



2016/17 Annual Report



Greater Manchester
Learning Provider Network

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The past year has been one of momentous change. We are now four months in to what the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) described as a four year programme. Whilst we might applaud the intention to move to an employer led skills system the imposition of mandatory employer contributions, dual lock contracts, 20% off the

job training and standards has resulted in a sharp drop in starts, certainly in the first three months of the year. Our surveys of GMLPN members accurately predicted this outcome. Sadly there is now the very real prospect that we will lose both good quality provision and providers resulting in long term damage to Apprenticeship training capacity.

Our primary purpose is to support our members to adapt to the changes and to improve their overall capacity and the quality of provision. We continue to develop our Provider Support Programme delivering workshops on key aspects of the reforms. The quality of this work has enabled us to develop a strategic relationship with the Education & Training Foundation. This in turn will lead to well informed provider support over the next three years.

We continue to work with other provider networks across the North of England to create an effective lobbying force. We were instrumental in establishing the Northern Provider Network and its links to the Northern Powerhouse. Our support included helping to organise two northern skills conferences. These provided a platform to share key issues directly with Government including the outcomes of our membership survey regarding Apprenticeship starts. This was in turn used by AELP and gained national publicity. We have been asked to repeat this exercise by ESFA.

We are all of us operating within an uncertain economic future as Brexit becomes a reality. Whilst it brings risks it also provides some real opportunities to address both emerging skills gaps and the need to drive up productivity becomes ever more pressing.

We have continued to brief the political leadership across Greater Manchester maintaining their awareness of the skills agenda and opportunities to improve productivity. I have represented GMLPN on the Skills and Employment Partnership, working closely with Sean Anstee and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA) skills team to improve the skills of the regions' workforce. Our successful delivery of the GM Apprenticeship Ambassadors project, the GM Search and Apply project, the #SEEDIFFERENT campaign and the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools project have contributed to the success of the Greater Manchester Apprenticeship strategy.

With our partners in GM Futures: the GM Chamber of Commerce, GMCVO, the GM Colleges Group, The Growth Company, The LTE Group, and Manchester Athena we are operating strategically to improve the skills & employment system.

Our commercial agreements bring real benefits to members and we are delighted to have refreshed our agreement with Pearson and not least the opportunity for both GMLPN and members to become delivery partners for End Point Assessment. This programme will roll out in early 2018.

The strength of the network rests upon the active engagement of our members who collectively deliver over 90% of the skills provision in Greater Manchester. Thank you to our existing members for their continued support in turning our shared vision into reality. Special thanks go to the Advisory Board members; my co non-executive directors, Jonathan Bourne and Debra Woodruff and our executive directors Anne and Andy together with the GMLPN team.

Mark Currie,
Chair of GMLPN

Promoting the Growth of Apprenticeships

Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Strategy

The GMLPN supports the Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Strategy and the Greater Manchester Careers and Participation Strategy through the delivery of four key projects:

- The GM Apprenticeship Ambassador Programme
- The GM Search & Apply Project
- The GM Apprenticeship Hub - #SEEDIFFERENT campaign
- The Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) for schools Project

These projects contribute to the strategies by providing free impartial support to schools and empowering students to consider Apprenticeships as both a post-16 or post-18 option.

Apprenticeship Ambassador Programme

The Apprenticeship Ambassador Programme is an Apprenticeship information service for schools in Greater Manchester mobilising volunteer apprentices to share their first-hand knowledge and experience of Apprenticeships as a route into a successful career. In the past four years we have:



Recruited and trained **346** Ambassadors, representing a range of sectors



Attended **480+** events in **127** different schools and colleges, engaging with over **19,000** young people

"I love being an Ambassador! I feel that from having such an amazing Apprenticeship experience it would be crazy not to share that with young people and businesses."

Gemmer Crozier, Brother UK

Search and Apply

The Search and Apply project encourages and supports the use of a post-16 options portal, UCAS Progress. The aim is to increase post-16 participation and to increase the number of young people actively considering and taking up Apprenticeships. Delivered alongside our partners in Career Connect and Positive Steps we have now reached the end of the third year of the project.



86 schools in GM now use the system, with **15,550** young people submitting applications in the 2016-17 academic year

207%

Increase on the number of post-16 providers using the system

188%

Increase on the number of providers receiving applications

127%

Increase in Apprenticeship applications

The GMCA has recently announced that they will continue to fund the licence for GM Search and Apply in 2017/18. This means that the system will remain free at the point of use for all post 16 education & training providers in Greater Manchester for a further year.

The GM Apprenticeship Hub - #SEEDIFFERENT Campaign

Since 2015 the #SEEDIFFERENT campaign has been positively changing hearts, minds and perceptions of Apprenticeships across Greater Manchester. Phase two of the project focuses on engaging stakeholders through The Apprenticeship Hub website and various social media channels. Since it's inception, the project has:



90,190 website hits



202,424 young people reached



23,383,217 social media impressions



92 case studies produced



122,591 social media engagements



111 skills providers and **23,508** employers reached

Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools

The Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge Project is an ESFA funded programme aimed at raising awareness of Apprenticeships amongst students in years 10-13, as well as supporting students in years 11-13 to register and apply for Apprenticeships using the Find an Apprenticeship website. The GMLPN are responsible for delivery in Greater Manchester and Cheshire & Warrington. In the first year of the project we achieved the following outcomes:



Attended **89** schools and colleges in GM



Engaged with **4,673** students and **280** teachers



Registered **1,744** students on Find an Apprenticeship

Manchester City Council Options Evenings

Manchester City Council (MCC) asked the GMLPN to develop and deliver a pilot programme which provided impartial Apprenticeship information to parents of students in Years 8 and 9 at their GCSE options evenings. Our role was to test the offer and to provide an evaluation report to MCC. We attended **five schools** across Manchester and engaged with approximately **100 parents** at an Apprenticeship stand. Parents benefited from increased awareness on the range of job roles, options and levels of Apprenticeships. We received positive feedback from the five schools as they recognised the benefit of informing parents about at an early stage about the career options available via the Apprenticeship pathway.

Working on Behalf of Members

Representing Members

During the year we have witnessed the introduction of the Apprenticeship levy and procurement of Apprenticeship training for SMEs and Adult Education Budget. Our primary role has been to identify emerging issues and to lobby both nationally and within Greater Manchester to ensure that the voice of providers is heard.

In May, the GMCA approached us to ascertain what impact the introduction of the Apprenticeship levy was having on providers and their employers. We undertook in-depth surveys with over 25 prime providers. The outcomes which pointed to a disappointingly low take up and slow start were shared with the GMCA. Our survey reflected the national picture, with less than half of large employers having done anything thus far with many not yet ready or intending to recruit Apprentices.

In September we undertook a major survey to understand what was happening to Apprenticeship starts following the introduction of the reforms in May 2017. The outcomes, which accurately predicted the 60% reduction in starts compared with last year, were shared at our September network meeting, with the AELP, the ESFA and the GMCA. This resulted in extensive coverage of the issues faced by members including in FE Week. The ESFA are keen for us to repeat this work in December and to share the results with them.

Network Meetings

A key feature of the GMLPN is our all-member network meetings and we have hosted five this year. These are an ideal opportunity for our members to share experiences, engage with national Government agencies – notably Ofsted and the ESFA – and the GMCA. These events are purposefully aligned to the various city-wide and national skills strategies and provide our members with greater clarity in terms of what is the here and now, but also what is coming down the track.

Whilst our focus has always been on promoting and supporting quality provision, during this year we have made it our mission to really bring this theme to the fore. Both Bev Barlow, senior HMI North West for FE & Skills at Ofsted and Chris Jones, Ofsted's lead on Apprenticeships have attended network meetings. We have also had witness testimonies from GMLPN members who have undergone a recent inspection and updates from John Whitby who sits on Ofsted's Regional Advisory Forum.

Updating Members

We have circulated both our regular information bulletin and a funding bulletin on a monthly basis. These have proved popular bringing together a wide range of information in a easily accessible format with links to key information and websites. In addition we have revamped our website and this has resulted in significantly increased usage.

Funding Opportunities

Throughout the year we have alerted providers to national procurement exercises and opportunities. In Greater Manchester we have promoted the GMCA's Apprenticeship procurement process and the new capital programme to which a number of members have responded. In addition we have supported primes and sub-contractors to find delivery partners, successful brokering a number of new partnerships which have come to fruition.

Adapting to Apprenticeship Reforms

The North West & Northern Provider Networks

We continue to work with other provider networks across the North of England. At a time of unprecedented change this work has become increasingly important. The GMLPN has been a key protagonist in establishing the Northern Provider Network and building links with the Northern Powerhouse initiative.

The Northern Provider Network, consisting of nine sub-regional networks has met on three occasions. The focus is to promote greater collaboration amongst providers across the North of England, to better coordinate lobbying activity both regionally & nationally and to share our collective knowledge and expertise.



As part of this growing network activity the GMLPN has played a key role in organising two major skills conferences. At the Apprenticeship and Technical Education Reform Conference that took place on the 6th October in Leeds, we were able to bring together leading national representatives of all of the organisations which have responsibility for Apprenticeship policy and quality providing a forum for providers to share their experiences.

Greater Manchester Mayoral Election

In April, in support of the Greater Manchester mayoral election process and to brief the candidates on skills issues, GMLPN hosted a hustings with the leading candidates in the run up to the election on 4 May.

Partnerships and Working Groups

Throughout the year the GMLPN has been involved in a number of advisory and working groups supporting the GMCA to take forward the Work and Skills Strategy and aspects of the Devolution Agreement. This has included:

- Membership of the Skills and Employment Partnership; working to deliver the Apprenticeship Strategy.
- The Adult Education Budget task group; looking at future priorities, target groups and the procurement, contracting and payment options.
- With our partners in GM Futures; the Chamber of Commerce, GMCVO, the Greater Manchester Colleges Group, The Growth Company, The LTE Group, and Athena Housing we are operating strategically to improve the skills & employment system.
- Coherence Working Group; a sub-group of the Careers and Employability Advisory Group.

We are also members of Calderdale College's ESF Skills Support for the Workforce steering group for Greater Manchester, GMCVO's GM Talent Match steering group and the Choices steering group delivered by World Skills UK.

Provider Support Programme

In 2016 the GMLPN launched its Provider Support Programme, designed to support members to adapt and grow during a period of intense change. We have focused on seven key areas:

- 1. The Reforms to Apprenticeships**, including:
 - Preparing for the Apprenticeship reforms
 - Delivering profitable Apprenticeships
 - Delivering Apprenticeship Standards
 - Meeting the 20% off-the-job training requirement
 - Selling to levy employers
 - Audit compliance
 - Completing the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers & the non-levy ITT - These collaborative workshops worked well and the outcomes for providers have been better than the sector average. For example, for the original RoATP exercise GMLPN members achieved a 95% success rate compared with 75% for the sector.
- 2. Recruitment** - making sure members have the right people with the right skills to grow their business.
- 3. Adult Education Budget procurement webinar** - supporting providers to make applications
- 4. Quality** - workshops have focussed on preparing for inspection and implementing the Common Inspection Framework.
- 5. Safeguarding** - focused activity on the Prevent duties and bespoke programmes for individual members.
- 6. Resilience** - resilience is arguably the most important resource for coping well during challenging times. We explored how training providers can support learners to be more resilient and stay the course.
- 7. English and maths** - supporting providers to improve through strong centralised management, clear strategy, staff buy-in, the right delivery model and suitably qualified staff.

We have delivered **23** workshops, to **82** individual organisations, with **355** attendees.
We have also facilitated **2** Northern conferences with **242** attendees.

*“Friendly group, excellent facilitator and fantastic resources to share with colleagues” - **The Path to Outstanding, Living the common Inspection Framework***

*“Subject matter and delivery was outstanding. Really enjoyable! Made so much sense - so much to think about.” - **Are you ready for the Apprenticeship Reforms?***

Supporting Providers

Greater Manchester & Cheshire Vocational Education and Training (VET) Professional Exchange

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) has commissioned the GMLPN to establish a Professional Exchange in Greater Manchester and Cheshire.

The objective of the Professional Exchange is to support teachers, trainers, assessors, managers and leaders to successfully adapt to the Apprenticeship and Technical Education reforms.

Work together - Learn together

Our Professional Exchange is an opportunity for FE practitioners to work together and learn from each other in the following areas:

- Equality and diversity in FE
- Quality
- Delivering the new digital standards
- Transition from assessment to training
- Effective employer involvement in curriculum design and delivery
- Recruiting learners and managing progression

Developing work placements and promoting English and maths skills programme

The GMLPN and the Adult Learning and Improvement Network (ALIN) have been working together over the past year to deliver this programme that has and continues to prepare study programme providers to:

- Prepare for the larger intensive work placement programmes that form part of technical routes
- Improve the promotion of English and maths skills development through work placements
- Plan, implement and manage enhanced work placements as part of study programmes
- Develop differentiated resources related to job roles and technical routes to promote careers to young people and parents/guardians

“This is such a great programme, outlining how to improve our approach to study programmes, and engaging and motivating all our staff” ProCo North West

Pearson End Point Assessment

The GMLPN held its first End Point Assessment (EPA) Forum in October 2017. Key themes of this ongoing work are to support providers in adapting to EPA and this will be a key area of activity alongside our partners in Pearson during the coming year. We are also working intently with Pearson to develop an EPA model that offers an opportunity for providers to become involved in the delivery of EPA.

Our Board

Board Members

Debra Woodruff
Jonathan Bourne
Mark Currie

Oldham College
Damar Training
Mantra Learning

GMLPN Team

Andy Fawcett
Anne Gornall
Charlotte Cookson
Matt Leigh
Richard Nash

Advisory Board Members

Abdi Yusuf
Adrian Fantham
Andy Turner
Carol Halford
Jayne Worthington
Jill Nagy
John Whitby
Julie Shawcross
Linda Dean
Nikki Bardsley
Simon Foster
Steve Murphy
Tony Brown

Focusing First on People
Babington Group
Rochdale MBC
ProCo NW
The Skills Company
Rochdale Training Association
STEGTA
The Expanse Group
Total People
Seetec
Education Training Partnership
Positive Steps
The Expanse Group

Commercial Partnerships



GPRS are permanent recruitment specialists supporting GMLPN members to identify the right people with the right skills to grow their business.



HURST, an industry experienced accountancy firm, familiar with the various government funding streams and able to advise providers on adapting their business strategy to respond.



iPEGS is an efficient way to manage and monitor learner progress, particularly those out in the workplace. iPEGS offer an easy and efficient method of creating, signing and sending digital forms.



INNOVED provides comprehensive online features and facilities to control the entire process of teaching, learning, assessment and quality.



Pearson

Pearson, a long term partner of the GMLPN, is a renowned awarding body with a range of products and services. Our members can be eligible for up to a 25% discount.



Peninsula Partnership are the leading HR, employment law and health & safety consultancy firm.



Zen, a long term commercial partner of the GMLPN, offer a wide range of services from business supplies to office fit outs to managed print services allowing our members to consolidate their purchases.

Our Members

3aaa Apprenticeships	GM Chamber of Commerce	Prestige Training
Acacia Training	Groundwork	ProCo NW
Alliance Learning	Heyrod Construction	QA
ANS Group	Hopwood Hall College	Rathbone
Apprentice Academy	Inspire 2 Independence	Rochdale MBC
APM UK	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	Rochdale Training Association
Armstrong Learning	Interactive	STEGTA
Aspire Education Academy	Intraining	Salford City College
Babcock Training	Jarvis Training Management	Seetec
Babington Business College	JTL	SS Simon Jude CofE Primary School
Back 2 Work Complete Training	Kaplan Financial	Standguide
Bolton College	Kashmir Youth Project	Stockport College
Bright Direction Training	Key Training	SETA
Brighter Beginnings Day Nursery	learndirect	Street League
Burnley College	Lite	Tameside College
Bury College	Manchester First	Tameside MBC
Bury Council	Manchester Metropolitan University	Tameside, Oldham and Glossop Mind
Care Assessment Training Service	Mantra Learning	The Expanse Group
Carillion PLC	Menerva Training	The Manchester College
CILEX Law School	Michael John Training	The Skills Company
Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College	National Schools Training	The Training Brokers
Damar Training	NGTC	The White Room
Dawn Hodge Associates	Norman Mackie & Associates	Total People
Dentrain	North Lancs Training Group	Trafford College
Education Training Partnership	North of England Training	Train'd Up Railway Resourcing
EQL Solutions	North West Skills Academy	Training 2000
ESG Skills	NowSkills	Training Strategies
Essential Learning	NTG Training	Transport Training Academy
Estio Training	Oldham College	Utility & Construction Training
Fir Tree Fishery	Oldham Council	W Academy & Education
FLM Training	OTC	WEA
Focusing First on People	Pathway First	Wigan & Leigh College
Free 2 Learn	Pearson	Wigan MBC
GP Strategies	Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	XTP International
GMCVO	Plato Training UK	YMCA Training
	Positive Steps Oldham	



This publication is available at www.gmlpn.co.uk

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to:

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