

# Annual Report 2013/14



**Greater Manchester  
Learning Provider Network**

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## Foreword

Last year I expressed confidence that 2013/14 would be an even more productive year for the network and this has proved to be the case. We established a clear vision to achieve an ever closer alignment between the skills system and the needs of employers, individuals and the economy of Greater Manchester.

At the AGM last year we agreed to take forward that vision by creating the post of Executive Director and were delighted to make the joint appointment of Anne Gornall and Andy Fawcett. They have brought with them their very significant experience of the Greater Manchester skills system and huge amounts of enthusiasm. This has enabled us to gain significant momentum.



We are committed to bringing about a step change in the level of employer investment in skills and Apprenticeships. We are working alongside the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce to help 'make the market for skills' and to convince more employers of the business benefits of skills investment. Utilising the ESF Skills Support for the Workforce programme we jointly introduced the Skills Gateway. Together we also launched the Skills for Business Awards – a real highlight of the year.

We have also used ESF funding to introduce the Demonstrating IMPACT Programme helping skills providers to raise their game in meeting employer skills needs and enabling them to demonstrate the business benefits of skills investment. We have launched the Employer & Employee Ambassador programme.

The strength of the network rests upon the active engagement of our members who collectively deliver 90% of the skills provision in Greater Manchester. Welcome to seventeen organisations that have joined GMLPN this year. Thank you to our existing members for their continued support in turning our shared vision into reality and especially the Advisory Board members. My co-directors, Jonathan Bourne and Debra Woodruff, have made a huge commitment to help enhance the network and have also contributed to the development of the Careers Education Information and Guidance strategy and the Apprenticeship Hub.

We have continued to work closely with colleagues in the New Economy to deliver the skills strategy. I continue to play an active role in the Skills and Employment Partnership. Greater Manchester still has far too many people who are low skilled and economically inactive. To make a real difference we have to build coherent progression models and to do this we have developed better links with the third sector and with GMCVO in particular.

The Richard Review proposals represent the most radical changes to the Apprenticeships system undertaken in the last twenty five years. Working alongside the North West Provider Network we surveyed over 450 employers and have lobbied hard to ensure that the best features of the current system are retained. Government is clearly now reconsidering its approach and this is welcomed.

Over the next three years the network needs to work even harder to create a more coherent skills system which effectively promotes Apprenticeships to young people, helps the unemployed to secure employment and achieves business benefits for employers. We will also work alongside our providers and partners to maximise the opportunities presented by the 2014-20 European Structural & Investment Fund programme.

The challenges ahead cannot be underestimated. We are committed to working with you in the coming year and beyond to achieve the vision of a skills system which serves our economy and community in Greater Manchester. In the subsequent pages we set out our ambition and how we are taking that ambition forward.

**Mark Currie**  
**Chair of GMLPN**

## Our Purpose

The Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network (GMLPN) is a network of over eighty private training providers and colleges established to represent its members' interests and to work with and on behalf of those skills providers.

## Our Ambition for 2014-18

Our ambition for 2014-18 is for a nationally recognised skills system in Greater Manchester which drives economic growth by anticipating and meeting the needs of individuals, employers and communities. To achieve this we will work with the network and our partners to deliver the following:

- **Increase employer investment** in skills by working with skills providers and the GM Chamber of Commerce to make the market and demonstrate the return on skills investment, developing a sustainable model for the Skills Gateway, extending the Ambassador projects, and building capacity by maximising the Demonstrating IMPACT Programme.
- **Support young people** by improving access to effective careers education, information, advice & guidance as well as expanding Traineeships and creating city wide coherent pre Apprenticeship pathways.
- **Expand Apprenticeships** by growing the range of Apprenticeship opportunities, especially at higher level.
- Tackle the **low skills, low pay cycle and unemployment** by working alongside providers, Jobcentre Plus, the third sector and GMCVO as well as with the Work Programme providers to build more coherent and effective progression models.

## Strengthening the Network

To achieve our ambition we need to ensure that GMLPN continues to have an active engaged membership underpinned by a sound and sustainable organisation.

## Shaping Policy

The operating environment for skills providers will remain challenging with a combination of reduced public funding and large scale change. We will continue to support the network to adapt to those changes. In the coming year we will:

- Continue to update our members in respect of key policy changes including Apprenticeship Trailblazers, funding changes and requirements.
- Contribute to Government policy development by submitting collective responses to policy initiatives that impact on our stakeholders.
- Help to influence and shape policy and investments arising from the City Deal and the Growth Deal by working with colleagues in the Skills and Employment Partnership and the New Economy.
- Monitor national policy development especially in relation to the devolution agenda and inform and influence local policy.

## Maximising Opportunities

We also seek to add value by seizing commercial opportunities on behalf of our collective membership. These commercial benefits are available to all of our members.



## Demonstrating IMPACT Programme

The Demonstrating IMPACT Programme has been designed to support providers to position themselves in the fast developing employer-led skills system. Utilising ESF Skills Support for the Workforce the Programme will enable providers to:

- See the employer as the customer and deliver solutions that businesses need.
- Demonstrate the Return On Investment (ROI) that learning and training can have on business productivity. By equipping providers with the knowledge and tools to demonstrate ROI, employers are more likely to invest in skills.

## The Approach

The Programme begins with a needs analysis focussing on key aspects of the business but specifically on organisational development embracing senior & middle management, sales, delivery and administration.

The organisation then receives an outline proposal that is further refined through dialogue to become a bespoke organisational development plan. Additional support is then provided through a series of master classes and coaching for individual organisations.

For a list of masterclasses and coaching visit:

[www.demonstratingimpact.co.uk](http://www.demonstratingimpact.co.uk).

By engaging senior management teams at the outset, the Programme aims to transform the performance of the organisations by upskilling key employer engagement and delivery staff within skills providers to improve the service to their employers.

## Progress

Over thirty independent skills providers and colleges are actively engaged in the project to date.



## High Quality Support

GMLPN has developed a provider advisory group to help us ensure that the programme is of the highest quality.

GMLPN has engaged a number of associates who are recognised as having particular expertise to deliver masterclasses and coaching.

We continue to strengthen the range of experts we can call upon and would welcome further referrals and the direct involvement of providers who have specialist expertise.

## Further Information

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Skills Gateway is part of the Greater Manchester ambition to develop a culture of an employer led and learner focussed skills system, building and maintaining strong relationships with and between employers and training providers; identifying best practice whilst providing a platform for future opportunity and growth.

It is a unique collaboration between the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Greater Manchester Learner Provider Network funded by the ESF Skills Support for the Workforce.

The service has been set up to bridge the gap between employers and training organisations, providing a service to businesses that they understand and value within the skills and training arena.

### How will it operate?

There are 3 strands of work:

- A Media & Marketing Campaign
- An independent Referral Service
- A Skills Catalogue

All three strands are linked and interdependent.

It will encourage businesses to invest in their people and:

- demonstrate the benefit to their business.
- make it easy for them to identify what training they need.
- help them access available training solutions.
- help them to purchase training effectively.

Skills Gateway will also stimulate the development of new provision to meet unmet needs.

Employers are able to raise their enquiries with the Gateway team who will access up-to-date details of provision for all participating skills providers.



*From left to right Mark Currie GMLPN, Angie Took - Skills Gateway, James Farr - New Economy and Clive Memmott - GM Chamber of Commerce at the launch of the Skills Gateway*

### How will Skills Gateway benefit training providers?

As a result of its mission to help businesses harness the potential of training, Skills Gateway will be growing the market for the region's training providers and acting as an effective tool for qualifying and directing potential new leads.

It will also be a strong and impartial voice making the case for the potential positive impact for businesses that commit to better training as part of their day-to-day operations. The data gained from employers and training providers will help identify best practice and prioritise potential skills gaps, informing and influencing future product development including the Demonstrating IMPACT programme.

### GM Skills Gateway Service Contacts:

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Skills Gateway Line: 0161 817 5007

[www.gmskillsgateway.co.uk](http://www.gmskillsgateway.co.uk)

GMCC and GMLPN working in partnership







Who better to raise awareness of the benefits of investing in skills to employers and potential learners than employers and learners themselves?

GMLPN will identify employers and employee ambassadors and support them to deliver key messages on the advantages, the Return on Investment, of skills for organisations and individuals. The aim is to get employers and adult learners hungry for skills and help stimulate the market. This is essential for the long term productivity of the Greater Manchester economy. We know from research conducted over the previous years that the principal reason for the economic productivity gap between Greater Manchester and other significant conurbations across the country is a lack of skills.

One solution to help tackle this is to encourage and support existing employers and employees to influence their peers. Moreover, we facilitate and give them the opportunity to present at employer forums, employer workplaces, employment fairs.

We are exploring opportunities to enhance the skills of those employees who are currently mentoring and coaching Apprentices and other employees.

### The process in brief...

The GMLPN identifies suitable employer and employee learner ambassadors. The GMLPN supports these individuals to be in a position to:

- effectively promote the value of skills.
- integrate their own personal experiences – this will typically consist of outlining the benefits experienced by the employer and identifying the impact of training on the business.

The GMLPN will coordinate opportunities for Ambassador presentations and in addition we will provide materials and resources to support ambassadors in their work.



*Employer Ambassador Darren O'Brian & Apprentice Hollie Satterthwaire from Barclays Bank attending a forum in Bolton*

### Further Information

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# The Apprenticeship Ambassador Programme

## The concept in brief...

The concept here is simple... who better to sell our Apprenticeships than apprentices?

Our ultimate aim is to get more young people, schools and parents to appreciate the opportunity and value of Apprenticeships. Young people regularly say that they were never aware of Apprenticeships; that they were not told about the opportunities by their school, teachers or parents. There is a significant drive in Greater Manchester to improve the level of access to information about Apprenticeships and the Apprenticeship Ambassador scheme is the programme that is spearheading this drive.

We are supporting current or recently qualified apprentices to become ambassadors by offering training and development. Once equipped they present to young people, teachers, parents and carers promoting the value of Apprenticeships.

## The process in brief...

We work with our providers and employers to identify and recruit suitable candidates who are either current or recently qualified apprentices.

The GMLPN trains these individuals to make sure that they are confident and well briefed and are able to integrate their own personal experiences. This will typically consist of outlining what an Apprenticeship is and the benefits experienced by the young person and their employer.

The GMLPN coordinates opportunities for Ambassador presentations.

Materials and resources are provided to the Ambassadors at events.



## Progress

To date we have:

- Recruited and trained 120 Apprenticeship Ambassadors.
- 19 providers and 19 employers who have nominated ambassadors.
- Distributed over 4,000 Apprenticeship information packs.
- Attended 91 events.
- Engaged with over 4,300 young people.



## Further Information

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## The Skills Show Experience *Have A Go*

### Inspiring Young people

The Skills Show Experience delivers a series of high profile 'hands on' local skills events for 14-25 year olds. The partners are skills providers, schools, employers and Local Authorities. Independent careers advice is made available, delivered by the National Careers Service (NCS), to raise the profile of vocational learning and careers including Apprenticeships.

### Working with schools

The events replicate the *Have a Go* elements of the national Skills Show by organising local events. A wide range of activities take place, with those attending given the opportunity to try their hand (and mind) at a number of activities which replicate real occupations. These exciting activities which embrace everything from manufacturing & robotics to the medical and service sectors are designed to inspire young people, parents, schools and teachers by giving attendees practical hands on experience.

### A High Quality Experience

GMLPN is responsible for the co-ordination and quality of the *Have a Go* events. We work with Local Authorities and schools to maximise attendance and also administer the overall budget and project administration.

During 2014 the project has delivered nine major events, each one supported by a range of skills providers, colleges, schools, Local Authorities and careers specialists. Employers are also actively involved. Each event attracted over 800 young people and parents. In addition we are delivering twenty smaller events across Greater Manchester.

### Funding

The project is funded via ESF Technical Assistance distributed by Find a Future and the National Careers Service.

### The Role of Skills Providers

The role of skills providers is to demonstrate a realistic and exciting occupational experience to young people. This helps young people to make a more informed choice when considering their future career options.



### Progress to Date

We have delivered *Have A Go* experiences involving:

- 14,407 Young people.
- An additional four small events and 550 young people.
- Engaging all 10 of the Greater Manchester Local Authorities.
- Working with several hundred schools.



### Further information

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The Skills for Business Awards 2014 was our flagship event marking the outstanding contribution that skills and learning make to businesses across Greater Manchester and a celebration of those employers that invest in their workforce.



*Above: Mike Blackburn, Chair, The Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership.*

The original idea for the awards was initiated by the Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network and the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce who together with the New Economy and Pearson WBL were the key sponsors.

Additional sponsorship was also secured from the wider partnership, The City Deal, The Greater Manchester Colleges Group, Tameside College, Salford University, Manchester Metropolitan University and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The GMLPN would like to express sincere thanks to all sponsors that helped make the event a success.

Many of the case studies are being actively used to promote the advantages of investing in skills and a number of employers have stepped forward as employer ambassadors.



*Chris Bolton, Director of Stakeholder Relations at Pearson WBL*

The awards took place on Thursday 3 July at the iconic Hilton Manchester Deansgate, and were hosted by Dara O Briain, comedian and host of the BBC's The Apprentice You're Fired!



*Top right - Clive Memmott GM Chamber of Commerce*

Further information about the awards, the categories and the finalists can be obtained here:

[www.skillsforbusinessawards.co.uk](http://www.skillsforbusinessawards.co.uk)

Over 170 Nominations in 18 Categories  
Over 500 Attendees

COMING SOON: THE GREATER MANCHESTER SKILLS FOR BUSINESS AWARDS 2015

## The work of GMLPN

### The Board and the Advisory Group

#### Board Members

Mark Currie	Mantra Learning
Jonathan Bourne	Damar Training
Debra Woodruff	The Oldham College

#### The Advisory Board

Nikki Bardsley	Kaplan Limited
Julie Gough	Babbington Business College
Riccy Longden	The Manchester College
Jill Nagy	Rochdale Training Association
Andy Turner	Rochdale MBC
John Whitby	STEGTA
Jenny Worsdale	Tameside College
Suzanne Vawdrey	Age UK Limited
Abdi Yusuf	Focusing First on People

### Strategic Employment Partnership

We have continued to be active members of both the *Strategy Group* and the *Programme Board*. Our focus has been to ensure that the skills strategy for Greater Manchester is informed by the experience of skills providers and their employers.

### Influencing Investment in Skills in Greater Manchester

Board members have worked closely with colleagues in the New Economy to support the:

- Development of the Skills Strategy to ensure that it meets City Skills Priorities and key sectors of the economy.
- Enhancement of the Apprenticeship Hub strategy and the growth of Apprenticeships at Level 3 and above.
- Refinement of the Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance Strategy.
- Development of the 2014-20 European Structural and Investment Fund Strategy.

## Skills Support for the Workforce

Having helped to secure the ESF Skills Support for the Workforce contract we have worked alongside our colleagues in The Manchester College to ensure that we maximise the opportunities which the funding affords. To do this we have:

- Actively engaged in the Strategic Oversight Group to ensure fair play for all partners.
- Supported the work of the Capacity Building Group.

### North West Provider Network

Mark Currie and Debra Woodruff have continued to represent us on the Board of the North West Provider Network.

### Lobbying on behalf of the Provider Network

The implementation of the Richard Review has dominated our lobbying activity in the past year. The proposed changes to the funding of Apprenticeships prompted us to challenge the rationale on which this policy was based.

There was little or no evidence to justify changes on this scale and as a consequence of the Government's flawed initial consultation we undertook a major survey of employers with over 450 responding. The results indicated that there was little or no appetite for change amongst employers especially SMEs and micro businesses.

Following completion of the survey we submitted a response to the Department of Business Innovation & Skills (DBIS) and also lobbied MPs and local authority leaders. Members of the Advisory Board also met with their local MPs. It is now clear that the Government is re-evaluating its plans and we will continue to contribute, lobby and influence whenever opportunities arise.



## Apprenticeship Trailblazers

In addition to our lobbying work we also organised a major North West event on behalf of NWP in respect of Apprenticeship Trailblazers. The event attracted nationally recognised speakers and was attended by 150 senior managers from North West skills providers and colleges.

## Supporting the Network

A vital dimension of the GMLPN's activity is to keep members aware of the latest strategic and operational developments which impact upon their operations. To do this we have held a series of network events which have included:

- Briefings from the New Economy setting out the priorities for the City Deal and Growth and Investment Plan
- Presentations on the 2014-20 European Structural and Investment Funds
- The National Careers Service and the roll out of the new service
- Regular operational updates from the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency
- The launch of the ESF Skills Support for the Workforce

## Government Consultations

We have made submissions on behalf of the network in respect of:

- Proposed changes to Traineeships
- Future Development of Loans in Further Education
- Outcome based success measures for adult further education

## National and Regional Connectivity

GMLPN also responded to both DBIS and the Education and Training Foundation following the publication of the *Further Education Workforce Strategy*.

We are building links to ensure that the capacity building projects which we develop and deliver add value to national and regional investments.

We have also maintained our membership and strengthened our links with the AELP.

## The GMLPN Team

Andy Fawcett – Executive Director

Anne Gornall – Executive Director

John Doris – Ambassador Programmes

Carol Garton – *Have A Go*

Stephanie Hodgson – Ambassador Programmes

Matt Leigh – Apprenticeship Ambassadors

Richard Nash- Business Development Manager

Rob York – Office Manager

## The Skills Gateway Team

Angie Took – Operations Manager

Helen Rose – Skills Services Manager

Shahzad Asghar - Skills Gateway Advisor

Tom Quaye - Skills Gateway Advisor

Katie Turnbull - Skills Gateway Apprentice

## Benefits of GMLPN Membership



Our arrangement with Pearson offers significant cost savings of up to 25% on Pearson qualifications and resources.

### Key Account Support

In addition Pearson, through their key account customer support service, offer an enhanced added value that brings greater efficiency, improved services and improved quality outcomes and success rates to GMLPN members.

### Sector intelligence...

Network members also have access to unparalleled intelligence on skills policy, direction of travel for our sector, labour market intelligence, tools and resources. Pearson also provide a range of bespoke events covering issues such as administration, quality assurance and the introduction of new or revised qualifications/standards.

### Demonstrating the value of skills and learning...

More than this, it is undoubtedly true that Pearson is a significant player in the skills arena and they are actively involved in supporting the efforts of the GMLPN to reduce the Greater Manchester productivity gap by increasing the level and added value of skills provision across Greater Manchester.

The GMLPN is delighted to be working with Pearson because we share the same ethos; recognising the contribution of learning and skills to business, individuals and the economy.

If you wish to learn more about Pearson please follow the link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WKjIDxeaEQ>



Our arrangement with Office Depot brings real commercial benefits to our members.

### Tangible cost savings...

The GMLPN and its members have significant buying power and we have utilised this strength to build a relationship with Office Depot. Under our agreement with Office Depot savings of 15-30% have been made on the cost of office products and business solutions.

### What our members are saying...

*"We did a full cost analysis of our top 20 ordered items in comparison to the 2 stationery providers that we use and found that we would get a 39% saving with Office Depot. This amazed us as we had been using other suppliers for a long time and had spent a long time negotiating the prices down by playing suppliers off each other – so we thought we had a great deal. Add to that the online ordering system, quick delivery and range of products...Office Depot blew other suppliers out of the water."*

Carl Johnson, GMLPN member.

### Key account support...

Through Office Depot's key account customer support, you will have unparalleled levels of support to help you make the right decision when it comes to choosing office products, furniture, and other office supplies.

### Get involved...

Richard Nash - Development Manager

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## Our Growing Network

Acacia Training & Development  
Active Synergy  
Age UK Trading  
Alliance Learning  
The Apprentice Academy  
Armstrong Learning  
Ashton 6th Form College\*  
Astral Training (formerly CEL Training)  
Avanta Enterprise Limited\*  
Babington Business College  
Back 2 Work Complete Training  
Blue Training (UK) Ltd  
Bolton College  
Bury College  
Bury MBC  
Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College  
Community Skills Development Agency\*  
CTC Training and Assessment  
Damar Training  
Dawn Hodge Associates \*  
Economic Solutions  
First 4 Skills  
FLM Training\*  
Focusing First on People  
GK Training Limited\*  
GP Strategies  
Hopwood Hall / Orchard Training  
Inspire 2 Independence  
Intraining  
JHP Training  
Joint Learning Partnership Ltd  
JTL  
Kaplan Financial  
Kashmir Youth Project\*  
Learn Direct (formerly UFI)  
Lite (Stockport) Ltd  
Manchester First\*  
Manchester International College  
Manchester Metropolitan University  
Mantra Learning  
Media College Ltd  
Michael John Training

North Lancs Training Group (NLTG)  
North of England Training\*  
North West Skills Academy\*  
NTG Training  
Plato Training Limited\*  
Prestige Training\*  
Proco North West Ltd  
Rathbone  
Rochdale Training Association  
Salford & Trafford Engineering Group Training Association  
Salford City College - Trinity Business Training  
SBC Training  
SEETEC Business Technology Centre\*  
SS Simon Jude CofE Primary School\*  
Standguide Ltd  
Start Training  
Stockport College  
Stockport Engineering Group Training Association  
Tameside College  
The Manchester College  
The Oldham College  
The Training Brokers  
Trafford College  
Training 2000\*  
Venture Learning  
Wigan & Leigh College  
YMCA Training

### Associate Members in 2013/14

Boltonwise  
Care Assessment Training Services  
Complete Forensics CIC  
Education Training Partnership  
Essential Learning  
Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce  
Groundwork MSSTT  
Office Depot  
Pearson Work Based Learning  
Positive Steps Oldham\*  
Rochdale MBC Skills Team  
TDB Training Specialists\*  
Winning Pitch Trading

(\*New members in 2013/14)



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