Social Mobility, Inclusion, and Belonging at Co-op

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Making the Leap.

In 2022-23, Making The Leap conducted in-depth qualitative research with Co-op colleagues, leaders, and senior leaders from lower socio-economic backgrounds (LSEBs) to explore their views and experiences of social mobility, inclusion, and belonging. Read the full report here.

The research found three levels of social mobility at Co-op:

"Me and my husband both work ... We can't even afford to put our gas on in the house, so we don't have any heating because it's too expensive ... I have no financial security and no way of knowing what hours I'll be working."

Struggling

- > Financial insecurity
- > Job instability
- > Barriers to career progression

Working at Co-op does not yet provide these LSEB colleagues with the building blocks for social mobility.

Managing

- → Some financial security
- ∼ Some job stability
- Some career progression opportunities

Working at Co-op provides these LSEB colleagues and leaders with the building blocks for social mobility, but the foundations are not fully secure.

"Just the fact that I've got a permanent contract means I've got job stability. But I sometimes feel like I'm one pay cheque away from disaster."

Comfortable

- ✓ Financial security
- ✓ Job stability
- ✓ Career progression opportunities

Working at Co-op has provided social mobility for these LSEB leaders and senior leaders, who have a higher standard of living compared to their parents.

"When I think about my life growing up ... we really struggled. My life is not like that at all now - me and my partner, we live comfortably. Social mobility means not ever having to live like I used to in the past."

What can Co-op do?

By providing financial security, job stability, and fair progression opportunities, Co-op can support social mobility for LSEB individuals at all work levels, and improve working conditions for its whole workforce. To do this, Co-op should:



Continue and widen access to financial support for the lowest-paid colleagues.



Facilitate more pathways for career progression and ensure fair and transparent processes.



Improve transparency and communication about working hours for colleagues on variable-hours contracts.



Draw on Co-op's core values and engage social mobility role models to improve inclusion and belonging.