



INCLUSIVE GROWTH
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Inclusive Growth: New approaches for skills, productivity and labour markets

Roundtable Writeup
27th June 2016 at The RSA

The RSA Inclusive Growth Commission hosted the second of its series of seminars in June, 2016. The roundtable event brought together key people across sectors to examine how new approaches to skills and labour markets might drive growth and productivity alongside greater inclusion and participation in local economies.

The issue goes to the heart of our work at the Inclusive Growth Commission. Its importance has risen even further in the wake of Brexit. But as Charlotte Alldritt highlighted in her introduction, it is a much more complex issue than simply finding ways to improve higher or further education policy. It is intertwined with challenges relating to, for example, the legacy of deindustrialisation, the dynamics of identity and aspiration, and the impact of government approaches to economic growth, welfare and decentralisation.

The roundtable brought together over 30 experts, policymakers, academics and practitioners. The speakers were:

David Hughes

Chief Executive of the Learning and Work Institute

Tony Tweedy

Director of Lifelong Learning, Skills and Communities at Sheffield City Council

Gill Bainbridge

Chief Executive of the Merseyside Youth Association

Charlotte Alldritt

Director of the Inclusive Growth Commission and Director of previous City Growth Commission (Chair)

Stephanie Flanders

Chief Market Strategist for J.P. Morgan and Chair of the Inclusive Growth Commission (event co-chair)

To achieve inclusive growth we need to properly invest in skills, employment and training

David Hughes reflected on the extensive research on skills and labour markets conducted by the Learning and Work Institute. He identified three challenges that were premised on the idea that if we are really going to create a more inclusive society and economy we need more investment in skills, employment and learning – by government, employers and people. He argued that our current systems do not effectively facilitate this, and that devolution provides important opportunities. The three key challenges are:

Challenge 1 - the UK skills base is dire by international standards. Against our OECD peers, the UK does terribly on anything other than higher education. For example, on basic skills policy we are lagging seriously behind – around 20 percent of the adult population have poor literacy and numeracy. Lifelong learning is so important to skills acquisition and development, but people who left school at 16 or earlier are much less likely to continue learning throughout their lives. In addition, there are significant issues around how to engage with people that have done badly in the system. In terms of how devolution and policy innovation might help address this challenge, David argued:

- The devolution of the adult education budget will help, and it is important that this is levered to support and engage with people excluded in the labour market.
- We need to develop more effective ways to stimulate individual investment. Loans that are currently available for people have a woeful take up rate, but they may be one of the few ways for most adults to acquire intermediate level skills. There is a case to be made for the loans budget to be devolved so that they can be aligned with local priority sectors of the economy.

Challenge 2 – Apprenticeships. David emphasised that it is good news that the Apprenticeship Levy is going ahead – which will require all employers operating in the UK with a wage bill over £3 million each year, to make an investment in apprenticeships. There are, however, a whole range of issues related to how it is implemented. David argued that the current apprenticeship mix is not meeting the needs of working age people and the economy.

- According to last year's figures, just under 60 percent of apprenticeships were intermediate level (level 2). This, however, doesn't meet the skills needs of the economy – only 40 percent of apprenticeships are at the higher level. There is a need to persuade employers to invest properly with the levy.
- Around half of apprenticeships were for people already in work.
- The government's target for 3 million apprenticeships by 2020 gets in the way of the quality we need by emphasising quantity over the quality of apprenticeships.
- We need a local compact around apprenticeships where employers work closely with colleges and providers.

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Challenge 3 – the disability employment gap.

Addressing the poor employment outcomes for disabled people is absolutely critical, but has proven very challenging. In its manifesto, the government said they would half the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people, but since then they have only made a 0.1% advancement on that figure. The employment rate for disabled people is 47 percent – 33 percent less than the rest of society. Around one million additional people need to get into work to achieve the government's aim. David argued that only locally tailored policies and support services can go some way towards this – there should be a full devolution of the skills and employment budget, along with some of the money from the European Social Fund (ESF). In light of Brexit, there is the potential to replace the ESF – which was often very bureaucratic – with more flexible pots of funding.

Finally, reflecting on the challenges posed by Brexit, David made two points. First, if we are really going to pursue and achieve less immigration, there will need to be significantly more investment in our own population to address skills shortages. Secondly, there was a clear sense of disenfranchisement, partly related to skills and education that shaped the referendum outcomes: those people that were highly educated

tended to vote to remain, while those with low levels of education tended to vote leave. It is important now as much as ever to begin to tackle the inequalities in skills that help fuel such disenfranchisement.

How local places can be empowered to promote skills and productivity for inclusive growth

Tony Tweedy reflected on the experiences of Sheffield and examined whether devolution can help meet the inclusion and growth challenges of the city. He started by illustrating the inequalities within the city, showing the vastly different economic conditions and outcomes of two neighbourhoods on a single bus route (see slide below).



Tony identified some of the key challenges facing the city and the opportunities to help address them (see slide below).

There are very weak progression prospects for young people coming through both in post-16 and post-19 education – in terms of both employment and entry into higher education. In addition to the city’s low skill’s equilibrium and low wage economy, there is also the deep rooted labour market neglect that has persisted over a long period of time. There are many people disengaged from the labour market, and a significant number – between 24-29,000 – that have been on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) since the 1990s. This created a particular problem in Sheffield and many other northern cities that are part of a set of very significant issues at the heart of inclusion.

In terms of opportunities and potential solutions, Tony emphasised that some of these will be facilitated by devolution but there are also a number of approaches Sheffield City Council is already undertaking on its own. For

example, in terms of addressing the learning deficit the council it is looking not only at skills improvement initiatives but also forging stronger alliances between education (including schools) and businesses. Devolution has been useful because it has given added impetus and energy to local approaches and enhanced the connectivity between different initiatives.

There is also an opportunity to harness national initiatives that stand outside of devolution in order to promote inclusion, particularly for the most vulnerable – for example the apprenticeship levy. The council is seeking to use this as a stepping stone – developing and encouraging apprenticeships that provide wraparound support for those that are vulnerable and distant from the labour market and helping to move them onto sustained private sector employment.

The council is using its own levers and leadership to promote inclusion. For example, for every contract with the city council worth over £100,000 a year the council enters into an agreement with the contractor to build employment and training opportunities for local people. In order to encourage and empower employers to invest in skills and workforce development, the city-region has created a Skills Bank, a national demonstrator project which will be dependent on the devolution deal. The initiative is premised on the principle of employers making a contribution but also achieving a return. For an economy like Sheffield where 90 percent of employers are SMEs, this form of networking support and face-to-face brokerage is vitally important – and much more likely to succeed than purely market-based schemes. The city’s ‘skills escalator’ is seeking to meet the ‘fendishly difficult’ challenge of working with employers to help them progress their workforce in terms of wages, skills and careers opportunities that will raise them above the threshold for in-work benefits. This will be strengthened by the devolution of the adult education budget next year.

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning deficit & weak progression Low skills equilibrium, low wage economy Labour market neglect & welfare dependency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a 21st century curriculum: SCR Education-Business Alliance Harnessing national initiatives: the apprenticeship levy Exploiting existing powers: procurement agreements Stimulating workforce development: the Skills Bank & brokerage Driving progression: the Skills Escalator Shaping the supply side: 19+ Outcome Agreement & FE capital programme Early intervention & prevention: SCR Employment Pilot PSR: Integrated Employment, Health & Support services Innovative financing: Business Rate retention & the Investment Fund

Tony identified further opportunities, in particular the Sheffield City Region employment pilot, which will go further than initiatives such as the Work and Health Programme in aligning services across the public sector to improve outcomes for those furthest from the labour market. Finally, there are innovative financing opportunities around business rate retention and an investment fund that pools all resources made available by local government, other local stakeholders, central government and social investors with a view to delivering a common vision, a single plan and shared targets for driving up economic inclusion.

“ Devolution needs to be shaped more by values, and not just targets.

Tony closed by identifying some of the ‘unfinished business’ that needs to be better thought through and addressed to ensure new approaches are successful (outlined in the next slide).

- One of the key issues is that while the city will hold the adult education budget, it will not have the 16-19 budget, which is where the bulk of colleges’ budgets lie and which are important in any strategy to close the inclusion gap. It does not make sense to devolve 19+ funding whilst retaining 16-19 funding centrally.
- We also currently have inadequate labour market interventions, and it is unlikely that a centralised approach through Job Centre Plus is likely to be the answer unless it properly connects with a whole range of services at local and city-region levels. Public Service Reform can deliver integrated support in the right combination and the right sequence, covering skills, employment, health, housing and advice services, but only if local areas are empowered and given the freedom and flexibilities to do so.
- We need to end the current ‘confetti of initiatives’ – initiatives that do not connect are parachuted on a regular basis – it is imperative to join them up in a single investment fund for economic inclusion for the city-region.
- It is important to shift the expectations of national government departments, to address the current relationship of paternalism towards local areas. We need a culture of partnership in place of this.
- Devolution needs to be shaped more by values, and not just targets. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) were initially focused on economic growth objectives, but there was much less emphasis on the social values

that should underpin growth i.e. economic inclusion, although this has begun to change as the Combined Authority has developed.

- It is also vital that we have ‘purposeful partnership’ between departments, national and local authorities, and services. This means having a relationship of constructive and neutral challenge – hard targets which partners are jointly committed to, and a joint partnership that properly connects central government and local and sub-regional authorities. Sheffield City Region won agreement through its devolution deal to create a Joint Venture Partnership between the LEP, the Combined Authority, SFA and DWP. This type of arrangement has precedence, would drive the creation of a common vision, single plan and shared responsibility for inclusion targets, but its creation needs to be backed by central government.

Unfinished business...

- A fragmented skills system
- Inadequate labour market interventions
- Conquering the confetti of initiatives
- Culture shift: partnership not paternalism
- Devolution: values as well as targets
- Purposeful partnership
- Sustainable funding



Putting people at the centre of employment and skills support – lessons from Liverpool City Region’s Talent Match programme

Gill Bainbridge reflected on the learning from the Talent Match programme and emphasised the importance of putting participants at the centre of programmes to develop a truly inclusive economy. She argued that current economic policy is built on the questionable premise that if we grow the economy and create wealth and jobs, this wealth will cascade, lifting local areas out of poverty and impact positively on the lived lives of people within those communities. As a challenge to this dominant approach, she stressed:

- **The importance of investing in people and avoiding one-size-fits-all solutions.** To build a truly inclusive economy we must build on social capital, investing in people. When we talk about investing in people, we often automatically think about investing in training, employment programmes and vocational skills. We design stand alone, one size fits all programmes that are meant to fill the skills gaps and miraculously turn people's lives around after 12 weeks.
- **Appreciating the complexity of the challenges people face.** People cannot slot into pre-defined solutions. They are complex and have changing and interconnected needs. They have competing priorities and shifting motivation. Life is not a linear pathway. Yet we expect people to succeed with linear programmes, taking progressive steps forward until they reach the final goal – employment. But employment is not the end of the journey, but the beginning – those complex needs do not disappear once the weekly wage packet arrives.
- **We must invest in people differently, putting them at the heart of how we build sustainable models for real change.** Our challenge is to motivate and inspire people to work together to become part of their own change. We can only do this if we involve people from the very start – via the co-design of programmes and services delivered by and for them.

Designing Talent Match

Gill described the work of the Merseyside Youth Association (MYA) and its work in running the Talent Match programme in Liverpool City Region. MYA is a youth work charity that aims to create positive and lasting change in the lives of young people. Talent Match is a flagship £105 million Big Lottery programme targeting young people who are furthest from the jobs market, including those who are completely outside of the benefits, work and training system and facing severe barriers to gaining the skills they need to get into work.

Talent Match boosts opportunities for young people in these areas by bringing together partnerships of employers, education providers and others, led by local charities. The investment was co-designed with young people, both centrally and in each of the 21 partnership areas, and will continue to have young people at the heart of decision making throughout the programme. Rather than turning young people into a tickbox exercise, the programme is about supporting people with genuine career development and pathways that are relevant

to them. In terms of its key principles, the programmes must:

- Be young person centred
- Be young people co-designed
- Target those furthest away from the labour market
- Be a locally determined model
- Address unemployment and the skills gaps
- Bridge young people, the community and the economy
- Support local solutions – coordination, supply and demand
- Reflect the local economic situation
- Project positive messages about young people
- Challenge current thinking
- Be robust and demonstrate impact
- Influence policy
- Create clear pathways for young people
- Provide returns on investment

Liverpool City Region's Talent Match – design and learning

Gill described the key processes and design elements of the Talent Match programme led by MYA. Young people were involved in the design from the beginning – researching local needs. MYA worked in partnership with the Youth Unemployment Task Group and undertook surveys with young people, employers and stakeholders. This formed the basis of a local vision. One of the key messages that came out is that employers wanted to recruit on the basis of positive attitude and not merely skill. The young people emphasised that they wanted support that was consistent and accessible across the city region.

On the basis of this research, a 'golden thread' of intensive mentoring was built into the local programme. This includes:

- Employing a core of intensive mentors who work with young people on a wide and holistic model – not just skills for employability but also skills for life.
- Targeting young people with the most complex needs.
- Longitudinal support – intensive mentoring is not just a quick fix, a 12-week programme, and nor does it stop as soon as a young person gets a job. Young people were clear on this – it's about skills, life, employment, human fulfilment and the future. To reflect this, the programme developed a 'SELF' toolkit.
- Designing bespoke packages, where young people design their own pathways, with supportive signposting and integrated commissioning support from the private and voluntary sectors. A key part of this is recognising that there is not always a linear

path to sustained employment – young people can go back and revisit areas and access support if their life changes, or if they go into crisis.

- Putting young people at the centre of designing support has been extremely positive in helping the programme understand priorities and what people need to succeed. For example, programme partners initially thought 30 percent of young people would need therapeutic counselling – but in fact, 70 percent are now accessing that service.

Gill reflected on some of the key lessons from MYA's experience leading Talent Match. She identified a number of key enablers for programme success – including ensuring that they are individualised, accessible, flexible, and with strong coordination from the lead voluntary sector organisation that holds the programme together. She argued that for devolution programmes such as Talent Match provide important lessons for the skills agenda.

Following EU exit it is more important than ever that local areas take control of the skills agenda and shape local economic strategies so that there is a focus on investing in people and in life skills alongside conventional vocational skills and employment. Further lessons are provided in the slides below, as well as conclusions from an independent evaluation of the Talent Match programme by Sheffield Hallam University.¹



- Include the community from the start
- Ensure programmes are co-designed and evaluated by the targets cohorts
- Build your theory of change – a good programme will evolve
- Allow programmes to take risk- we learn from failure as well as success
- Be holistic – remember Mazlows Hierarchy of Needs- we cannot expect inclusive growth if basic needs are not met
- Give programmes time to work –sustainable change in attitudes , behaviours and skills take time
- Invest to save.
- Embed mental health support in from the start
- Work collaboratively but don't let that dilute the vision and coordination



Developing a system that enables us to invest in people and intervene early

Participants emphasised that to address the skills and labour market challenges we face, it is important to begin with the starting point of people rather than the mechanisms or process. The public sector spends a vast amount on dealing with the consequences of social crises – and these issues in turn limit the potential of economic growth and labour market inclusion, while also being fuelled by economic conditions and opportunities that fail to support those that are most disadvantaged.

“ It is more important than ever that local areas take control of the skills agenda and shape local economic strategies so that there is a focus on investing in people and in life skills alongside conventional vocational skills and employment.

One local authority leader noted that significant portions of the council's money is spent on averting or alleviating crises – for example, on preventing domestic violence and spending significantly on care. This not only fails to tackle the source of these problems, but also leads to a drag on productivity as many people are either unable to work or engage in productive and sustainable employment. There should therefore be more of a focus on investing resources in the pivotal moments where you can actually make a difference in people's lives – to help people move towards independent, self-sustainable lives. It is important to explore what types of systems and interventions can help enable this better – drawing on and expanding the principles of whole-place community budgets.

Participants discussed how the changing context around devolution might help in this regard. New institutions, powers and flexibilities could potentially enable local places to join up and target services more effectively to support the individuals and families most in need (building on community budgets). Reforms such as business rate devolution and

1 Hallam University, "Talent Match Evaluation and Learning Contract," <http://www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cesr/ouexpertise/talent-match-evaluation-and-learning-contract>.

the localisation of council finance are creating an impetus for locally-led economic growth, with more possibilities to tailor this growth and the resources that flow from it to investment in supporting disadvantaged people.

Another participant characterised the current trajectory of policy and public services as two systems operating in parallel. One is the locally-led system, where inclusive growth is pursued through aligning a fragmented set of initiatives and systems, focusing on the ‘whole person.’ Alongside this you have the national system (seen for example with the apprenticeship levy) which is predefined, as well as a welfare system that is centrally managed, despite its important interfaces with skills and work. This might be described as a closed system sitting on top of an open designed system. It is important that the Inclusive Growth Commission is able to be clear about how devolution can take the fundamental steps to address this.

The private sector can help create a more inclusive economy

Participants discussed the potential of the private sector to play a key role in developing a ‘good economy’ with accessible, high-quality jobs. Helping to invest in skills is part of this, but it can go much deeper. One participant from the ‘Good Economy Partnership’ highlighted ways in which the organisation is helping to support this – including developing models for the private sector to invest in places that are the most deprived; and a new system that is being developed that rates companies according to how well they create good jobs in the UK, particularly in the places that need them the most. Capital investment in communities is key – and the private sector can support this further through responsible investment.

Acknowledging the impact of austerity and recognising the public investment case for spending

When examining the potential of devolution and better designed policy, it is important to acknowledge the very significant funding challenges many local places face and the impact that austerity is having on local economies and the resilience of people furthest from the labour market. One participant noted that

Sheffield City Region has lost £1 billion through a combination of welfare and council cuts since 2010. In addressing this, it is possible to make a public service argument for growth, drawing on cost-benefit principles: public spending can help create the conditions for growth.

Redesigning the skills and employment system

The Work Programme: opportunities for a new approach

Participants noted that the Work Programme contract comes to an end in 2017 and will then be renegotiated. There is an opportunity to explore what a new system might look like from an inclusive growth perspective. It may be possible to develop an inclusive welfare to work programme with contracts designed and delivered differently, drawing on the learning from locally-rooted and person-centred initiatives such as the Work Solutions family support programme, and the Work and Health programme. One participant mentioned the experience of Barnsley Council, which is currently subcontracted by Serco to deliver employment support on a payment-by-results model. One of the key lessons from this has been the value of not just a welfare to work programme but an accountable welfare to work programme, led by organisations such as local authorities that can embed accountability into the way they work. Finally, there is a serious case to be made for challenging the punitive nature of our current welfare system, which operates on strict conditionality including the excessive use of ‘sanctions.’ This can intensify people’s barriers to sustainable employment – indeed, some people that are sanctioned exit the system altogether.

Investing fairly and through different stages of people’s working lives

Participants noted that under our current skills system we invest heavily until the age of the age of 19, and until 21/22 through loans. But after recipients receive their qualifications, they are left to their own devices without any further engagement. In addition, as mentioned above, the system is extremely punitive, in particular the sanctions regime. It has also been unable to effectively support or re-engage those people that are disabled and economically inactive (3.6 million of them) – this has been one of the key failures of the Work Programme. In addition to unemployed people, there has been very little state investment (in terms of skills and development) to support other cohorts of potentially vulnerable people, such as those that

are self-employed or low paid.

One local authority leader argued that under the current system, so much of an individual's success in terms of employment and progression is dependent on them making the right economic choice at the right time. Some people are significantly disadvantaged because, for example, they may not have received the right advice before entering college (and subsequently pursued a path that doesn't support their future prospects), and then later on in their life (even in their 20s) being deemed too old to re-enter the system. This can lead to a situation where many people drop out of the labour market altogether.

Tailoring support across the labour market spectrum: from pre-employment to skills utilisation

Participants mentioned the importance of understanding the needs of different groups of people in different parts of the labour market spectrum – from the long-term disengaged to those with a high level of skills. For the former support may include, for example, pre-employment programmes while for the high-skilled it may include efforts to address skills under-utilisation, which is a significant challenge in the UK. One participant also highlighted older workers as a group within the spectrum that are often neglected as much of the focus remains on young people. Yet the challenges for older workers are significant, particularly in economies affected by the legacy of deindustrialisation and mass unemployment. Often they cycle through different programmes without achieving job outcomes, as well as losing hope and aspiration.

“ To really address the fragmentation and ‘confetti of initiatives’, it is important to go beyond the scope of traditional approaches to joined-up policy.

Getting incentives and culture right

Building in the right incentives to encourage employers and other organisations to promote and invest in workforce development was recognised as critical. Participants discussed whether the problems around talent retention (for example less prosperous cities losing talented graduates that migrate elsewhere, often London) limit the impact of, or undermines, skills investment. One senior council officer argued that there was nothing fundamentally wrong with training people that go on to live and work elsewhere – the more serious problem is with some companies that simply poach labour rather than investing in training and workforce development. Designing incentives and promoting cultures to address this is vital. Moreover, in addition to the high-skilled graduates, there is a much more substantial cohort of young people who are caught up in labour markets with low wages and poor prospects for progression – it is far more important that these people are more effectively supported.

Participants agreed that creating a more inclusive economy for skills and labour markets also requires demand side incentives (shaping local economies) rather than just focusing on the supply of skills. Indeed, because much of our current economic and employment model is driven by low wage, low value sectors, many of the largest players in the apprenticeship levy are sectors such as logistics and retail, which are not necessarily going to drive forward productivity.

Going beyond the scope of traditional ‘joined-up’ approaches

It was argued that to really address the fragmentation and ‘confetti of initiatives’ mentioned earlier, it is important to go beyond the scope of traditional approaches to joined-up policy. We need to explore not just the joining up of initiatives that are seen as being in usual realm of skills and employment, but also services and resources around other key challenges – such as transport, childcare, minimum wage and employee conditions (e.g. zero hours).

As part of this, and building on points made earlier in Tony Tweedy's presentation, it is important to make the skills and employment system far easier to navigate for employers and those receiving support from it – it is currently too complicated. Developing effective brokerage is therefore vital.

Participants explored the potential of ‘joint venture partnerships’ between key organisations and sectors involved in skills and employment – for example bringing together colleges, employers, local authorities, central government departments (such as DWP and BIS) and others. In applying such approaches in practice, it is vital to clarify roles and responsibilities – clearly setting out what the role is of government and partners in any new system that develops. This should include the formal conditions of partnership and clear streams of accountability.

Shifting our focus to outcomes and knowing what works

Several participants argued that ‘we are obsessed with outputs but not outcomes.’ There was an impression that no one has yet been able to develop an outcomes-based funding system that works (the issues with the Work Programme are all too evident here), but that this was key. In education and training, for example, the system and budget are far too focused on qualifications rather than outcomes (i.e. where learners go after they complete their education). This is compounded by a real lack of data about what exactly the skills system is providing us in terms of outcomes, and what sorts of approaches and interventions work.

Devolution: the challenges and barriers

Participants also recognised that in many respects the scope of devolution is actually relatively narrow and locally-based reforms can be diluted by the centralising tendencies of government departments. For example, by 2018 only up to £1.5bn of adult skills funds will be devolved – which are largely first step programmes. In terms of the levers for addressing skills gaps, these are met largely by higher level (centrally-managed) programmes. We know that 16-19 education is increasingly more centralised; the apprenticeship levy will be market-oriented, along with, increasingly, higher education.

One participant argued that the key levers are more centrally prescribed than before – for example the increasing presence of prescribed qualifications, ever greater prescription in funding, and more centralisation of programmes and accountability. There are important questions about whether this centralised, market-based approach might widen inequalities and potentially lead to ‘skills ghettoisation.’

Conclusion

Creating labour markets that enable a far greater range of people to develop their skills and enjoy quality employment is a central challenge for realising inclusive growth. The evidence from this seminar suggests that our current approaches to skills and employment are too centralised, fragmented, confusing and unresponsive to the unique needs and resources of local places. The challenges of weak progression, a low wage economy with a low skills equilibrium, and structural labour market exclusion are not being adequately addressed – and those furthest from the labour market tend to be most adversely impacted. As devolution moves forward (and despite the clear limitations that have been imposed on it), there are nevertheless opportunities to reconfigure our skills and employment support systems. This can include joining up services and connecting skills and employment to the wider public service reform agenda (including early intervention, health, housing and transport); investing in schemes (such as Talent Match) that are locally tailored and make a long-term difference; and ensuring that devolution is shaped by values rather than targets.

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About the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission

Launched in April, 2016, the Inclusive Growth Commission is an independent, impactful inquiry designed to understand and identify practical ways to make local economies across the UK more economically inclusive and prosperous. Chaired by Stephanie Flanders, former BBC economics editor and J.P. Morgan Chief Market Strategist (UK and Europe), and building on the success of the RSA's City Growth Commission, the Commission will seek to devise new models for place-based growth, which enable the widest range of people to participate fully in, and benefit from, the growth of their local area.

The RSA City Growth Commission demonstrated how the largest UK cities can drive prosperity through place-based investment and economic policy making, enabled through devolution and new forms of governance and finance. This economic narrative has since driven policy developments, but it has become increasingly urgent to understand how we can deepen and broaden this vision, tackling the entrenched inequalities within and between neighbourhoods that act as a drag on growth, and ensuring that the benefits of this place-based approach are more widely shared.

Find out more and get involved

To find out more about the Commission and view its latest content, visit www.thersa.org/inclusivegrowthcommission or our Twitter on @incgrowth.

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