

'Changing One Million Lives' event challenges what more businesses can do to drive forward social mobility in the UK

2 years ago



[Compass Group UK & Ireland](#) has hosted over 100 clients and stakeholders to discuss the importance of enabling social mobility, alongside learnings and insights, at an event which marked the anniversary of the launch of its 'Our Social Promise' – a commitment to positively impact 1 million lives by 2030.

Held at Chelsea Football Club, the UK's largest food service provider brought together leaders in the social mobility space. Delegates heard from keynote speaker Professor Lee Elliot Major OBE, who is the country's first Professor of Social Mobility. His work is dedicated to improving the prospects of disadvantaged children and young people. He works closely with school leaders, universities, and employers as well as Government policy makers and was able to offer insights on how businesses can help, including –

- Developing an equity approach
- Acknowledging the experiences of people's development
- Recognising human talent comes in many forms

Robin Mills, Managing Director, Compass Group UK & Ireland and Amanda Scott, Director of Talent, Learning and D&I, Compass Group UK & I gave an update on what Compass has achieved in year one of its ambitious commitment, what the organisation has learnt and where more work is needed. This includes the publication of its first ethnicity and pay gap report; the roll out of a socio-economic survey among its unit manager and above, employee population; ongoing investment in skills and development, seeing over 1000 people now on "career pathways", over 600 apprentices and over 100 employees becoming mentors. The business has also supported 330 clients move to Real Living Wage, since becoming a Recognised

Service Provider in 2021. Additionally, the business has grown its partnerships as it actively looks to help those from disadvantaged or hard to reach groups into employment. Partners include Springboard, WestLea, Key4Life, Ambitious about Autism and The Oaks Specialist College.

Katherine Chapman, Director, Living Wage Foundation, highlighted the critical role a decent wage plays in social mobility. Panel discussions saw representatives from Career Ready, Bright Blue, Direct Line Group and Deloitte discuss how businesses can play a role in unlocking the social mobility deadlock. They shared views on topics such as changing recruitment processes to make them more accessible, the importance of building social capital and ensuring organisational culture and practices create an environment where everyone can thrive.

Professor Lee Elliot Major OBE said: “We often talk about the important role of education for children and young people in enhancing social mobility within society. There is no doubt this is key, but we have to accept that this isn’t the only route and education has not acted as a great social leveller historically. This is why the role of businesses is integral to making progress – this is an opportunity, which also carries with it a strong business case in terms of the retention and recruitment of talented people.”

Robin Mills, Managing Director, Compass Group UK & Ireland added: “Improving social mobility is not something that one group can solve overnight. By working together with our clients and partners, I believe we can drive real change and we can learn from one another along the way. I want Compass to be a force for good and social mobility is now an important part of our DNA. I don’t think we can underestimate the significance of the work we have undertaken this year, at the start of our Mission to a Million journey.”

Compass’ ambitious Mission to a Million commitment aims to enhance opportunities and change lives, through job creation, education, training, community and charitable engagement. It includes gender, ethnic minority and the industry’s first socio-economic representation targets across its executive team, middle management, junior management and frontline roles, such as cleaners and chefs. For more detail visit [Our Social Promise](#).