

Our Response to the report 'Social Mobility, Inclusion and Belonging at the Co-op' - June 2023

We are pleased that this report from making the Leap finds there is a lot that the Co-op is already doing right, and that many of our colleagues from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds already feel a strong sense of inclusion at belonging within the Co-op.

We recognise that there is more we can do to support not only our colleagues but to use our influence to encourage others to play their part in promoting fairness and social mobility across the UK.

We will therefore:

1. Establish an internal social mobility taskforce to work through the detailed findings of the report and publicly report back in Summer 2024 with a full Social Mobility strategy. We will ensure that this taskforce continues to be informed and driven by the views of colleagues from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds.
2. Set a target of 80% of all our colleagues voluntarily declaring their Socio-economic background by the end of 2025 and publish the results annually after that date, including a breakdown by work levels across the Co-op and across our businesses.
3. Publish a Socio-economic Pay Gap Report in 2024 in addition to Ethnicity and Gender pay gap reports. We'll take an inter-sectional approach and provide commentary on how different characteristics may jointly impact on outcomes for individuals and use our insight to inform our future approach.
4. Redesign the way in which we present our internal job opportunities to help our colleagues see how their skills may suit a sideways move or promotion within the Co-op.
5. Continue to develop our financial wellbeing programme so our colleagues develop increased financial resilience. We will:
 - o address the size of contracts and the number of additional hours worked to give colleagues a more secure income with fewer uncertain overtime hours.
 - o support colleagues to start saving and build their financial security.
 - o give colleagues a better idea of what they will be paid ahead of payday, making it easier to stay in control of their finances.
 - o help colleagues to build the skills and embed the behaviours which will help them to manage their money more easily.
6. Develop mentoring opportunities for colleagues from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with a particular focus on intersectionality with other areas of inequality.
7. Campaign for Socio-economic background to become the 10th protected characteristic under the 2010 Equality Act, focussing on working in partnership with others and involving Co-op members, colleagues, and customers in our campaign.
8. Campaign for Section 1 of the Equality Act to be enacted (Public Sector Duty to have regard for socio-economic inequalities).
9. Encourage other employers to include a clear focus on Socio-Economic Background in their Diversity and Inclusion strategies, collect socio-economic data, support financial wellbeing and to commit to publish socio-economic pay gap reports, with a particular focus on Co-op suppliers and partners.