

Traditionally,
examined the issue of
widening participation
within

[Business](#), [Career](#)



Traditionally, in the UK, becoming a doctor and practicing medicine has been, predominantly, associated with the more privileged members of society, with medicine as a career conventionally only being accessible to those individuals attending the most elite schools and receiving the best education. However, over the years and as society has evolved, many efforts have been made to try and change this mentality and diversify the population of doctors. It has long been felt that the cohort of doctors in the UK should represent individuals from all walks of life; backgrounds, ethnicities and gender, to be able to best understand and serve the general population and improve the quality of health care provided. In 2014, the 'Selecting for Excellence Report'¹ examined the issue of widening participation within medicine, in an attempt to establish strategies to 'reach out' to and encourage a wider population of students to consider medicine as a profession. The report concluded that over 75% of the students in medical schools across the UK came from only 20% of schools². Furthermore, the General Medical Council recently reported that over 60% of current trained doctors were from affluent areas and attended fee paying or independent schools³, illustrating the prevailing unequal representation of differing backgrounds within the medical profession⁴. There have been various causes attributed to the under-representation of young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds within medicine.

The 2012 'Fair access to Professional Careers' report⁵ conveyed several important factors that they have found to likely be contributing to this under-representation such as a lack of knowledge of the medical school application process and a considerable lack of outreach programmes⁵. In light of these

findings, the 'Selecting for Excellence Report' established a subject-specific outreach framework, to be implemented by medical schools across the country, to engage with individuals from groups with lower involvement rates in medical education¹. The guidance promotes the creation of programmes, targeting children at all stages of their education, to encourage and inspire medicine as a career.

The framework also suggests that these programmes, to be most effective, ideally should be run by medical student ambassadors who reflect the social demographic of the target group to endorse the idea that medical school is 'for pupils like me'¹.