The influence of parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations

Keith Kintrea,
Ralf St Clair and
Muir Houston

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This report aims to better understand the relationship between young people's aspirations and how they are formed.

There is a high degree of interest among politicians and policy-makers in aspirations, driven by two concerns: raising the education and skills of the UK population, and tackling social and economic inequality. High aspirations are often seen as one way to address these concerns, but how aspirations contribute to strong work and educational outcomes is not well understood. Based on longitudinal research in three locations in the UK, the report investigates aspirations and contributes empirical evidence to the debate.

The report:

- examines the nature of aspirations;

- explores how parental circumstances and attitudes, school, and opportunity structures come together to shape aspirations in deprived urban areas; and

- argues that the approach to intervention should be reconsidered.

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Executive summary

This study set out to examine the educational and occupational aspirations of young people in three locations in the UK, and to explore the factors that shaped them. The study intended to understand the contexts, structures and processes through which aspirations are formed, moving beyond the view that aspirations are simply a matter of individual choice.

The research was conducted in three areas, in London, Nottingham and Glasgow. Working within secondary schools, 490 students aged around 13 were individually interviewed in 2007–08, with 288 of the same students interviewed again in 2010 at around age 15. These interviews were supplemented by focus groups with young people and further interviews with parents, teachers and community representatives.

Because the notion of aspirations is under-theorised (despite its high profile in current policy) the first stage of the research was to build a model to explain the creation of aspirations. The model analysed factors in three groups: family, place and school. This worked well and allowed the interactions of those factors to be understood in some depth.
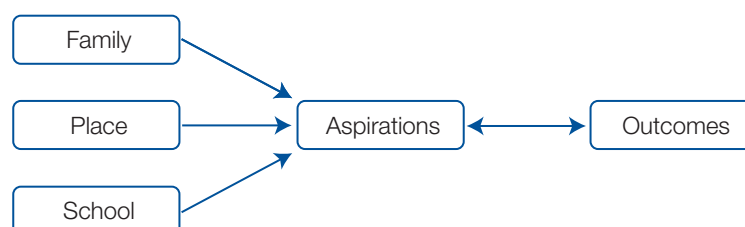
A central question for the study was the influence on aspirations of living in disadvantaged places. The study involved young people in three schools that drew from neighbourhoods with strong evidence of deprivation, but that otherwise provided markedly different social and economic contexts. Across all three case locations young people had a very high degree of exposure to local influences, particularly to the local norms, beliefs and expectations about what is important in life. The study provided little evidence that deprivation *per se* influenced aspirations, but strongly supported the significance of specific places.

The places that young people lived in played a strong role in their lives, which varied a great deal across the three case studies. In London, there was a diverse, ethnically rich community. Here we found the highest aspirations, and these increased between 13 and 15 years of age.

In Nottingham, there was a predominately White working-class community. While many in Nottingham aspired to go to university and have professional jobs, the aspirations of the young people were lower than the other cities at age 13, and remained low at age 15. A larger number of young people were interested in traditional roles, with boys aspiring to trades and girls to care occupations.

In Glasgow the school drew pupils from some of the poorest parts of Scotland as well as some more affluent areas, and from a wider area of the city than the more neighbourhood-focused London and Nottingham schools. This resulted in aspirations being formed in a far less homogeneous milieu than the others. There was also a tendency for aspirations to move from polarisation among different groups towards a common level over time. This level was slightly lower than average aspirations in London, but higher than in Nottingham.

Five findings concerning the nature of aspirations and their formation arose from the study:

- Young people's aspirations towards education and jobs are high. Most aspire to go to university, and young people aspire to professional and managerial jobs in far greater numbers than the proportions of those jobs in the labour market. There was little evidence of fatalism in the face of depressed labour markets or that not working was seen as an acceptable outcome.
- Young people's aspirations are not predominantly unrealistic. At 13 many had ideal occupations drawn from sport or celebrity but this had waned by the age of 15. It is certainly not the case that large numbers of young people are wedded to the idea of being pop stars or premiership football strikers.
- Our data reinforces the insight that places with a shared status of deprivation can be quite different in their social make-up and the way that this plays out in the life experiences of residents. Generalisations about the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that surround aspirations in disadvantaged communities are not helpful, and should be avoided.
- There is likely to be a wide variety of patterns of aspirational formation across the UK. Areas of greater and lesser deprivation, and with different demographical and social factors from those studied, will potentially have other, and quite specific, outcomes in terms of aspirations. This study deliberately looked at distinctive areas in the expectation that they would have specific characteristics, but it is not exhaustive and suggests that other challenges could be found in places with different characteristics.
- Factors affecting aspirations, whether from school, place or family, tend to be consistent and reinforcing, pushing young people towards or away from the fulfilment of high aspirations. In Nottingham and London, they emerged at the school level because the school was so strongly rooted in the community. The more economically diverse school in Glasgow showed these patterns at a smaller scale, but the overall consistency of factors was striking across all three settings.

Aspirations have been a focus of policy relating to education, poverty and social mobility for some years, driven by two concerns. The first is the educational level and skills of the UK population. The second is social and economic inequality and social mobility. Aspiring to a high level of achievement is seen as part of the answer to individual progress and to the collective ambition for the UK to remain internationally competitive. However, there is a lack of clarity about whether aspirations are fundamentally too low, especially among people from disadvantaged backgrounds, or are in fact rather high, but cannot be realised because of the various barriers erected by inequality.

Based on this study we believe that aspirations are a reasonable focus for intervention; in order to succeed, young people need to want to succeed. But the approach to intervention needs to be reconsidered, taking into account the following six fundamental insights.

Aspirations are high but uneven

The evidence that aspirations are generally high among young people contradicts assumptions that there is a problem of low aspirations among young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds. This raises a fundamental question about how two important policy aims can best be brought together. One aim is to ensure that enough people in the UK aspire to highly educated roles. The other is to break the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage. This research suggests that there is little problem with the first goal; young people collectively have aspirations higher than the outcomes likely to be delivered by the labour market. The second aim is more problematic. The finding that aspirations differ significantly between places suggests there is a need to identify and work in a focused manner with those families and communities where aspirations are weaker or poorly defined.

Place matters

The places that we studied in this research are all disadvantaged to some degree but the aspirations of young people within them are distinctive. It is not correct to characterise deprived neighbourhoods as places where aspirations are always low. Policies need to recognise that aspirations may be influenced by social class, culture and history or people's direct experience of the place they live in. Like other studies, this research reinforces the evidence that White young working-class people are among the least aspirational.

Aspirations are strongly influenced by place, and it follows that policies to address aspirations must be local. A universal approach is likely to be less effective because of the distinctive nature of aspirational formation in different types of social setting. The initial approaches and early experiences of the *Inspiring Communities* programme in England makes it clear that there are plenty of ideas about how stronger aspirations within poor communities might be built. It is disappointing therefore that the programme was cancelled before it really got underway and that the current UK Coalition Government's social mobility strategy contains no specific proposals for community-based approaches to raising aspirations, leaving it all to local action.

Higher aspirations are not enough

Aspirations are sometimes seen within policy as the critical factor in the success of young people. However, it is not enough for young people just to aspire; they also need to be able to navigate the paths to their goals.

It appears that what it takes to progress in education and attain desirable employment is not well understood by many parents or young people in the areas that we surveyed. Addressing lower aspirations means allowing young people and their parents to see for themselves the range of possibilities that are open, but it also means ensuring that they understand what it will take to fulfil their ambitions. However much the young person wants to be a lawyer, this aspiration is incompatible with leaving school at the age of 16.

There is a lack of fit between young people's job aspirations and the kinds of jobs available in the local labour market. An obvious but vital observation here is that in order for young people to obtain good jobs such jobs have to be available and the young people have to be able to access them. There is a need to expose students to a greater range of occupations and to promote a better understanding of job content. To that end, exposure to school 'alumni' in a range of positions might be helpful, as well as greater contacts with local businesses.

Because young people from disadvantaged backgrounds do not attend universities in the same proportion as their more advantaged peers, it is likely that many of the young people in this study who say they want to go to university will be disappointed. This supports the development of policies to widen access to university and to incentivise staying on at school.

Aspirations are complex and require informed support

Aspirations are both short term and long term and young people may aspire to different things simultaneously. The full range of possibilities for educational outcomes and jobs is often hidden or unimagined, particularly when there is little experience in families of higher education and professional jobs. This means that young people need informed and detailed help to take the pathways that are likely to lead to fulfilment of the longer-term ambitions. This requires better career advice and more access to work experience. There is a need for continual support at every stage of young people's development, and there have to be mechanisms to ensure that young people who do not take advantage of opportunities at traditional school age are not marginalised for life.

Individual aspirations are influenced by multiple mutually reinforcing factors

Aspirations, as we have treated them, are hopes that are held about the future concerning education and jobs. But they are built on by the young people's own ideas and how they respond to the pressures of school, community and society. We find that place, family and schools tend to coalesce around particular views of future options and reinforce each other. Policy must recognise the ways in which aspirations are deeply affected by the experience of individuals, such as their level of engagement with school, the influence of peer groups and the attitudes of family members towards work and education.

There have been and remain several one-dimensional programmes to raising aspirations, particularly through schools. The previous UK Labour Government's *Going the Extra Mile* programme (DCSF, 2009) and the current UK Coalition Government's proposals to expose school students to high achievers as motivational visitors, including Cabinet ministers themselves, and to involve them more in work experience through partnerships with business (Cabinet Office, 2011) may be useful in some circumstances. But they are not likely to be fully effective in changing the aspirational trajectories of young people who have many other powerful influences on their world views.

Parents are important

Parents and families play a key role; there is clear alignment between what the parents say they want for the young people and what the young people aspire to themselves. For policy, supporting aspirations then means working with parents as well as young people, particularly where parents face disadvantages themselves.

1 Introduction

This study set out to take an innovative approach to aspirations. We wanted to understand how geographical and social contexts shape the aspirations of young people in a deeper and more nuanced way than has been done before. The place that people spend some of the most formative years of their lives inevitably has a profound effect on their view of the future, and there are a number of outstanding questions about this relationship. How does it vary by the nature of that place? How profound are these influences? What factors tend to strengthen or limit the differences?

This report arises from a longitudinal study of young people designed to answer some of these questions. Its core was a large-scale survey that aimed to find out what they said affected their aspirations, set within three different urban contexts. This information was then used to develop recommendations for policy and practice.

The research team began by creating a literature-based model of the factors that influence aspirations, which we defined as young people's desires for the future. This model is discussed in the next chapter.

Context

This study comes at a time at a time when there is a very high degree of interest among politicians and policy-makers on aspirations. We consider the implications of this study in Chapter 8, but for now it is important to note that there is a strong assumption that raising aspirations will increase educational achievement, thereby contributing both to greater equity and to the economic competitiveness of the UK, and that public policy has a key role in promoting this.

Aspirations were a key theme of many of the Labour Government's policy papers about children and young people up to 2010. They were a key component of *The Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007) and in *Aiming High for Young People* (HM Treasury and DCSF, 2007).

The Social Exclusion Taskforce worked in partnership with the Departments of Children, Schools and Families and Communities and Local Government to commission a review of evidence on aspirations in disadvantaged communities in 2008. The findings (Cabinet Office, 2008) provided background for the Labour Government's social mobility White Paper *New Opportunities: Fair chances for the future* (Cabinet Office, 2009). This document announced measures to increase young people's aspirations via the new programme *Inspiring Communities* (CLG *et al.*, 2009).

The Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government elected in May 2010 has continued the interest in raising aspirations (although *Inspiring Communities* has been stopped).

Launching the *Schools White Paper* (DfE, 2010a), the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister's joint foreword notes the differences in attainment between groups of young people, and attributes a lack of aspiration as a key reason for this, specifically:

> *In far too many communities there is a deeply embedded culture of low aspiration that is strongly tied to long term unemployment. The Coalitions' Work Programme and welfare reforms will help tackle these issues. But schools do have a crucial role to play.*
>
> DfE, 2010a, p. 4

In 2011 the Coalition published its strategy for social mobility (Cabinet Office, 2011) that continues the interest in raising aspirations, particularly among schoolchildren from disadvantaged backgrounds, as a route to educational and career success.

In spite of the broad commitment to raising aspirations across the political spectrum, the links between aspirations and educational and labour market outcomes are not well understood and neither are the best ways to raise aspirations. There is a presumption in policy thinking that having high aspirations implies a sense of career direction and a belief that upward mobility can be achieved through current learning. Low, vague or inappropriate aspirations are thought to indicate weak ambition for the future, lack of confidence and low motivation towards learning.

The portrayal of aspirations in policy debates can sometimes suggest that they are essentially an individual attribute that is the result of open choices. This can lead to a belief that low aspirations are the reason for people being poor and at the bottom of the social hierarchy. It can also mean that aspirations are seen as something that can be manipulated with a little external guidance and encouragement, for example, by parents, schools or mentors. However, the Social Exclusion Taskforce's conclusion that aspirations may vary systematically by place (Cabinet Office, 2008) and the range of institutional factors acting as barriers to the professions for working-class young people featured in the Milburn report (Panel on Fair Access to the Professions, 2009) argue for fuller recognition of the importance of social, economic and cultural context.

The current study is based on the belief that aspirations policies cannot properly be designed without placing aspirations in the context of wider factors, including educational and economic opportunities and resources. It is also based on the understanding that aspirations are complex and multidimensional, reflecting the influence and interaction of many different individual, social, cultural and environmental factors, including economic, social, neighbourhood and household structures.

Structure of the report

This report has seven further chapters. The next chapter discusses the model of aspirations adopted and the research methods, providing insights into the processes used to generate and understand the data. Chapter 3 looks at the three cities selected for the research, explaining how they were similar and different, and why we believed they would help to illuminate the differences between places in the UK. Chapters 4 and 5 describe the aspirations of the young people we talked to at ages 13 and 15 respectively, leading into the discussion of the differences between locations in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 discusses what we learned about the factors affecting aspirations, and Chapter 8 lays out our conclusions and implications for future policy.

Overall, we see this research as giving rise to some subtle and fascinating insights into the relationship between place and the aspirations of individuals, and hope that it proves a useful contribution to the ongoing debate on the relationship between aspiration and achievement.

2 Research methods and model

This chapter describes briefly the way aspirations were approached in this research and the data collection and analysis methods used. In addition, some background information on the young people involved in the survey is provided.

Understanding aspirations

The term 'aspiration' is widely used to capture the various desires and ambitions held by young people about their futures. Aspirations may centre on lifestyle or self-fulfilment, or revolve around roles in the family or community (such as performing a caring or leadership function). The research and policy literature is mainly concerned with the educational and occupational goals of young people, linked to policy agendas about social mobility and increasing the pool of skills as a basis for economic growth. Do young people want to stay on at school or to go on to further education? Do they want to become mechanics, beauty therapists, doctors, pilots, footballers or business executives?

The notion that raising aspirations will lead to enhanced outcomes, both vocationally and educationally, is approaching the status of a common-sense truism. What appears to be missing from the discussion of aspiration is an explanation of why some aspirations are better than others and, even more fundamentally, how aspirations actually affect outcomes. Often there is unproblematic acceptance that environmental and personal factors affect aspirations, which in turn affect outcomes.

While these relationships may well exist and have a substantial influence on outcomes, it is unlikely that they are the whole story. An early task in this study was to develop a model of aspirations that offered a more nuanced insight into aspirations than many of the existing models.

The way aspirations are usually used in policy is based on three connected propositions. These are:

- Low aspirations leads to low achievement (defined in a variety of ways).
- Some people from poorer backgrounds have depressed aspirations, affecting their achievement and ultimate job prospects.
- Raising aspirations will help to break this cycle, and lead to improved social and economic outcomes for young people from deprived backgrounds.

These three propositions may have some truth to them, but it is very difficult to support the argument that low aspirations *cause* low achievement. It is relatively simple to imagine a scenario where young people who dislike school, for example, tend not to score well in tests or exams and become disengaged and unambitious. In this case, low aspiration is an outcome of low achievement, not its cause.

A recent study for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Goodman and Gregg, 2010) analysed four large-scale datasets to build a strong evidence base for the importance of aspirations at key stages of children's lives. Both children's and parents' aspirations and expectations were powerfully related to outcomes in these areas. However, the study did point out that aspirations were generally high, and that the key might not be raising aspirations as much as ensuring that high aspirations were converted into reality.

In the current study, the research team was extremely cautious about following the three propositions listed above. They can all too easily lead to a mechanistic, over-simple model of aspirations that supports the idea that people can do better if they believe they can and are motivated by this belief to try harder. The aim of this research was to challenge these over-simplified models. The focus of this study is the formation of aspirations in certain places, and the research team accepts that without the desire for high outcomes it seems unlikely that they can be attained. In other words, aspirations may not be sufficient for success, but they are necessary.

In this study aspirations are viewed as dynamic, changing over time and responsive to feedback from peers, family and educators. Our basic position is that understanding the way aspirations contribute to a person's movement through educational systems and labour markets requires going beyond the 'snapshot' approach. Previous research on aspirations makes strong arguments that certain factors influence the aspirations identified by young people, but tends not to place aspirations within a long-term process of decision-making and development.

Aspirations develop over time, and will shift considerably throughout an individual's life. This may represent changes in social circumstances or in an individual's reactions to the same circumstances. There is some evidence that key individuals can have a strong influence on aspirations, but we do not know when this is the case and what other factors come into play. Aspirations can be seen to be shaped by various forms of feedback to the individual, both through key relationships such as with their peer group and through opportunity structures such as the local labour market (Furlong and Biggart, 1999).

Another way to look at this is that stating a particular aspiration evokes a reaction from others. The reaction could include approval, derision, interest or support. This reaction is likely to affect the aspiration that will be stated in the future. So if somebody says that they want to be an astronaut and are laughed at, next time they may say doctor or lawyer. So when thinking about aspirational outcomes it is important to think about the immediate outcomes that may affect the aspiration of the individual as well as the long-term concrete vocational and educational outcomes of an aspiration. This study is not designed to capture the long-term outcomes, so the focus remains on the process of aspirational formation.

The approach taken in this study is summarised in Figure 1. This model is intended to organise potential influential factors into three domains, or groupings: family, place and school. It also shows a double-headed arrow between aspirations and outcomes, to show that there is a degree of feedback between the aspirations chosen by individuals and the outcomes of that choice.

Figure 1: A model of aspirations including a feedback loop
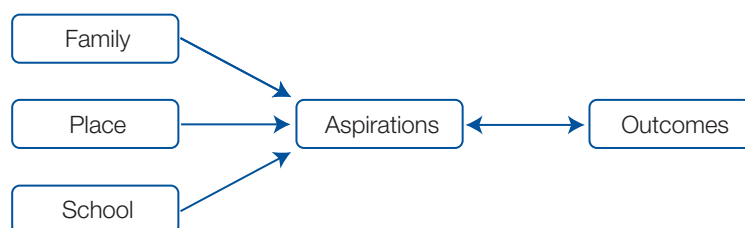
In this research we focused on understanding more fully how the varying influences of different places manifest in aspirational pathways for young people between 13 and 15 years of age. There are three types of aspirations that are considered in this research:

Ideal: What the individual would do for a job if there were no real world constraints.
Realistic: What the individual expects to be able to do for a job given the circumstances within which they live.
Educational: What the individual anticipates regarding their educational career.

The three types are connected to some degree. Certain vocational aspirations will require specific educational aspirations to be realised.

The difference between ideal and realistic aspirations is an important one. Ideal aspirations can tell us a great deal about the general direction of a young person's ambitions even if they may be, by definition, unrealistic. Realistic aspirations may reflect perceived individual and structural constraints. The two types tend to be highly correlated (Andres *et al.*, 1999). Individuals with high hopes for an ideal world also tend to have high hopes for the real world. This in itself suggests that aspirations have something powerful to tell us about individuals in society.

Research methods

This report is based on data collected in a two-stage survey of young people in three secondary schools, plus surveys of their parents and semi-structured interviews with staff in the schools and people in the local communities. The schools were used as a point of access to a cohort of young people living in broadly disadvantaged areas, set within the distinctively different labour markets of East London, Nottingham and Glasgow.

At stage 1 the young people were interviewed in school year 2007–08 when they were aged 12 or 13. For clarity, this report will refer to this group as 13-year-olds. Most of the same students were then re-interviewed in 2010, when they were typically aged between 14 and 16. This group will be referred to as 15-year-olds. Overall, almost 500 young people were interviewed in the first stage and 288 in the second.

The core of the interviews with young people at both stages was designed to establish their aspirations, both their ideal aspirations – what they ideally wanted to do in the future – and their realistic aspirations – what they expected to do. The interviews also sought information from the young people about their home areas, their leisure interests, their attitudes to school and learning and their family backgrounds, including the support they got at home for their aspirations and with their schoolwork. Especially at age 15, young people were also asked open questions which probed their reasons for holding particular aspirations and expectations, and for changes that had occurred in their aspirations and expectations since they were 13.

The core survey of young people was supplemented by three other data-gathering exercises. At stage 2 we ran three focus groups with young people in each school. These were designed to explore, in particular, neighbourhood and school influences on aspirations. At both stages we carried out a telephone survey with parents of the young people who had been surveyed in school. The telephone interviews were designed to obtain a view from parents on the aspirations held by young people and parents' attitudes to those aspirations, as well as to obtain reliable socioeconomic and household data as context for the data obtained from young people. We also carried out a small number of semi-structured interviews at both stages with staff in the schools and with members of the community in which the schools stood. These interviews were designed to better understand the school and neighbourhoods as contexts for the shaping of young people's aspirations.

Survey participants

When initially selected, the participants were young people in Year 8 (England) or S1 (Scotland) from each of the schools (the selection of schools is discussed in the following chapter). They were identified through a key contact, usually the head or assistant head of year, who arranged to have the young people meet with the researchers to be interviewed. The approach to accessing young people was different depending on the school; one school sent a list to classroom teachers in the morning with times for the students to be sent for interview. In the other two schools there were student helpers who were used as runners to

pick random students from the classrooms. For the second interviews in Glasgow, students signed up for appointments to meet the researchers. At the other two locations the young people were chosen randomly using class lists, either by the student helpers or by the school administrators. Consent from parents and pupils was sought before interview. If parents chose to withdraw their children from the research the young people's names were removed from the lists, although this was extremely rare.

The Glasgow interviews started in the summer of 2007 and concluded in the first few weeks of school year 2007/08, when the young people were in S2. The London and Nottingham interviews were carried out in the winter of school year 2007/08. The number of participants per school at stage 1 varied according to the size of the year group and potential for young people to move in and out of the catchment area per year (see Table 1 for number of students at each school). The London school had a more transient pupil population and therefore we interviewed more young people at the school. The Nottingham school had a much smaller year group size and a resultant smaller number of participants available to interview. In practice almost all of the young people in the year were interviewed.

Table 1: Participation by location (2007)

	London	Nottingham	Glasgow	Total
Number of pupils in each school	1,300	807	1,200	
Pupil interviews (age 13)	203	137	150	490
Pupil interviews (age 15)	114	108	66	288
Parent interviews	32	66	77	175
Teacher and community interviews	6	14	13	33

Our strategy was to interview as many as possible of the same young people at 15 as had been interviewed at stage 1. Stage 2 interviews were carried out between 2 years 3 months and 3 years after the first. This meant that young people in the English schools were in Year 10 and had not yet taken any GCSEs. In Glasgow students were in S4 and had started Standard Grades. The number of interviews achieved at age 15 was lower in Glasgow than the other schools; it appeared that some pupils excluded themselves more readily from the survey than elsewhere. Indeed, although staying on rates were relatively high at the Glasgow school, some had already decided to leave at the minimum leaving age and were disengaging from the school.

Stage 1 interviews followed a standard questionnaire and lasted approximately 20 minutes. Based on the model described above they covered a number of areas: the neighbourhood, the young people's interests and hobbies, the aspirations and expectations of the young people regarding their education and careers, the orientation of the young people towards school and the sources of advice available to them. Stage 2 interviews retained the same core questions about young people's aspirations, personal interests and attitudes towards school, although a few questions that did not need to be repeated were dropped. We also provided an opportunity for young people to provide open-ended reflection about the reasons for their answers, and asked an extended range of questions about parents' occupations, housing tenure and other socioeconomic circumstances in order to improve our understanding of the young people's socioeconomic backgrounds.

The surveys of young people were matched by parallel surveys of their parents or carers. Parents were identified from the list of young people who were interviewed for the research and were invited to take part by letter or telephone call. Those who were willing to participate sent back consent forms and contact information and were interviewed by telephone. In recognition of the recent migrant status of many of the London families, for the first round of interviews letters and consent information were sent out in the five dominant languages identified by the school staff as prominent in the catchment area (Bengali, Punjabi, Urdu, Somali and Polish). Researchers who spoke these languages were hired to conduct interviews for

any of the parents who wanted to participate in these identified languages. Repeated mailings were sent to those not responding and additional telephone calls were made to some parents in London to attempt to raise the participation rate. At stage 2 in London, school staff personally telephoned parents and asked them to participate.

Interviews with parents were approximately 20–40 minutes long. Parent participation varied across the three cities, with significantly less participation by parents in London. The interviews explored the parents' own educational and employment experiences, their residential choices and their attitudes towards education and their children's aspirations. The interviews also probed some of the wider neighbourhood attributes and opportunities or constraints facing school and residential location decisions.

A third stream of interviews involved guidance teachers and other teachers identified in the interviews with young people as those whom they talked to most about their futures, as well as leaders of local educational and vocational projects that had some focus on raising aspirations or achievement, and local community actors. The teachers and school staff were accessed with the help of the key contact at each school. Other individuals in the community to be interviewed were identified by school staff and by the local authority.

Characteristics of the young people

The young people in this study shared the experience of living in areas with a high degree of deprivation, as we discuss in the next chapter.

There were more young men than young women in the study at both stages, except for 15-year-olds in Glasgow. Family background varied depending on the city and neighbourhood, and there have been some changes in composition over time. There was a greater diversity of family background in London than in Nottingham or Glasgow (see Table 2).

Table 2: Characteristics of the young people at stages 1 and 2

	London	Nottingham	Glasgow
13-year-olds			
Gender	59% male 41% female	55% male 45% female	59% male 41% female
Family background	3% White British 64% Asian 19% Black 10% Other 3% Mixed	93% White British 1% Asian 4% Black 2% Mixed	81% White British 8% Asian 2% Black 1% Chinese 1% Other 7% Mixed
15-year-olds			
Gender	57% male 43% female	55% male 45% female	48.5% male 51.5% female
Family background	4.4% White British 72.0% Asian 15.8% Black 6.1% Other 1.8% Mixed	92.6% White British 4.6% Black 2.8% Mixed	84.8% White British 4.5% Asian 1.5% Black 1.5% Chinese 7.6% Mixed

It is worth noting that there is a pattern to the ethnic representation of 13- and 15-year-olds in the two stages of the survey. In both Glasgow and London the representation of White British marginally increased among the 15-year-olds.

Data analysis

The data gathered took three forms. There was a considerable amount of direct quantitative data, such as on background characteristics and Likert scale responses to attitude questions. There was also indirect quantitative data, where open responses to questions such as 'What would you like to do when you leave school?' were coded into numbers using frameworks such as the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). Care had to be taken here to clarify whether the numbers were to be understood as discrete categories or as an ordered hierarchy. Finally there was open-ended or qualitative data that was not converted to categories, such as from focus groups and teacher interviews.

Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS to assess the relative importance of different influences on aspirations and to generate robust multivariate statistical relationships between the key variables. Qualitative data was analysed thematically. Throughout the data analysis the key consideration was the meaning and importance ascribed to factors by the young people themselves, triangulated with the data from family members, teachers and key community actors. Key influences can be considered from three viewpoints, providing a way to enrich understanding of their significance.

For this report, we focused on specific types of patterns among specific variables, and used quantitative approaches to identify these patterns and understand them. The more open data was used to shed light on these patterns where possible, but it could certainly be subject to more in-depth analysis if a different type of question was being examined. In relation to findings about elements of change that occurred between the first and second rounds of interview, unless otherwise stated, the analysis used a matched dataset that allowed direct comparisons between the same individuals at 13 and 15 years of age. While this reduced the sample size, it allowed specific instances of change at the individual level to be identified.

Summary

This chapter has set out the model of aspirations used in this research, the data collection and, very briefly, the types of data analysis conducted. It sets the scene for the rest of the discussion by clarifying what kind of evidence will be gathered and examined, and what will not, as well as showing how the notion of place fits with other factors considered to affect aspirations.

3 The three areas

In any study that sets out to understand the influences of place, the selection of locations for the research is a critical consideration. In the current study, we wanted to select three areas with a considerable level of disadvantage but with variation in the form of that disadvantage and the reasons lying behind it. The key driver initially was labour market conditions but, as will be seen, the areas were also associated with different types of community.

Cities with different labour market conditions and sociodemographic characteristics were chosen on the assumption these different labour markets conditions might have an impact on aspirations. The choices made were Glasgow, Nottingham and East London (Newham).

London: A city with great cultural and ethnic diversity, substantial educational and labour market disparities and localised concentrations of poverty, but a buoyant economy in recent years.

Nottingham: A city with moderate cultural and ethnic diversity, but continuing challenges of inequality, segregation and labour market adjustment despite recent economic improvements.

Glasgow: A city with very extensive worklessness and associated deprivation, but with cultural and ethnic diversity confined to relatively small areas in the city. Recent economic improvements have not yet benefited poorer communities, which are mainly White. Educational attainment remains much lower than anywhere else in Scotland.

Since the study started in 2006 unemployment rates in Glasgow and Nottingham have not changed or changed only insignificantly, but have dropped four percentage points in Newham. Table 3 shows data for the cities and the areas around the school, as well as an indicator of economic activity. It should be noted that the Glasgow school, as is the case with many Scottish schools, draws its students from a wide area of the city and very few live in the ward within which the school sits.

Table 3: Unemployment and economic activity rates in the case study areas

	Newham	Nottingham	Glasgow	Great Britain
Unemployment rates in area near school (ward level data)	14%	8%	5%	8%
Unemployment rates in the city	10% (Inner London)	10%	11%	
Economic activity rates in area near the school	60%	73%	76%	76%
Economic activity rate in the city	75% (Inner London)	65%	65%	

The selection of the schools was purposive rather than random. They were selected with the aid of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), knowledge of the geography of catchment areas and with guidance from the local authorities. In practice this means that their catchment includes areas of disadvantage and that there are substantial numbers of children from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in all three schools. Schools were not the direct focus of this research; they were initially used as a way to gain access to the young people in a given area. As the research developed it became clear that each school had a distinctive character that both reflected the location and influenced the young people's aspirations.

A key question of this study was whether place makes a difference to aspirations. This was based on theory that suggested that deprived places are characterised by inward-looking perspectives serve to limit residents' horizons (Lupton and Kintrea, 2011). Most of the home addresses of the young people in the surveys were in disadvantaged areas, determined by the use of postcodes mapped onto the IMD in England and Scotland (see Figure 2).[1] The data is presented in deciles mapped onto the IMD using the respondents' home postcodes. The vast majority of our participants are in the most deprived 20 per cent of the IMD.

Figure 2 shows that the Glasgow sample was the most diverse in terms of neighbourhood context and East City the least diverse. Statistical analysis confirmed that on average the London students lived in contexts of greater deprivation than Nottingham students, and Glasgow students were less deprived again.[2] The respondents in the three cities also had different distributions across the IMD deciles. While all the respondents in Nottingham and London lived in neighbourhoods that were in the most deprived half of the scale, in Glasgow respondents were quite widely dispersed across the IMD, including some who lived in the least deprived 10 per cent of Scottish neighbourhoods. This difference emerged in other ways later in our analysis.

Figure 2: Deprivation in the sample by area (1 = high deprivation)
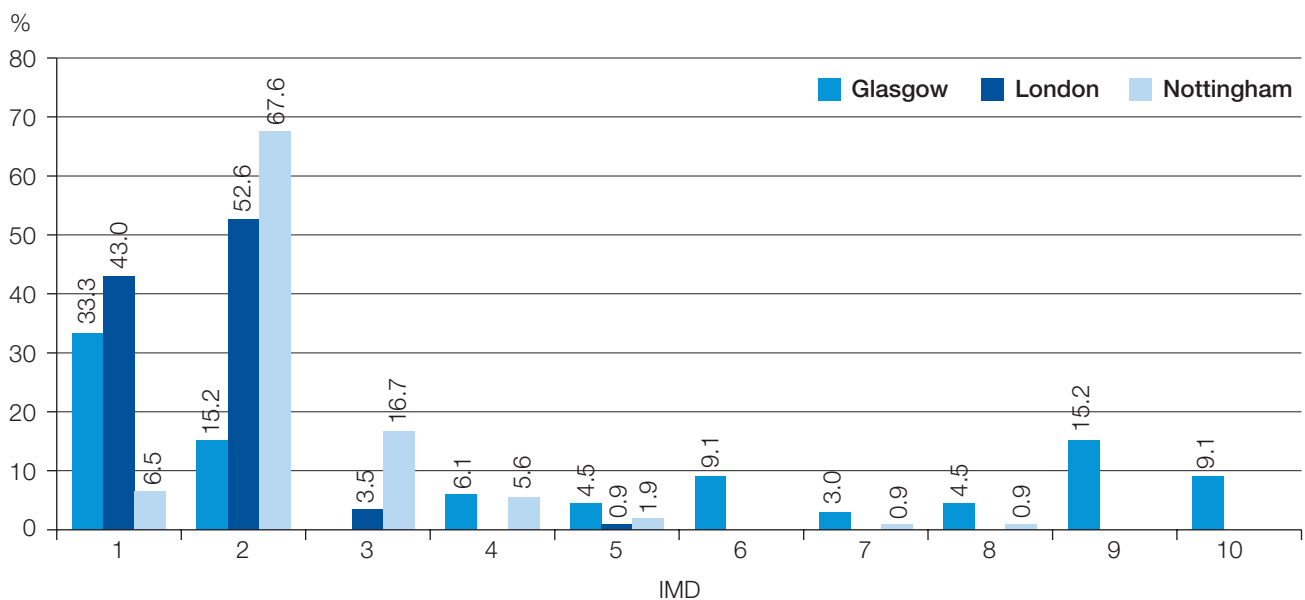
Source: ONS

In London and Nottingham most of the young people lived in neighbourhoods immediately around the school and there was a strong sense that the schools were both embedded in their neighbourhoods. However, the Glasgow school's pupils came from neighbourhoods over a wide area of the city, and occasionally beyond. Some came from peripheral council-built estates and others from deeply contrasting affluent inner suburbs, which were all part of the school's official catchment area. Others came from the much more ethnically mixed inner city, as well as some from newly built suburbs, which were outside the official catchment. Therefore, unlike the other schools, there was much less of a sense of these pupils being connected to a particular neighbourhood or area, and certainly no shared identity between the school and its neighbourhood.

In the next three sections the areas and the schools are described in more detail, leading to a concluding section for the chapter where the characteristics are summarised. The schools are not specifically named in this report to protect confidentiality.

The London area and school

The London area is a suburb about 9 miles from the centre of London originally built up in the late nineteenth century with some later council-built housing, including some high-rise flats.

The population is highly mobile, with a high proportion of people born outside the UK, and highly aspirational, yet strongly disadvantaged. According to the IMD for 2007 all of the 'super output areas' in the local ward sit in the top 20 per cent of deprived areas in England, with the majority in the top 10 per cent (CLG, 2008). The local ward's population contains a high proportion of young people. About 40 per cent are under the age of 25 compared with a Greater London figure of 32 per cent, and this proportion continues to grow, mainly through increasing density in the existing housing stock. The ward has a very high proportion of non-White groups, over 70 per cent. The largest groups are of Asian origin (over 40 per cent described themselves as Asian or Asian British, with the largest group among these Bangladeshi). A quarter of the population described themselves as Black, with the majority of African origin. There is a lower proportion of White people than in Newham as whole, and a corresponding larger proportion of people of Asian origin (von Ahn *et al.*, 2007; London Borough of Newham, 2008a).

In relation to housing tenure, 70 per cent of the dwellings in Newham are designated as private, with 30 per cent split between local authority (17 per cent) and registered social landlords (13 per cent) (ONS, 2011). In our survey, when asked about housing type, 68 per cent stated that they lived in terraced housing, with the remainder relatively evenly split between semi- and detached houses and low and high-rise flats. This corresponds to the housing in the immediate vicinity of the school observed during fieldwork and reinforces the links between place and school evident in the London case.

In the parents' survey, half of the answers to the question about why they moved to the area were positive, mainly about getting a bigger house, a better area or both, and very few reasons were negative. However, Newham residents suffer from significant levels of deprivation as noted above, and for some measures deprivation has increased. A report by the London Borough of Newham (2008b) noted that it had moved from eleventh most deprived district in England in 2004 to the sixth most deprived district in 2007 and that Newham was the third most deprived borough in London. The report noted increasing levels of deprivation in relation to income, barriers to housing and services and the living environment although it also reported slight improvements in relation to employment, health, education and crime.

Despite this official picture, in our survey 90 per cent of 13-year-olds said that their local area was a 'good' or a 'very good' place to live; 9 per cent said it was 'bad'; and only 1 per cent 'very bad'. Asked what they liked about the area, the most common answer referred to having friends there. Some young people referred positively to amenities in the area including shops and a local park; it was also frequently mentioned that area was friendly and safe. In contrast, asked what they disliked about the area, the most frequent response was to refer to violence and crime of various kinds, including the presence of gangs: "Too much violent crime – someone who got murdered lived in my road" and "Killing, mugging and violence". However, it seemed that violence and crime was not often personally experienced; rather it was mainly a question of perception. The other main complaint was about rubbish and fly tipping.

London's labour market is strong and very diverse. Central London and major employment centres such as Canary Wharf and Stratford are within easy reach, and the 2012 Olympic Games site is within a few miles of East City School. However, Newham's population occupies a significantly disadvantaged position in the labour market. Employment rates are a long way below the British average, with men in Newham far more likely to be in part-time work, unemployed or otherwise economically inactive; the groups least likely to be working (among both sexes) are Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups. The employment persistence rate and wages are both also lower than the British averages.

It would appear, however, that the parents of our respondents fare relatively better, with just under half cited as being employed in the top three SOCs, one in five in the middle three SOCs and around a third in the bottom three SOCs. When questioned about their own prospects, a third of our survey respondents did not believe that it would be easy to get a job in London at age 13 and this had increased to 54 per cent

by age 15, perhaps indicating greater awareness of labour market conditions. As in all locations, jobs that were deemed easier to get, including retail, cleaning or security, were of little interest, except as a means to an end while studying, for example.

The school is a large 'community' (that is, comprehensive) school of about 1,300 boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16, of whom 28 per cent have special education needs (SEN). The latest Ofsted report assessed the school as Grade 1 (that is, 'outstanding') for overall effectiveness, with all other grades except one being 1s. The school has improved in overall effectiveness from the previous Ofsted report in 2005, which graded it as 'good'. The 2009 report noted that:

It has a very diverse community, with students from over 50 different countries. A very high percentage speaks another language at home, including a large number who are at an early stage of speaking the language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities is above average.

Ofsted, 2009, p.1

The report also praised the 'passionate leadership' of the school and noted that the school focused on equipping all students with the best possible social and academic skills. The outstanding pastoral ethos and personal development of the students were seen as key elements in the high achievement pattern.

Educational attainment, as measured by assessment results at the end of Key Stage 4, is below average. However, it has been generally rising, with a total of 42 per cent of young people attaining five or more GCSEs at Grades A*-C, including maths and English language in 2009. This compares with a borough average of 47 per cent and an English average of 50 per cent (DfE, 2010b). However, the contextualised value added score for the school (a measure of how well the school helps pupils to progress rather than simply final results) is very positive, at 1,015, which is in the top 25 per cent of English secondary schools. This suggests that the school is contributing substantially to the academic success of pupils who are facing many barriers.

The school primarily serves students belonging to non-White groups, and its ethnic composition contrasts strongly with the other two schools in the study. Sixty-five per cent of the respondents identified their family background as Asian, with over 40 per cent of that group being Bangladeshi. Nineteen per cent were Black, with Black Africans predominating. The majority of young people in the survey (67 per cent) have always lived in the UK, however. White young people of British origin made up only 3 per cent of the respondents. The proportion of students of Asian origin far exceeds the overall proportion of Asian people in the local area, while the proportion of White young people is far lower than the proportion of White people.

Nearly all students lived near the school. The school has the second highest proportion of children coming from linked primaries (56 per cent) in the borough (London Borough of Newham, 2007, p. 50) even though recent arrivals to the UK may not have attended a local primary at all. Our own survey data shows that at 13 years old 73 per cent of the students lived in the postcode sector which contains the school, while a further 15 per cent lived in adjoining postcode areas within Newham. In the parents' survey a majority of the parents reported that they had specifically chosen to send their children to the school.

The Nottingham area and school

The area of Nottingham studied represents a 'traditional' white working-class housing estate with relatively low mobility and considerable deprivation, set within a city which itself has a reputation for having high levels of deprivation. Over the last two decades privatisation of housing stock has had an appreciable effect, with 63 per cent of housing owner-occupied, of which half are owned outright, around a quarter still rented from the council and just over 4 per cent rented privately. Walking through it gives the impression of a well-kept community despite the age of the houses. There is little low- or high-rise development, and

most houses are semi-detached with small garden areas. This corresponds with the information obtained from our participants, who reported that almost half lived in semi-detached houses, over a third in terraced housing, and the majority of the remainder living in detached houses. Only 2 per cent reported living in low-rise flats. Nonetheless, it has high levels of poverty compared to UK averages, and large numbers of residents who are living with deprivation on a day-to-day basis. A report by a local authority committee (Nottingham City Council, 2005) noted that while almost all the single output areas covered in our study were in the most deprived 20 per cent in the country, they were relatively less deprived in comparison to other parts of the city.

Nottingham Health Informatics service (2005) provides a number of interesting insights into the area. It contains about 10 per cent of the population of Nottingham city, and is strikingly ethnically homogeneous. The 2001 Census showed 96 per cent of the population were White. Residents are older than most Nottingham areas, and indeed the rest of England. In terms of age, around 20 per cent were under 18; a third were aged 25–44 and over 20 per cent over 65. There are substantial numbers of people with no educational qualification, around 38 per cent of 16- to 74-year-olds, which is substantially higher than both the rest of the city and the country as a whole.

Around 93 per cent of the young people interviewed were White, just fewer than 4 per cent were Afro-Caribbean and around 2 per cent were of mixed ethnic background. Everyone was born in the UK and all spoke English as a home language. The families were well settled in the area, with 15 per cent living there "all my life", another 50 per cent over 15 years and a further 23 per cent between 9 and 15 years. Overall, then, 88 per cent had lived locally for more than nine years, suggesting a slow population turnover. People who moved to the area generally did so for a larger home or for a better area to live, suggesting that the estate has moved beyond its historical reputation as a troubled area.

In general terms, this view appears to be shared by our young respondents, with 86 per cent rating it as a 'good' or 'very good' place to live and 83 per cent citing it as a safe place for young people. However, as in the other locations, when pressed about positive aspects ("The leisure centre – they do sports activities in the holidays...."; "Access to town is easy. Parks and fields and shop are nearby") and negative aspects ("Not much to do in general and things get ruined by vandalism – people hanging around; litter … gangs...") of their areas, young people in our area of Nottingham reported similar issues as their peers elsewhere.

According to Neighbourhood Statistics, economic activity rates were around 78 per cent for males and 60 per cent for females (ONS, 2011), and in terms of the SOC over a quarter in the area studied are classified in the top 3, but over half in the bottom three. The educational and work status of the parents interviewed fit with the general statistics for the area. Around 15 per cent of respondents had no formal educational qualifications, 50 per cent had O-level/GCSE qualifications and just fewer than 20 per cent had a trade qualification. Around 4 per cent had a degree. Interestingly, 75 per cent of parental respondents said that they liked school (this may have been an influence on why they agreed to be interviewed), and around half indicated they would like to participate in more education at some point. Two thirds of respondents were working outside the home, with 8 per cent of those self-employed. Of those working, 62 per cent worked full time. The dominant job categories were skilled trades (24 per cent), personal services (13 per cent) and process/plant operatives (10 per cent). Interestingly, occupational coding identified 11 per cent as managers and senior officials.[3] People were generally 'content' or 'very content' with their job; 85 per cent put themselves in this category. In relation to local employment prospects, 35 per cent of the young people did not believe that it would be easy to get a job in Nottingham at 13 years of age, and this had increased to 45 per cent by 15, suggesting greater awareness of labour market conditions. As with respondents in Newham, jobs identified as easy that they perceived to require no qualifications and with low pay were in retail, cleaning and security, and as with their peers, tended to be of little interest.

The school has about 820 pupils aged from 11–16, which makes it slightly smaller than an average secondary in England. The proportion of pupils identified with SEN is 17 per cent. The school has slightly more diversity than the community as a whole, with 6 per cent of pupils coming from non-White

backgrounds. All the pupils are considered to be fluent in English. Ofsted's latest report was extremely positive about the school, stating it is:

> *… an outstanding school. It knows what it does well and is rightly proud of its success. Parents praise the school, as do students who are proud to be part of the caring and learning community. They feel valued as individuals, rewarded for their efforts and achievements and supported through excellent personal care to achieve their best.*

<div align="right">Ofsted, 2007</div>

In the local authority brochure distributed to assist parents with school choice, the Nottingham school describes itself in the following way:

> *We are a successful, popular and regularly oversubscribed school with high expectations of ourselves and for all our pupils. We believe that our success is the result of a caring, purposeful and secure environment where parents, pupils and staff all know what is expected and work together to achieve that.*

Despite many similar accolades, the performance of the school in terms of examination results is modest. Educational attainment measured by assessment results at the end of Key Stage 4 has been generally rising, with a total of 36 per cent of young people attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including maths and English language in 2009, compared with a borough average of 41 per cent and an English average of 50 per cent (DfE, 2010b).

However, the contextualised value added score for the school is very positive for the school. The school's score of 1,013 is in the top 25 per cent of English secondary schools (see Ray, 2006). This suggests that the school is contributing substantially to the academic success of pupils who are facing many barriers. However, Ofsted noted that the proportion of students entitled to free school meals is above the national average. This reinforces the notion that while this may be one of the less deprived areas of Nottingham, there are still substantial issues of deprivation.

Several of our interview respondents identified the same issue for the school: very often students get strong GCSE results but then aim for jobs or further education that require far lower levels of results. In addition, a strong tendency for young people to want to stay in the area after leaving school was noted – words such as 'insular' and 'isolated' were frequently used. These comments seem to suggest that raising aspirations and awareness of what is needed to fulfil them are pressing issues for the school.

The Glasgow area and school

The Glasgow area and school are more economically mixed than Nottingham and London, with the school drawing students from a wide range of areas often sharing common features in relation to composition and levels of deprivation. Despite the far wider catchment area, focus groups tended to identify common positive and negative comments regarding areas of residence.

The school is located in an affluent area with students drawn mainly from eight associated primary schools. Glasgow is a highly deprived area in its national context: it has 48.5 per cent of all data zones in the most deprived 5 per cent and over 30 per cent in the most deprived 15 per cent in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2011). Four of the primary schools are in areas in the bottom decile for multiple deprivation in Scotland, with two in the bottom 5 per cent. More than two out of every five (42 per cent) 12-year-olds in the survey lived in the poorest 10 per cent of neighbourhoods in Scotland, and nearly one in five (17 per cent) lived in the next poorest 10 per cent. At the other end of the spectrum, almost one in five (19 per cent) lived in the least deprived 30 per cent of neighbourhoods in Scotland. This area and school provide

the opportunity to examine aspirations in a context where young people from deprived neighbourhoods study alongside young people from much less deprived backgrounds. Deprivation is so severe in parts of Glasgow that in 2002 the BBC reported that of the ten most deprived Westminster parliamentary constituencies, four, including the top three, were in Glasgow (BBC News, 2002).

Glasgow has experienced a significant economic turn-around over the last two decades. The decline of heavy industries, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s, has been followed by the growth of services, including consumer, business and public services. This has resulted in 80,000 additional jobs created in Glasgow City over the last decade (an increase of 23 per cent). The types of jobs available have changed accordingly, with fewer manual jobs as traditionally filled by men, and more white-collar jobs (such as in call centres, shared services and back office functions) and 'customer facing' jobs (such as retail, hospitality and social care) traditionally filled by women and students. In the area around the school, which as noted may not be truly representative, economic activity rates are 71 per cent for men and 62 per cent for females, slightly higher than average rates in both Glasgow and Scotland. In addition, according to Nomis (2010), 66 per cent of the economically active were in the top three SOCs, with 19 per cent in the middle three and 15 per cent in the bottom three SOCs.

This can be compared to responses from our survey which asked who had the best job in the house. Over half (56 per cent) were in the top three SOCs, 25 per cent in the middle three and 18 per cent in the bottom three SOCs. According to the data, the area around the school has almost three times as many people in professional occupations as the rest of Glasgow and Scotland as a whole (Nomis, 2010).

Several of the key informants said that the perceptions among young people and many of the adults who influence their attitudes have not kept pace with the changing labour market, either in terms of the number and composition of the jobs available, or the shifting skill requirements. In the student survey, one in three respondents said they thought it would be difficult to get a job in Glasgow when they left school. A further quarter said they didn't know whether or not it would be difficult to get a job afterwards. Only 43 per cent said it would be easy to get a job in the city. As elsewhere, a range of jobs was identified as easiest to get, but were of little interest except as a means to an end.

The area of the study is quite stable in terms of population turnover. Only 9 per cent of parents said they had lived in the area for less than three years, and two thirds had lived locally for at least nine years. The school rarely featured in their reasons for moving home; only 13 per cent said they were influenced 'a lot' by getting access to the school. Fifty-five per cent of respondents owned their own home and the balance rented. In relation to housing type, 47 per cent lived in detached or semi-detached housing, 14 per cent in terraced housing, 32 per cent in low-rise flats and only around 6 per cent in high-rise flats. This picture of housing type corresponds to the housing mix generally found in the areas named by the young respondents as their home location.

The respondents were likely to be very familiar with their immediate neighbourhoods since they socialised quite extensively. One in three said they spent time with friends 6–7 days a week, one in four 4–5 days a week and one in three 2–3 days a week (90 per cent altogether). Despite some challenging neighbourhood conditions, 71 per cent said their neighbourhoods were 'good' and 21 per cent 'very good', with only 7 per cent of young people described their home areas as 'bad' or 'very bad'. The features most commonly identified as positive were the parks, sports facilities, shops and having friends and extended family within the vicinity. These virtues were sometimes referred to purely in comparison with problems elsewhere: "My estate is tucked away so there is no trouble"; "Quite peaceful, no bullies"; "Not much racket. It's quiet and fewer neds [marginalised young people with a reputation for criminal behaviour]"; "Good friends and know that you have back up if someone tries to fight with you".

Despite being generally positive about their areas, with 79 per cent citing it as a safe place for young people to live, most respondents could identify negative features too. These fell into three basic categories: violence and crime, litter and graffiti, and lack of recreational amenities. Examples of responses included: "Most people who live here are drug addicts or violent people or racist people"; "Gangs and trouble – graffiti and vandalism"; and more worryingly, "Recently a murder". According to teachers, gang behaviour in the

area is stressful for pupils who have to cross several territories in their journeys to and from school. The role of territoriality and associated issues in the mobility of young people specifically in Glasgow is supported by the research literature (Kintrea *et al.*, 2010).

The school is a six-year non-denominational comprehensive with about 1,200 pupils aged between 11 and 18, about the average size for Glasgow. The six-year provision makes it different from the two English schools, which only teach up to GCSE and expect students to move onto sixth form colleges to continue their education. As would be expected from the IMD results earlier, the school has a very diverse intake in terms of socioeconomic background, with parents ranging from professionals and managers to less-skilled workers and people without jobs. Almost one in three students (32 per cent) are entitled to free school meals in 2006/07 (on the grounds of low household income), which is around the Glasgow average but 250 per cent higher than the figure for Scotland.

Average levels of academic attainment are the same as the city as a whole, with an average of 22 per cent of S4 pupils achieving five or more Standard Grades at credit level over the period 2004–07, compared to 34 per cent in Scotland. The average proportion of pupils achieving three or more Highers was slightly higher in relative terms at 17 per cent over the period 2004–07, compared to 13 per cent in Glasgow and 22 per cent in Scotland. The proportion of school leavers going into full-time higher education was also slightly higher than for Glasgow as a whole and slightly lower than for Scotland. Slightly fewer school leavers went directly into employment than in the rest of Glasgow and Scotland. Moreover, and perhaps reinforcing the mixed catchment of the school, unemployment on leaving school was around 7 percentage points higher than both Glasgow city and Scottish levels.

The school was officially inspected during 2006/07. No overall grading is given in Scotland, unlike in England. Particular strengths mentioned included: pastoral care, learning support and links with external support agencies; promotion of inclusion, equality and fairness; staff commitment to the school and extracurricular activities; and partnership with parents and the local community. Further action was required to improve the curriculum at all stages to meet the needs of pupils more effectively; to improve standards of attainment, particularly at S1/S2; to develop further the overall quality of learning and teaching; and to improve the effectiveness and impact of the school's quality assurance processes (HMIE, 2008).

Summary

In this chapter, we have attempted to provide some context to better understand each of the case studies in this report. As we have shown, the meaning of deprivation (and aspirations) in these three areas is not the same. We have attempted to convey that it is experienced, and understood, in particular ways dependent on social composition in terms of class, 'race', ethnicity and local labour market structures.

In London, for many families it means being among the first generations to come to the UK and strive for success in one of the richest economies in the world. The school, the community and the individual young people seem to share strong aspirations to move away from the experience of deprivation. In Glasgow, it is far less clear-cut. Many of the students are living with significant deprivation, but some are quite well off. So here deprivation is experienced in a different context, one where many people are not deprived, and its meaning – and the way it manifests in aspirations – may be quite different. In Nottingham, there is a solid community that tends not to be aspirational, partly because of a degree of insularity. Tradition seems to be a powerful factor here, and may play out in the perception of mobility adhered to by the young people.

The next two chapters look at the pattern of aspirations across these three areas, then in Chapter 6 we begin to look more closely at the way these areas may influence the development of aspirations over time.

4 Aspirations at 13

This section of the report lays out the findings from stage 1 of the data collection. The main message from work with the 13-year-olds is that there is a very high level of consistency in aspirations and in the kinds of factors identified as relevant to those aspirations. Unless a specific difference is identified, it should be assumed that the findings in this chapter apply to all three case study locations.

Educational aspirations

The educational aspirations across all three settings were relatively high. A majority of young people in all three settings stated that they enjoyed school, and many hoped to continue to study. For example, Table 4 shows the proportion of young people in each school who hoped to attend college and university.[4,5] It is striking that the proportions were considerably higher than the proportion of young people in the UK who actually do attend these institutions; overall 83 per cent of the young people we talked to wanted to go to university. It is interesting to note that London showed the highest proportions at both levels.

Table 4: Percentage of pupils aspiring to attend college or university

	London	Nottingham	Glasgow
College	97	91	79
University	87	78	81

When asked when they wanted to leave school, very few in any location wanted to leave as soon as possible. Generally their intended leaving date was consistent with the qualifications they hoped to achieve. These were, once more, higher than the population average. Table 5 shows the figures for when the young people wanted to leave school. As noted, very few wanted to leave either 'as 'soon as I can' or at the minimum leaving age of 16. However, there are differences by location which tend to reflect the relative levels of aspirations described in this report.

Table 5: When do you think you might leave school?

	London	Nottingham	Glasgow
As soon as I can	3	5	4
At 16	2	12	7
Post-GCSE/Standard Grade	30	32	9
Post A-levels/Highers	63	47	77

Even though London and Glasgow have similar proportions of 13-year-olds who hoped to gain qualifications from school, the distribution was quite different. In Glasgow far more young people expected to go on to complete the higher of the two qualifications. The reasons for this are unclear, although two possible factors are the more diverse school population and the tendency in Scotland to see Highers as the traditional exit qualification for many young people.

Overall, Figure 3 shows the final educational qualification the young people thought they would realistically attain. These are relatively strong, and demonstrate that the majority of 13-year-olds had a strong interest in post-compulsory education. These findings did not vary significantly by any of the social factors we examined, except in Nottingham, where the aspiration to go to college was linked with living in an area with less deprivation.

Figure 3: Expected levels of educational attainment (%)
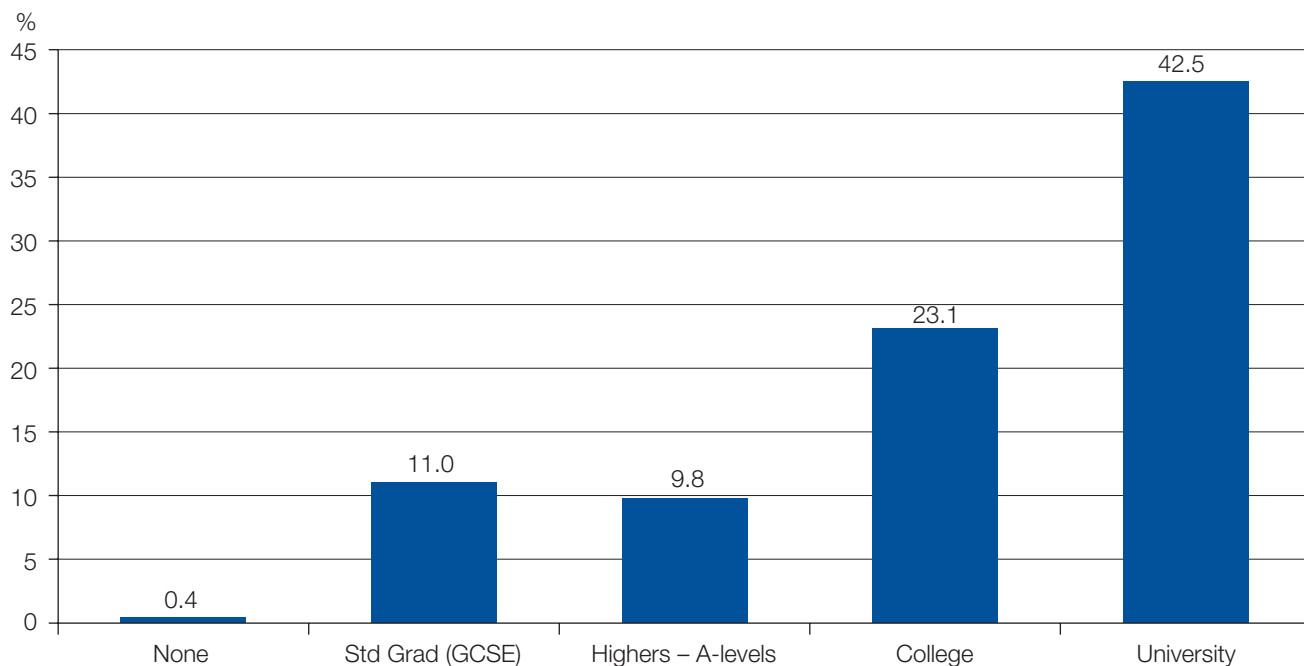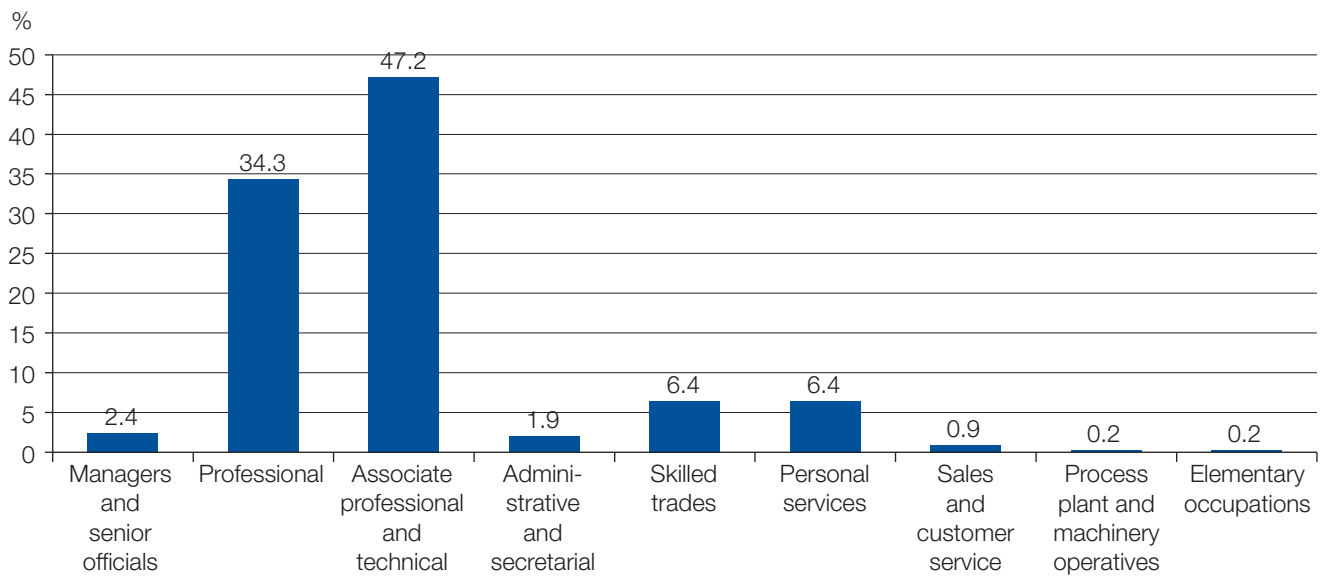

Occupational aspirations

Across the case studies a large majority of young people (86 per cent) had thought about what they wanted to do when they were older. When asked if it was important that they got a job when they left school, 98 per cent 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed', and 87 per cent 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' that they often thought about what they would do when they leave school. There was no evidence that differences in socioeconomic and other background factors influenced the way that young people thought about their future.

For many young people, their concern went beyond awareness. Just under three quarters (73 per cent) 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they worried about leaving school with no qualifications, and 70 per cent 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they worried about not being able to get a job when they were older. For a group of young people just entering their teenage years, their concern about employment seems quite marked.

Almost all (96 per cent) of the young people could name a job they would want in an ideal world.

The most frequently mentioned ideal jobs were associate professional and technical occupations (SOC 3[6]). This category includes culture, media and sports occupations. Specifically, there were a large number of young people who wanted to be footballers, athletes or to work in arts-related occupations like an actor/actress, fashion designer or graphic designer. Some of the other occupations that young people spoke about with some frequency (approximately 10 per cent of young people for each category) were health professionals such as doctors, and business and public service professionals, including lawyers and accountants. Additionally, 7 per cent of young people wanted jobs in science and technology occupations (crime scenes investigator or scientist) and 6 per cent of young people wanted to work in the trades (for example, joiner, plumber) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Ideal occupations by SOC (%) at age 13

When the SOC is used to compare the distribution of occupations in the local labour markets with the pattern of ideal job aspirations of the 13-year-olds, the ideal jobs were significantly skewed towards those requiring more education and experience. In other words, the aspirations of the young people were more ambitious than occupations they saw around them. This was true across all three areas, but there was a higher degree of interest in professional jobs in London. Forty-two per cent in London suggested a professional or managerial occupation, with lawyer, doctor and accountant all featuring frequently. Forty-seven per cent preferred an associate professional position, so altogether almost 90 per cent aspired to a professional occupation of some kind.

The next question asked was whether the ideal aspiration was attainable. When 13-year-olds were asked if they believed they could get this ideal job, 67 per cent stated that they believed that they could. Relatively few (19 per cent) did not know if they could get the ideal job, and even fewer (9 per cent) felt that they would not. So young people were relatively confident, and felt that their ideal aspirations were achievable.

Nonetheless, 69 per cent of 13-year-olds named an alternative to their ideal job when asked what they expected to do when they were older, given the constraints of the real world. It is interesting to note that 31 per cent did not know or chose not to answer, perhaps suggesting that this group was particularly committed to the ideal aspiration.

Translating the realistic job aspirations named by the 13-year-olds into SOC categories showed that they were somewhat different to the ideal occupations. Around two thirds (67 per cent) expected to have 'Managerial or professional' occupations (SOCs 1–3), lower than those young people who had these jobs as their ideal occupation (84 per cent). A greater number of young people (26 per cent) cited jobs in 'Administrative, trades or personal service' occupations (SOCs 4–6) whereas only 15 per cent of the young people had these as their ideal occupations. Young people expecting to have 'Sales, processor and machine and elementary' occupations (SOCs 7–9) increased from 1 per cent as ideal to 7 per cent as realistic (see Figure 5).

In order to put ideal and realistic aspirations into wider context, they were compared to the overall breakdown of the UK workforce. In the UK, 41 per cent of people actually work in managerial, professional and associate professional and technical occupations (SOCs 1–3), 32 per cent in administrative, trade and personal service occupations (SOCs 4–6), and 27 per cent in sales, process and machine and elementary occupations (SOCs 7–9). Figure 6 shows ideal and realistic aspirations mapped against the current UK pattern of employment. It seems to indicate quite clearly that the proportion of young people aspiring

Figure 5: Realistic occupations by SOC (%) at age 13
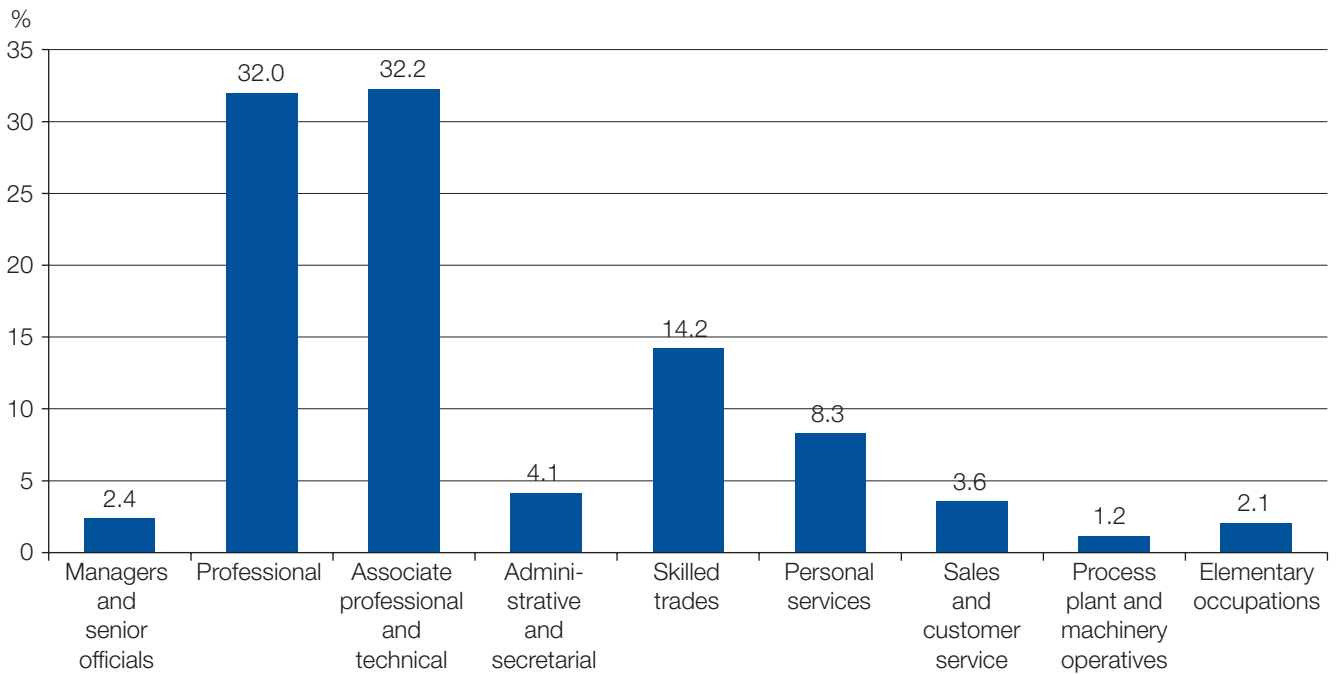
Figure 6: Ideal and realistic occupations compared to current UK labour market aged 13

towards occupations – both ideally and realistically – in the top three SOC categories is far higher than the proportion of those jobs among the current workforce.

A similar analysis was run after taking out potentially difficult to achieve aspirations (such as actors and footballers) to see if it would significantly affect the results, and it did not.

An examination of the difference between ideal and realistic aspirations did show a gender effect. While ideal aspirations were extremely high, and realistic aspirations were still strong, many of the 13-year-

olds changed between ideal and realistic aspirations. Males tended to move themselves realistically into skilled trades (21 per cent), process plant (2 per cent) and elementary occupations (2 per cent). Females were more likely to re-allocate themselves to personal service (20 per cent) and sales/customer service (6 per cent) categories. This suggests that while 13-year-old boys and girls have equally ambitious ideal job aspirations, their realistic aspirations are separated by gender.

Thirteen-year-olds' future perspectives

The future appeared to be a genuine concern for the majority of the 13-year-olds interviewed. Sixty-four per cent agreed that they worried about getting a job. The young people who expressed concern about getting a job were mainly the same young people who also said that they often thought about what they wanted to do when they were older. The correlation between these two groups was statistically significant.[7] Perhaps more significantly, there was also a tendency for young people living in more deprived neighbourhoods to be more concerned about finding employment.[8]

When young people were asked what appealed to them about their choices, the most popular response was that they enjoyed the activity, such as playing football, music or computers. An aspiring special effects manager in feature films said "it's exciting and fun because you get to blow things up". An aspiring skiing instructor enjoyed skiing, and a skateboarder "liked the tricks". An aspiring author "really liked to read and wanted to write", and a would-be fireman said "saving people is exciting".

A second type of response involved an interest in caring for other people or animals. Someone wanted to work in a children's home because she felt "sorry for the kids and want to help them". Another aimed to help animals because "you are making the world better and people happy". One wanted to be "a plastic surgeon in order to make ugly people pretty and fat people slim", and another a teacher "to help other people learn".

The third response involved direct material rewards, especially money and fame. One wanted to be "a famous rock star – to have fans screaming my name and the power and rush of playing to thousands of people", and another to be "in a band because it's cool and easy". An aspiring actor said you "get paid lots of money and nice clothes" and a chef said "you get to be creative and you could be famous". People aiming to be footballers said "it's cool and you get loads of money", "a lot of people watch you on TV". An aspiring television presenter said you "meet loads of people and are famous", and an aspiring bounty hunter said "it's very cool and you get paid a lot".

These attractions were sometimes linked. An aspiring forensic detective said "they're well paid so I could take care of my family", and a footballer said "my mum's not got a lot of money and I can help her out with the house and help out my favourite team too". An aspiring plumber liked "fixing things, it's a good job with lots of money and driving about helping people".

Finally, while some young people mentioned the need to work hard in their answers, some of the jobs that were mentioned were attractive because they seemed like easy money. Being a "business man, owning big shops" was attractive because it meant "a lot of money and not a stressful life"; a would-be fiction writer considered "in fact it is not very hard, you can make a lot of money", and selling cars was a route to "make a lot of money" but "not a very hard job".

In a few cases the idea seemed to go beyond these types of immediate appeal to be more carefully considered. Someone wanted to be a sports journalist because "football is a passion and I'm good at English so it's a perfect job". However, only 5 per cent seemed to make a link to their own skills or abilities by suggesting they might be good at doing this job: "My teacher tells me I'm good at IT". An aspiring accountant said "I like maths and am quite good at it", and a potential singer/actress said "I've been told I'm a good singer and my family call me a drama queen".

When asked what was required to get their ideal job, some responses could be rather under-developed. One in four said they had to study a particular subject(s) at school. Another quarter went beyond

this in indicating that they needed good grades or to develop a relevant skill. Nearly one in five (18 per cent) said simply that they had to work hard or keep trying, and 13 per cent said they needed to go to university. An aspiring paediatrician gave an unusually elaborate response: "be good with kids, be smart, go to university, be compassionate and appreciate what you do", but this degree of depth was unusual.

Hobbies and activities played a role in forming young people's aspirations. The young people were asked about their personal hobbies and activities in and out of school, and both in-school and out-of-school personal activities were found to have some effect on vocational desires and expectations. Forty-three per cent of young people felt that activities made a difference to what they wanted to do when older.

One of the important influences young people cited was a current activity they enjoyed or were good at. Across all three case studies almost half of the young people indicated that they had been influenced in their choice by a leisure activity. Of that sub-sample, sport was by far most frequently mentioned, although 18 per cent specified arts and 11 per cent mentioned computers. Answers were varied, but many mentioned an activity that they felt they were good at and could be used in a job. For example, it was very common for students who aspired to work in IT to say that were good at computing. An aspiring teacher explained they wanted the job "because I like working with children and people say I'm brainy and clever".

Television and the internet both played roles in the formation of the 13-year-olds' aspirations. Around three quarters agreed that they had taken ideas from television in deciding what they wanted to do when older, and just over half mentioned the internet. The young people who often thought about what they wanted to do when they were older were often the young people who said that television and the internet give them ideas about what they wanted to do.

This finding was also supported by the qualitative data as young people mentioned particular television programmes and films as factors giving them the idea for the vocations that they desired to have. An open question about the sources of their ideas yielded many responses suggesting television was influential. Several wanted to work with animals because "I enjoy watching programmes on animals" and "I saw adverts on TV about donating money". An aspiring chef said "I like watching cooking programmes" and a potential army engineer said "adverts on TV". Several aspiring doctors, forensic scientists, police detectives and paramedics mentioned programmes such as CSI and Scrubs. An aspiring fireman said "when I was small watching a programme called Fireman Sam" and a car designer got the idea "from a TV documentary about car designing".

But the influence of television and the media was mainly considered negative by the school and community interviewees:

'They see on TV the things they want to do. Footballers and actors, the Apprentice. [They believe] success is fame.

London learning support/maths teacher, male

Others saw television and video games and an interest in music stars as especially detrimental for boys:

'TV – it sees life as cheap, Videogames, they're a big influence, they see it as acceptable behaviour, violence and aggression towards women. Rock stars – they idolise – how do we compete? They see it as a way to money, fast cars and women.'

London support staff member, male

'In video games, songs and films casual violence and amorality is a given. It changes their preconceptions and backdrop.'

Glasgow community representative, male

There is evidence that media has had some influence but, overall, immediate experience, including leisure activities, was far more likely to be mentioned as a direct influence on the aspirational choices of these

13-year-olds. The individual factors in occupational choices varied to a significant extent, but clustered around enjoyment, helping people or animals, and money.

Parents and family background

Across all case study areas there was no statistically significant relationship between 13-year-olds' aspirations and the socioeconomic status of their parents. Also, young people living in deprived neighbourhoods were just as likely to want to be footballers, vets, teachers, doctors or in computing as those from less deprived areas.

Families, and particularly parents, were important to consider when looking at the aspirations of 13-year-olds. Families tended to support the young people well, with approximately 72 per cent of young people saying that they talked to their parents about what they wanted to do when they were older. Parents were extremely positive about their young people's aspirations, with two thirds saying that they thought their children's aspirations were realistic.

Families were also a very important source of occupational ideas for young people. Many cited family members as giving them ideas for their preferred job; either there was someone in the family who already had that job ("one of my granddads was a doctor"; "my cousin is a computer tech"; "some of my cousins are security guards") or the idea for the job came from parents ("mum wants me to be one"; "my dad's dream [is] for this"; "my dad would like me to be a doctor and repay my parents…").

The exact job they wanted was often influenced by members of their extended family, such as an aunt who was a lawyer or similar. One aspiring mechanic explained, "Dad drives lorries and my brother likes it too". An individual wanting to be a self-employed bricklayer commented that "My dad does it; he's a plasterer and works for himself and other people". A hopeful architect had got the idea from their stepfather, and a pupil who wanted to be a beauty therapist explained that "Sometimes I do my mum's hair".

Interviews with parents allowed their views on the young people's aspirations to be explored. Responding parents were very interested in the future of their children, with 74 per cent describing themselves as thinking 'a lot' or 'somewhat' about what they wanted their child to do when they left school. An even greater number of parents (84 per cent) described themselves as having talked 'a lot' or 'somewhat' with their child about what they wanted to do when older.

One finding was that there was a link between parents having clear ideas of what they wanted their children to do for an occupation and those families that lived in deprivation.[9] The corollary is that parents who lived in less deprived areas were more likely to have a laissez-faire attitude to their children's aspirations.

There was a clear preference (89 per cent) across all the parents for their children to find work in the managerial, professional, and technical professional occupations (SOCs 1–3). A much smaller number of parents suggested their children should work in the trades or in personal service occupations, although a proportion of parents (73 per cent) 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they would be happy with their child working a trade or doing an apprenticeship.

Most parents (67 per cent) felt that their children's expectations were realistic, but that there was a high likelihood of their children changing their minds about what it was they wanted to do when they were older (55 per cent). There was also a correlation between neighbourhood deprivation and whether parents thought their children would change their mind about what they wanted to do when older.[10] Parents who were living in more deprived areas tended to think that their children were more likely to change their mind about their ideal occupations.

Parents tended to worry about whether their children would be able to get jobs when they were older. Just over half (52 per cent) of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they worried about their children being able to get jobs when older. A fifth of these parents had experienced being out of work, not by choice, for more than a year in the last ten years. There was a correlation between parents who worried about their

child being able to get a job when they were older and the kinds of qualifications they thought their child would eventually get.[11] Parents who thought their children would get lower qualifications were also worried about them being able to get a job.

Parents had fairly high educational aspirations for their children, generally higher than their own education level. Three quarters (77 per cent) of parents expected their children to go to college or university, but only 30 per cent of parents themselves had actually gone to college, university or had a professional qualification. Seventy-eight per cent of parents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that it was important that their child got better qualifications than they had themselves.

Parents appeared to be unhappy with the idea of their children entering the workforce at 16, with 63 per cent 'disagreeing' or 'strongly disagreeing' that they would be happy if their child left school at 16 in order to start work. Overall, the relatively uniform picture of parents is that they want their children to do well, and they support them as much as they can.

Neighbourhood

The majority of 13-year-olds thought that the neighbourhood they lived in was either 'good' or 'very good' (90 per cent). Young people across all schools and cities held the same views on the best and worst parts of living in a particular area. The two factors young people mentioned most often as the best parts were:

- friends in the area
- local facilities for recreation – sports teams, football pitches, leisure centres and youth clubs

The two factors young people mentioned most often as the worst parts were:

- violence, crime, gangs, fights, stabbings, murder and generally 'bad people' hanging about
- rubbish, litter and pollution.

Even though 13-year-olds tended to like the area that they lived in, almost three quarters (72 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that they worried about getting mixed up with people who might get them into trouble. The majority of parents (76 per cent) who were interviewed also tended to worry about their children getting mixed up with people that might get them into trouble. This suggests that even though there is little evidence that peer groups are having a strong influence on aspirations at this age, they may become more important with time. Already around 90 per cent of young people spent time with friends two or three days per week, and about half agreed that their friends looked down on those who worked hard at school.

In London and Nottingham there were concerns among school staff that living in the local areas was a negative influence on aspirations. A consistent theme in the interviews in the school and the community was that young people were isolated in their areas:

> 'The area is very insular ... it's our job to widen eyes.'
>
> Nottingham teacher

> 'They don't mix. They eat, breathe and live in this area. They mix in the area with people with similar characteristics.'
>
> London support staff member

However, the balance of evidence appears to be that neighbourhood is not a strong direct influence on the aspirations of the 13-year-old group.

Schools

When the young people were asked whether they felt that their teachers talked to them about what they wanted to do when they left school or about going to college or university, 38 per cent of young people at age 13 agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers talked to them about going to college or university. This group overlapped strongly with the 83 per cent of young people who agreed or strongly agreed that they wanted to go to university. While the majority tended to like school and studying, the more deprived the neighbourhood that young people lived in the less they enjoyed studying.

Each of the schools provided several services that aimed to steer children through their studies, and Ofsted deemed the London school's support services 'outstanding'. Despite this, teachers and other school staff did not feature highly in the young people's own identification of influences.

In the first stage of the study at age 13 none of the young people had reached the age of exam subject selection and commitment to a particular vocational direction.

Summary

The 13-year-olds showed high aspirations across the ideal, realistic and educational categories. Ideas for aspirations were derived from a variety of influences, including the media, but were not as unrealistic as some might expect for this age group. The young people were concerned about their future, and gaining considerable support from their families in thinking through the options and opportunities available to them as they began their secondary education career.

The influence of place is not particularly strong at this point and the vast majority of observations are relevant to the young people from all three locations.

5 Aspirations at 15: overview

This chapter sets out the aspirations of young people at age 15 and makes some comparisons with age 13. It does not analyse the data for each area in depth or tackle the main research questions, but aims instead to provide an overview of trends across the data set as a whole. Chapters 6 and 7 examine the key issues influencing aspirations.

The findings presented are based only on matched data, in other words, young people whose answers were available at both ages 13 and 15. This reduces the size of the dataset to 288, although some questions gained fewer responses. What is lost in sample size is made up for in the insight gained by being able to compare answers from the same people at the two stages of the research. It also means that the numbers in tables for 13-year-olds are different in this chapter from those in Chapter 4.

The pattern of aspirational change over the entire cohort is described below.

Educational aspirations

Overall, the educational aspirations of the young people remained extremely strong. As Figure 7 shows, 9 per cent of the young people expected to stay at school until after Standard Grade or GCSE and 73 per cent until after A-level or Highers. This is an important finding for the young people at the English schools in particular, as in both areas completing A-levels will involve changing to a new school and continuing to study.

The high level of educational aspirations is borne out by the consistently high proportion that stated that they would like to go to university.

Table 6 shows that the overall proportion at both ages who would like to go to university was very high indeed. However, there were differences between the cities: the numbers have been maintained in London, dropped a little but are still high in Glasgow, but have dropped from three quarters to two thirds in Nottingham.

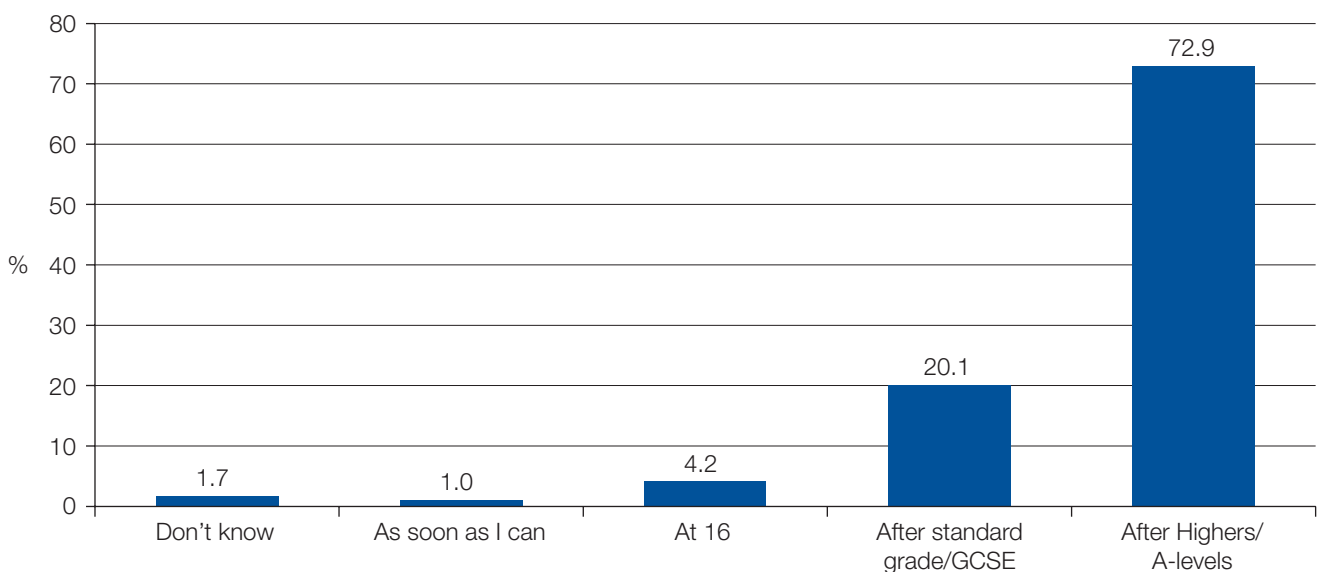### Figure 7: Intended school leaving stage (%)

Table 6: Percentage agreeing 'I would like to go to university', by age and city

	London		Nottingham		Glasgow	
	13	**15**	**13**	**15**	**13**	**15**
I would like to go to university	89	90	76	66	91	82

Occupational aspirations

In looking at the occupational aspirations of the 15-year-olds we once more asked about ideal and realistic job aspirations. If the young person believed their ideal aspiration was attainable, we recorded the same occupation as their realistic aspiration.

Figure 8 shows that overall, 36 per cent cited a higher status ideal job at 15 than at 13. Another 31 per cent demonstrated no change in job status; however, 33 per cent cited a lower status job at 15 than 13. Considering realistic aspirations, 47 per cent indicated a higher status job at 15 than 13, indicating increasing expectations. While 20 per cent indicated no change in expectations between 13 and 15 years old, 33 per cent expected to end up in a lower status job.

The ideal aspirations of the 15-year-olds were once more strongly concentrated towards high status positions, with a significant numbers in SOC category 3. This category contains actors, athletes, musicians and other high profile occupations (Figure 9).

There was a relatively high level of confidence in being able to achieve their aspirations among the young people at both stages of the research. Two thirds of young people believed they could attain their ideal aspiration at both 13 and 15. Across the three areas more than 80 per cent of young people at both ages said that they often thought about what they wanted to do when they were older. When asked if it was important that they got a job when they left school, more than 90 per cent in each case agreed or strongly agreed that it was.

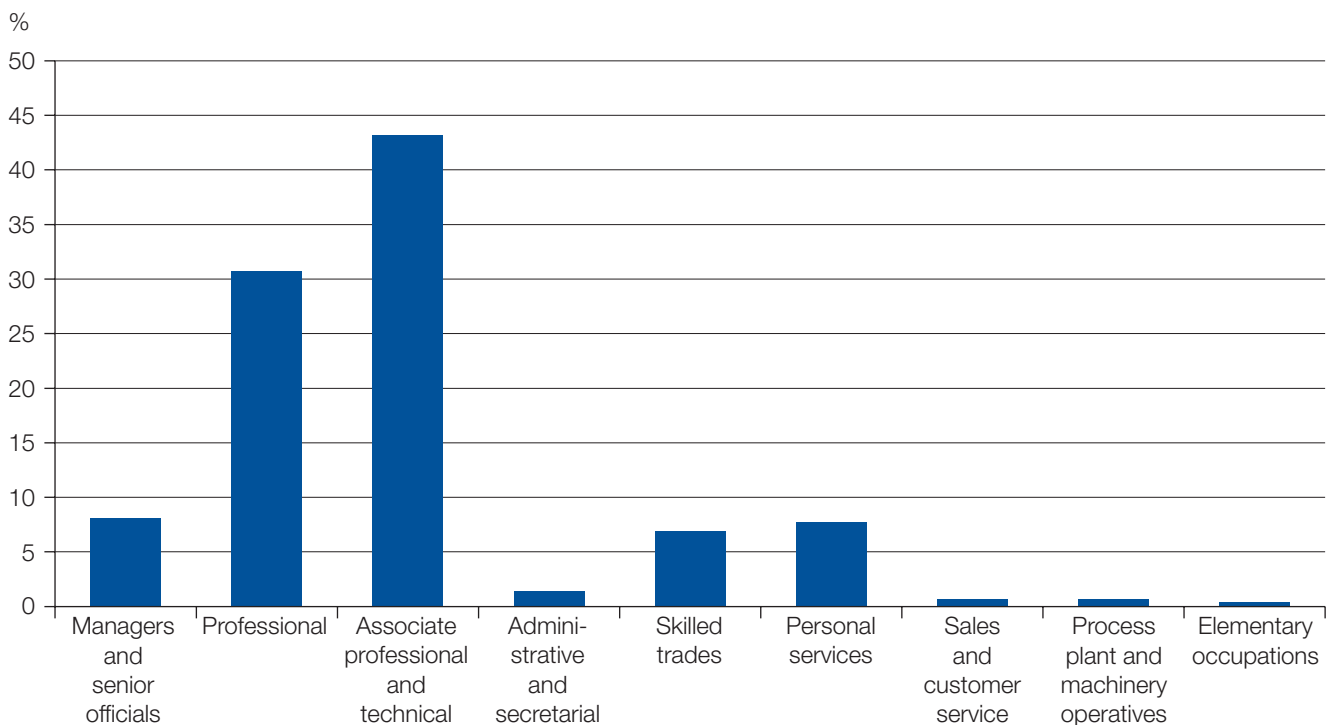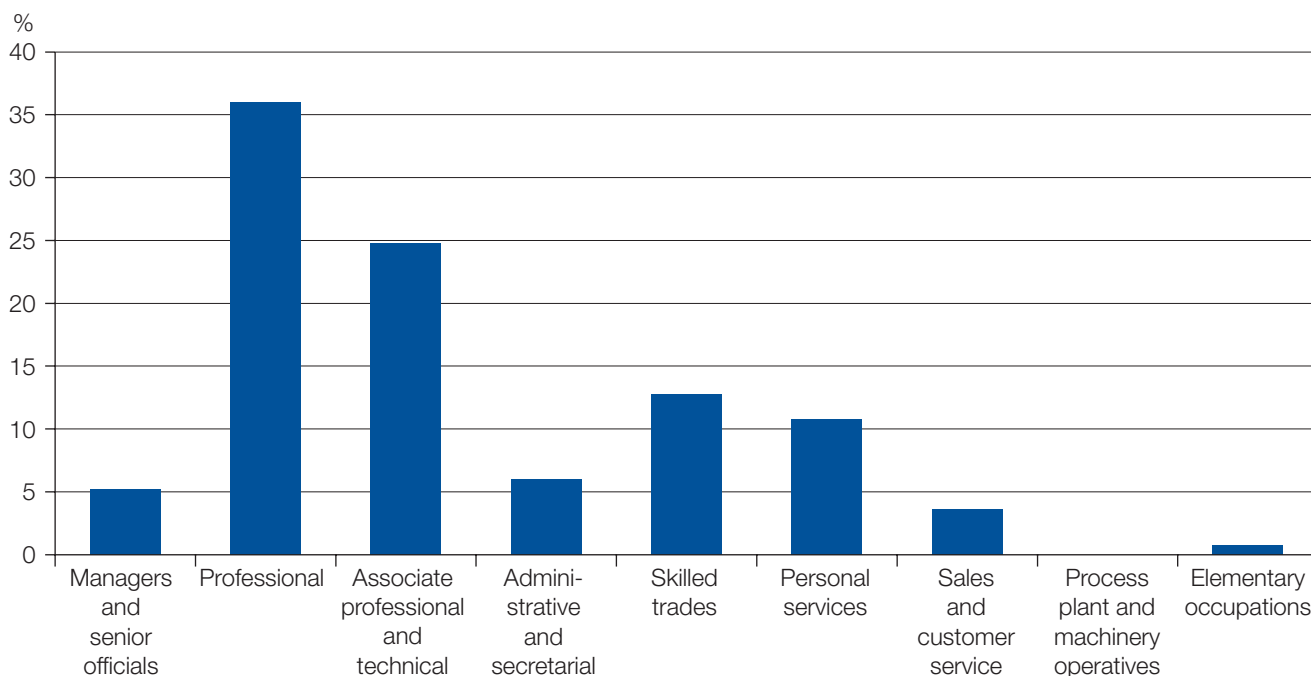## Figure 8: Ideal occupations by SOC (%) at age 15

Figure 9: Realistic occupations by SOC (%) at age 15

The realistic aspirations of the 15-year-olds were once again very strong, although SOC category 3 was much less prominent. Comparing between 13 and 15, the proportion of young people with a realistic occupation in SOC category 3 dropped from just under a third to a quarter.

Young people were also asked directly if they had changed their aspirations since the last time they were surveyed. If they could not remember they were prompted with their response from stage 1. Altogether 75 per cent indicated a change and it is instructive to examine some of the reasons provided. For a number of those who at 13 had cited aspirations for glamorous occupations such as professional sports, film stars, models etc. there often was some recognition at 15 that it was unlikely they would achieve these goals, using phrases such as "too difficult", "very competitive", "more realistic"; "Talking with Mum – realised it was not going to lead to job – but still enjoy it; chance of success … not good". Indeed the drop on SOC category 3 is substantially driven by a group of young people recognising that 'professional footballer' is not likely to be a career that is open to them.

In addition, there were some who had not changed but rather refined their ideas. An aspiring lawyer had been influenced by films, work experience and family contacts ("Legally Blonde – dad's friend has his own wee practice") and watching law programmes; while for another, work experience provided by the school was important: "it's just more fun, during the work experience I found it became more interesting"; "learnt more about it and spoke to a real social worker".

And for others it was a process of maturity, greater knowledge and understanding of what was out there and how to go about achieving their goals: "as I got older, got advice from teacher"; "got ideas for realistic job"; "I matured and ideas have moved on"; "because I think I've got more chance of getting an apprenticeship – my PSE teacher suggested apprenticeship as an idea".

Figure 10 compares the aspirations of 15-year-olds to the UK occupational structure. Once again, the aspirations of young people – both ideal and realistic – were far above the norms of the current occupational structure of the UK, although there has been a degree of change since age 13. The proportion in the highest status category (managers, professionals and associated technical occupations) had dropped in respect of both ideal and realistic aspirations, and the same was true for the occupations at the lower reaches of the SOC scale. There had been some increase in the middle categories, particularly for realistic aspirations. This proportion had grown from 26 to 29.6 per cent.

Figure 10: Ideal and realistic occupations compared to current UK labour market at age 15
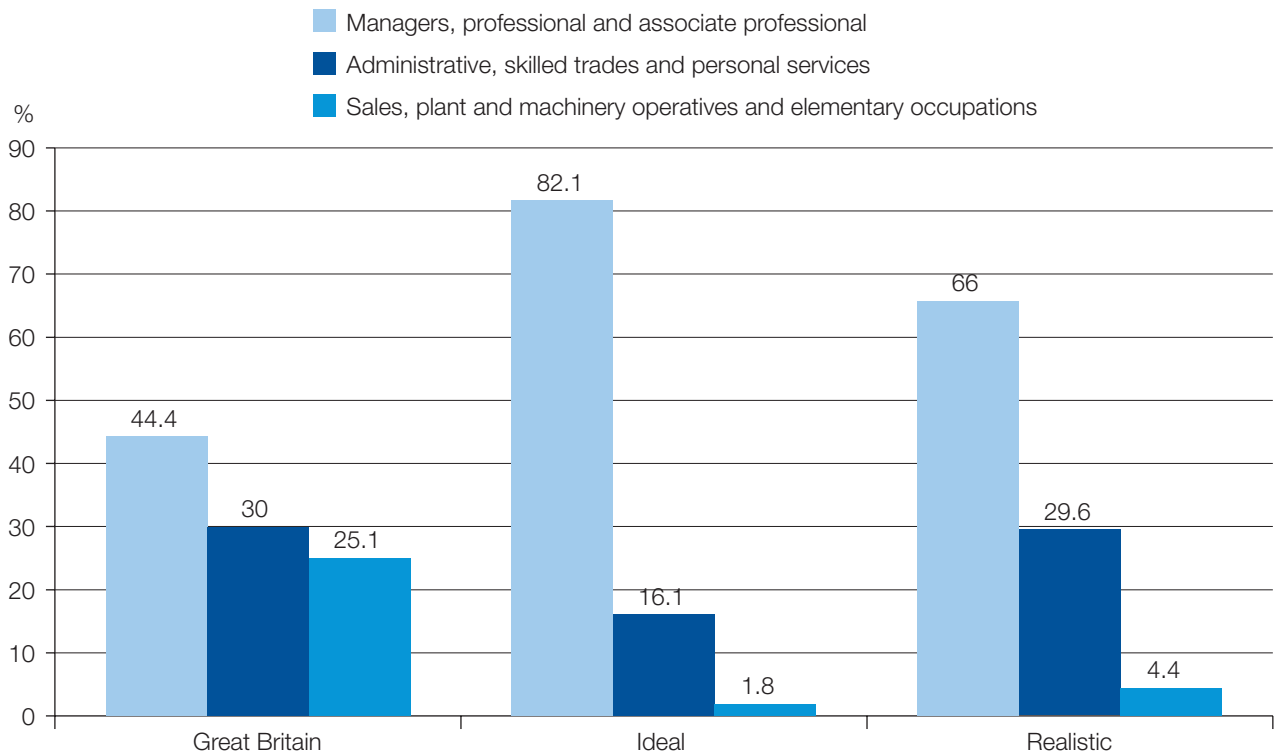
But overall, the aspirations of 15-year-olds have stayed high; indeed they are much higher than the current distributions of education and occupation outcomes in the UK and especially in comparison with the local areas.

Dynamics of aspirational change

Given that we had a matched dataset it was possible to go deeper into these figures, and look at the dynamics of change over time. There were four measures that were central to understanding aspirational change. They are:

Ideal-ideal:	The change in ideal aspirations between 13 and 15.
Realistic-realistic:	The change in realistic aspirations between 13 and 15.
Ideal-realistic 13:	The change between ideal aspirations and realistic aspirations at age 13.
Ideal-realistic 15:	The change between ideal aspirations and realistic aspirations at age 15.

(Ideal-realistic measures are based on matched data, so only include the individuals with complete data at 13 and 15.)

The next chapter looks in detail at the way these measures vary by location. The aim here was to examine them across the dataset as a whole in order to get an overview of the direction and extent of change. The findings here reflect only the broad occupational categories as represented by the SOC. The SOC has nine categories which are broadly hierarchical, that is, the occupations at the top end of the scale are high status, associated with high incomes, and most require advanced qualifications, while the occupations at the lower end of SOC, in general, are lower status, lower paid and require fewer qualifications. This meant that we could identify whether young people were changing their aspirations up or down a broad hierarchy of more desirable and less desirable jobs and, if so, by how much.

In terms of ideal-ideal, the average change between 13 and 15 was −0.06, or one sixteenth of an occupational category, downwards (see Table 8 on page 46). So, overall, there has been very little average movement in ideal aspirations and what has occurred has been a very slight lowering of occupational aspirations.

With respect to ideal-realistic the average change at age 13 was −0.49, meaning that, in other words realistic aspirations were on average, half a category lower than ideal aspirations. The same is apparent at 15, with a −0.34 lowering. While some reduction is perhaps to be expected at both ages, it is interesting that the average gap between ideal and realistic aspirations is smaller at 15 than 13.

The striking finding at this level, however, concerned realistic-realistic changes. Between 13 and 15, on average for the matched group, realistic aspirations rose 0.15 categories. While this was a very small amount, it did mean that for the group of young people as a whole, their realistic expectations of occupational outcome held up during this two-year period, when our initial expectation was that they would diminish.

Summary

Overall, the aspirations of young people at 15 are still very strongly positive.

In the next chapter the differences in aspirational development between ages 13 and 15 in the three locations are identified, leading to a discussion of possible factors that influence those differences.

6 Aspirations and place

In this chapter the differences in aspirational patterns between the three study locations are described, including the details of the four measures introduced at the end of the last chapter. The emphasis here is very much on differences, so little attention is given to the areas of commonality across the three locations, such as the general strength of aspirations.

Educational aspirations

While there were universally high aspirations on a broad level, when the three locations are examined in detail the picture was more nuanced. This shows up when the proportion that would like to go to university is examined, as discussed in the last chapter (Table 6). Overall, the proportion agreeing that they would like to go to university fell from 85 per cent at age 13 to 81 per cent at age 15. But the trajectory in each area was quite different. The proportion of young people from Nottingham who said they would like to go to university fell from three quarters to two thirds, in Glasgow it fell from 90 to 80 per cent and in London it actually increased very slightly, to 90 per cent. This suggested there were different dynamics of aspirational change at play.

Table 7 presents the data from the 15-year-olds in a slightly different way. The difference in desire to attend college by gender is notable in Glasgow compared to other locations. It is interesting that the gender imbalance regarding college is not matched for university; there is no sign, for example, that more females want to attend college and more males want to attend university. The second aspect of this data worth noting is that the lower desire for university in Nottingham is strikingly consistent for both genders.

This finding is parallelled in the highest qualifications that 15-year-olds expected to achieve. The London students were considerably more likely to expect to get a university qualification, at 76 per cent, compared to Glasgow at 58 per cent and Nottingham at 44 per cent. This was reinforced once more by the students' expected school leaving age, which was consistent with expected qualifications.

As a further perspective on this issue, the number of qualifications students were preparing for at age 15 was also recorded. The number of GCSEs and Standard Grades that students study for was fairly consistent between Scotland and England. The highest number of GCSEs or Standard Grades (7.4) was found in London, with Glasgow next (6.9) and Nottingham the lowest[12] (5.4).

In terms of educational aspirations, it is clear that while there were high levels of aspiration overall, there was consistently lower aspiration among Nottingham young people, and this is confirmed by the age at which they expected to leave school and the number of examinations they expect to take before doing so.

Table 7: Percentage agreeing with statements, by gender and city

	I would like to go to college		I would like to go to university	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
London	94	100	86	96
Nottingham	93	98	64	67
Glasgow	69	53	78	85

Occupational aspirations by location

Chapters 4 and 5 discussed occupational aspirations across all three locations. In this section, those aspirations are examined in more detail, and change over time in each location is analysed. For all of these discussions the jobs the young people believed they could get, that is, their realistic aspirations, were used to compare the three areas, noting that for about a third of the matched sample ideal and realistic aspirations were the same.

In Nottingham at age 13 (Figure 11) the third SOC category was dominant. This includes both a range of common jobs and several of the most glamorous occupations such as singer, actor and footballer. Over a fifth of respondents believed they would attain skilled trade occupations, a fifth professional occupations and around one in seven saw themselves realistically in personal service occupations.

## Figure 11: Occupational aspirations by SOC at ages 13 and 15 in Nottingham (%)
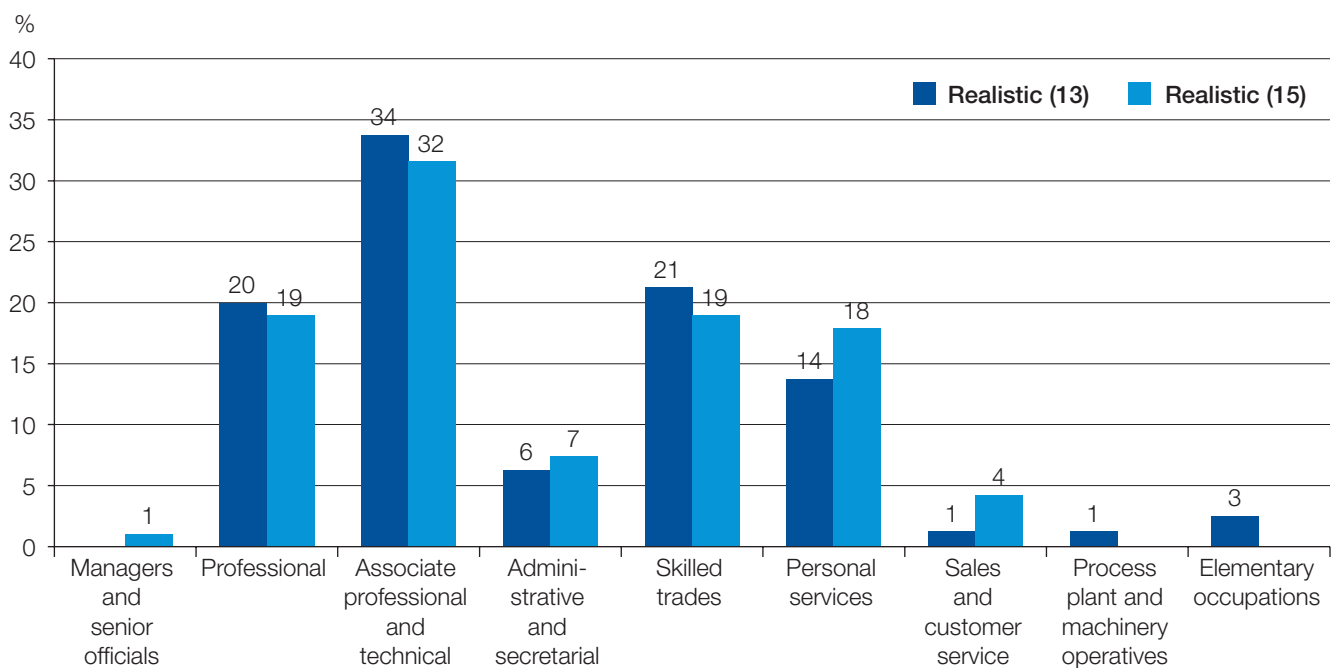
At the age of 15 the situation was generally very similar. The proportion interested in SOC category 3, associate professional and technical occupations, had dropped very slightly, as had professional occupations and skilled trades. Personal services had increased by 4.1 per cent, the biggest single change. Between 13 and 15 the picture presented by the Nottingham data is overwhelmingly one of stability.

In Glasgow the distribution at 13 was somewhat different (Figure 12). Here more than a quarter of young people identified aspirations for a professional job, and another equally large proportion named associate professional and technical occupations. Trades were named by another quarter of young people. The bottom three categories, which were named by few people in Nottingham, are mentioned by nobody in Glasgow. In Glasgow 6.9 per cent aspired to be managers and senior officials, mentioned by nobody in Nottingham.

At the age of 15 the most striking change in Glasgow is the increase in the proportion of young people aspiring to professional jobs, now up to 40 per cent. The proportion aspiring to personal services was very stable, but the number for skilled trades dropped from 24 to 19 per cent. The changes in proportions interested in skilled trades and the professions respectively are very substantial indeed, especially bearing in mind that the period of the study was only two-and-a-half years. So whereas in Nottingham the story was one of stability, in Glasgow the narrative appeared to be one of the increasing professionalisation of aspirations, largely at the cost of interest in skilled trades.

Figure 12: Occupational aspirations by SOC at ages 13 and 15 in Glasgow (%)
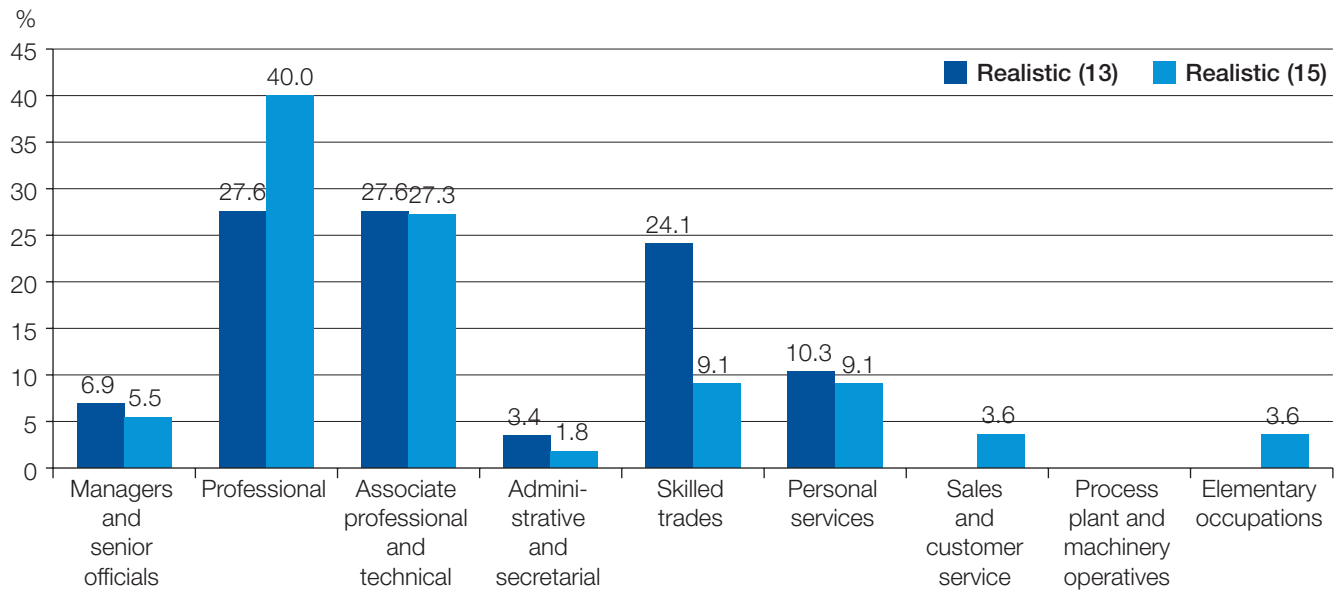
London was different again (Figure 13). Here the emphasis at 13 was on professional occupations and associate and technical occupations. Whereas in Nottingham and Glasgow SOC categories 2 and 3 were named by around 55 per cent of young people, in London the proportion was 73.5 per cent. Put another way, the proportion of young people aspiring to be in the top three categories in London was over 75 per cent against 62 per cent in Glasgow and 54 per cent in Nottingham. Overall, the young people in London demonstrate a far clearer tendency to aspire to the top end of the occupational hierarchy.

Between the ages of 13 and 15 the aspirations among the young people in London generally moved upwards. The overall proportion in the top third of the range increased only slightly (to 76 per cent) but the top two categories expanded substantially. The overall picture in London was of a highly aspirational group of young people at 13 who became even more aspirational at 15.

Figure 13: Occupational aspirations by SOC at ages 13 and 15 in London (%)
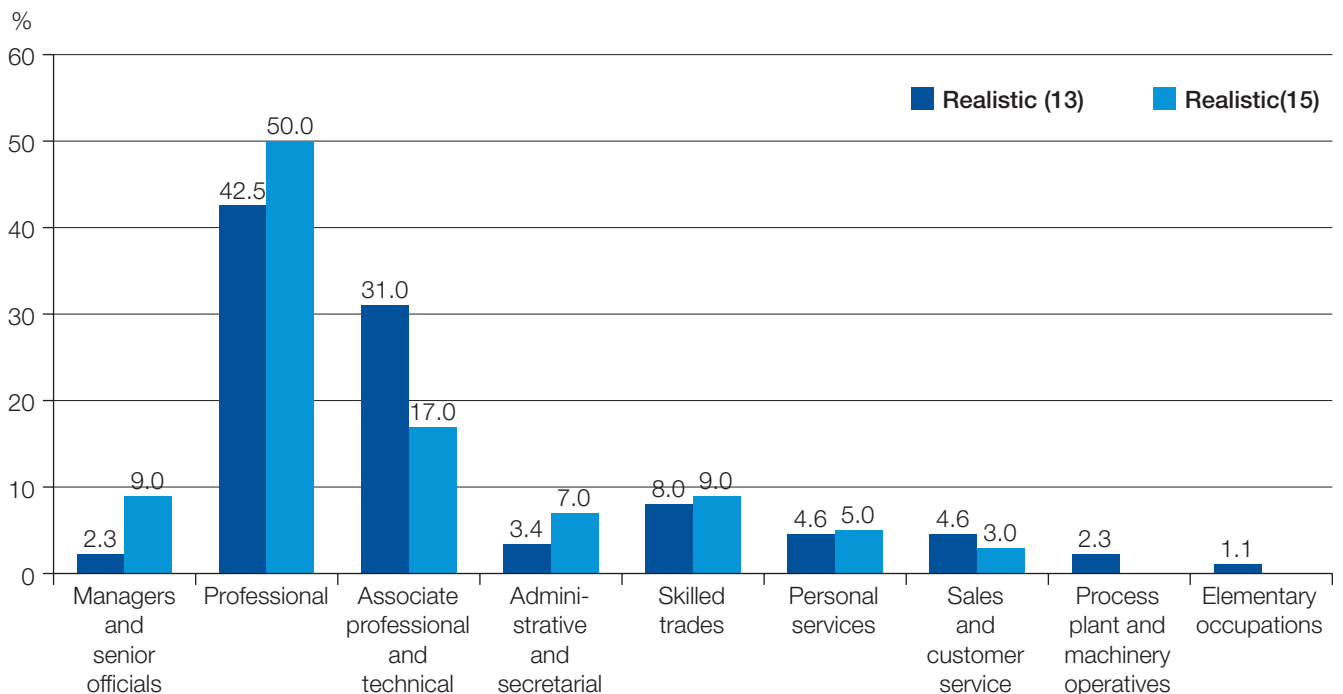
The three places, then, all with substantial levels of deprivation, have quite different patterns of aspirations and aspirational change. In making sense of this finding, it is critical to consider whether these different patterns might simply be driven by different labour market conditions.

Job aspirations and the local labour market

Chapters 4 and 5 discussed the broad relationship between young people's realistic aspirations and the labour market. In this section, the 'fit' between realistic aspirations and the local labour market is more closely analysed. Gender is included in the analysis as a pertinent factor.

Figures 14, 15 and 16 contain a lot of information. For each of the nine overall occupational categories there are four bars. The first one is the proportion of this type of job in the labour market within the local authority area (Glasgow City, Nottingham City and the London Borough of Newham). The second is the proportion in Great Britain as a whole. The third and fourth bars show the proportion of young people who see jobs in this category as a realistic aspiration, with females as the third bar and males as the fourth. As an example, in Figure 14 elementary occupations make up about 14 per cent of the Glasgow workforce, slightly more than the 12 per cent proportion of the Great Britain workforce. Among the Glasgow students at age 15, about 3 per cent of female students and 4 per cent of male students have jobs in this group as their realistic aspiration.

Figure 14 shows that in Glasgow, the notable differences between aspirations and the local labour market were in SOC categories 2, 3 and 6. A far higher proportion of 15-year-olds wanted professional jobs than the proportion of such jobs held by the current workforce, and this is particularly true for female students. There was also a larger proportion of students who wanted to have associate professional and technical occupations than the proportion that currently exist, but this time there were more male than female students. Finally, just over twice as many female students were interested in personal services occupations than the proportion of such jobs in the current workforce.

Figure 14: Job expectations compared to jobs available in the labour market – Glasgow, by gender
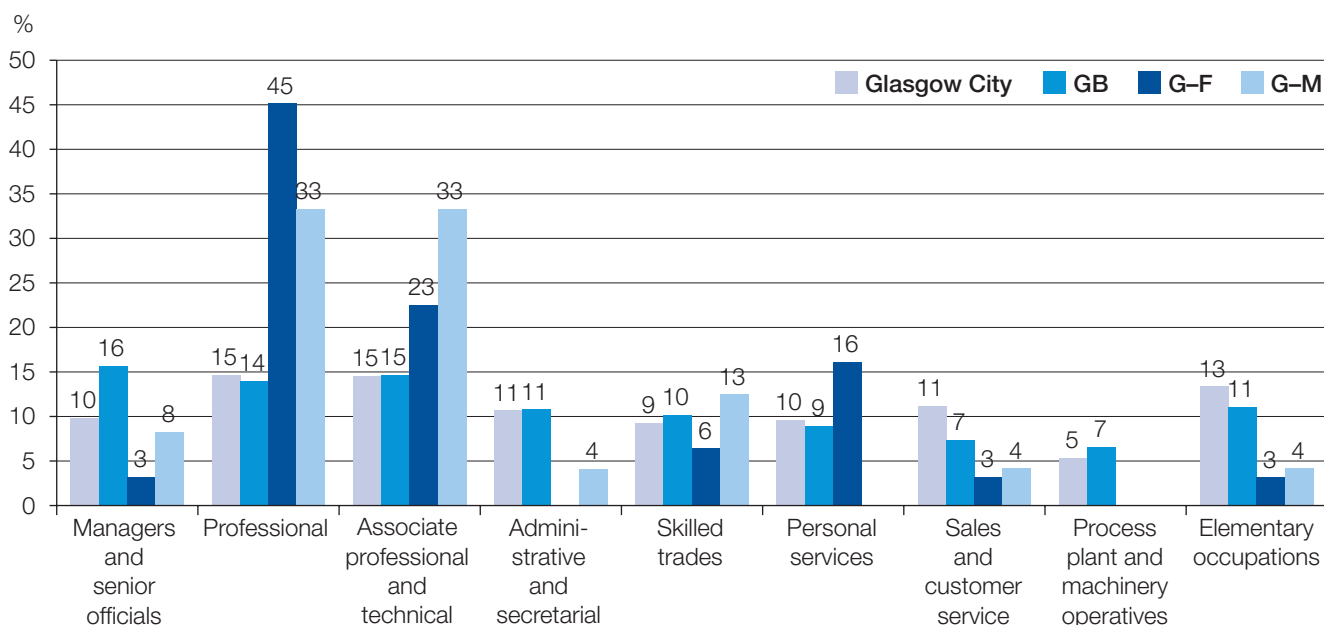
Source: Nomis (2010)

In Nottingham (Figure 15) the patterns were quite different. The interest of female students in personal services was even more marked, but there was also a very high level of interest in skilled trades among male students. There was far less interest in Nottingham than in Glasgow in professional jobs (category 2), but the male level of interest in category 3, associate professional and technical occupations, was maintained. There was noticeably less interest in category 1 jobs (senior officials and managers) in Nottingham.

Figure 15: Job expectations compared to jobs available in the labour market – Nottingham, by gender
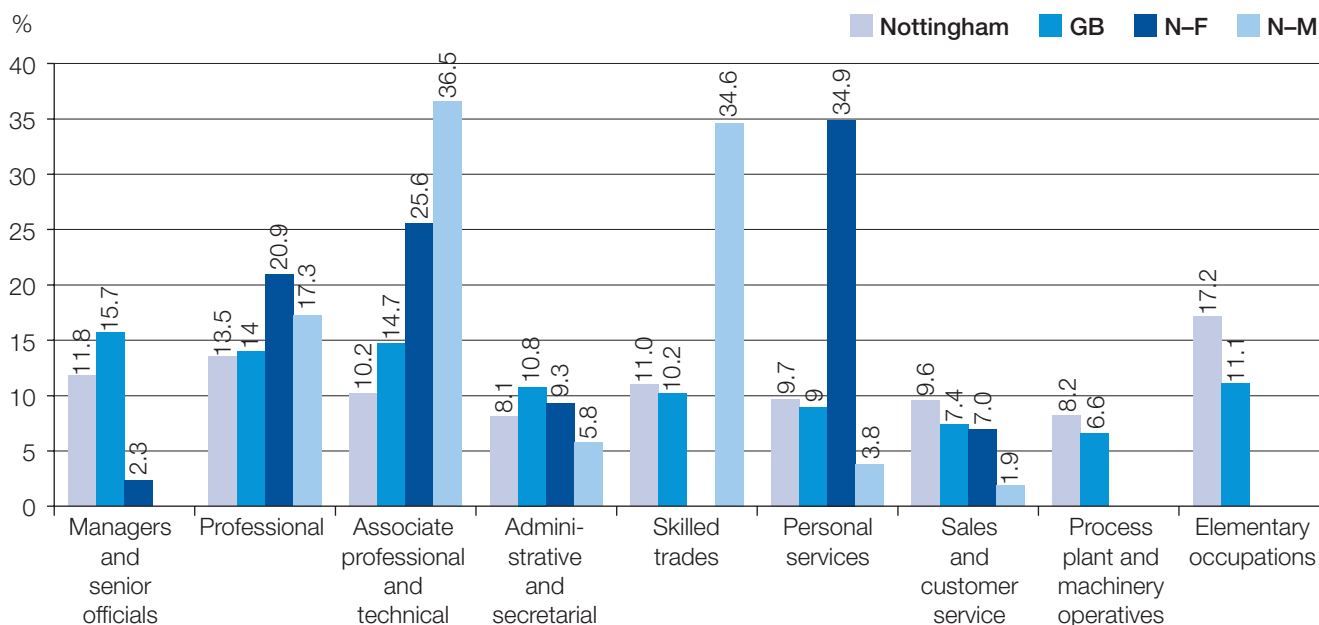
Source: Nomis (2010)

In London there was very limited interest in personal services jobs, and a very strong orientation towards professional jobs among female participants (Figure 16). Almost 70 per cent were interested in a professional occupation compared to just over 10 per cent of the jobs in East London being in this category. The male interest in associate professional and technical jobs was still present, but considerably less strong than in Glasgow or Nottingham.

We can conclude from these data that all the groups of young people were very highly aspirational. This analysis further supports the importance of place in aspirations and is strongly consistent with the findings on educational aspirations in the last section. Aspirations in London were markedly high but 15-year-olds in Nottingham were less interested in jobs at the top end of the scale and more interested in 'traditional' working-class jobs such as personal care for females and skilled trades for males. In each location there were more female students aspiring to professional jobs than male students. It was also clear that the types of jobs that young people expected to get – their realistic aspirations – were much higher up on the occupational scale, on average, than the jobs that actually exist at present in the labour market.

Next, we consider the extent to which place affects the development of these aspirations between the ages of 13 and 15 in these three locations.

Figure 16: Job expectations compared to jobs available in the labour market – London, by gender
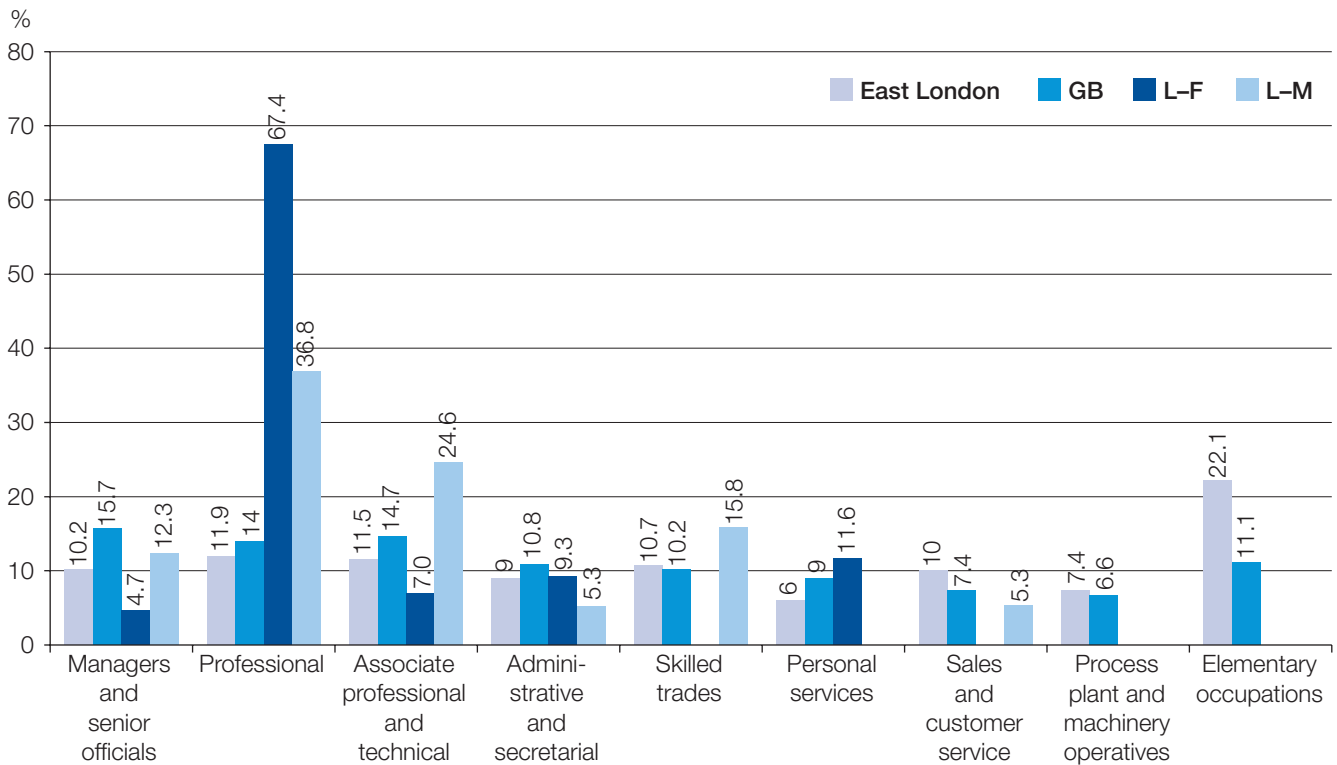
Source: Nomis (2010)

Average aspirational change over time

In this section, the four measures established in the previous chapter regarding aspirational movement over time are applied to the three locations. Table 8 shows these changes, with a minus sign reflecting a move 'down' the occupational hierarchy. Some caution is needed regarding this data because the numbers of matched cases in each location are quite low (they are included in brackets) but the overall message is relatively robust.

Table 8 shows that the patterns of change were different for the three places. In Glasgow ideal aspirations came down by a small amount between 13 and 15, and in Nottingham they came down somewhat more. But in London the ideal to ideal indicator actually went up during the same period. The difference between Nottingham and Glasgow was around half a category during the two-year period.

A narrowing gap between ideal and realistic aspirations over time suggests that young people may be developing a more focused and attainable picture of their future. The Nottingham cohort demonstrated the widest gap between ideal and realistic aspirations, although there were signs of it narrowing over time. In Glasgow, the gap had actually widened between the two survey rounds and, given the drop in ideal

Table 8: Mean aspirational change (SOC) by measure and location (*n*)

	London	Nottingham	Glasgow	Total
Ideal-ideal	0.24 (104)	−0.31 (99)	−0.15 (62)	−0.06 (265)
Ideal-realistic at 13	−0.48 (85)	−0.63 (79)	−0.14 (29)	−0.49 (193)
Ideal-realistic at 15	−0.23 (94)	−0.48 (92)	−0.30 (54)	−0.34 (240)
Realistic-realistic	0.40 (71)	0.00 (71)	−0.21 (24)	0.15 (172)

aspirations, this suggests there had been a significant average lowering of aspirations. In London, the gap at 15 was less than half of the gap at 13, but the ideal aspiration had gone up. Overall this suggests that the realistic aspirations held by the young people in London at 15 were as high as the ideal aspirations of the same people at 13.

The most concrete of the measures was the comparison between realistic aspirations at 13 and 15. Here there was a striking pattern. In Glasgow realistic aspirations had fallen slightly on average, and in Nottingham they had remained, on average, exactly the same. But in London, realistic aspirations had risen 0.4 categories, indicating a very substantial rise.

Summary

The three places selected for this study shared significant deprivation. In this chapter examination of the aspirational trajectories demonstrates that despite the common ground between the cities there are different aspirational trajectories. In Nottingham, the White working-class community, there had been very little change in overall aspirations, and although they were high compared to the local labour market they were below the average for this study. Our Glasgow location was mainly a White Scottish community with representation of a wide range of socioeconomic groups. Here there had been growth in professional aspirations in some case, although the overall picture included a slight creeping decay of average aspirations. In London, a highly mobile immigrant community, aspirations started remarkably strong and had consolidated as young people approach the examination stage of their school career. The next chapter sets out to identify some of the factors behind these diverse patterns.

7 Factors affecting aspirations

In this chapter factors affecting aspirations are discussed according to the three categories introduced earlier: school, family and place. The influence of the media on aspirations is also discussed. Particular attention is paid to any factors that can help explain the different aspirational trajectories in the three locations we have examined.

Role of schools

Schools were not initially a focus of the research but merely a means of accessing appropriate cohorts of young people; they proved impossible to ignore, however. The researchers were struck by the commitment shown by the schools to supporting the aspirations of their students. Our interviews with teachers showed that they had thought deeply about the challenges facing their students, and the best ways to address them. The three schools had, nonetheless, developed different practices, and this showed up in the surveys and also the focus groups with students.

Influence of teachers

Just over half of all young people said that teachers often talked to them about what they might do when they left school and about two thirds said that their teachers often talked to them about going to college or university. Young people in London agreed most often with these statements and young people in Glasgow least often. The difference is quite substantial; a little more than 40 per cent of young people in Glasgow said their teachers often spoke to them about going to college or university versus close to 80 per cent in London (Table 9).

Table 9: Careers advice from school sources, by location

% in agreement	London		Nottingham		Glasgow		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	All
My teachers often talk to me about what I might do when I leave school	60	63	56	55	50	53	57
My teachers often talk to me about going to college or university	80	71	59	76	41	44	65
Have you had any careers or guidance advice at school? (those answering 'Yes')	68	76	66	71	81	68	71
Did you find this advice about careers useful? (% of those who got advice)	64	76	85	97	85	62	77
Did the advice help you make up your mind about what you want to do when you leave school? (% of those who got advice)	44	58	51	37	35	46	46
There is a particular teacher who gives me advice	53		50		59		53

Over 70 per cent of young people said they had received careers advice at school, of which the majority (85 per cent) said it was useful. Overall, then, 60 per cent of young people have had useful careers advice, but only half of those getting advice said that it had helped them decide what they wanted to do when they left school. There were also substantial gender differences within the schools regarding careers advice, especially notable in London, where 70 per cent of female students who got careers advice reported that it helped shape their aspirations. Statistically, there was a significant relationship between those getting advice and their ideal job aspirations, with those getting advice having higher aspirations.[13] This may suggest that young people approach careers discussions with an occupational outcome in mind and the role of the school is to explain how to attain it.

The focus groups with 15-year-olds considered the role of their school on aspirations. In a London focus group the young people were clear that the school wanted everybody to do well, although this was slightly qualified:

Researcher: "In general here do you think the staff want you to do well?"

(Several voices): "Yeah." "Yeah, yeah, some of them."

Researcher: "Do they expect everyone to do well?"

(Several voices): "I think they want everyone to do well, but they know that not everyone's going to "do well."

Sometimes they like to pick on individuals, so they'll know you can achieve your potential best."

"… and they set high standards."

In addition, young people in London recognised the support that teachers provided to those who were having difficulties:

"Like, for example, ... you could be studying like, in English ... the teachers would be, they would be helping you, encouraging you with that, it's not that bad 'cos sometimes it's not easy to like, get good levels. Sometimes you might be a bit low, yeah, but the teachers will help you, like … sometimes they'll even come to you and, like, probably ask you to come after school, yeah, then you could do that one on one talking about, like, whatever's on your mind."

Young people in Nottingham were slightly less positive when asked if they thought teachers wanted them all to do well:

"Well, you do something good and they don't say nothing to you."

Researcher: "Mmm, yeah."

(Several voices) "It's like the what's the point really."

"Some teachers do. Do you think some teachers tell you if you do…."

"Yeah. Some teachers do."

Factors affecting aspirations

"Some teachers praise you and then some don't, they just sit there like … like what's the point in doing the work then?"

In Glasgow responses in relation to teachers' support for all pupils were a bit more ambiguous:

Researcher: "Do you think they're all interested in where you want to be or your futures?"

(Several voices): "No."

"Most of them."

"Most of them."

"Some ae them." [laughing]

"They wouldn't be very good teachers if they didn't want us to succeed."

Researcher: "But do you think they want everybody to succeed the same, or do you think…."

(Several voices): "No." [laugh]

Young people generally seemed to acknowledge and appreciate the schools' efforts to help them to do well, but also identified that some students have more expected of them and get more support. Careers services were broadly regarded as useful, but not necessarily as strongly shaping influences.

Disengagement from school

The influence of school, and of teachers, is likely to be different for young people who are disengaged from school. There were three main questions addressing this issue.

Overall, just over a quarter said their friends disrespected people who worked hard, with the same proportion not liking school. A third said they didn't enjoy studying (Table 10). The Nottingham cohort showed the highest level of disengagement on two of the indicators.

The Glasgow results provide a challenge for interpretation. Very few said their friends disrespected people who worked hard, which may be affected by the social mix of the school. More liked school than in the other locations, yet three quarters of both boys and girls claimed not to enjoy studying. This might be explained by the fact that most of the 15-year-olds at Glasgow were in the process of taking their Standard Grades at the time of the interviews.

None of these variables was significantly related to the occupational aspirations of the young people, or to their trajectory between ages 13 and 15. However, there was a relationship with the number of exams young people were hoping to sit.

Table 10: Attitudes to school (15-year-olds)

% in agreement	London		Nottingham		Glasgow		All
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
My friends look down on people who work hard at school	32	26	39	26	9	6	26
I don't like school	20	20	48	31	22	15	27
I don't enjoy studying	15	12	42	27	75	74	36

Those who agreed their friends looked down on people who worked hard were intending to take a significantly lower number of exams than those who disagreed.[14] When respondents were divided by gender it seems that it was girls who were driving this result.[15] Those girls who agreed that their friends looked down on hard workers were taking an average of 4.8 exams while those who disagreed were taking an average of 6.4. Interestingly, in Nottingham, those who agreed expected to take a significantly higher number of exams (6.0 versus 4.3) than those who disagreed.[16]

The group of young people who said that they both disliked school and did not enjoy studying were intending to take significantly fewer exams.[17] There was a slight tendency for this group to have lower aspirations, but it was not statistically significant.

These results suggest that a degree of disengagement from school does not necessarily result in lower aspirations, but rather in a lower interest in taking exams.

Self-perception of ability

The survey asked about students' perceptions of their own academic ability. They were asked whether they saw themselves as 'very good' at maths, English language and at their self-nominated favourite subject, and also whether they were better than their friends. Not all favourite subjects were academic; indeed the most popular favourite subjects were PE and art.

Overall, 60 per cent or more rated themselves as 'very good' at maths, English and at their favourite subject. On average they were more modest in their claims of superior ability in maths and English compared to their friends, although three quarters claimed they were better at their friends in their favourite subject (Table 11).

A belief in mathematical ability did not translate to different aspirations, but it did make a difference to the number of exams taken. In London, the difference between the average number of exams being taken by those who agreed they were very good at maths and those who did not was statistically significant.[18] While present elsewhere the effect was not so strong. There is a notable gender divide in the responses to this question; while in Glasgow and Nottingham boys were more likely to agree, in London it was girls who were more likely to see themselves as very good at maths. The same general effect on exam expectations also showed up among those who believed they were better than their friends at maths, and again this was statistically significant only in London.[19]

There were no apparent differences in job or exam aspirations associated with ability in English, except that those who agreed they were better at English than their friends had statistically significant higher average job aspirations.[20] Language ability is a complex factor, and confidence in that ability more so. It may represent an important proxy for other factors, and would potentially reward further investigation.

A composite variable was constructed for those 38 young people who agreed with all the items in Table 11. Those who identified themselves as having high levels of ability, both intrinsically and in relation to their peers, intended, on average to take around 1.5 GCSEs/Standard Grades more than those who did

Table 11: Self-perceptions of ability (15-year-olds)

% in agreement	London		Nottingham		Glasgow		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	All
I am very good at maths	65	74	71	49	69	50	64
I am better than my friends at maths	45	41	41	20	44	44	39
I am very good at languages/English	77	84	73	61	56	59	69
I am better than my friends at languages/English	48	37	34	31	31	21	35
I am better than my friends in my favourite subject	82	77	76	64	88	88	73

not rate their ability highly.[21] In addition, they also tended to have significantly higher realistic aspirations for jobs.[22]

Summary of school influences

The cumulative data about the three schools suggested that there were quite different approaches among them to supporting young people. It should be noted both the English schools take students up to GCSEs only, so a key performance indicator is the proportion of young people who achieve five good GCSEs. In Glasgow students who stay in education after the minimum leaving age remain within the school for Highers.

In London the school appeared to be very encouraging; it wanted all young people to do well and specially aimed to arouse their aspirations. It participated in national aspirations raising programmes and young people stated in focus groups that teachers wanted all young people to succeed, and provided good help to slower learners. The London school also ran after-school study clubs that were the single most popular after-hours, school- related activity.

In Nottingham the school's approach was apparently more divisive. Young people recognised that there was a group of students in the school that was strongly supported by the school to be high achievers but that there was also a more problematic group that was subject to discipline and containment. In Nottingham the survey showed that there was less general conversation by teachers about careers and going to university than in the other locations.

The Glasgow school appeared to be more laissez-faire than the others. There was a much greater sense that young people were ambitious of their own accord, rather than that the school expected it. In Glasgow, there was a very high proportion of students who believed they were better than their friends at their favourite subject, with almost 90 per cent believing that to be the case. The reported attitude of teachers was much more variable than at the other schools, where each had a distinctive, albeit different, prevailing school ethos.

The influence of schools does also seem to vary by gender. In London students reported teachers talking to them about college or university more often. In this school, female students in particular said that careers advice had helped them to make up their mind. In Nottingham, over 40 per cent of boys disagreed with each statement regarding liking school and enjoying studying. In the same location there were a low number of female students who believed they were better than their friends at maths, a belief that translated directly to number of exams taken.

The findings about schools suggested that they did make some difference to young people's future orientations, but may not be critical shaping forces. Young people recognised the support of the schools, but also were aware that support was not always consistent. In terms of careers services, they seemed to be regarded as helpful, but not necessarily directly in setting aspirations. On the basis of this evidence, the influence of schools seemed to be channelled through confidence and self-belief regarding ability. More concretely, the impacts in most cases were manifest through exam intentions rather than aspirations.

Family and external influences

This section looks at the home environment of the students and external influences and how they play out in the aspirations of young people. Topics covered include support, spare time activities, media influences and general self-confidence. We begin by looking at family background.

Family background

In the survey of 15-year-olds we included a number of additional questions designed to provide proxies for family income and status so that we could try to explore the relationship between socioeconomic factors in the family and young people's aspirations. In addition we asked young people the occupations of those who provided most help with their homework and those who talked to them most about what they might do when they left school as well as asking who held 'the best job in the house'.

Young people in the survey were asked whom they talked to most at home about what they might do when they left school. In Glasgow and Nottingham around 85 per cent cited one or both of their parents but in London this fell to just over 60 per cent. Siblings were the second most important source of advice about young people's futures. In London this amounted to 18 per cent of all young people (or 20 per cent including all relatives), but only half that proportion or less in the other two locations. In London 7 per cent of young people said they talked to no one at home about what they might do, with equivalent figures being 4 per cent in Nottingham and none in Glasgow.

When asked if they knew what the person to whom they talked hoped they would do in the future, most answered positively: 86 per cent in Glasgow and London and 72 per cent in Nottingham. However, when asked for details, differences opened up between students at the three schools.

In Nottingham the most common answer was that parents did not mind what job they did in the future as long as it made them happy. Just under 30 per cent stated that their parents wanted them to have a specific job or go to university. In terms of named jobs, around a third were for trades (for example, joiner, mechanic or electrician) although accountants, lawyers and scientists also featured.

Around 45 per cent of the young people in London who gave a reply were able to name a specific job or occupation that the person whom they talked to about their future wanted them to do. Of the remainder, 15 per cent said the hopes were to get an unspecified 'good job', with only half of that percentage reporting that the person who talked to mainly hoped for their happiness. Of those who named a specific occupation, the majority identified law and medicine, with only one naming a trade.

The results for Glasgow were more evenly balanced than elsewhere: while a desire for happiness was the most common answer (33 per cent), a specific job or occupation featured in the same proportion of answers and the range of jobs was wider than in London. Another quarter of replies concerned hopes for an unspecified 'good job'.

At 13 there was no overall relationship between young people's job aspirations and the occupational status of the person the young person talked to about the future. In Glasgow there was a positive correlation between the kind of job held by the person female students talked to most and the young person's realistic aspirations; that is, where the person talked to had a high status job, the young person also had relatively high occupational aspirations,[23] which is suggestive of influence. In London there was similar evidence for both genders[24] but none at all in Nottingham.

At 15 across the whole group, there was also significant correlation between the aspirations of 15-year-olds and the occupational status of the person the young people talked to most about their future, but this time it was negative. In other words, this suggests that young people at 15 in general aspire to higher status jobs than those they talk to most about the future.

We considered whether there was any relationship between the economic position of young people's families and their aspirations using a range of rough measures around housing consumption and car ownership. We asked young people what housing tenure the family held, how many people lived in their house and how many bedrooms it had (so a rough measure of overcrowding could be established)[25] and how many cars there were at home. Putting these three factors together in a composite variable showed no significant relationships with ideal or realistic aspirations.

As a final perspective on family economic background we compared free school meal status to aspirational trajectories discussed in the previous chapter. The only notable relationship was in Glasgow, although caution should be taken due to the small number of students taken into account (24). The result

suggests that over time the realistic aspirations of young people on free school meals increased while those of young people not eligible fell. This can be cautiously interpreted as both groups moving towards a shared midpoint of aspiration.

Given that this research set out to focus on people living with deprivation, it is not surprising that significant differentials by family economic status were not found. There was not a wide socioeconomic range among our participants. This finding reinforces the notion of similarity between the people involved in the research and adds credibility to the idea that the differences emerging are related to place and associated factors.

However, it is notable that there is a trend for the aspirations of the young people to be broadly consistent with the desires of those they talked to about the future. In London young people were aware that the adults they talked to wanted them to do well and often to attain specific high status occupations, and this was reflected in their own stated aspirations that were the highest of the three locations. In Nottingham the hopes of many of the adults were for trades jobs, reflected by the young people's own aspirations, or they were unspecific as to occupations. In Glasgow there was a spread of both young people's aspirations and the hopes that adults had for them. Taken together, these findings suggest that the hopes, and the advice, of the people approached by the students for advice really matters.

Support at home

Almost all young people said that there was someone at home who was interested in their schoolwork. Most young people (87 per cent) reported that they received help with homework from someone at home.

In Glasgow and Nottingham mothers were the most common source of help (32 per cent and 45 per cent of young people). Small proportions in each location (under 10 per cent) received help from both parents. Fathers on their own were a relatively minor source of help, at 17 per cent in Glasgow, 15 per cent in Nottingham and 10 per cent in London. Altogether for 80 per cent of young people in Glasgow and Nottingham it was parents who mostly provided help with homework, this fell to just over 60 per cent in London. Young people in London relied to a greater extent than elsewhere on siblings and other relatives (34 per cent), although these were also the second most important source of help in Nottingham (17 per cent) and Glasgow (21 per cent).

However, a much larger proportion of young people in London received no help at all with homework at home. Thirty per cent reported that no one helped them, with more boys than girls reporting they were self-sufficient, compared to 18 per cent of young people in Glasgow and 12 per cent in Nottingham.

The different patterns in London may reflect a number of factors. Many more young people attended after-school study clubs than at the other locations, English language abilities among parents were likely to be lower, and on average, young people had a higher number of siblings and other relatives living at home.

It does not appear, however, that London parents had less interest in young people's education. In fact the London parents showed the strongest tendency to support young people by 'always' attending parents' meetings at the school. In London, parents were also very actively encouraged to get involved by the school. Young people reported in Glasgow their parents more likely 'never' to attend relative to other locations; in Nottingham they were slightly more likely to attend 'sometimes'. A significant relationship exists between location and going to parents' meetings.[26]

Responses to an open-ended question about other kinds of support at home included general encouragement, the provision of help if it was asked for and the provision of resources such as books, computers and internet access. It was notable that while none of the Nottingham students mentioned getting any material help (books, computers, etc.) a third of Glasgow students mentioned that kind of support along with about 10 per cent in London, including the occasional mention of recognition of parental sacrifice: For example:

"… [she] buys past papers and stuff to help me in my studies." (Glasgow)

"… provides material like books and magazines." (Glasgow)

"… resources if need – books, computer and that – encouragement as well." (Glasgow)

"Mum was going through a financial crisis but she got me a computer and internet." (London)

Only a relatively small number of pupils overall mentioned the provision of a tutor or other support specifically focused on aspirations to support their learning, and again these were all in Glasgow and London:

"Got me a maths tutor." (Glasgow)

"Looks at report cards and if there's anything worse than rest, will organise tutorials." (Glasgow)

"Mum looks for things involving medicine – got the number of a guy for volunteering." (Glasgow)

"Got me a tutor." (London)

"Pays the tuition – maths, science, and English." (London)

There were few significant statistical correlations between getting support at home and young people's aspirations. In Nottingham and London for females only, there was a moderate but significant link between job aspirations and a composite variable that includes all of the parental support factors.[27] This suggests that girls in those locations who received higher levels of support aspired to a higher status job.

Spare time activities

Almost all young people said they had one or more activities that they liked to do in their spare time, and the different locations showed different patterns of leisure activity. Taking part in activities organised by the school was more common in London and the pattern of activities was different to the other schools. While young people in Glasgow and Nottingham (especially boys) predominantly took part in sport, in London the leading activity was study support activity. Out-of-school activities in London showed more diversity than the others and included a sizeable group who mentioned (mainly Muslim) religious activities. There was also a larger proportion attending youth or social clubs than in the other locations.

At the Glasgow school, 59 per cent of boys and 47 per cent of girls said that activities had an influence on future plans. These included team sports for boys and for girls it was activities related to arts/music/drama in school, and individual sports out of school.

In Nottingham, 56 per cent of boys and 39 per cent of girls said that activities had an influence on future plans. When questioned, the most influential activities were computers followed by sports, and for girls it was arts/music/drama followed by others, including the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

In London, 49 per cent of boys and of girls said that their out-of-school activities had an influence on future plans. For both boys and girls revision, exam and specific subject support were the most frequently cited activities followed closely for boys by team sports. In addition, arts/music/drama were influential activities for both genders.

Taking part in out-of-hours school activities was associated with higher aspirations. Overall, those who took part in school activities anticipated taking a significantly higher mean number of GCSE/Standard Grade exams (7.0) than those who did not (5.9).[28] In addition, they also tended to have significantly higher

status job aspirations.[29] It also had some association with the number of exams anticipated, with those participating in out-of-school activities having a higher mean (6.7) than those who did not (6.0).[30]

We also examined whether the kinds of activities young people did in their spare time had any kind of relationship with their aspirations for particular kinds of jobs. There was some link between enjoying particular sports and wanting to be a professional player in that sport, or a coach. The popularity of computers (and computer gaming), especially among boys, led some to aspire to work in those fields, particularly in Nottingham. For a number of boys and fewer of the girls, music activities were influential in wanting to be involved in playing or producing music. Some girls mentioned shopping as a leisure activity; this was often linked to career aspirations in fashion.

In general, leisure time activities seemed to have two effects. First, being involved in such activities was associated with higher aspirations for jobs and for the number of exams to be taken. Second, the activities young people enjoy did have some degree of influence on the kinds of occupations they favoured. The emphasis on study-related leisure activities in London again seemed to be consistent with a more aspirational milieu than Glasgow and Nottingham.

Media influences on aspirations

Again at age 15 young people were asked if television and the internet gave them ideas about what they wanted to do when they were older. There was a positive correlation between the two, that is, those who agreed that television gave them ideas also tended to agree that the internet gave them ideas.[31] At the lower end, just under half of Glasgow females agreed that the internet gave them ideas, rising to almost three out of four London males who agreed that the television gave them ideas (see Table 12). Overall, since age 13, the influence of television had fallen somewhat and the influence of the internet had risen slightly.

There was little noticeable difference in aspirations between those who agreed the television and/ or the internet gave them ideas and those who did not. So the media does not appear to raise or lower aspirations in general, perhaps because of its ubiquity.

Considering the specific occupations young people mentioned, the media appears to have a more powerful influence than consciously acknowledged, although this appeared to diminish over time. As discussed in Chapter 4, at age 13 young people often mentioned particular television programmes and films as giving them an idea for future jobs. By age 15 the influence of television appeared to have waned and been replaced by computer use in various forms, most often in relation to 'video/computer gaming' and less frequently 'social networking' and 'surfing the internet'.

Table 12: Television and the internet

% in agreement	London		Nottingham		Glasgow		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	All
Television gives me ideas about what I want to do when I'm older	72	53	68	55	47	59	61
The internet gives me ideas about what I want to do when I'm older	60	63	58	63	56	32	57

Self-confidence

We asked a number of questions relating to young people's self-confidence, specifically whether they experienced worry about getting mixed up with people who might get them into trouble, leaving school with no qualifications or not being able to get a job when they were older. Many young people were not just

thinking about their future but also worrying about it, in spite of their very positive orientation overall towards going to university and obtaining high status jobs.

At age 15 just under 70 per cent 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they worried about leaving school with no qualifications, and 70 per cent 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they worried about not being able to get a job when they were older (see Table 13).

Table 13: Worries and anxieties

	London		Nottingham		Glasgow	
% in agreement	13	15	13	15	13	15
I sometimes worry about getting mixed up with people who might get me into trouble	75	67	71	64	64	50
I sometimes worry about leaving school with no qualifications	70	69	70	72	64	67
I sometimes worry about not being able to get a job when I am older	68	69	70	76	53	68

Worries seemed independent of location and gender and it is perhaps worth noting that in general around half to two thirds of all respondents expressed some anxiety about the future and a significant correlation between all three statements was found.[32] Interestingly, while anxiety levels about qualifications remained relatively consistent across the schools and over time, worries about negative peer influences decreased, perhaps as a result of greater maturity and confidence, while anxieties about not getting a job increased. This may be attributable to greater awareness of work, or possibly the impact of the economic recession. It is also perhaps surprising how many young people were concerned about getting a job when they were 13 and still some years away from joining the labour market.

At age 15 anxiety about mixing with people who could get them into trouble had no significant relationship with aspirations.

Those who were worried about leaving with no qualifications did anticipate taking a significantly lower mean number of anticipated GCSE/Standard Grade exams,[33] but it had no significant relationship with job aspirations. Girls who were worried about getting no qualifications anticipated taking a significantly lower mean number of GCSE/Standard Grade exams,[34] but there was no significant relationship with aspirations.

Young people who did not express any of these worries were expecting to take significantly more GCSEs or Standard Grades (7.4) than those who worried (6.3).[35] In addition, they also tended to have significantly higher realistic job expectations.[36]

The picture here is a relatively concerned group of young people, with the realism to know that taking a smaller number of exams may not serve them well. They were aware that finding a job might not be easy, and worried that leaving school without gaining good exam grades would increase the challenges. However, at this point these worries, even noting they were associated with the expectation of taking fewer exams, were not linked to job aspirations.

Summary of family and external influences

In general, the young people had supportive families, with evidence that they mostly had people to talk to about their futures. In Nottingham and Glasgow this was usually their parents, although in London siblings and other relatives took on a bigger role. In Nottingham and Glasgow, significant numbers of key supporters did not mind what the young person did for an occupation (as long as they did well), but in London there was frequently a specific occupational expectation for the young person, and it was almost always professional.

Socioeconomic background made a limited difference in this data, probably because there was not much diversity in the sample. Where there is an identifiably different group, for example, young people not entitled to free school meals in Glasgow, this was associated with a different aspirational trajectory between ages 13 and 15. Families in London and Glasgow provided some material support and access to extra tuition that was not available to young people at the Nottingham school.

Activities, both in school and out of school, made a difference to aspirations. Not only did they raise aspirations generally, they often had a direct effect on which kinds of jobs were desirable. However, they had a limited effect on aspirations and it appeared to diminish with age. In London, activities were more varied in the other two locations, and tended to be about studying, television and the internet. Differences were clearly discernible between the three locations. London students were more highly focused and aspirational, with families deeply interested in the attainment of their children. Here the highest level of attendance at parents' evenings can be found. In Glasgow families on the whole were not as explicitly aspirational as in London, but few were disengaged. Some families had specific aspirations for their children, and some supply material support and tutoring. In Nottingham young people had support from home, but the data provided much less sense of explicit and focused high aspiration among parents, and also some tendency to value traditional skilled manual occupations which was not present elsewhere.

Place

This section discusses the factors relevant to the specific study locations to examine their influence on aspirations.

The labour market

One of the initial ideas underlying this study was that young people's aspirations would be influenced by the local labour market. However, as the overview in Chapter 6 suggests, there was little evidence of this in the broad pattern of the jobs they said they would like to, or expected to have. At the age of 15 a minority at each location and a third overall believed it would be easy to get a job, but there were quite wide differences between the lowest (Glasgow) and the highest (Nottingham) proportions (Table 14).

Young people were asked about the kinds of jobs that would be easy to get and whether they would be interested in them. Most young people who answered identified routine jobs as easy to get, such as shop work or stacking shelves, security and cleaning, although some suggested that there were no easily obtainable jobs.

Given the routine nature of the easy-to-get jobs, and bearing in mind the high aspirations of most young people, it is perhaps unsurprising that around only 20 per cent in each location said they were

Table 14: Views of the local labour market 2010, and change since 2007/08

%		London	Nottingham	Glasgow	All
It will be easy to get a job in this city when I leave school'	Agree	32	41	21	33
	Disagree	54	45	70	54
	Don't know	13	14	9	12
Change in those agreeing it will be easy to get a job since 2007/08		−14	+7	−26	−10
The types of jobs available in the city interest me	Yes	21	19	24	21
	No	62	69	71	67
	Don't know/no response	17	12	5	12

interested in these jobs. This was also often qualified by the observation that such jobs only held interest as temporary or part-time employment to support further study.

Looking at the change between the ages of 13 and 15, the proportion that believed it would be easy to get a job fell markedly in Glasgow and London, but actually rose by 5 percentage points in Nottingham (Table 14). This might reasonably suggest that young people had a better idea of the labour market at 15 than they had at 13, as all three survey areas have relatively weak labour markets with above average levels of worklessness. Also, because many of the answers about the jobs that would be easy to get refer to ubiquitous jobs that require few qualifications, it could be argued that they also demonstrate some knowledge of the labour market. However, the 'don't know' answers are included in the table because they may be indicative of a sizeable group for whom the labour market was poorly understood or hidden.

As discussed in Chapter 6, there was little correspondence between the structure of the labour markets and young people's aspirations and expectations. Note here, however, that while Newham had the lowest proportion of managers and professionals of all London boroughs, London as a whole had a higher proportion of such jobs than the profile of the young people's aspirations. However, it seems unlikely given the lack of any apparent references to this that the high aspirations of young people in London had been influenced by specific London job market factors. On the other hand, it seems likely that young people in Nottingham, who were more inclined to 'working-class' jobs than elsewhere, were somewhat influenced by local context and tradition.

Exposure to the neighbourhood

When thinking about whether young people were influenced in their aspirations by their geographical context it was important to take into account the extent that young people were exposed to the neighbourhood they live in. For example, did they have social relationships in the neighbourhood outside the family and the school and did they use the public spaces and facilities?

We asked young people where they spent time with their friends in the week prior to the survey. Only nine young people said that they had not spent any time with friends and all but 23 (9 per cent) had met with their friends at least two days per week, with almost a quarter meeting every day.

Overall, given the possibility to give more than one location where they 'hung out', 75 per cent of young people said that they spent time with their friends outdoors in the local area. Further, 60 per cent said they spent time at friends' houses and about 15 per cent mentioned spending time at local venues such as at a club or sports centre.

The local area was the most popular choice for meeting up with friends in Nottingham and London, though less so in Glasgow, likely due to the more dispersed pattern of residence. In addition, young males in London were less likely than other groups to hang out in other areas in the city. This may reflect the territoriality and associated threats of violence mentioned in some focus groups.

Overall, it can be concluded that the young people in all three locations had a very high degree of exposure to their local peers and to their local neighbourhoods generally. Most of them spent a lot of time with friends in the local area, often outdoors. However, perhaps contrary to expectations, this did not appear to mean that young people were confined to their local neighbourhoods. Only nine young people had not left their neighbourhood in the last two weeks.

Sixty-five per cent of males and 78 per cent of females said they had travelled out of their area more than three times in the past fortnight, not counting going to school. However, in Glasgow they were significantly more mobile than elsewhere, again perhaps reflecting the much more extensive range of neighbourhoods they lived in, and there were no young people who had not travelled out of their area at all. Ninety-five per cent of the Glasgow group had travelled out of their area twice or more in the fortnight before the interview compared to 83 per cent in Nottingham and 75 per cent in London. Participants in one of the focus groups in Glasgow (mainly White young people identified by school staff as being among the more

able students) reported they met up at a local shopping/entertainment street or in the city centre and used buses to get around.

At the London school, when asked about travelling outside the area, young people tended to mention immediately adjoining areas. Clearly some of them sometimes went into central London, but this came across as being relatively uncommon:

> Researcher: "And do you go up into, like, London itself?"

> "Yeah, we go up to London, yeah, yeah."

> Researcher: "So when was the last time you were in central London?"

> "The last time I want was on New Year's Eve."

> Researcher: "So about three months ago. What about yourself?"

> "Last week…. I went shopping in Oxford Street."

> "I once went to London, like a few months ago, with my school…."

A consistent theme in the interviews with adults in London was that the neighbourhood was a negative influence on aspirations, mainly because of its lack of diversity combined with inward-looking behaviour:

> "A significant number of the school body live in a situation of isolation."
>
> Community representative, male

> "They don't mix. They eat, breathe and live in this area. They mix in the area with people with similar characteristics."
>
> Support staff member, male

The data seems to suggest that young people in the London school were relatively less mobile than in the other two areas, especially Glasgow.

Views of the neighbourhood

In general, young people's views of the area they lived in were generally positive (see Table 15). Over 85 per cent in each of the areas thought that where they lived was 'good' or 'very good', with Nottingham slightly

Table 15: Neighbourhood safety and reputation

	London	Nottingham	Glasgow	All
My area is a 'good' or 'very good' place to live	93	86	92	90
My area is a safe area for young people	78	82	79	80
My area has a good reputation among people who live elsewhere in the city	62	54	77	64
Adults in my area are doing well in life	69	76	76	73
Young people in my area expect to do well in life	84	80	72	80
I want to stay around here when I'm older	53	30	47	43

behind the others. The best things about the local area that were most often mentioned were the presence of friends and family and, even though they perhaps did not use them, amenities such as parks, shops, libraries, youth clubs and sports centres.

Community spirit and various dimensions of social mixing or harmony were also mentioned as good things in London. On the negative side, there were some concerns, particularly in Glasgow and London, about gangs and (often unspecified) 'trouble', which were frequently mentioned as the worst things about their area (although often these negative points were qualified by reference to specific places and times).

A slightly smaller proportion thought that their home area was safe for young people. Across all three areas, there was less confidence that people who lived in other parts of their cities thought that the home area had a good reputation, especially in Nottingham and to a lesser extent London, but positive assessments were still made by more than half the sample. There was a significant relationship between 'safety' and 'reputation'; those who said the area had a good reputation also tended to feel safe.

In general, despite the official deprivation of many of the areas the young people lived in and the weakness of the surrounding labour markets, around three quarters in Glasgow and Nottingham thought adults in the area were 'doing well in life', with the London figure behind at just under 70 per cent. In Glasgow correspondingly fewer of the respondents believed that young people in the area expected to do well in life, but in the other areas more respondents thought that young people expected to do well compared with the figure for adults. The biggest gap between adults' perceived position and young people's perceived expectations (13 per cent) was in London.

There were differences between the areas in the proportions who said they wanted 'to stay around here when I'm older', even though there were broadly similar proportions who provided a positive assessment of their home areas. While only in London was there a majority of young people who wanted to stay in the area, there was a substantial gap between the proportions who wanted to stay in Glasgow and London compared to Nottingham, where only 30 per cent expressed a desire to stay.

There was a significant relationship (for boys only) between neighbourhood reputation and desire to move: those who thought the area had a bad reputation were more likely to want to leave, while those who thought it had a good reputation were more likely to want to stay.[37] In general job aspirations or social mobility in general were cited as reasons for wanting to leave. A desire to leave was associated with slightly higher job aspirations and expectations and with a higher number of intended GCSEs or Standard Grades. Asked to elaborate why they wanted to leave, young people tended to cite a general desire to get on, or to follow careers that were not available locally, or sometimes a desire to live in a better area. For example:

"I just want to see how living in another area would be like – get a better education, go to university." (London)

"I want to see other places and see if there is anything better." (Glasgow)

In Nottingham, there was more of a sense in some of the interviews that the reasons for wanting to leave were more about 'push' factors, such as the overall reputation of the neighbourhood. A typical comment was:

"I don't really like it around here. I want to move above and beyond to a nice place." (Nottingham)

With respect to employment a constant theme was the lack of locally available jobs. In one of the London focus groups a young woman explained:

"There are not really many jobs. There are jobs in [name of local neighbourhood] but stuff like hair cutting, nails, yeah, there's not really major business jobs. Obviously you're looking at stuff like central London, that's where all the top business stuff is...."

In Glasgow the question 'Would you ever move away?' received the answer:

"Yeah…. Because I'm thinking of doing like a degree in engineering…. I don't think like organisations or that in Glasgow, so you need to move abroad somewhere."

There was similar story in Nottingham, in this conversation:

"In [name of neighbourhood], there's nothing. Like if you work in a shop like Greggs … that's all there is. Or work in a pub."

"There's not even any jobs in town [that is, the city centre]. Like all shop assistants and waiters."

"And when you want to do something good with your life, then you have to travel…."

And again in another focus group in Nottingham:

Researcher: "… do you know what kind of jobs there are around here?"

"… you don't get that much chance to get a job 'cos there's not many of them around now, if you get a job you're lucky…."

Those who wanted to stay in their areas tended to mention friends and family and a general familiarly with the area (and those who wanted to move often qualified it with a recognition that their family and friends were nearby), for example:

"No, I wouldn't want to move from [name of neighbourhood]. Also I've been living here for about 15 years." (London)

"I was born here and I like the area. I would feel out of place elsewhere." (Nottingham)

And showing some mixed feelings:

"It's a dangerous place but I've been there for, like, I think more than eight years and I've really gotten used to it … like I have a lot of friends here." (London)

The data, then, suggested a tension between wanting to move for work, or for self-improvement, and wanting to stay close to friends and family.

Summary of place

There was significant evidence here that place matters, although perhaps not in the ways that might have been anticipated. The data showed that most young people had significant exposure to their own neighbourhood. In Nottingham and London especially there is a sense that the neighbourhood is most of their world. The vast majority of young people liked where they lived, and felt that the adults who lived there were doing well in their lives, which sits perhaps somewhat uncomfortably with the official disadvantage of most of the places they lived. There was also a tendency for respondents to feel that young people from those neighbourhoods were ambitious and could be successful. So there was no real sense that living in a deprived neighbourhood was something that would hold them back. At the same time, the majority of

young people in the survey, and especially in Nottingham, did not want to stay in their neighbourhoods when they were older, and a desire to move was associated (for males) with neighbourhood reputation.

We explored the influences of the urban labour markets in which the neighbourhoods sit. There is little doubt, as mentioned earlier, that the aspirations of these young people go beyond what the local labour market can support. This was most evident in London and Glasgow, whereas in Nottingham there has been increasing interest in the working-class jobs that reflect local tradition and context. It was also interesting to note quite different perspectives on what it takes to get work. In Nottingham, young people at age 15 were more likely to believe that it would be easy to get a job locally than they were at age 13, whereas the opposite was true elsewhere. But in all locations, especially in London and Glasgow, there was also belief among many that they would have to move to find worthwhile work.

Summary

This chapter has laid out the contextual factors that are relevant to the aspirations of young people in each of the three locations. We did not examine society-wide influences in much depth, but it seemed clear that the media did not influence the height of young people's aspirations, although it did often provide ideas for particular jobs. Young people were also to some extent influenced by their peers, with those who said that their friends looked down on people who worked hard at school intending to take fewer exams. However, it was difficult to discern a peer effect on aspirations.

It is the distinctiveness of the three places that stands out when examining the factors that influence aspirations. Overall, there are three types of places: the traditional working-class 'council-built' estate, a mixed context where young people from deprived neighbourhoods go the school alongside those from less deprived areas, and an area mainly populated by south Asian families who are recent migrants. There is a striking consistency between school, family and place factors. They appear to reinforce each other to form a distinctive context that shapes young people's aspirations and life chances.

This can be seen most clearly in Nottingham and London. In the former, there were lower levels of educational and vocational aspirations. The school appeared to support young people's ambitions selectively and there were considerable numbers who were disengaged from school. Young people were aiming for traditional jobs in much greater proportions than elsewhere in the study. Parents were generally content for young people to do what made them happy and, compared to the other areas, there was less sign of either overt pressure or explicit support for high levels of aspiration. Yet at the same time, there were somewhat more young people who wanted to move away from the area than at the other locations, apparently linked to the reputation of the area as well as a perceived shortage of all but low skilled and low paid jobs.

In London, the picture was quite different. Here there were highly ambitious parents, many of whom had a clearly defined ideal future for their children, mainly involving professional occupations. Some went out of their way to provide them with the material and academic support they needed to achieve them. The school was also enormously focused on success for all students, and young people were highly confident mainly, aiming for high status professional jobs in line with the expectations of adults.

In Glasgow the picture was more mixed. There is an extent to which the Glasgow young people were experiencing the same openness around career objectives as in Nottingham. The school was less directive than London and less controlling than Nottingham, and this appeared to contribute to less closely specified aspirations. But there were also clear indications that there were some families pushing towards more specific outcomes and that some young people were very focused. What makes this case study different to the others is the way that young people from deprived and less deprived areas came together, and this may have created a levelling effect to some degree.

In the final chapter, we conclude by discussing the implications of this study for understanding the formation of aspirations and the development of potential political responses.

8 Conclusions and policy implications

This study set out to create new understandings of aspirations and the way they operate in British communities. Before setting out the conclusions of this study and what they mean for policy, it is important to provide two caveats.

The first is that our aim throughout this discussion has been to examine only certain facets of aspirations, associated with educational and vocational ambitions. Even here, our construction of aspirations has necessarily been rather narrow. We acknowledge that we have not considered forms of aspiration that are based, for example, on service to community and family rather than on career advancement of a conventional form. Furthermore, discussing aspirations as 'high' or low' does not reflect a potentially wide range of different values, principles and views of what is important in life.

The second caveat is that our analysis could be read to suggest that families, schools and communities who do not explicitly support high educational and employment aspirations in young people are failing them. The 'deficit' perspective is not a helpful way to look at the operation of aspirations. It makes much more sense, and is far less judgemental, to say that some contexts are more conducive to high educational and job aspirations than others. What we are trying to do here is understand the contexts, structures and processes that shape those outcomes. Low aspirations cannot be seen as simple bad decisions. Family history, home culture and the local community world view can contribute to attitudes to education and careers that individuals cannot simply choose to change (Auerbach, 2007).

Defining aspirations

The model of aspirations developed in Chapter 2 proved to be both appropriate and effective in this study. The clustering of factors within the domains of family, school and place was a useful analytical device and allowed the interactions of those factors to be understood in some depth. Looking at educational aspirations and 'ideal' and 'realistic' occupational forms of aspiration worked well with the data and allowed important analytical questions to be addressed directly.

There was evidence that the feedback loop between outcomes and aspirations was operating. An example of this is given in Chapter 7 on the role of schools. Here we discuss young people approaching the careers teachers with specific ideas and receiving support that could reinforce their aspirations. There was also the possibility of a downward pressure on aspirations, such as lowered examination expectations for those whose friends looked down on those who worked hard.

Overall, there is opportunity for this model to be developed further, but as an organising principle for this study it proved robust and insightful.

Aspirations and place

A central question for the study was the influence of place on aspiration. In order to understand this we chose to study young people in three schools which drew from neighbourhoods with strong evidence of deprivation, but which otherwise represented markedly different social and economic contexts.

We found little evidence that deprivation *per se* influenced aspirations, or that aspirations are entirely a social class issue. Although the study was not designed to cover a full cross-section of neighbourhoods or socioeconomic groups, our data showed no significant relationships between area and family disadvantage and young people's aspirations. However, it is clear that the places that young people lived in played a strong role in their lives. Especially in London and Nottingham, young people spent a lot of their time within their home neighbourhoods and their school was also located there. In part the effects were a result of positive views of the neighbourhood and networks of friends, as well as the availability of local leisure facilities and activities. However, there was also a sense from the qualitative work with adults and young people that there was a degree of insularity in the areas, and that many young people did not travel much to other areas of the city. Young people in Glasgow were somewhat more mobile and connected to a wider range of neighbourhoods but also spent a lot of time locally with their friends. Across all three case locations it is reasonable to conclude that young people had a very high degree of exposure to local influences on cultural capital, that is, the norms, beliefs and expectations about what is important in life.

In London, the expectation that the diverse, ethnically rich community with high levels of recent migration would create an interesting context for study was borne out. Here we found the highest aspirations, and they increased between 13 and 15 years of age. Two of the distinctive phenomena found here were high levels of confidence around maths in girls and job aspirations which were highly professional, again led by girls. Almost half of the young people in London could name a specific job aspiration held for them by others, and most accepted those aspirations.

In Nottingham, looking at a predominantly White working-class community offered a chance to consider whether young people growing up in the 2000s still expected that they would attain traditional working-class jobs (see Willis, 1977). While many in Nottingham aspired to go to university and have professional jobs, the aspirations of the young people were lower than the other cities at age 13 and remained low at age 15. There was also a larger number of young people interested in traditional roles (divided by gender into trades and care occupations) than in other settings. There appeared to be strong influences on many young people's job aspirations from growing up in an area where traditional blue-collar skills were valued. Although many young people have accepted the general message that it is possible for them to aspire to a white-collar job, there was little evidence of families pushing their children into particular types of employment.

There was also some evidence that both children and parents did not fully understand what it takes to succeed in today's job market. Parents' hopes for their children were mainly unspecific as to occupation; there appears to be little awareness of routes to success. There were several examples of young people who expected to leave school at an early age who did not aspire to university, yet wanted to have high status jobs. In Nottingham there were more young people who were disengaged from school than elsewhere but this group did not appear to be significantly different in respect of their job aspirations or job expectations. For the disengaged group high aspirations might suggest a lack of knowledge about the connection between school achievement and attaining higher status jobs. Overall, there seemed to be a common lack of understanding of the way in which school, post-school education and vocations were linked.

In Glasgow, we selected an area with a mixed composition. The comprehensive school draws pupils from some of the poorest parts of Scotland as well as some more affluent areas and from a wider area of the city than then the more neighbourhood-focused London and Nottingham schools. This results in aspirations being formed in a far less homogeneous milieu than the others. Here we found that among the young people there were a variety of different ways of forming aspirations. Among some young people there were the directed approaches so common in London, with significant social, school and family support for ambition. For others there was the supportive but untargeted approach of Nottingham. There was some evidence in Glasgow that more disadvantaged young people were less supported in their aspirations. However, there were also suggestions that over time the aspirations of the students started to move from extremes towards a common level, albeit one that was slightly lower at age 15 than at age 13.

Across the three cities these results are highly suggestive. They raise the question of what other models of aspirational formation might be found, and what other trajectories might be experienced by young people between the ages of 13 and 15. There are also details that would be interesting to investigate more fully, such as the specific interactions of gender and aspiration in each area, and why they vary as they do.

The different patterns of aspiration formation mean that there is no single challenge facing aspirational development. In places like Glasgow the challenge is making sure that young people experiencing falling aspirations are identified and that supports are put in place. This might be quite difficult to achieve in a comprehensive school setting with young people of widely varying background and different trajectories.

In Nottingham, which best conforms to a traditional working-class community, the role of the school is far from clear. Overall, young people's aspirations here did not change much between the ages of 13 and 15, and there were indications in the data that the school was not equally supportive of all students. However, key informants told the researchers of examples of young people who got strong exam results but maintained an aspiration more suited to a lower performance. Both of these points suggest that the school could put more emphasis on ensuring that aspirations and performance were more consistent. The starting point might be the most immediate effect of low aspirations, a tendency to take a lower number of examinations. Parental engagement may prove to be another challenge.

In aspirational London, the challenge is almost the opposite: managing the high level of expectations. In London the school plays a very active role in supporting high aspirations, and to a degree in forming them as well. Parents are highly involved here and tend to have specific career aims for their children. The question is the degree to which these aspirations are realistic, and whether it is harmful in any way to have so many young people with aspirations that are unlikely to be fulfilled by the labour market. However, the impact of this is outside the bounds of the study: disappointed aspirations are likely to be felt only after the young people have completed their GCSEs and moved on from the school.

Based on these three case studies, and on the overall picture they provide, it is possible to derive five substantial findings regarding the formation of aspirations.

First, our data reinforces the insight that places with a shared status of deprivation can be quite different in their social make-up and the way that this plays out in the life experiences of residents. Generalisations about the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that surround aspirations in disadvantaged communities are not helpful, and should be avoided.

Second, there is likely to be a wide variety of patterns of aspirational formation across the UK. Areas of greater and lesser deprivation, and with different demographical and social factors from those studied, will potentially have other, and quite specific, outcomes in terms of aspirations. This study deliberately looked at distinctive areas in the expectation that they would have specific characteristics, and found them. However, it is not exhaustive, and it is very likely that other challenges could be found in places with different characteristics.

Third, within two of the three areas we looked at, the domains of factors seem to be broadly consistent. By this we mean that place, family and school factors seem to 'push' in generally the same direction, either towards or away from high aspirations. The exception to this pattern is Glasgow, where there was evidence of parallel but different patterns of aspirations within the same cohort of young people. The implication here is that the consistency of aspirations can be found, but at different scales. Depending on factors such as the means of school recruitment, the consistency will emerge either at school level or within different economic groups attending the same school.

This raises a question of how the same school environment can be seen as both supportive of high aspirations and supportive of low aspirations. The answer may lie in the awareness of students that schools are not identically supportive of all students; they experience their education in different ways, with some being deeply engaged and some much less so.

Fourth, aspirations among young people in the three locations are high, even if there are significant differences between the places. The aspirations that young people have for education is generally to stay on in school education, take exams and go to university, in far greater proportions than the number who are likely to attend. The aspirations which young people have for jobs is generally to get professional and managerial jobs, again in proportions far greater than actually exist in the labour market, especially in the local authority areas on their doorsteps. It might have been expected that living amid relatively depressed labour markets would generate a degree of fatalism among young people. However, while often recognising that the jobs that were in plentiful supply locally were low paid and unappealing, this did not appear to suggest to many young people that it was not worth aspiring to get a good job. In fact the opposite may be true for some; they were encouraged to aspire to higher education and a good job as a reaction to a generalised understanding that good jobs would be hard to get. Furthermore, there is absolutely no evidence from the study that young people see not working, or obtaining an income through extra-legal activity, as preferable to a mainstream job.

The fifth finding is that young people's aspirations are not predominantly 'unrealistic'. At age 13 many young people had ideal occupations that were drawn from sport and celebrity. At age 15 few young people still hang onto these as ideal jobs, and most recognise that they are not likely to achieve them. Instead, their aspirations are often for more everyday jobs on the same or even a higher rung on the occupational ladder. Indeed having ideal jobs in sport or entertainment and realising they were unlikely destinations often led young people to focus on more realistic, but related, occupations.

This research has identified some key characteristics of aspirations, and of aspirational formation. It is critical to consider the implications of these findings for policy development in this central area of government interest.

Policy implications

The idea that aspirations are an essential underpinning of attainment – and therefore of aims to improve educational outcomes and skills – has become influential in recent public policy. A focus on aspirations is central to the idea promoted by the Labour Government of 1997–2010 that public policy outcomes depend on what people believe and how they behave in response to those beliefs (Knott *et al.*, 2008). It is also compatible with the current administration's idea that 'nudge' can be an alternative to legislation and targeted funding of programmes as a means of meeting policy goals.

Aspirations appeared in many Westminster documents as a theme of policy under the Labour administration (see, for example, DfES, 2005a, 2005b; DCSF, 2007; HM Treasury and DCSF, 2007; Cabinet Office, 2008, 2009) and the theme has been continued by the Coalition Government (DfE, 2010a; Cabinet Office, 2011; DWP and DfE, 2011). The devolved administrations in the other parts of the UK appear to have put less emphasis on aspirations as an object of policy.

There are two main drivers of this interest. The first is socioeconomic inequality and what can be done to overturn existing tendencies. The UK is one of the most unequal of the highly developed countries (see, for example, Hills *et al.*, 2010; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds generally achieve far less at school than their better off peers. The disadvantages that come from low educational achievement then feed forward into people's life chances as adults, as a range of contributions to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation programme on education and poverty has shown (Cassen and Kingdon, 2007; Raffo *et al.*, 2007; Hirsch, 2007).

Second, having a section of the population with limited education and skills is held to be a potential barrier to economic competiveness in a globalised, knowledge-based economy. Recent efforts by government to improve educational and occupational achievements have been strongly driven by a sense that the UK is in danger of slipping down international league tables (Panel on Fair Access to the Professions, 2009; DfE, 2010a).

There is some inconsistency in the description of the assumed problem with aspirations. The language in some policy documents suggests that aspirations are too low, particularly in deprived areas, and have to be raised. This is shown in the Coalition Government's Education White Paper of 2010 (DfE, 2010a). At the same time, it is suggested that there is a pool of frustrated high aspiration which policy should help to release:

> *This Report makes recommendations on how the professions, the Government and others can unleash the pent-up aspiration that exists in the young people of our country. Social mobility is not something that can be given to people. It has to be won through their effort and endeavour.*
>
> Panel on Fair Access to the Professions, 2009, p. 8

Despite this disagreement about whether aspirations are too low and need to be raised, or high enough and need to be easier to attain, aspirations are a central plank of policy. The extent to which aspirations have moved into the centre of policy-making is illustrated by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, writing in *The Observer*:

> *This is a country of aspirational individuals who, given half a chance, want to get on and not simply get by ... people can be deeply ambitious for their families while knowing individuals prosper best with the strength of a community around them.*
>
> Brown, 2010, p. 3

In a more individual vein aspirations were also stressed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, in his speech to the Conservative Party conference in 2010:

> *The aspiration to have a better life, to get a better job, to give your children a better future. The aspiration to work the extra hour. These aspirations are the most powerful forces in our nation..*
>
> Osborne, 2010

Our findings offer insights that can be used to critique existing policy and frame the development of new policy. Overall, aspirations are a reasonable arena for policy intervention, but there is a need for work to be done regarding the rationale for, and the intended outcomes of, that intervention. A key element of all of these points is that aspirations are not likely to be easily susceptible to short-term influence as they are strongly embedded within local cultures.

Aspirations are high but uneven

Overall, the evidence in this report shows that aspirations are high among young people aged up to 15, and among many of their parents and most of their teachers. The findings provide a challenge to the picture that continues to be drawn of a problem of low aspirations among young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds.

There is little support here for the notion that aspirations are insufficiently high. However, it does support the critical importance of finding ways to ensure that high aspirations can, at least to some extent, be realised. A primary concern is breaking intergenerational transmission of disadvantage. We find that aspirations differ significantly between different kinds of places. If aspirations are important as a step on the route to higher education and labour market success, there is a need to identify and work with those families and communities where aspirations are weaker or poorly defined.

Place matters

The places that we studied in this research are all disadvantaged to some degree but the aspirations of young people within them are distinctive. It is not correct to characterise deprived neighbourhoods as places where aspirations are always low. Policies need to recognise that aspirations may be influenced by social class, culture and history or young people's direct experience of the place they live in. Like other studies, this research reinforces the evidence that White young working-class people are among the least aspirational. They tend to live in a milieu where traditional skilled 'blue-collar' occupations are valued, even if these kinds of jobs are now relatively scarce. The gap between their realistic job expectations and their ideal is wider than elsewhere. Many do aspire and expect to go to university and obtain professional jobs, and parents are broadly supportive, but people lack clear recommendations about occupational outcomes.

Because place matters so much in the formation of an individual's aspirations, policies to address aspirations must be local. A universal approach is likely to be less effective because of the distinctive nature of aspirational formation in different types of social setting. The patterns of factors affecting aspirations are not universal or national. Local institutional forms (such as comprehensive schools) make a substantial difference to the way young people's aspirations are created and their development over time.

One guide to ways communities might help raise aspirations (CLG, 2011) was based on the initial approaches and early experiences of the *Inspiring Communities* programme and does not represent a full evaluation of its effectiveness. However, it is clear that it contained many ideas about how stronger aspirations within communities might be built. An important theme that comes across is the need to develop approaches that are sensitive to local settings and to provide opportunities for intergenerational working on areas of common interest between young people and parents. Although some activities within the programme were organised through schools, another message that can be taken is the value of raising aspirations outside of school settings, especially where there is scepticism about formal schooling and a community history of alienation and low attainment.

Given the positive view of *Inspiring Communities* it is disappointing that the current UK Coalition Government cancelled it before it really got underway. It might also be seen as surprising that the current UK Government's social mobility strategy (Cabinet Office, 2011) contains no proposals for community-based approaches to raising aspirations. However, the government has taken the view informed by its 'localism' concept that local communities should be empowered to develop their own priorities and social programmes.

Higher aspirations are not enough

Aspirations are seen by policy as an intervening factor; in order to succeed, it is reasonable to suppose that young people have to want to succeed. Where young people are 'under-aspiring' compared to their abilities, it seems to be reasonable and beneficial to try to raise their ambitions.

However, it is not enough for young people just to aspire; they also need to be able to navigate the paths to their goals. There are several issues here. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds do not attend universities in the same proportion as their more advantaged peers (and if they do attend, they are more likely to go to a local post-1992 university than a Russell Group institution) (Stevenson and Lang, 2010). Therefore it is likely as things stand that many of the young people in this study who say they want to go to university will be disappointed. This lends support to policies to widen access to university, such as the *Aim Higher* programme. However, the Coalition Government has cancelled *Aim Higher* and replaced the Educational Maintenance Allowance in England with a much less well funded bursary scheme.

It is also worth noting again the lack of fit between young people's job aspirations and the kinds of jobs available in the local labour market. An obvious but vital observation here is that in order for young people to obtain good jobs, there have to be such jobs available and they have to be able to gain access to them.

Many young people are committed to their neighbourhoods. In this study the neighbourhoods are set within generally weak labour markets with above average rates of worklessness and low skilled jobs. But many urban and regional policies that persisted up to 2010 have been abandoned by the current UK Government. These had a focus on urban economic performance and attempted to attract investment into northern and Midlands cities and regions, as well as the south, to promote them as engines of the economy and to support alternative economic modes for former industrial centres. More market-friendly approaches that explicitly favour uneven regional development are being promoted, as expressed in the *Local Growth White Paper* (BIS, 2010). At the local level, the infrastructure of regeneration policy has also been wound up. Many other young people envisage themselves moving away to satisfy their ambitions yet the UK has a housing system that is volatile and unsustainable and creates a 'mobility trap', deterring or even preventing people from moving between regions (Stephens, 2011).

It appears that what it takes to succeed is well understood neither by many parents nor by young people in the areas that we surveyed. Addressing lower aspirations means allowing young people and their parents to see for themselves the range of possibilities that are open. Young people tend to get their job ideas from those around them (family and older siblings), from jobs they witness in the media, jobs that they are aware of because they are performed under the public gaze (for example, police officers) or from knowledge of established and unassailably respectable professions such as doctors and lawyers. While schools are making some inroads we suggest that there is a need to expose students to a greater range of occupations and to promote a better understanding of job content. To that end, exposure to school 'alumni' in a range of positions might be helpful, as well as greater contacts with local businesses.

Aspirations are complex and require informed support

Aspirations are both short term and long term and young people may aspire to different things simultaneously. The full range of possibilities for educational outcomes and jobs is often hidden or unimagined, particularly when there is little experience in families of higher education and professional jobs. This means that young people need informed and detailed help to take the pathways that are likely to lead to the longer-term ambitions. Emphasis needs to be placed on what young people need to do in the current year to improve their chances of getting to university, as so many of them want to, or to get the jobs they desire. One clear example is examinations: lowered aspirations manifest as a smaller number of exams, which in turn will limit the horizons of possibility.

There is a need for continual support at every stage of young people's development. The research here shows quite low levels of discussion in schools with 13-year-olds about their future, although many of them wanted to go to university even if they weren't clear what that involved. At age 15 the numbers who acknowledged receiving specific support were higher, but over 40 per cent still did not agree that their teachers often talked to them about the future. The qualitative work suggested that work experience was very important in shaping ideas, but in reality most young people had a very limited exposure to the world of work.

There appears to be a need to improve careers guidance and advice. To that extent the emphasis placed by the UK Government in providing resources for an 'all age' career service by 2012 (DWP and DfE, 2011) is to be welcomed. Looking beyond age 15, changing people's aspirations is a long, slow business, and there have to be mechanisms to ensure that young people who do not take advantage of opportunities at traditional school age are not marginalised for life.

Individual aspirations are influenced by multiple mutually reinforcing factors

Aspirations, as we have treated them, are hopes that are held about the future towards education and jobs. But they are built on by the young people's own ideas and how they respond to the pressures of school, community and society. We find that place, family and schools tend to coalesce around particular views

of future options and reinforce each other. Policy must recognise the ways in which aspirations are deeply affected by the experience of individuals, such as their level of engagement with school, the influence of peer groups and the attitudes of family members towards work and education.

There have been and remain several one-dimensional programmes to raising aspirations, particularly through schools. The previous Labour Government's *Going the Extra Mile* programme (DCSF, 2009) and the current Coalition Government's proposals to expose school students to high achievers as motivational visitors, including Cabinet minsters themselves, and to involve them more in work experience through partnerships with business (Cabinet Office, 2011), might be useful in some circumstances. But they are not likely to be fully effective in changing the aspirational trajectories of young people who have many other powerful influences on their world views.

Parents are important

Parents and families appear to play a key role; most young people have someone at home they talk to about their future, and there is clear alignment between what the parents says they want for the young people and what the young people aspire to themselves. For policy, supporting aspirations therefore means working with parents as well as young people, particularly where parents face disadvantages themselves. This is clearly recognised in the Coalition Government's child poverty strategy (DWP and DfE, 2011). However, as written, the strategy is very light on how this will be achieved, instead concentrating on more directly narrowing gaps in attainment.

Summary

This study set out to investigate the idea of aspirations and to consider them as an area for potential policy intervention. Using aspirations as a central plank of policy does make sense – even though they are not sufficient for addressing the complexities of occupational and educational outcomes, they are a necessary component.

However, the current, somewhat muddled view of aspirations underpinning policy is not helpful, and is not consistent with the findings of this study. The challenge for policy-makers is coming up with clear and well thought through mechanisms for intervention and a nuanced understanding of what intervention focused on aspirations can, and cannot, achieve.

Notes

1   The IMD for Scotland and England are not calculated on the same basis and the Scottish IMD used here is more recent, so they are not directly comparable.

2   ANOVA ($F = 53.128$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.01$).

3   Care should be taken (as noted elsewhere) as occupations at the upper end of the SOC tended to be based on more ambiguous job descriptions by the young respondents.

4   'College' is likely to have been interpreted in different ways in Glasgow compared with the English locations. In Glasgow 'college' is associated with further education, whereas in both London and Nottingham students staying on to do A-levels attended sixth form college.

5   The survey was conducted in 2010 before the UK Government's proposals to raise fees at English universities was announced.

6   The Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) is a common classification of occupational information for the UK. Jobs are classified according to the kind of work performed and their skill content. There are nine major groups of jobs ranging from managers and senior officials (SOC 1) to elementary occupations (SOC 9).

7   $r = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$.

8   $r = -0.11$, $p < 0.05$.

9   $r = 0.208$.

10 $r = 0.168$.

11 $r = -0.172$.

13 $F = 10.914$, significant at $p < 0.01$.

14 $t = 2.219$, $df = 144.457$, $p < 0.05$.

15 $t = -2.226$, $df = 111.292$, $p < 0.05$.

16 $t = -2.369$, $df = 35.242$, $p < 0.05$.

17 $t = -2.502$, $df = 106$, $p < 0.05$.

18 $t = -2.281$, $df = 286$, $p < 0.05$.

19 $t = 2.363$, $df = 111$, $p < 0.05$.

20 $t = 2.634$, $df = 106$, $p < 0.01$.

21 $t = 2.589$, $df = 208.242$, $p < 0.01$.

22 $t = 2.658$, $df = 286$, $p < 0.01$.

23 $t = -2.537$, $df = 248$, $p < 0.05$.

24 $p = 0.814$, $p < 0.05$.

25 $p = 0.313$, $p < 0.05$.

26 Two adults and one child in dwelling with two bedrooms is considered as the reference point and gives a ratio of 0.67. If the ratio is below this it is taken as an indicator of overcrowding and a ratio larger than this implies more room and no overcrowding.

27 $\chi^2 = 11.722$, $p < 0.05$.

28 Nottingham females ($r = -0.317$, $p < 0.05$); London females ($r = -0.387$, $p < 0.01$).

29 $t = 3.285$, $df = 285.9$, $p < 0.01$.

30 $t = -1.979$, $df = 271$, $p < 0.05$.

31 $t = 1.973$, $df = 225.2$, $p < 0.05$.

32 $r = 0.267$, $p < 0.01$.

33 The correlations ranged from $r = 0.264$, $p < 0.01$ between wrong people and no job, and $r = 0.596$, $p < 0.01$ between no job and no qualifications.

34 $t = 3.339$, $df = 200.916$, $p < 0.01$.

35 $t = 2.881$, $df = 99.151$, $p < 0.01$.

36 $t = 2.722$, $df = 55.43$, $p < 0.01$.

37 $t = -2.439$, $df = 34.32$, $p < 0.05$.

38 $\chi^2 = 11.169$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.01$.

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About the authors

Keith Kintrea (Keith.Kintrea@gla.ac.uk), Senior Lecturer and Deputy Head of Department, School of Social and Political Sciences, College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow.

Ralf St Clair, Professor of Lifelong Literacy, School of Education, College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow.

Muir Houston, Research Associate, School of Education, College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow.

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