make discrimination based on social class illegal and provide a route through which to raise relevant grievances.**
    - It would mandate organisations, including educational institutions, to work towards eradicating class-based discrimination through, for example, appropriate training, policies, and procedures.
    - Over time, these actions can lead educational institutions to develop a culture of inclusivity and reduce many of the current barriers that result in working class students not realising the benefits of education to which all members of society are entitled.

2. **An updated Act 2010 would divert human and financial resources towards implementing policies, procedures, and actions aimed at supporting those from working class backgrounds in education.**
    - Although the appetite to implement these is often present among managers, many report that they cannot justify investing resources to support groups based on non-protected characteristics.[136] An updated Act (2010) would not only legitimise these, but mandate them.
    - Initiatives would support people from working class backgrounds directly, such as mentoring and funded Foundation Year programmes, which have been shown to bolster feelings of belonging and reduce fears of being excluded.[137]
    - Such resources would also support working class students indirectly by:
        - *raising awareness of class-based inequalities among educators,*
        - *incentivising actions aimed at reducing class-based bias and discrimination; and*
        - *amending practices that currently favour middle/upper-class individuals so that they are equally relevant to lower-class individuals, for example ensuring that universities emphasise the value that they place on collaborative study as well as on independent study.*

[132] Callender & Jackson (2005); Callender & Mason (2017); Callender & Wilkinson (2003).
[133] Jessop et al. (2020); Reid et al. (2020).
[134] Rubin & Wright (2015).
[135] Callender (2008).
[136] Friedman (2021).
[137] O'Sullivan et al. (2019).

3. An updated Equalities Act 2010 would mandate the collection and publication of high-quality data on the social class of students and employees.

   - This is critical for documenting:
     - *social class inequalities,*
     - *how class may interact with other protected characteristics such as gender and ethnicity; and*
     - *the impact of policies to reduce class-based inequalities.*
   - This report would follow Sutton Trust (2021) recommendations to use ACORN as the best area-level measure available as a good relationship to low household income and less biased than other area-based markers. However it is currently not free to use.
   - Therefore, we recommend the production of processes that allow data related to school students' eligibility for free school meals, including the number of years during which they were eligible, to be obtained.
   - We also recommend the inclusion of subjective measures of social class in HE equality monitoring at application stage.
   - Specifically, processes should be put in place to allow data related to school students' eligibility for free school meals, including the number of years during which they were eligible, to be obtained, with appropriate safeguards. This would increase the value of research into the effects of SES on educational and life trajectories[138] and would permit contextualised university admissions to be much more precisely targeted.[139]

4. **An updated Act 2010 would have longer term impacts**

   - Over time, high-quality data and a heightened awareness of class-based inequalities would lead to sector-wide change and the implementation of powerful initiatives. For example, the inclusion of gender as a protected characteristic laid the foundations for the Athena Swan Charter, which transformed the higher education sector's approach to tackling gender inequality.
   - Over the longer term, the legitimisation and mandating of proactive policies and initiatives, such as contextualised admissions and mentoring programmes, will increase the representation of working class individuals in institutions and occupations that require high levels of education, and increase the visibility of working class role models. This has been shown to lead to beneficial outcomes for working class students and increase their educational trajectories.[140]

[138] Jerrim (2021).
[139] Boliver et al. (2019); Jerrim (2021).
[140] Oyserman et al. (2006).

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Section 3: Psychology of social class-based inequalities – Policy implications for a revised (2010) UK Equality Act: Health

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HEALTH OUTCOMES

There is incontrovertible evidence for severe socioeconomic and class-based health disparities in and across societies.[1] Such inequalities result in shorter healthy and total life expectancies for working-class people. These social-classed based determinants have been well-documented ('the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age and people's access to power, money and resources'[2]) as the key drivers in health inequalities. However, it is imperative to view such causal mechanisms as emerging from multifactorial forms of discrimination, intersecting with other disadvantaged identities, such as race, gender, sexuality and disability[3] [4] [5]. Discrimination is thus intersectional and cumulative, leading to higher stress exposure, stigma, lower protective factors and poorer health and mental health outcomes. In this section, though focus remains on social class as a key mechanism through which disadvantage and discrimination is enacted, a multifactorial model is advocated overall.

With regards to life expectancy, (based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation[6]) between 2018 and 2020, women residing in the most deprived areas of the UK lived almost 8–11 years fewer than women in the wealthiest areas. For men, the gap is 10 years[7] [8] (Wales and Northern Ireland[9]) and in terms of healthy life expectancy, such class-based disparities are even greater: for example

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1 Marmot, M. (2020).
2 World Health Organization (2021).
3 Khan et al. (2017).
4 Wallace et al. (2016).
5 Wemrell et al. (2021).
6 The Index of Multiple Deprivation is based on seven domains of deprivation which are combined and weighted: income; employment; health deprivation and disability; education, skills & training; crime; barriers to housing and services; living environment.
7 Office for National Statistics (2022).
8 Office for National Statistics (2021).
9 Department of Health (2021).

women in England and Scotland[10] in the least deprived areas have over 19 years more of healthy life compared with women in the most deprived areas, and similarly for men, this gap is just under 19 years.[11]

MEASUREMENT

As outcome data has already demonstrated, research carried out on psychology, health and social class has often conceptualised social class via measured levels of deprivation in key economic, social, and health outcomes (e.g. Index of Multiple Deprivation[12]) capturing the amount of economic, social and cultural capital a community provides to individuals who live there. Socioeconomic status (SES) is another commonly utilised proxy measure for social class, capturing the amount of economic capital (e.g. current income) to which a person has access. Finally, the gap between the highest and the lowest ranking SES in a community or society (income inequalities) is measured (e.g. total annual income) to establish degrees of class-based inequalities in access to economic mobility within that community or society and correlating this with health outcome measures.

SOCIAL CLASS AND THE STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Class-based differentials in structural, economic, environmental and material conditions are hugely significant for health and wellbeing.[13] [14] For example, consuming a varied and nutritious diet is a key component of achieving and maintaining good health yet people living in areas of deprivation (index of Multiple Deprivation) have reduced access to 'healthy foods' due to lack of availability and cost.[15] Similarly, food insecurity (linked to low income) correlates with poor mental health which, in turn, impacts on academic performance.[16] Living in greener environments is also associated with positive advantages for physical and mental health, yet people of lower socio-economic status and those living in deprived areas are less likely to have easy access to greenspaces.[17] Housing is another known social determinant of health, with good quality, affordable housing within safe and supportive neighbourhoods being key to enhancing health and wellbeing as well as preventing respiratory diseases.[18] Finally, working-class people (occupation status) are more likely to be unemployed or have insecure employment[19] and both are known to impact negatively on physical and mental health.[20] Joblessness is linked to an increased risk of coronary heart disease,[21] poorer self-rated health,[22] mental health difficulties[23] and higher

[10] Scottish Government (2022).
[11] Office for National Statistics (2022).
[12] Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) (2017 – 2019).
[13] Hodgetts et al. (2014).
[14] Hodgetts et al. (2020).
[15] Williamson et al. (2017).
[16] Martinez et al. (2020).
[17] Public Health England (2020).
[18] Rolfe et al. (2020).
[19] Lahtinen et al. (2020).
[20] Kim & von dem Knesebeck (2015).
[21] Lundin et al. (2014).
[22] Giatti et al. (2010).
[23] Paul & Moser (2009).

mortality.[24] Insecure employment offers poor psychosocial working conditions with similar detriments to health, as those associated with unemployment.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF 'LOWER' SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND HEALTH BEHAVIOURS

People of lower socioeconomic status (a facet of social class[25]) have reduced levels of perceived and actual personal control over many aspects of their present lives and future outcomes.[26] This lack of control leads to people being more likely to engage in present-oriented behaviours which offer immediate rewards (for example, smoking and drinking alcohol) rather than future-oriented behaviours which may provide longer-term health benefits.[27] Lower socio-economic status is also linked to decreased engagement with health screening services such as colorectal cancer screening,[28] breast cancer and cervical cancer screening.[29] These phenomena are not due to personality traits or something as simple as 'a lack of willpower' or lack of concern over one's health; rather, they are reasonable and rational responses to a complex web of life conditions which provide people with little control (perceived and actual) over their longer-term outcomes and feelings of helplessness.[30]

CLASS-BASED DISCRIMINATION AND BIAS IN THE DIAGNOSTIC AND TREATMENT PATHWAY

Psychological research consistently reiterates that people in the UK not only feel that their perceived social class affects the way they are treated, but evidence (often measured via SES) also demonstrates that working-class people are routinely discriminated against.[31] A large body of recent research has found that perceived working-class status affects diagnosis[32] and treatment pathways for many 'physical' health conditions. Some examples include dehumanizing inferences regarding their pain and different treatment recommendations;[33] paternalistic and social-class based stigma in maternity care;[34] assumptions of individual blame in asthma treatment;[35] judgments regarding 'poor' morality in obesity-related public health policy[36] and more negative experiences during dyslexia diagnosis pathways.[37] Despite such evident social class-based bias and discrimination, awareness of such bias is poor[38] and an understanding surrounding the role of social class in health disparities is poorly developed in medical school curricula.[39 40]

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[24] Martikainen et al. (2007).
[25] APA (2015).
[26] Pepper & Nettle (2017).
[27] Pepper & Nettle (2017).
[28] Miles et al. (2011).
[29] Douglas et al. (2016).
[30] Sheehy-Skeffington (2020).
[31] Social Mobility Commission (2019).
[32] Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2011).
[33] Diniz et al. (2020).
[34] Rayment-Jones et al. (2019).
[35] Holman (2015).
[36] Gillborn et al. (2020).
[37] Macdonald & Deacon (2019).
[38] Backhus et al. (2019).
[39] Penner et al. (2018).
[40] Lokugamage et al. (2020).

Such class-based discrimination has a direct negative impact on people's physical health, with a significant portion of allostatic load ('a measure of cumulative wear and tear on the body') being explained by perceived discrimination.[41]

In addition to bias and discrimination, there is evidence that people living in the most deprived areas (measured through the Index of Multiple Deprivation) receive poorer NHS care, across 23 measures (e.g. the experience of making a GP appointment; being seen within four hours at A&E) compared with those living in the least deprived areas, and for 11 out of the 23 measures, the inequality gap is widening.[42]

Clearly then, social class and its various components (e.g. SES; living in areas of deprivation) is a key determinant of physical health, impacting on opportunities to adopt and maintain lifestyles conducive to good health, and ultimately on life and healthy life expectancies. The reasons for this are many, varied and complex but pivot around structural class-based inequalities which shape people's psychological processes, psychosocial experiences[43 44] and material circumstances which enable or constrain the opportunity to live healthy lives. There are also clear parallels between the impact of social class, physical health and mental health, as examined in the following section.

SOCIAL CLASS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Epidemiologists were amongst the first to identify higher rates of poor mental health in more economically unequal societies, with the lower SES status groups substantially more affected.[45 46] Suggested causes include biological (impacts on physical health, diet, housing) psychological (how low status impacts mood, cognitive processes, self-evaluation, emotions) and social (relationships, group membership, interpersonal communication). Evidence does not support the claim that this association between poorer mental health and lower status is exclusively driven by lower SES status emerging as a consequence of poor mental health (the social drift hypothesis) but, rather, of low SES and working-class status serving as a causal factor in poor mental health.[47 48 49] Factors such as higher rates of chronic stress, higher levels of social, physical and emotional threat, educational barriers, precarious employment, insecure housing, feelings of humiliation and perceived entrapment are all compounded by a less valued status. These factors have all been cited as key ingredients in causal mechanisms in the production of elevated rates of mental health challenges.[50 51 52 53]

Evidence further suggests that fewer resources, greater exposure to threat and a reduced level of personal control impede access to treatment.[54] Moreover, the impact of economic instability

41 Fuller-Rowell et al. (2012).
42 Nuffield Trust (2020).
43 Bolam et al. (2003).
44 Brunner (2017).
45 Wilkinson & Pickett (2010).
46 Wilkinson & Pickett (2018).
47 Muntaner et al. (2000).
48 Wilkinson & Pickett (2010).
49 Wilkinson & Pickett (2021).
50 Beiser et al. (1993).
51 WHO (2012).
52 Cromby et al. (2013).
53 Mossakowski (2014).
54 Johnstone & Boyle (2018).

has likely intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic due to increased financial uncertainty, disproportionately affecting the mental health of lower social class groups.[55] [56] [57] Consequently, when environmental stresses occur, the less affluent in society are more likely to experience significant depletion of already limited resources, resulting in chronic personal stress and poorer mental health, especially if social or community support is not forthcoming.

Chronic personal stress can impact emotional states, decision making and other cognitive processes that raise vulnerability to mental health challenges. For example, increased negative thoughts and feelings, including shame, hopelessness, embarrassment, feelings of low self-worth and negative self-evaluation, a felt lack of choice and agency, social anxiety and stigma are consistently linked to working-class groups and causally associated with poorer mental health outcomes.[58] When multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage are present outcomes are impacted even further.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CLASS: RECOGNITION AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

If individuals do not acknowledge mental health challenges, they are less likely to seek help, formally or informally. Mental health literacy is a popular way to conceptualise mental health knowledge, recognition and understanding,[59] referring to knowledge and beliefs about mental health challenges that assist recognition, management or prevention.[60] [61] There are reported links between lower mental health literacy and reduced intentions to seek help.[62] In part, lower mental health literacy among lower SES status individuals is also linked to a perceived lack of eligibility and entitlement to mental health services.[63]

Individuals may also avoid appraising themselves as emotionally distressed if self-identity is threatened, or social and employment status compromised (especially pertinent to low paid or precarious work). Where resilience is perceived to be central to identity (e.g. working-class men) help-seeking and acknowledgement of distress is less likely. In cases where individuals do seek professional help, studies have found middle-class individuals are offered appointments more rapidly than their lower class counterparts (where social class was measured as a departure from standardised grammar and the presence of a working class accent).[64] Long waiting times for talking therapies often result in over use of physical treatments for lower class groups, leading to poorer long term outcomes given the greater efficacy of psychological interventions (or combined physical and psychological interventions) for many mental health challenges.

The 2007 British Attitudes Survey revealed that individuals who had attended university and lived in affluent households were more aware of how to access therapeutic intervention for the entire range of mental health difficulties.[65] Myers argues that individuals of lower socio-economic status

[55] Algren et al. (2018).
[56] Gallo et al. (2005).
[57] Patel et al. (2020).
[58] Liu (2021).
[59] Jorm (1997).
[60] Bullock (1995).
[61] Jorm et al. (1997).
[62] Wright et al. (2007).
[63] Cromby et al. (2013).
[64] Kuggelmass (2016).
[65] Anderson et al. (2009).

are exposed to cumulative and complex vulnerabilities (including a greater number of threatening life events, especially among those whose forms of disadvantage are compounded by ethnicity) that reduce their access to care and increase psychological distress.[66] Classic studies further highlight how those from higher class backgrounds are more able to research, seek out and access formal mental health treatment options when mental health challenges arise.[67 68]

MENTAL HEALTH, CLASS STATUS AND CLASSISM

Public and media discourse tend to stigmatise those of a lower social class, with classist attitudes potentially resulting in identities that become hidden or submerged,[69] power imbalances,[70] 'othering'[71] and shame and embarrassment, especially in professional health contexts framed around middle class clients (such as psychotherapy[72]). Classism encompasses negative attitudes directed towards those who are socially devalued, potentially impeding access to services or obstructive to an individual's engagement with a service. Typically, individuals on lower incomes experience classism in a variety of situations through everyday practices, assumptions, attitudes, and institutional rules that utilise language and modes of interaction that are less familiar or threatening to them.[73] Classism can be readily internalised resulting in low self-esteem, low mood and avoidant coping strategies that can impede treatment access or seeking out other valuable forms of social support in the community. Experiences of classism are reported to be most prevalent for those of low income, occupation and education level and have been associated with poorer mental health and feelings of inferiority – though negative self-evaluation due to status can adversely affect individuals of all classes, in socially unequal societies.[74 75] Studies report those with the lowest educational attainment or low income to be at higher risk for psychosis, depression,[76] anxiety and substance use disorders, due to low social positioning, classism and socially devalued status impacting mood, decision making and threat arousal.[77]

Recent research[78 79] further demonstrates how UK mental health service providers have inadequate understandings relating to the role of social class within the treatment/therapy journey and additionally hold social class-based and stigmatising stereotypes towards lower- or working-class communities. UK based studies have found that working-class patients may feel misunderstood, powerless and shamed when their therapist is of a perceived higher social class,[80] leading to a disconnection from therapy.[81] A perceived limited understanding of the client's class-related

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66 Myers (2009).
67 Hollingshead & Redlich (1958).
68 Horwitz (1982).
69 Bradley (1996).
70 Rickett & Morris (2020).
71 Holt & Griffin (2005).
72 Liu (2021).
73 Bullock (1995).
74 Simons et al. (2017).
75 Wilkinson & Pickett (2018).
76 Lorant et al. (2003).
77 Muntaner et al. (2013).
78 Cook & O'Hara (2020).
79 McEvoy & Clarke (2021).
80 Balmforth (2009).
81 Trott & Reeves (2018).

experiences, particularly the impact of poverty and/or limited resources and opportunities on their distress further compounds a lack of trust in the therapeutic relationship.[82 83]

Social class experiences are highly personal, yet interventions could practically incorporate several points of reference to improve mental health and treatment access.[84] Mental health professionals could assist their client in developing 'social class consciousness'[85] to better identify how social class and classism (as well as other crucial intersecting factors e.g. racism, homophobia, sexism, ableism) contribute to, shape or even cause poor mental health (i.e. feelings of shame for not 'adequately' providing for their children in a society that values wealth and equates wealth with social status).

SUMMARY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ACT (2010) REVISION – SOCIAL CLASS AS A PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC IN LAW

1. Legal requirement to provide a comparable, established and systematic monitoring of social class

    - All public services in Scotland and Wales now require the monitoring of all protected characteristics (Public Sector Equality Duty, Equality and Human Rights Commission). However, no legal obligation currently exists in England or Northern Ireland, this needs to be remedied via a comparable PSED for these two nations.
    - Including social class as a protected characteristic (England, Scotland and Wales) and additional equality area legislative protection of social class (Northern Ireland) would require all public health services and provision within England, Scotland and Wales to precisely measure and monitor social class-based health disparities in a clear, compatible manner.
    - Including social class as a protected characteristic would address the significant under-reporting or lack of parity in recording of social class in the use of data capture in routine access, practice, and patient outcomes.[86]
    - A provision of precise measurements will lead to better comparative identification and prioritising of those at risk of not accessing services; better understanding of service resource spend linked to social class-disparities; clearer reporting of social class-based experience of health care services, including whether services are social class inclusive and finally; whether they reduce or increase social class-based health gaps in patient and client outcomes.
    - Using current 'education level' as a proxy for class, common in health research, may be insufficient, as it fails to capture other significant and meaningful indicators of class and classed-experiences.[87]
    - We follow recommendations from recent research;[88] social class data should be recorded for patients as part of routine data collection within health services; there is now a need to develop questionnaire items[89] and screening systems which capture all components of class; these need to be developed to be efficient and simple to use

[82] Thompson et al. (2012).
[83] Trott & Reeves (2018).
[84] Liu (2021).
[85] Liu (2011).
[86] Jones et al. (2022).
[87] Allen et al. (2019); Präg (2020).
[88] Jones et al. (2022).
[89] Evans et al. (2022) for use in education.

within healthcare contexts.

- In the meantime this report recommends measuring social class in health care settings/ or in relation to health via occupation (a key indicator of SES and one which significantly impacts on patient-healthcare professional interaction[90]) and subjective measures of social class[91] (as efficient and reliable predictors of health outcomes[92]).

2. A legal requirement to eliminate unlawful class-based discrimination, achievable through raising awareness of how socioeconomic affordances shape health behaviours and social class-based bias among healthcare professionals.

- Class tends to be less visible than race and gender[93] and awareness of classism is lacking in comparison with racism and sexism.[94]
- A lack of understanding of social class-based bias and resulting discrimination is common in health service provision (ibid).
- To begin to eliminate class-based discrimination, development and delivery of an awareness programme simultaneously at training and practice level is needed. An awareness programme would increase literacy of social class-based bias and resultant discrimination in health care provision: this would arm new and longstanding healthcare professionals with the means to communicate and interact more effectively with working-class patients and reduce current social-class based stigma and discrimination.[95] These longer-term initiatives, in turn, would increase engagement with health services as working-class patients begin to feel valued and understood through greater awareness and more effective communication.

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[90] Allen et al. (2019).

[91] Alder et al. (2000).

[92] E.g. Euteneuer (2014); Demakakos et al. (2018); Präg (2020).

[93] Lott (2012).

[94] Liu (forthcoming).

[95] See Gonzalez et al. (2014).

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Section 4: Psychology of social class-based inequalities – Policy implications for a revised (2010) UK Equality Act: Work

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MEASUREMENT

As a note, research reviewed below most often measures the SES facet of social class, capturing the extent to which a person has access to economic capital (e.g. current income), parental (such as parent's occupation at the age of 14) and individual social capital (e.g. highest level of education), in addition to subjective measures of social class (e.g. self-identification relative to others).

WORK OUTCOMES

In the UK, social class has an impact on both explicit (e.g. salary, occupational status, promotions) and implicit (e.g. career satisfaction, quality of working life, employment conditions and well-being) and the income we earn, or our parents earned (e.g. parental occupation). Only 10% of UK employees from working-class backgrounds make it into Britain's higher managerial, professional or cultural occupations.[1] Consequently, the amount of say and control we get in societal level decisions conferred through our work, and the health and psychological outcomes associated with that work, will be largely determined by our family's social class background (e.g. parental occupation at the age of 14).

Despite the Social Mobility Commission advice that organisations measure worker social class origin to assess class-based differences in salaries, seniority and type of work, organisations are not legally obliged to do so, therefore most (over 60%[2]) do not. Of those that do, a 'class pay gap' between the average upper-class worker and the average lower-class worker (ranked on parental income at the age of 14) is between 8.6%.[3] and 12.1%[4] in accounting business workforces and as high as 44%[5] in law firms.

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1 Friedman & Laurison (2019).
2 The Sutton Trust (2020).
3 KPMG (2021).
4 PwC (2022).
5 Clifford Chance (2021).

Over the past 30 years access to 'elite' occupations has become increasingly exclusive according to socio-economic background[6] shored up by an 'elite' pipeline from private, fee paying schools, through to Oxford and Cambridge University and into the highest graded, most powerful positions in the UK. Currently, despite just 6% of the UK recorded as attending a private fee-paying school, disproportionately high numbers of those are appointed to the most important decision-making roles in our society (e.g. 65% of senior judges; 59% of senior civil servants; 57% of members of the House of Lords; 39% of the UK government cabinet)[7].

A 'class ceiling'[8] also prevents the upwardly mobile from enjoying equivalent career progression and earnings to those from upper middle-class backgrounds. Working-class staff (parental income measure at age of 14), are represented in the senior leadership labour force 10 times less than they are represented in broader society. Where working-class employees do break through the 'class ceiling' the same levels of success as those from more privileged backgrounds are not necessarily achieved.[9] For example, leaders from working class origins earn on average £6400 less annually than their middle-class or higher-class counterparts.

These socioeconomic inequalities are profound, likely to increase post-pandemic,[10] and exacerbated by simultaneous, intersecting impact across other social categories leading to multiple financial disadvantages in the workplace. For example, women from working-class backgrounds earn on average £19,000 a year less in 'elite' occupations than men from privileged backgrounds, while ethnic minority workers from working class backgrounds and working in 'elite' roles earn around £10,000 a year less than their White counterparts of middle class origin.[11]

PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS FOR SOCIAL CLASS-BASED INEQUALITIES IN WORK

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SALARY INEQUALITIES

A small but burgeoning body of work researching the psychological impact of low versus higher salaries (e.g. a minimum versus a living wage) has found higher incomes to increase job satisfaction, work engagement, career satisfaction, perceived control and stability, emotional commitment, organisational citizenship practices,[12] and a better work-life balance.[13] Conversely, lower waged and/or precarious employment conditions create barriers to the formation of a stable work identity,[14] elevate psychological distress[15] and worsen self-rated health.[16] This work highlights the compounded effects of any salary inequities brought about by the class ceiling and subsequent class pay gap.

6 Ashley & Empson (2013).
7 Social Mobility Commission (2019).
8 Friedman & Laurison (2019).
9 Ashley et al. (2015).
10 Eyles (2021).
11 Laurison & Friedman (2016).
12 Zeng & Honig (2017).
13 Thompson & Dahling (2019).
14 Selenko et al. (2018).
15 Isaacs et al. (2018).
16 Borg & Kristensen (2000).

CLASSING VOCATIONAL SUPPORT

Within psychology, there is a clear and long-established history of the study of decisions about what occupation to enter (often called vocational psychology or career psychology[17]). Scholarship has identified the critical need of this work to better understand how the psychological impact of class-based prejudice and discrimination shapes career outcomes[18]. Experiences of classism shape the journey that we take towards gaining a job role and the pay, power and precarity that job role confers[19] and can also erode feelings of control and the ability to make career decisions.[20] While class-based bias (along with economic constraints) within the vocational guidance system can directly reduce the access to and quality of guidance and result in discrimination at the job recruitment stage.[21] This bias is often informed by societal discourse around social class, particularly 'meritocracy', which conveys the everyday existence of a social system whereby people's success in life depends primarily on their talents, abilities, and effort. Claims that meritocracy prevails have served the argument that social inequality results from limited aspiration and unequal merit rather than structural disadvantages such as discrimination, social injustice and poverty.[22] When applied to social class, being working class and/or low SES is viewed to be the result of a lack of talent, abilities, effort, and more latterly 'aspirations', rather than structural inequality.[23]

THE 'PIPELINE PROBLEM': FROM ASPIRATIONS TO SITUATED CULTURE

Recent research in psychology has interrogated the focus on levels of aspirations as a potential key driver of social mobility. Research has tended to focus on how structural inequalities can produce 'mindsets', finding a mentally taxing experience of 'scarcity' (e.g. lack of money and time) which hinders capacity to think and plan beyond immediate needs, thereby sapping resources for future career aspiration planning.[24] While other work has established socially situated shared norms as shaping the type of aspirations we value. For example, working-class communities often relate to collective aspirational discourse and may draw on values such as being authentic and not trying to better everyone else.[25] On the other hand, middle-class communities more commonly draw on networks of resources that normalise values around the need to gain power in relation to others.[26] Furthermore, UK socioeconomic differences in perceptions of control, or of what is feasible to aim for in life, have been argued to be better understood as rational assessments of one's life conditions, rather than faulty mindsets or disparities in apparently freely chosen qualities such as 'aspirations' or 'attitude'.[27]

Recent work from social psychology provides an understanding of how we see ourselves and our aspirations are a classed phenomena. It is argued that the neighbourhood we inhabit and our exposure to networks shape certain practices and expectations (e.g. career aspirations), which in turn reinforces classed psychologies.[28,29] In the case of working-class communities, financial

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17 Arnold (2011).
18 Lui & Ali (2005).
19 Diemer & Ali (2009)
20 Allan et al. (2021).
21 Liu (2012).
22 Littler (2017).
23 Rickett (2020).
24 E.g. Mullainathan & Shafir (2013).
25 E.g. Archer & Leathwood (2003).
26 E.g. Stahl (2018).
27 Sheehy-Skeffington & Rea (2017).
28 Kraus & Stephens (2012).
29 Stephens & Markus (2012).

boundaries require working-class individuals to rely on one another more greatly for a range of different day to day needs, which, in turn, produces and sustains a collective, interdependent model of the self in relation to others. In contrast, middle-class social conditions have been found to be driven by independent cultural norms that privilege choice and a focus on personal goals.[30] Research has found that individuals readily assess others' social class[31], with those of similar social class developing a shared understanding of the ideal ways to relate to others. In the context of gaining and sustaining high-status job roles, supporting organisational processes that privilege middle-class personhood.[32]

The above research helps complicate and contextualise our understanding of what underlies the so-called 'talent pipeline problem', whereby organisations explain low levels of diversity and pay gaps in professional workplaces, in terms of not receiving enough applications (for positions or promotions) from those from under-represented groups such as the working class.[33] Research in psychology suggests that the individualistic values and culture communicated by higher status job specifications in middle-class work settings are mismatched to the more interdependent concerns predominant in working-class settings. Therefore, potential working-class recruits may have a sense that they may not be well-suited to a high-status role, even before they apply.[34] More concretely, occupational psychology research has also highlighted how job application decisions are not made based solely on considerations of desired future career progression. Instead, for those from lower/working-class backgrounds, a first order concern may be liquidity constraints, such as whether a job offers the ability to meet immediate financial needs.[35]

CONSTRUCTING CLASS-BASED INCLUSION AND 'SUCCESS'

Research broadly situated within discourse and organisational psychology has offered an understanding of how shared meaning around values and norms are embedded in the practices of talking, writing and visual and cultural artefacts that can produce class-based exclusion at the organisational level. These organisationally embedded discourses produce a 'cultural sorting' which privileges particular social categories. For example, 'Googliness' and the young, middle-class, able-bodied male ideal in tech recruitment information,[36] informal 'poshness tests' in 'elite' job recruitment processes[37] and application processes that favour a middle-class medic.[38] Overall, language constructs the 'ideal' candidate in 'elite' roles using middle- and upper-class values, making it harder not only for working-class people to see themselves as being the ideal applicant, but also to be judged as such via fulfilment of the job description or the informal understanding of the 'ideal candidate'.[39] When working-class candidates are successfully appointed to traditionally middle-class work roles, such as academic positions in UK universities, societal level classed (and gendered) values and norms can draw them into roles that are often unrewarded via promotions processes (e.g. student support roles) which instead reward success via independence measures[40] (e.g. research intensity relative to peers). In sum, the upwardly mobile

30 Dittmann et al. (2020).
31 Gorman (2000).
32 Jost & Banaji (1994)
33 Iyer, P. (2022).
34 Stephens et al. (2019).
35 Coffman et al. (2019); Duffy et al. (2012).
36 Ingram & Allen (2019).
37 Ashley et al. (2015).
38 Cleland & Fahey Palma(2018).
39 Sølvberg (2021).
40 Rickett & Morris (2021).

are expected to assimilate to middle-class norms embedded in the language used in organisational structures and processes to satisfy the requirements of the 'ideal worker'.[41]

Finally, recent research has exposed a complex and fraught journey often experienced by a working-class upwardly mobile worker. Class background is readily identifiable,[42] with those of similar social class establishing shared norms, which in turn supports institutional processes that leave those with working-class backgrounds feeling left out or unrespected despite their progression.[43] This scholarship has examined the impact of social class on the interplay between work and non-work life including family, friendships, local communities, educational institutions, neighbourhoods, and religious communities. Despite benefits conferred via higher pay and occupational status, socially mobile individuals, possibly as a result of a work/non-work norms and values mismatch, and organisationally embedded class based bias, have more complex experiences navigating their work-life environments.[44] Consequently, their work-life interactions are more likely to be characterised with conflict, feelings of disconnect, and low sense of belonging, leaving them unable to be their authentic self and flourish in either their work or non-work roles.[45]

REDUCING BIAS: FROM INDIVIDUAL TRAINING TO ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURAL CHANGE

There has been a sustained attention to unconscious (implicit) race and gender bias within organisations conceived as emanating from automatic bias,[46] as existing outside of consciousness and as requiring workplace training on its existence to reduce organisationally situated social class-based inequalities.[47] In comparison with racism and sexism[48] class, despite being readily identifiable, tends to be less visible[49] and awareness of classism is lacking in comparison with racism and sexism.[50] Nevertheless, the presence of class-based bias has now been evidenced across several occupations, including careers advice,[51] nursing, surgery,[52] counselling and psychotherapy[53] and education.[54] As such, workplace classism could be tackled by increasing awareness and literacy around class-based inequalities via bias reduction interventions. However, recent studies have shown that biases are not necessarily unconscious or automatised but something that people are aware of[55] and training based on the former understanding can reduce accountability[56], responsibility[57] and give credence to stereotypes.[58] Therefore, to be impactful, training may be better focused on raising awareness of class-based prejudice as emanating from the organisationally shared and embedded norms and values that a person draws upon, sometimes

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41 Friedman (2014).
42 Gorman (2000).
43 Jost & Banaji (1994).
44 Evans & Wyatt (2022).
45 Marks & Baldry, M. (2009).
46 Haider et al. (2014).
47 Phoenix (2021).
48 Lui (2021).
49 Lott (2012).
50 Lui (2021).
51 Liu (2012).
52 Haider et al. (2014; 2015).
53 McEvoy et al. (2021).
54 Cassen & Kingdon (2007); Dunne & Gazeley (2008); Kutnick et al. (2005).
55 Hahn & Gawronski (2019).
56 Daumeyer et al. (2019); Daumeyer et al. (2020).
57 E.g. Dobbin & Kalev (2018).
58 Duguid & Thomas-Hunt (2015).

actively,[59] and increasing knowledge of organisational efforts to address social class-based inclusion and diversity. However, success will depend on structural change whereby organisations reinforce individual training with the implementation of structures and processes both aimed at fostering organisational responsibility for inclusion and blocking decision-maker prejudice and discriminatory practice.[60]

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ACT (2010) REVISION – SOCIAL CLASS AS A PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC IN LAW

1. Legal requirement to provide a comparable, established and systematic monitoring of social class at vocational training, recruitment and promotion stages.

    - There is significant under-reporting and a lack of parity in the recording and measurement of social class in organisations. Including social class as a protected characteristic would mandate that all organisations monitor social class-based disparities at the worker level in a clear and comparible manner.
    - Provision of precise measurements would lead to better comparative identification and prioritising of those at risk of not accessing career services; better understanding of social class disparities and the intersection with other protected characteristics; clearer reporting of social class-based experience in career services and work lives, including whether organisations and their policies and practices are social class inclusive, and finally; insight into whether such policies and practices reduce or increase social class-based pay gaps and recruitment to senior leadership and 'elite' roles.
    - Established objective measures such as occupation, income, social capital (via parent occupation and individual highest level of education) and cultural capital (e.g. number of books in childhood home[61]) and established subjective measures such as self-identification[62] and subjective social status[63] are both highly related to one another and associated with a number of organisational level outcomes.[64]
    - Research should now use these established multiple measures to develop, pilot and establish a first of its kind composite measure of social class for specific use within UK based work and organisational contexts.
    - In the meantime, researchers should ensure that social class origin and current subjective social class are measured in all cases to illuminate individual level asynchrony relating to how class is measured and interpreted (e.g. self-identifying as working class versus our current socioeconomic status as middle class)[65] and capture context and the intersectional nature of social class more readily.[66]
    - Future research should also partner with key public bodies and organisations to develop a first of its kind simple to use equality data capture tool for social class which includes subjective social class and objective measures to complement current protected

[59] McEvoy, et al. (2021).
[60] See Onyeador et al. (2021); Stephens et al. (2020).
[61] Sieben & Lechner (2019).
[62] Kraus et al. (2013).
[63] Alder et al. (2000).
[64] Loignon & Woehr (2018); Autin et al. (2017).
[65] See Diemer & Rasheed Ali (2009).
[66] Rubin et al. (2014).

characteristics data capture in screening tools used in organisational recruitment, promotion processes and career services data capture.

- In the meantime, cross-organisational equality data should capture the recommendations from the social mobility commission toolkit,[67] in addition to a first subjective social class measure, would be an evidenced based and sensible strategy for all employers.

2. A legal requirement to eliminate unlawful class-based discrimination within organisational structures, processes and practices.

- Class based discrimination law change has the potential to impact work-based structures and practices through norm changes about what is right and wrong[68] and increased individual literacy about class-based prejudice and discrimination.[69]
- Development, piloting and roll-out of an awareness programme to increase literacy of social class-based bias in professionals working in vocational services, recruitment, retainment and promotion and provide decision-makers with the means to ensure that their structures, processes and practices do not exclude via a reliance on classed notions of success and ideal workers.
- This report recommends using discursive/linguistic analysis methods[70] to review the extent to which language and meaning embedded in organisational processes exclude or include on the basis of social class based organisational norms.[71]
- Medium-term improvement in these policies, processes and practices can increase applications from those with working-class backgrounds to higher-paid work and increase their perceived value and sense of belonging in communities, ultimately improving their well-being and ability to contribute to society.

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[70] Phoenix and Tizzard (1996).

[71] Ashley et al. (2015); Ingram & Allen (2019); Cleland & Fahey Palma (2018); Rickett & Morris (2021); Sølvberg (2021).

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Appendix: Overview of measures used in report

WHAT IS THE MEASURE?	WHAT'S BEING MEASURED?	HOW'S IT BEING MEASURED?	WHO IS USING THIS MEASURE?	WHAT'S IT BEEN USED FOR?	REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS*
Objective measures					
Individual level					
Childhood measures	Assessment of the socioeconomic status/ economic, social, and cultural capital when growing up.	Eligibility for free school meals (means-tested) Main breadwinner's job at age 14 Attendance at free versus fee-paying school Parent's education level (at age of 14) Number of books in your childhood household	Educational institutions, Researchers	To assess social class background	Education: Follow Sutton Trust (2021) to use ACORN as the best area-level measure available as a good relationship to low household income and less biased than other area-based markers. However it is not free to use. Recommended to produce processes that allow data related to school students' eligibility for free school meals, including the number of years during which they were eligible, to be obtained. To include alongside subjective measures of social class in UK HE equality monitoring at UCAS application stage.

Current measures	Assessment of current socioeconomic status/ economic, social, and cultural capital	Current salary (absoute or in bandings) Current education level (low – GCSE's to high – Post graduate qualifications)	Educational institutions, Researchers	To assess current SES and social class	Work: Report recommends continued use with social class origin measures to assess class pay gaps. Report would suggest utilising social mobility (2020) toolkit together with subjective social class measures for a more comprehensive understanding of class pay gaps
NS-SEC (2020) UK Government	Occupational status current or parents at the age of 14	1 = Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations; 2 = Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations; 3 = intermediate occupations; 4 = Small employers and own account workers; 5 = Lower supervisory and technical occupations; 6 = Semi-routine occupations; 7 = Routine occupations; 8 = Never worked and long-term unemployed	Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), Office for National Statistics (ONS), educators, researchers	To measure social class and social class-based differences in outcomes	Work: Parent occupational at the age of 14 is recommended in combination with current occupation and subjective social class (either measures) to establish extent of social mobility and capture local context, and the intersectional nature of social class.

Community level					
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) (2017 – 2019) ONS, UK Government	Levels of deprivation in key economic, social, and health outcomes at a community level	Income (22.5%), Employment (22.5%), Education (13.5%), Health (13.5%), Crime (9.3%), Barriers to Housing & Services (9.3%), Living Environment (9.3%)	National & local government, educators, charities, researchers	To prioritise resources and target funding	
Subjective measures					
MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (Adler et al; 2000)	Subjective socioeconomic standing relative to others	A 10-rung ladder on which respondents indicate their self-perceived socioeconomic rank compared to others in their community or society, with 'the people who are the best off – they have the most money, the highest amount of schooling, and the jobs that bring the most respect' at the top and 'people who are the worst off – they have the least money, little or no education, no job or jobs that no one wants or respects' at the bottom	Researchers, public health practitioners	To assess subjective construal of how one is doing socioeconomically in relation to others, usually with a view to improving health behaviours	Health: Report recommends measuring social class in health care settings/ or in relation to health via system availble childhood measures (e.g. FSM status), occupation and subjective social status as efficient and reliable predictors of health outcomes.

Social class discursive and linguistic coding Phoenix and Tizzard (1996)	Identification of language which signifies social class values norms, identities and class-based relations	Typically involves linguistic coding of data (e.g., interview transcripts) that signifies evaluation of own and other groups according to social class on economic, social and cultural components	Researchers and clinical psychology practitioners	To identify embedded social class-based norms which underpin identities and relations.	Work: Report recommends using this data capture method to review the extent to which language and meaning embedded in organisational processes exclude or include on the basis of social class based organisational norms
Social Class Self Identification (Kraus et al., 2013)	The social class with which one most strongly identifies	Participants choose which social class they most strongly identify with, from 1 = Poor; 2 = Working Class; 3 = Lower Middle Class; 4 = Upper Middle Class; 5 = Upper Class	Researchers and clinical psychology practitioners	To gain insight into a person's subjective understanding of their class positioning	

*note from authors:
We recommend that research now focuses on the development of a reliable, easy to use composite, measure of social class which is developed in a UK context.

In the absence of this It is important that that there is some similarity between measures for education/work/health so that comparisons can be made over time and across contexts.

In this case it is suggested to use childhood measures along with subjective measures in equality data capture/screening.

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