

Exchange	Business Development
Date of Meeting	05/03/2026
Location	Microsoft Teams
GMLPN Staff	Chloe Forrest, Hannah Bolsher
Chair	Zack Grimes, Co-Founder / Director MarCommED
Speakers:	GM Skills Map update – Jordan Winterbottom Marketing / Business Development Discussion - Chloe Forrest, Zack Grimes, delegates GMACS & Beeline update – Simon Pook
Attendees:	Jacob Evans, (Rochdale Training) Toby Stubbs, (Evolve Academy) Emma Mortin, (Kingdom Academy) Lee Morris, (Bright Direction Training) Suzy Chapman, (Oldham College) Joanne Taylor, (TMP College) Laura Meakin, (System People) Leah Grimshaw, (NCFE) Sam Currie, (Mantra Learning) Carl Morris, (NLTG) Tomek Krzyzaniak, (Mantra Learning) Danielle Holt, (Trafford & Stockport College) Darren Jones, (National Logistics Academy) Danae Smith, (MCC) Jill Sheffield, (Acorn Training) Alex Barker, (MMU) Daniel Maddock, (Kingdom Academy) Mel Cooke, (University of Greater Manchester)
Key Themes / Discussion Points	
1. Awareness & Engagement with GM Platforms - Get involved with GMACS, Beeline, and the GM Skills Map, including uploading provision, advertising open days, and promoting rapid tasters. - GMCA outlined how platforms support learners, employers, and providers, with emphasis on place-based careers information, skills pathways, and sector gateways. 2. GM Skills Map – Provider Opportunities & Challenges - Significant growth in users and referrals year-on-year, driven by skills coaches and paid campaigns. - Most popular training categories: Leadership & Management, Sales & Marketing, Digital, and Business Support. - Big demand from SMEs for fully funded or lower-cost courses. - Local authorities increasingly positioning Skills Map as the one-stop point for GM training. 3. Marketing, Communications & Sector Challenges - Recruitment of learners remains a sector-wide struggle, while employer engagement for events is improving. - The increasing need for strong employer engagement (schools, T Levels, work placements). - AI has reshaped marketing roles but quality assurance is a concern, organisations are adopting hybrid approaches (AI for efficiency + human oversight). 4. Campaigns & Best Practice Sharing - Difficulty maximising impact during busy campaign periods (e.g., National Apprenticeship Week and National Careers Week are too close together). - Providers shared examples including podcasts, employer-led discussions, safeguarding conferences, live shows, and spotlighting learner success.	

- Encouragement to align with local partners (housing associations, councils, local employers) to enhance reach.

5. Exchanges & Provider Collaboration

- Exchanges serve as a safe space for providers to collaborate, share practice, and troubleshoot shared challenges.
- GMLPN highlighted the opportunity to buddy providers with peers for additional support.

6. GMCA Updates on Platforms

- **GMACS:** Careers and apprenticeship service for GM learners; supports Gatsby benchmarks; hosts events, blogs, employer info and vacancies.
- **Beeline:** GM Baccalaureate-focused service linking pathways from age 14–18 into real GM jobs.
- **Life Ready:** PSHE-style life skills website created with young people.
- **Our Pass:** Free/reduced travel for 16–18s plus exclusive offers.

Resources / Links Shared

- [Celebrating our Members - February 2026](#) 
- [GMLPN Post-16 School Newsletter - February 2026](#)
- [Home](#) - GM Skills Map
- [IWD: International Women's Day 2026 theme is 'Give To Gain'](#)
- [GMLPN News | Stay Up To Date With Our most Recent Changes](#)
- [GMACS | Inspire, Explore, Apply | The Greater Manchester Apprenticeship & Careers Service](#)
- [Beeline | Putting You On The Path To Great Jobs In GM | GMACS](#)
- [Home - Curriculum for Life](#)
- [Homepage - Our Pass](#)
- <https://zfrmz.eu/ZAAFCI4VWgHcuNQ9gbzH> - EOI GM Skills Awards Table Centre Piece Project

Actions

For Providers

- Register and upload provision to GM Skills Map (including commercial, funded, apprenticeship and unemployed-focused offers).
- Share news stories, events, and opportunities with GMLPN for inclusion in bulletins and the schools newsletter.
- Contribute guest blogs, events, and learner stories to GMACS.
- Encourage learners and young people to use Our Pass for reduced travel to training and events.
- Share campaign plans and best practice to strengthen collaborative impact across GM.

For GMLPN

- Continue promoting skills platforms across GM.
- Maintain monthly Good News Bulletin, weekly provider bulletin, and GM schools newsletter.
- Bring platform leads (GMCA, Skills Map, etc.) into exchanges based on member needs.
- Progress planning for 9 July Business Development Exchange and explore topics like Canva training and AI.

For GMCA / Skills Map Team

- Continue enhancing Skills Map campaigns and social promotion.
- Provide clearer visibility for apprenticeship, commercial and unemployed training.
- Review opportunities to spotlight quality providers without restricting entry.
- Strengthen relationships with schools, local authorities, and employer boards via GMAX and B-Line.

Next Steps

Immediate

- Expressions of Interest remain open for GM Skills Awards Table Centrepiece Project (closing 27 March).
- Book onto the 13th May [GMLPN Network Meeting & 25th Birthday Celebration](#).

Upcoming

- Next Business Development Exchange: 9 July (themes to be shaped by member suggestions — Canva + AI suggested).
- GMCA to provide further information on the Festival of Technical Education and MBacc Summit once finalised.
- Continued development of the Member Resource Hub on the GMLPN website.