

Promoting the Progression from Traineeships to Apprenticeships

Project Report

**Chapter One Executive Summary Page 2-3**

**Chapter Two Background Page 4-5**

**Chapter Three Provider Masterclasses Page 6-9**

**Chapter Four Referral Agency Information Sessions Page 10**

**Chapter Five Traineeship Toolkit Page 11-12**

**Chapter Six Traineeship Conference Page 13-14**

**Chapter Seven Partnerships Page 15**

**Chapter Eight Legacy and Sustainability Page 16**

**One | Executive Summary**

This Greater Manchester (GM) project, funded by the GM City Deal, was aimed at supporting both an increase in eligible young people starting a Traineeship and an increase in the proportion of trainees progressing to an Apprenticeship. In order to achieve this we have developed resources and delivered masterclasses to support providers to enhance their provision. Simultaneously, we have raised awareness of Traineeships amongst referral agency advisors to enable them to promote Traineeships to the unemployed young people who they support.

Phase One of the project, between October 2014 and July 2015, focussed on developing a Traineeship toolkit which acted as a How to Guide for providers and as an information hub for referral agencies. The toolkit was launched at the 2015 Traineeships Conference and was well received by stakeholders across GM.

Phase Two has built upon the highly successful toolkit and responded to feedback from Traineeship stakeholders. There are two underlying principles to Phase Two:

1. If we increase the number of Traineeship starts in Greater Manchester there should be a natural increase in the number of trainees progressing onto Apprenticeships.
2. By improving the quality of Traineeship delivery a higher proportion of trainees will stay and complete the programme and a higher proportion will be ready to progress to an Apprenticeship after completion.

Phase Two of the programme consisted of:

1. **Provider masterclasses** - 17 provider masterclasses were delivered, attended by 291 people representing 59 different training providers. 21 providers were not delivering Traineeships. **70% of evaluation respondents indicated that they had adapted their provision as a result of attending the masterclasses.**
2. **Referral agency information sessions** - We delivered five information sessions to referral agencies to raise awareness of Traineeships amongst careers advisors who work with NEET or unemployed young people. **Referral agencies have reported an increase in the number of Traineeship referral made by their advisors.**
3. **JCP** - We have developed a mutually beneficial partnership with JCP. This has led to an increase in the number of Traineeship opportunities available on the District Provision Tool, where 51 providers are now available for Work Coaches to refer to. **JCP have reported an increase in the number of their clients referred to Traineeship provision.**
4. **Traineeship Toolkit** - We have continually updated the Traineeship Toolkit to ensure that it remains an accurate, relevant and valuable resource to both providers and referral agencies. **Between September 2015 and August 2016 the Toolkit website has received 1,559 sessions from 1,173 unique users.**
5. **Video case studies** - We developed seven inspiring video case studies featuring apprentices who had progressed from a Traineeship to demonstrate the progression to sustained employment opportunities that Traineeships can offer to young people. **The project’s YouTube channel which hosts the video case studies has received 962 views to date.**
6. **Greater Manchester Traineeship Conference** – We delivered another annual conference for all GM Traineeship stakeholders to highlight the success of the project. The session offered **“Enlightening and supportive information on understanding the requirements of Traineeships” – Bolton College.**
7. **Key Impact** – **Two thirds of providers who responded to our evaluation indicated that they had seen an increase in starts and 62% had seen an increase in the progression rates during the previous 12 months.**
8. **Looking Forward -** The next phase of the project could continue to deliver the existing elements to fully embed the provider and referral agency relationship, well as supporting Stakeholder Group Sessions and a Local Authority Workshop designed to ensure that all stakeholders engage in the holistic approach to supporting young people into Traineeships and crucially progressing them to Apprenticeships.

**Two | Background**

New Economy research, published in June 2014, recognised that there was a low uptake of Traineeships in Greater Manchester with a low number of starts and a low number of vacancies. The research identified three reasons behind the low uptake:

* A lack of interest from candidates, particularly relating to the unpaid nature of a Traineeship and little recognition of Traineeships as a progression route;
* Confusion amongst providers and referral agencies, including how Traineeships fit in with other schemes. What impact they have on the benefits system, resulting in a reluctance to refer young people onto them;
* Many providers are waiting to hear experiences and additional guidance from those who have already delivered Traineeships.

**Phase One**

To tackle the reasons for low uptake, we proposed to produce a toolkit for providers and referral agencies to develop, deliver and promote Traineeships. The Toolkit was intended to promote best practice for providers currently delivering or considering delivering Traineeships.

The aims of the toolkit were to:

* **Integrate Traineeships development with other pre-employment initiatives and develop coherent progression pathways, maximising progression into Apprenticeships.**
* **Increase the number of training providers who are delivering Traineeships.**
* **Grow the capacity of providers to engage employers.**
* **Increase the number of employers offering Traineeship work placements.**
* **Increase the number of referrals from Jobcentre Plus, the National Careers Service and other organisations, including those in the voluntary sector.**
* **Increase awareness and understanding amongst young people, parents, schools and employers, of the positive benefits engagement in Traineeships can bring.**

To achieve these aims we produced a comprehensive Traineeships Development Toolkit which contained a suite of materials in both electronic and paper format to enable providers and other stakeholders to develop, promote and deliver Traineeships. The Toolkit has been designed to be used either as a stand-alone resource or potentially as part of a longer term organisational development model which enhances the overall capacity and capability of the GM skills system in supporting young people who are one step away from an Apprenticeship.

Following the launch of the Traineeship Toolkit in June 2015 at the Greater Manchester Traineeships Conference we obtained stakeholder feedback from Traineeship providers and referral agencies. A key finding was the need for more systematic mechanisms for feedback on outcomes and progression for young people, co-ordinated support from providers and the referral agencies. Providers indicated that they would benefit from more hands on additional support to increase the number of Traineeship starts, improve the quality of their Traineeship provision and to increase the number of trainees progressing onto an Apprenticeship. Referral Agencies indicated that their advisors would benefit from increased awareness of Traineeships.

**Phase Two**

Phase two of the project had four interconnected components:

1. A series of seven distinct masterclasses were delivered, which supported Traineeship providers to enhance their delivery with the combined aim of increasing their progression rates to Apprenticeships. The masterclasses covered topics which intended to support recruitment, delivery, employer engagement and work placements. The masterclasses were attended by 59 different providers and colleges, 21 of which were not presently delivering but were considering doing so.
2. We delivered information sessions to referral agencies including JCP, Career Connect, Positive Steps and Nu Traxx. The sessions were aimed at increasing the number of referrals to Traineeships by raising awareness of Traineeships amongst advisors and signposting them to resources on the Traineeship Toolkit. Feedback from JCP and Positive Steps indicates that there has been an increase in referrals to Traineeships.
3. Maintained and updated the Traineeship Toolkit to ensure that it remained accurate and relevant for providers and referral agencies. We also produced seven video case studies featuring apprentices who had progressed to their current role from a Traineeship. These were developed as a resource to inform, inspire and motivate other young people to consider a Traineeship as a pathway into an Apprenticeship.

The case studies can be found here -  <http://www.traineeshiptoolkit.co.uk/case-studies>

1. Hosted a Traineeship Conference that brought together providers and referral agencies to highlight progress, encourage and inspire the continuation of closer collaboration between providers and referral agencies.

**Three| Provider Masterclasses**

The overall aim of the masterclasses was to give providers a holistic view of Traineeship delivery that would give them the tools to enhance their provision to achieve the twin aims of increasing starts and increasing progression rates to Apprenticeships. The provider masterclasses were developed and delivered in response to feedback from providers who had indicated that they required further support in addition that offered by the Traineeship Toolkit.

291 people attended the masterclasses which represented 59 different training providers including 21 who were not delivering Traineeships at that time. The suite of masterclasses were aimed at different members of staff within Traineeship providers to support recruitment, delivery and progression to Apprenticeships. In some cases individuals attended more than one masterclass, particularly where they had an overall responsibility for Traineeships or where their role covered a number of aspects of Traineeships.

The subjects are:

1. *Recruiting Trainees – Half Day*

This masterclass considers methods of engaging with young people through social media, schools, open days and other events. Attendees will identify what type of young person makes a good trainee; consider how to communicate with parents; manage expectations, opportunities and progression.

1. *Working with Referral Agencies- Half Day*

The session identifies how to develop effective communication between referral agencies and Traineeship providers in order to increase the number of suitable and eligible young people being referred onto Traineeships.

1. *Planning Delivery- Half Day*

The masterclass provides an overview of the funding for Traineeships; the models of Traineeship delivery and Initial Assessment practices.

1. *Delivering English and Maths – Full Day*

The aim of the masterclass is to arm practitioners with effective delivery techniques and processes that ensure that learners will complete the Traineeship programme, demonstrate progression in their English and maths and progress into an Apprenticeship.

1. *Delivering Employability Skills- Full Day*

This session examines the types of employability skills delivered, the delivery techniques that engage learners and the benefits of engaging with employers

1. *Employer Engagement – Half Day*

The masterclass examines how to engage with employers and to communicate the benefits of Traineeships. It also looks at managing the employer expectations.

1. *Work Placements – Full Day*

This masterclass focuses on ensuring that work placements are meaningful and identifies good practice in preparation for the work placement, learner support, feedback and review and managing the learner’s progression.

**Recruiting Experts**

The seven masterclasses were delivered by expert facilitators who the GMLPN secured through our robust recruitment process. The process requires prospective facilitators to complete an application form which highlights their knowledge, expertise and experience. The form also required that applicants provide references from previous customers. Upon successful approval they were then required at attend an interview with the GMLPN project manager and at least one GMLPN director.

The approved experts were required to develop the masterclass based upon a brief supplied by the GMLPN which had been drafted based on feedback from the project steering group. In some cases, such as “Delivering English and Maths” and “Delivering Employability Skills” the experts were able to adapt existing courses to meet the needs of Traineeship providers.

The “Working with Referral Agencies” masterclass followed an alternative recruitment process. We utilised key individuals from JCP and Positive Steps, who have also played a prominent roles within the steering group. They were keen to share their experiences as Traineeship leads within their organisations and to highlight to providers the drivers that motivate their colleagues to refer their clients to Traineeships. The masterclass was informal and enabled the providers who attended to establish relationships with both organisations in addition to understanding the good practice for working with all referral agencies.

In total 17 masterclasses delivered. The table below shows a breakdown on the number of times each of the seven subjects was delivered and the number of attendees for each subject:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Masterclass Subject** | **Number of Sessions** | **Total Attendees** |
| Recruiting Trainees | 4 | 81 |
| Working with Referral Agencies | 2 | 38 |
| Planning Delivery | 1 | 7 |
| Delivering English and Maths | 3 | 47 |
| Delivering Employability Skills | 1 | 8 |
| Employer Engagement | 3 | 52 |
| Work Placements | 3 | 58 |
| **Total** | **17** | **291** |

We responded to demand from providers by repeating those masterclasses that were popular and well attended. The Recruiting Trainees and Employer Engagement masterclasses which were delivered first were significantly oversubscribed and we recognised the need to deliver repeat sessions as soon as possible.

**Evaluation**

214 out of the 291 attendees completed feedback forms at the end of the masterclasses.

The pie charts below highlight that the programme objectives were met and that the content was relevant to providers. 10% of respondents indicated that the content would be relevant which reflects those providers who were not delivering Traineeships at the time they attended the masterclass. 97% of attendees rated the programme excellent or good.

Following the end of the masterclasses we conducted some further feedback of a small sample of providers to ascertain whether they had adapted their programmes as a result of the masterclasses.

70% of respondents indicated that they had made changes to their delivery following attendance at the masterclasses. Some of the amendments included:

* Simplifying the application processes for young people
* Establishing agreed work placements prior to the start of the programme
* Adopting a more robust eligibility and application process as a result of birth the masterclass content and the sharing of good practice by another provider
* Changing from fixed start dates to a more flexible roll on roll off programme

**Four | Referral Agency Information Sessions**

Referral Agencies play a crucial role in referring young people to Traineeships and in some cases offering additional support to providers and trainees during the programme. They are able to make a significant contribution to Traineeship starts both from an individual provider’s perspective and GM as a whole.

Therefore, it is important that advisors and work coaches are aware of the benefits of Traineeships, who they are for and what provision is available to ensure that the appropriate young people are referred to the appropriate Traineeship that offers them the greater chance of progression.

In order to raise awareness amongst referral agents we coordinated and delivered sessions with that included:

* Defining a Traineeship
* Highlighting the benefits
* Explaining who a Traineeship is for
* Summarising how it is delivered
* Promoting Provider Search Function in the Traineeship Toolkit
* Promoting and displaying the learner case studies in the Traineeship Toolkit

The sessions were delivered informally and enabled advisors to ask questions, provide examples of learners experiences, share experiences of referring to Traineeship providers and find out how the programme as a whole was enhancing provision across GM.

Positive Steps provide referral services for NEET young people in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. Kerry White, Team Manager at Positive Steps, explains that the Referral Agency sessions were beneficial to her team of careers advisors.

*“As advisers working on the frontline with a comprehensive knowledge of Traineeship pathways and making regular referrals into local Traineeship provision already, we found your input both informative and useful in terms of getting a sense of the wider challenges and context faced by all stakeholders. The session was pitched perfectly for careers professionals and provided a forum for discussions to evolve highlighting challenges faced by young people when deciding on a traineeship pathway as well as from an impartial careers viewpoint in terms of ensuring quality and progression. This session gave advisers reassurance of the efforts that local training providers are making to help support young people into meaningful opportunities and thus increase referrals overall.”*

Following the session for Work Coaches JCP have reported an increase in the number of their clients who have been referred to a Traineeship across Greater Manchester. This will also be due to the 51 Traineeship providers that are now visible to Work Coaches on their District provision Tool. Therefore, as well as a greater awareness amongst the Work Coaches there has also been an expansion in the variety of available opportunities for their clients.

**Five | Traineeship Toolkit**

The GMLPN have developed a Traineeship Toolkit for Greater Manchester Traineeship providers. The toolkit is a “How to” guide aimed at supporting training providers to consider how they will design and deliver their Traineeship Programme. The toolkit also provides information for local referral agencies to encourage and enable them to refer their clients to local Traineeship provision. The feedback from providers was positive and they indicated that the toolkit provided clarity and contained useful tools that would support their delivery.

Building on the initial development of the toolkit it was important to ensure that it remained up to date and relevant for all stakeholders. This required staying abreast of changes to the SFA/EFA guidance, for example, providers with an Ofsted Grade 3 are now eligible to deliver Traineeships. A section was added to define a Supported Internship in response to provider requests for clarity and to highlight how they are different to Traineeships.

Utilising feedback from referral agencies, we updated the provider search function to include additional information that would help young people and their advisors make an informed decision about which Traineeship course is right for them. The search function currently has 250 Traineeship opportunities available across GM.

We also used the toolkit as depository for the masterclass presentations to enable anyone to access the content. These can be found in the resources section of the website.

Video Case Studies

Responding to feedback from referral agencies we developed a series of video case studies featuring apprentices who had progress from a Traineeship. The feedback highlighted the lack of visible role models for young people who were considering Traineeships and that those young people would benefit from hearing the views of role models they can identify with. Therefore, we asked a series of questions aimed at understanding their background, the reasons for undertaking a Traineeship and their experience of the programme:

* **Before the Traineeship**
  + What is a Traineeship?
  + What did you enjoy about school?
  + What did you do doing between leaving school and starting your Traineeship?
  + What did your family think about the Traineeship before you started? (Unpaid etc.)
* **Getting a Traineeship**
  + How and why did you get your Traineeship?
* **Traineeship Experience**
  + What kind of work did you do during your Traineeship?
  + How did you feel about having to study English and maths again?
  + What did you get out of your Traineeship/How has a Traineeship helped you?
* **After the Traineeship**
  + What did your family think about the Traineeship once you had completed it?
  + How did your Traineeship prepare you for your Apprenticeship?
  + Do you think that you would be on an Apprenticeship if you hadn’t completed a Traineeship first?
  + Would you recommend Traineeships to others?
  + What are your future plans?

We also interviewed the employers of the apprentices with the intention of offering an employer’s perspective that could help persuade reluctant parents of the benefits of Traineeships. The interviews were designed to find out whether the employers had initial concerns, their experience of the work placement and their post-Traineeship perspective:

* **Reservations of taking on a trainee**
  + What is a Traineeship?
  + Why did you take on a trainee? Did you have any reservations about taking on a trainee?
* **Experience during the Traineeship**
  + How has the Traineeship programme helped your business?
  + Why did you encourage your trainee to progress to an Apprenticeship?
* **Thoughts after the Traineeship**
  + Would you have employed your trainee as an Apprentice if they hadn’t undertaken a Traineeship first?
  + Would you recommend Traineeships to other employers? Are you going to offer further trainee work placements?
  + How have you seen your trainee develop?

We produced seven full length videos featuring both the apprentices and the employer. Following feedback from the steering group we also produced seven bite-sized videos which featured the learners answering one or two questions over 30 seconds. All of the seven main videos and the nine bite-sized clips are available on the Traineeship Toolkit website.

**Six| Traineeship Conference**

The Traineeships Conference is targeted at provider staff with a responsibility for leading on Traineeships. The aim of the conference is to engage providers and to encourage them consider, enhance and develop their delivery. The conference features input from local experts that:

* Raises awareness of current Traineeship issues both locally and nationally;
* summarises policy updates and key funding information;
* provides example of delivery good practice;
* examines how to develop effective relationships with local referral agencies;
* promotes the provider masterclasses and the Traineeship toolkit

The conference was attended by 57 people who represented 31 providers and five other stakeholders including referral agencies and Local Authorities. We conducted a survey of attendees and received 38 responses to the following questions:

1. Have you and/or your organisation benefited from the Traineeship Toolkit and/or the Traineeship Masterclasses?
2. Have your Traineeship starts increased over the last year?
3. Have your progression rates increased over the last year?
4. Have you received more referrals over the last year?
5. Additional comments

81% of respondents indicated that they had benefited from the Toolkit and/or the masterclasses. Two thirds of respondents indicated that their starts had increased over the last year whilst 62% had witnessed an increase in progression rates.

Five attendees also took the opportunity to offer some additional comments:

* JCP – “Invaluable to delivery organisations. Has also been very useful for JCP work coaches.”
* Bolton College – “Enlightening and supportive information on understanding requirements of Traineeships.”
* Wigan Council – “Attending masterclasses, attending wider GMLPN events and toolkit/website is a great resource. Good links to referral agencies generated and best practice from others.”
* Ashton, Wigan and District YMCA – “Toolkit resources, sharing good practice, specific toolkit masterclasses very informative.”
* Salford City Council – “It's helped us to focus on things we hadn't considered and needed to revise.”

**Seven | Partnerships**

**Project Steering Group**

The project steering group, which supported us during the development of the Traineeship Toolkit, continued throughout this phase. The group was made up of Traineeship stakeholders representing providers, referral agencies, a local authorities and New Economy.

The purpose of the project steering group was to provide guidance and direction with particular respect to the content and format of the Masterclasses. They also offered valuable input prior to the production of the video case studies.

The project was delivered in partnership with a range of organisations:

**Expert Facilitators**

The expert facilitators that we recruited contributed to the development and delivery of the masterclasses. They were able to adapt their delivery to the size and expertise of their audience.

**Traineeship Providers**

Providers were a key component of the project and have a crucial role to play in increasing the number Traineeship starts and the number of Apprenticeship starts via progression from a Traineeship.

**Job Centre Plus (JCP)**

JCP contributed to the masterclasses by jointly delivering the “Working with Referral Agencies” Masterclass alongside Positive Steps. Their representative contributed to discussions at the steering groups and also they benefited from information sessions for their Work Coaches prior to the start of the project.

**Positive Steps**

Positive Steps also jointly delivered the Working with Referral Agencies” Masterclass. They also benefited from the information sessions for their advisors. In addition, we utilised their advisors’ knowledge and experience of working with young people to develop the questions for providers to answer in order to populate the Provider Search Function.

**Other referral agencies**

Career Connect and Nu Traxx advisors also benefited from information sessions for their advisors.

**Local Authorities**

Two GM LAs have made an important contribution to the project steering group and helping to coordinate three of the video case studies with young people who have progressed as a result of their programmes.

**Eight | Legacy and Sustainability**

The project has developed a considerable amount of content in terms of resources, practices and disseminated information.

The Traineeship Toolkit continues to be available as a resource for providers and referral agencies beyond the end of the project. The case study videos will continue to be available on YouTube as they will be relevant to young people.

59 providers who have attended the masterclasses have enhanced their provision to varying degrees. The legacy of those masterclasses, and the further seven to be delivered in the next phase, will be to recruit more trainees who will progress onto an Apprenticeship, further increasing momentum established to a self-sustaining degree.

The close working relationship that we have developed with JCP and other referral agencies means that coaches and advisor are aware of the Traineeship offer and the benefits that it brings and consequently are able to promote Traineeships to their clients. The legacy of those and future sessions will be that referrals will continue to be made by those referral agencies.

If an application for funding is successful, the next phase will offer value for money by continuing to the deliver those elements whilst adding new elements that are vital to further improve progression rates from Traineeships to Apprenticeships in Greater Manchester (GM). These new elements are:

* **Peer group sessions** – These sessions will enable the sharing of best practice; create a deeper understanding of the drivers of Traineeship stakeholders; and support the development of long standing, mutually beneficial relationships
* **Working strategically with Job Centre Plus (JCP**) – We will be supporting their aim of increasing the number of their clients who progress into an Apprenticeship by supporting their District Traineeship Manager to develop closer working relationships between Work Coaches and Traineeship providers and by linking with their new Apprenticeship project enabling further progression.
* **Strategic engagement with ten GM Local Authorities** – We will deliver a session that builds upon the successful programmes delivered in two GM LAs that have been supported by the project to highlight how other LAs can help influence and enhance their local Traineeship provision.