

Toolkit for PR practitioners from lower socio-economic backgrounds

There is a clear underrepresentation of people from lower socio-economic backgrounds working in the PR industry. Only 21% of PR practitioners were entitled to income support or free school meals as children, PR practitioners are, however, twice as likely to have parents who have a degree (43%). The proportion of PR practitioners with a university degree is more than double that of the average population, at 76% compared to 35%.¹ A quarter of PR practitioners went to private school, compared to 7% of the general population.

Recent research has highlighted the lived experience of PR practitioners from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Key barriers to getting in to and getting on in the PR profession included opaque recruitment and progression practices, unspoken 'rules of the game', a lack of networks and a lack of confidence comparative to peers from higher socio-economic backgrounds.

The resources below are intended to provide a one-stop shop for PR practitioners from lower socio-economic backgrounds, to empower them to take on some of these challenges.

Navigating recruitment processes

- **Inclusive Hires** – jobs board for roles in organisations where employers have explicitly sought guidance from a consultant in recruiting inclusively. <https://www.inclusivehires.com//IRcandidate/inclusivehires>
- **Aspiring to Include** – inclusive jobs board and wider career support. <https://www.aspiringtoinclude.com/>
- **UpReach** – a number of programmes for students providing personalised careers support. <https://upreach.org.uk/students/#programme>

Mentoring programmes and networking

- **CIPR Progress mentoring scheme** – self-service mentoring bank of CIPR fellows. <https://cipr.co.uk/progress>
- **I Have a Voice (IHAV)** – mentoring for people wanting to go in to a career in politics, network with people already in politics and find paid internships through partner organisations. <https://www.ihaveavoice.org.uk/>

- **Social Mobility Network** - provides university students with access to hundreds of industry professionals who are eager to support their career development. <https://socialmobilitynetwork.org.uk/>.
- **The 93% club** – member club and network for the 93% of people in the UK that went to state school. Works to dismantle class inequality through the power of community. <https://www.93percent.club/>
- **CIPR groups** – grow your network via the many CIPR groups, based on regions, sectors and disciplines. https://cipr.co.uk/CIPR/Network/Groups_/CIPR/Network/Groups.aspx

Give back whilst boosting your CV

- **The Access Project** – take on tutors who work with school students from backgrounds that tend to limit aspirations. <https://www.theaccessproject.org.uk/volunteer>
- **Social Mobility Foundation** – volunteer to mentor a young person or student from a lower socio-economic background. <https://www.socialmobility.org.uk/mentoring> You can also support graduates with job, internship and scheme applications. <https://www.socialmobility.org.uk/one-off-ops>
- **ReachOut** – volunteer to mentor a student living in an under-resourced community. <https://www.reachoutuk.org/sign-up-to-mentor/>

Wider support organisations

- **Socially Mobile CIC** - leadership course which is free for practitioners from lower socio-economic backgrounds and people from other under-served groups. Multiple cohorts a year – application required. <https://www.sociallymobile.org.uk/>
- **Iprovision** – the CIPR's hardship fund for practitioners struggling financially. https://www.cipr.co.uk/CIPR/About_Us/_iprovision/Iprovision_benevolent_fund.aspx
- **Department of Opportunities** – the Social Mobility Foundation's campaigns and advocacy outpost. <https://www.socialmobility.org.uk/campaigns>

¹ Chartered Institute of Public Relations (2020) State of the Profession 2020, <https://newsroom.cipr.co.uk/public-relations-out-of-step-with-views-of-general-public-on-social-mobility--cipr-state-of-the-profession-2020/#:~:text=This%20year's%20State%20of%20the,positive%20developments%20in%20other%20areas.>