

NETWORK MEETING & 25TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

📍 Wednesday 13th May 2026

📍 9.00-16.00

📍 [voco Manchester - City Centre by IHG](#)



Sponsored by:



Agenda

- Open & Impact Report Launch – **Mark Currie**
- GMLPN Updates
- GMCA – **Nicola McLeod**
- AELP – **Simon Ashworth**
- Learner Panel – facilitated by **Danny Wells**
- Cognisoft – Headline Sponsor – **Chloe Atkinson**
- **Cllr Eamonn O'Brien** – Portfolio Lead for Technical Education & Skills
- **Lunch**
- 2001 Quiz – hosted by **Andy Turner**
- Keynote – **Chloe Combi**
- Ofsted – **Paul Cocker** Q&A with **Allan Milne**
- LSIP Update – GMCC - **Chris Fletcher**
- Employer Insights Panel- facilitated by **Subrahmaniam Krishnan-Harihara**
 - **Amazon Web Services**
 - **Ash Integrated Services**
 - **GMCC**
- Close and looking forward – **Mark Currie**

Headline Sponsor:



25 YEARS OF COLLABORATION & IMPACT



Open & Impact Report Launch

Mark Currie

GMLPN Chair



25 YEARS OF COLLABORATION & IMPACT



GMLPN Updates

Charlotte Jones

Chloe Forrest



CELEBRATING

Years

**OF COLLABORATION
& IMPACT**

GMLPN25 will bring together members, partners, policymakers, and stakeholders through our events, moments, and storytelling activities across 2026. These will highlight the people, places, and partnerships that have shaped GMLPN's journey and continue to drive impact across Greater Manchester.

GMLPN 25

Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network

25 YEARS OF COLLABORATION & IMPACT

Where it Began Campaign

GMLPN25: WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Reflections from Damar Training

JONATHAN BOURNE, CEO

GMLPN has been an integral part of my and Damar's journey since we bought the business from its founder in May 2006. I remember meeting Mark Currie (already GMLPN chair), bemused about the sector and what I had taken on. Since then, he and others in the network have been a constant source of guidance and support.

The Greater Manchester skills landscape in 2006 was very different. Apprenticeships were largely a cottage industry, with small independent providers serving local and often niche markets. In Stockport, where Damar was then based, providers specialised in areas such as veterinary care, engineering, hospitality and business, while the local FE college offered a broader range. Apprentices were typically aged 16-24. Most employers were local SMEs or public sector organisations.

Pastoral support was strong and apprenticeships provided a valuable route into employment. However, most programmes offered little structured training and apprenticeships lacked the status of academic routes. Progression to higher-level qualifications was difficult. There was a glass ceiling, even for the most able.

Funding was limited. Some apprenticeships attracted less than £1,000, forcing providers to operate on a shoestring and making it hard to attract talent. Regulation, led locally, often felt disconnected from delivery reality. I got excited when the Learning and Skills Council allocated us 10 of apprenticeships in business administration and accountancy for a Cheshire market town. It turned out there was no employer demand. Cue me, knocking on doors across office parks and industrial estates near Winsford.

Policy and regulation shifted frequently. At times overly restrictive, at others too loose - such as with Train to Gain. This inconsistency led to inefficiencies and, inevitably, concerns about the use of public funds.

The mid-2010s brought major reform. Apprenticeship standards and the introduction of the Levy transformed the sector, largely for the better. End-point assessment introduced rigour, and apprenticeships became focused on training to address clearly defined skills gaps. They expanded across all ages and levels, including professions such as law and architecture. In theory, the glass ceiling disappeared.



GMLPN25: WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Reflections from Rochdale Training

JILL NAGY, FORMER CEO

We first joined 25 years ago before I was Chief Executive, following a poor Ofsted result. I remember going to the meetings at the Lancashire Health & Racquets Club with the then CEO. Prior to that - I think we had been more inward looking.

It was brilliant to meet so many like-minded people facing the same challenges and I felt very much "at home".

For 25 years GMLPN has been championing the impact of high quality vocational and technical education and Rochdale Training is proud to be a part of this.

Being a member you are not only very well informed about emerging issues but have the opportunity to discuss them with your peers benefiting from their expertise in a supportive environment. It has influenced policy via lobbying and the spirit of collaboration is so strong within the network.

We have benefitted greatly from the network and so have our learners. Rochdale Training would not be where it is today without GMLPN.

Personally, it has been a privilege to work with such dedicated people with a true passion for the sector and to make a difference to people's lives. The cheese and onion pie is also great! When we joined the network it was the time of Apprenticeship Frameworks and Train to Gain. Quality has increased but must remain priority in the light of assessment changes. With the high cost of living and minimal funding increases - it is challenging to run a small Independent Training Provider but the network is very supportive - like 'therapy' at times!

Rochdale Training has grown through diversification from being an Engineering Apprenticeship provider to offering many different subject sector Apprenticeships, Adult Skills and Study Programmes. Our quality has also increased facilitated by GMLPN's close partnership with Ofsted, CPD and the Quality Professional Exchange - which Rochdale Training chairs.

Hopes and ambitions for the future of Skills across GM

That Adult Skills training and apprentices are recognised as key in driving the economy. We are very concerned about our young residents and believe GMLPN can make a difference to these young peoples lives and needs to be given the opportunity to do so.



GMLPN25: WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Reflections from Tracey Wood

TRACEY WOOD, CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER (CCO) | THE TRAFFORD AND STOCKPORT COLLEGE GROUP

When I think back to where my journey with GMLPN began, it takes me right back to over 23 years ago, in the early years of my career in Further Education. At that time, I was undertaking a business development Return on Investment (ROI) programme alongside other providers across the region, created by the network. It was an exciting but challenging time - we were all trying to better understand how to demonstrate value, impact and effectiveness in what we delivered.

What stood out to me immediately was not just the programme itself, but the people. Being surrounded by colleagues in similar roles, facing similar challenges, created something powerful. There was an openness, a willingness to share, and a genuine sense that we were stronger together. That early experience shaped my view of networks like GMLPN and the role they play - not just as a forum, but as a community.

Over the years, GMLPN has been a constant thread throughout my career. As I've progressed into more senior and strategic roles, that sense of connection has only grown stronger. The network has provided a space to share best practice, sense-check ideas, and learn from others who understand the complexity and pace of the skills system. It has also been a place where relationships are built - and those relationships matter.

I can genuinely say that many of the connections I have today, across Greater Manchester and beyond, have been shaped through GMLPN. Whether through formal meetings, collaborative projects or informal conversations, the network has enabled us to come together around a shared purpose: improving outcomes for learners and supporting the needs of employers.

Over the past two decades, the skills landscape has evolved significantly. We have seen policy reforms, funding changes, shifting economic priorities and, more recently, a much stronger focus on place-based skills systems and devolution. Through all of this, the need for collaboration has only increased.



GMLPN25: WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Reflections from Mantra Learning

Mantra Learning joined the Network to stay connected to the ever-evolving further education landscape at both regional and national levels. Over time, it has become much more than that - providing our employees with valuable opportunities for professional development, as well as a platform to share best practice, gain new insights, and build meaningful connections across the sector.

Being part of the Network is incredibly important to us, as it enables us to work collaboratively with organisations across Greater Manchester to share knowledge, exchange best practice, and collectively drive positive change within further education.

For our learners, we are continuously lobbying for Government funding in further education alongside the GMLPN that will have a significant impact on Greater Manchester's residents.

Over the past 25 years, we have built strong relationships and partnerships with a wide range of organisations and businesses, enabling us to support both employed and unemployed people across Greater Manchester. Working alongside other members of GMLPN, we have also contributed to driving and influencing positive change at a governmental level, helping to shape decisions around further education funding.

Manchester Transport Training Group "then"



Mantra Learning "now"



Since Mantra Learning joined the Network, the GMLPN has grown considerably, welcoming additional training providers, colleges, universities, and sector partners. This expansion has created even more opportunities for networking and collaboration across the region. Sharing a common passion for further education and best practice, we continue to strengthen these relationships, working together to foster positive change and drive the development of the sector.

Looking towards the future, we hope that more organisations and business continue to join the network and mark the solidarity of Greater Manchester when it comes to further education. Additionally, we'd love to continue to build on existing connections and partnerships to shape development across the sector.

Our hope is that, with such a strong partner in GMLPN, we will be able to support tens of thousands more people with the skills needed for sustainable employment and career progression.



GMLPN25: WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Reflections from Tameside College



has proven to be strategically important enabling us to benchmark, challenge and continuously refine our provision in line with both regional priorities and national expectations.

JACKIE MOORES, PRINCIPAL AND CEO:

Tameside College is proud to be a member of GMLPN and the values it represents. The network enables the college to share best practice in a supportive and collaborative environment with other GM providers and to learn from colleagues across the sector in GM. Tameside College is also very proud to showcase the talent of our learners and staff alongside our colleagues across the GMLPN.



Tameside College has responded to many challenges and opportunities over the past 25 years to create a thriving teaching and learning environment. Regulatory, legal, technological and social changes have presented opportunities for the college to adapt and grow. Our GMLPN membership has helped shape this growth through shared practice, benchmarking and one voice.

The pandemic is a great example of a shared experience between GMLPN members of quickly adapting a public service online whilst ensuring the most vulnerable learners retained vital access to their teachers and support networks. The practice from this era has been embedded within the organisation.



25 YEARS OF COLLABORATION & IMPACT

What's next?

Campaign: Collaboration and Impact (July-September)

A spotlight campaign inviting contribution from members - showcasing current, or past collaboration that has had a positive impact

Campaign: Future of Skills for 2051 (October-December)

A spotlight campaign asking members and partners their view for the future of skills

E-mail Charlotte (charlotte.j@gmlpn.co.uk) to get involved!

Special Resolution

That, in connection with the proposed-registration of the Company as a community interest company:

- The Company's name shall be changed to "Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network Limited CIC".
- The Company shall be a community interest company.
- The articles of association shall be altered so as to comply with requirements in connection with becoming a community interest company. The articles of association shall be altered so as to take the form of the articles of association attached to this resolution which are in substitution for, and to the exclusion of, any articles of association of the Company previously registered with the Registrar of Companies.



GM SKILLS AWARDS 2026

**Book your place
before the 22nd May**



GMLPN 25
Greater Manchester
Learning Provider Network
25 YEARS OF COLLABORATION & IMPACT



Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce

We received



350 Nominations



GM SKILLS AWARDS 2026

Headline Partner

GMCA **GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY**

SPONSORS



North West



Welcome to our new members...

**<CODE>YOUR
FUTURE**



ZGMC

25 YEARS OF COLLABORATION & IMPACT

Youth Census



Upcoming Events

CEIAG Exchange, 15th May - 10 AM - 12 PM

Quality Exchange, 19th May - 10 AM – 12PM PM

Business Development Exchange, 5th June - 10 AM - 12 PM

SEND Exchange, 18th June - 10 AM - 12 PM

Online Member KIT, 24th June - 1:30PM - 3:30PM

Network Meeting, 16th September - 9AM - 4PM (Bolton)

Network Meeting, 2nd December - 9AM - 4PM (Salford)

Email: info@gmlpn.co.uk to book your place

NETWORK MEETING & 25TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

NICOLA MCLEOD

**DIRECTOR – EDUCATION, WORK &
SKILLS ENGAGEMENT**



GMCA GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

GMLPN 25
Greater Manchester
Learning Provider Network
25 YEARS OF COLLABORATION & IMPACT

NETWORK MEETING & 25TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

**SIMON ASHWORTH –
ASSOCIATION OF EMPLOYMENT
AND LEARNING PROVIDERS (AELP)**

DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND DEPUTY CEO



GMLPN 25
Greater Manchester
Learning Provider Network
25 YEARS OF COLLABORATION & IMPACT

AELP National Policy Update

May 2026

Facilitator: Simon Ashworth, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Policy, AELP

13th May 2026



A Much Changing Further Education Landscape and Ecosystem

Ofsted's Revised
Inspection Framework

Devolution Agenda
including Adult Skills

Qualification Reform
V Levels
T Levels
16-19 Programmes

Higher Education inc
Lifelong Learning
Entitlement (LLE)

Apprenticeship Reform

Young People and the
NEET Crisis

Wider Economic Factors
Home – Political uncertainty, Employment Rights Act, Employer Confidence
Abroad – Energy prices, Links to Inflation and Interest Rates

Apprenticeship Programme Budget: Fiscal Position Tightens

DfE raids budgets to cover ‘landmark’ apprenticeships overspend

Experts warn that further ‘trade-offs’ may need to be made in future



5 min read | 24 July 2025, 4:38 pm



- For the 24/25 financial year, the DfE saw a £123 million (4.6%) overspend on the original programme budget, rising to a £52 million overspend on the revised budget.
- Positive settlement in Autumn Budget - £725m more for apprenticeships. Minus the £140m for the regional pilots for the new “clearing/brokerage system” announced in NAW 2026
- Circa extra £200m a year for the programme budget for the duration of this parliament.
- But... HUGE surge in uncapped demand for Level 7 has devoured the new headroom and baked in extra costs.
- Narrative to “rebalance” the system needs to be expedited due to a degree of fiscal paralysis.
- Top slice of c£600m still being pocketed by HMT, potentially £1.5bn over the next two years.

DfE’s apprenticeship budget vs spending

Apprenticeship	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25
Budget	£2,010m	£2,231m	£2,469m	£2,467m	£2,466m	£2,554m	£2,525m	£2,729m
Spend	£1,586m	£1,738m	£1,919m	£1,863m	£2,455m	£2,458m	£2,509m	£2,781m
Returned £	£424m	£493m	£550m	£604m	£11m	£96m	£16m	£0
Returned %	21%	22%	22%	24%	0.4%	4%	1%	0%

Source: DfE data

FEWEEK

Skills England's Published Report on Level 7 Defunding

Apprenticeships and Skills Training

Statement made on 2 June 2025

Statement UIN HCWS672

Statement made by



Bridget Phillipson

Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities

Labour

Houghton and Sunderland South



Skills England did not find a strong enough economic rationale to exempt a small group of level 7 apprenticeship standards from defunding. While level 7 apprenticeships can be a valuable route for some disadvantaged learners, a significant proportion are from non-deprived backgrounds and are significantly less likely to be deprived than apprentices at lower levels. Level 7 generally has a higher proportion of older learners than other apprenticeships, particularly the senior leader apprenticeship (where 99% are over 25) and standards with an embedded postgraduate qualification.

I am now confirming that we will proceed with this reform. We will continue to fund level 7 for those aged 16-21 (when they start their apprenticeship) and support apprentices already on a level 7 apprenticeship through to completion. This change will apply from January 2026 across all sectors.

*“Evidence from the data and engagement demonstrates that level 7 apprenticeships offer **good value for money**, are **high quality** and are **highly valued by employers**.”*

*“There is a **clear economic rationale for employers to continue supporting some level 7 apprenticeships**, particularly where they have a skills need and where apprenticeships provide a more appropriate route than alternative training.... (BUT) In the context of needing to prioritise funding towards younger learners, Skills England has not found a strong enough economic rationale to exempt a small group of level 7 apprenticeships from defunding.”*

[Skills England: evidence on defunding of level 7 apprenticeships](#)

Autumn Budget: Incoming Apprenticeship System Changes (November 2025)

Key Changes

From the next academic year, fully funded apprenticeships for non-levy payers (mainly small and medium sized businesses) will be available for eligible under 25 year olds

We will work with employers and Skills England to streamline the range of apprenticeship standards available.

From the 2026/27 academic year we will begin to:

- remove the additional 10% top up to accounts funds
- change the expiry window for levy funds from 24 months to 12 months
- change government's co-investment rate to 75% (from 95%) for levy-paying employers once they have exhausted all their funds (this will mean levy-paying employers co-investment rate will be 25% if they have used all funds in their account)

In summary, levy-payers will get less to spend, less time to spend it and more expenses for exceeding their funds. Specifically, from August 2026:

1. *10% top-up stops*
2. *24 to 12-month expiry of levy funds applied to new funds from this point.*
3. *5% becomes 25% co-investment for exceeding levy allocation, noting no impact on pre-August starts already on-programme.*

Conversely, from August, non-levy paying employers will have a fully funded scope increase to under-25s, but this will only apply to new apprentices starting from that point onwards.

In summary

- Levy payers, being squeezed and squeezed hard.
- Marginal levy payers (typically SMEs) are the biggest losers.
- Non-levy payers, changes are more positive.
- Forecasting spending and commitments a significant challenge.
- Subtle footnote on "Streamlining" project announced

<https://find-employer-schemes.education.gov.uk/interim/growth-and-skills-levy>

Apprenticeships: the 'Pivot' to Young People (March 2026)

Pat McFadden unveils £1bn youth employment scheme and appeals to backbenchers who rebelled last year

● [UK politics live - latest updates](#)



📷 Pat McFadden: 'I see no reason Labour MPs should not support welfare reform that puts work and opportunity at its heart.' Photograph: Aaron Chown/PA

List of apprenticeship standards being streamlined:

- Facilities Management Supervisor
- Improvement Practitioner
- Custody and Detention Professional
- Security First Line Manager
- Improvement Leader
- Public Sector Compliance Investigator and Officer
- Cleaning Hygiene Operative
- Coaching Professional
- Outdoor Learning Specialist
- Learning and Skills Assessor
- Learning and Skills Mentor
- Professional Security Operative
- Lead Practitioner in Adult Care
- Team Leader
- Operations Manager
- Chartered Manager

An apprenticeship unit is a short, flexible training course to help respond quickly to evolving skills needs. The new apprenticeship units include:

- Welding – mechanised
- AI Leadership – developing AI strategy
- Electric vehicle charging point installation and maintenance
- Electrical fitting and assembly
- Mechanical fitting and assembly
- Permanent modular building assembly
- Solar PV installation and maintenance

YOUTH GUARANTEE:
THOUSANDS MORE TO
GET **TRAINING AND**
WORK SUPPORT

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-employment-drive-to-help-unlock-200000-new-jobs-and-apprenticeships-for-next-generation>

Pivot Towards Young People: New/Expanded Programmes (April 2026)



Foundation Apprenticeships (Level 2)

Wave One: Construction, Digital, Engineering and Adult Care – Expanded to include Retail and Hospitality from April 2026.

[Apprenticeship search / Skills England](#)

Level 2 Administration Assistant Apprenticeship

The long-awaited Level 2 Administration Assistant is being made available, but only for 16–24-year-olds and from August 2026.

[Administration assistant / Skills England](#)



Employer Incentives and Grants (Now and Future)

What is available now:

- **No Employer NICs** on employees under 21 and apprentices under 25. Noting this is based on actual age, not age at start.
- 16-18 incentive of **£1,000** for all current employers (and providers), including under 25s with an EHCP.
- 16-21 (plus those under 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan: EHCP)) **Foundation Apprenticeship** Incentive of **£2,000** for all employers. Note this is paid in three instalments, including 1/3 on a progression outcome.

Incoming additions:

- Subsidised 6-month **job placements** through the expanded **Jobs Guarantee**, currently open to candidates aged 18 to 21 (expanding to 18-24), to create over 90,000 placements over the next three years. Mainstream rollout coming Autumn 2026, covers NMW (and other employment costs). Expecting these to be administered by Intermediaries on behalf of JCP.
- June 2026 - **£3,000 incentive** for employers who employ a 16-24-year-old who has been on universal credit for 6 months plus – **Youth Jobs Grant**. This is expected to be paid in two equal instalments; more details from DWP expected shortly.
- August 2026 - **Fully funded apprenticeships** for 16-24 apprentices in non-levy paying employers (currently under 22s)
- October 2026 - **£2,000 “Hiring Grant”** for *non-levy payers (not SMEs!)* who recruit an apprentice aged 16-24

Employer Incentives for Apprenticeships in 2026

What AELP members need to know



The Government is delivering the biggest package of employer incentives for apprenticeships in over a decade.

These incentives sit alongside fully or majority funded training for many under 25s and employer National Insurance relief where applicable.

THE FOUR EMPLOYER INCENTIVES



1 Young Apprentice Payment

£1,000

AVAILABLE FROM

Now

Applies when you recruit:

- An apprentice aged 16-18, or
- 19-24 year olds with an EHCP or care leaver status
- Available for employers of all sizes
- Payments are processed by the training provider

Payment is available now for eligible apprenticeships



2 Foundation Apprenticeship Incentive

Up to £2,000

AVAILABLE FROM

Now

Applies when you recruit a foundation apprentice who is:

- Aged 16-21, or
- 22-24 with EHCP care experience or custodial background
- Available for employers of all sizes
- Payments are processed by the training provider

Supports young people not yet ready for a full apprenticeship, with progression into skilled employment.



3 Non-Levy Hiring Grant

£2,000

AVAILABLE FROM

October 2026

Applies when a non-levy paying employer employs and recruits an additional apprentice aged 16-24.

- Payments are processed by the training provider
- The apprentice can have joined the employer up to 3 months before their apprenticeship training start date.

Sits alongside:

- Full or majority funding of training costs for many under 25s
- Employer National Insurance relief where applicable



4 Youth Jobs Grant

£3,000

AVAILABLE FROM

June 2026

Applies when you hire an 18-24 year old who has been:

- On Universal Credit, and
- Seeking work for six months or more
- Available for employers of all sizes
- Payments made to the employer directly

Designed to reduce recruitment risk and help employers engage young people who may otherwise struggle to access opportunities

HOW THE INCENTIVES WORK TOGETHER



Youth Jobs Grant

Helps employers hire young people furthest from the labour market.



Jobs Guarantee Placements

Provide work experience and support to build skills and confidence.



Apprenticeship Incentives

Support progression into sustained, skilled employment.



Pipelines into skilled, sustained work for young people.

WHAT AELP MEMBERS SHOULD CONSIDER



Clear, consistent messaging

Ensure employers understand eligibility and timing.



Promote progression routes

Position apprenticeships as the next step from Jobs Guarantee and youth Jobs Grant roles



Focus on early support and retention

Most payments are linked to milestones - success depends on sustained engagement.



Work together locally

Collaboration with jobcentre Plus, Youth Hubs and employers will be essential to maximise impact.



Quality and progression matter

Incentives must translate into starts, progression and sustained jobs.

STACKING OF INCENTIVES



While final delivery guidance is still being developed, government announcements make clear that the Youth Jobs Grant, Jobs Guarantee and apprenticeship incentives are separate measures designed to work together. Employers may be able to access more than one incentive for the same young person where eligibility criteria are met. The precise mechanics, sequencing and claiming arrangements will be confirmed through forthcoming guidance.



AELP will continue to work with government and partners to ensure these incentives support quality, progression and positive outcomes for young people.

*Timing subject to final guidance

Downloadable Resource



Apprenticeship Units and Key Rules

Apprenticeship unit

Solar PV installation and maintenance – Apprenticeship unit (level 3)

This apprenticeship unit is for existing employed electricians who, with the support of their employer, need to upskill in solar photovoltaic (PV) installation and maintenance fundamentals.

Level: 3 - equal to A level

Type: Apprenticeship unit

Job category: Construction and the built environment

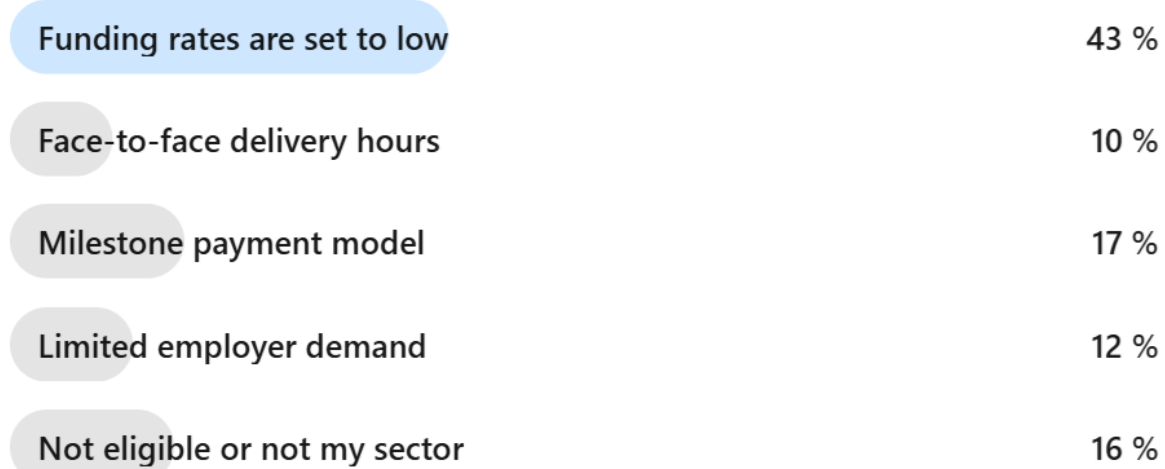
Delivery hours: 35 hours

Maximum funding from government: £950

[View 13 training providers for this course](#)

What’s the biggest barrier to you delivering apprenticeship units?

The author can see how you vote. [Learn more](#)



304 votes • Poll closed

- **Funding Eligibility:** Confirmed as available to non-levy as well as levy-paying employers. Co-Investment charge for levy-payers who have overspent currently at 5%, likely to be 25% from August 2026.
- **Learner Eligibility:** 19+ adults, cannot be on a concurrent apprenticeship.
- **Funding Model:** Bootcamp type model – two milestone payments, 30% milestone 1 and 70% milestone 2 on completion. Strictly no subcontracting allowed.
- **Funding Rates:** £3,200 to £750.
- **Funding Withdrawal:** DWP contingency to defund starts on units by giving 4 weeks’ notice (backstop)
- **Delivery Model:** New “delivery hours” as opposed to OTJT or GLH. This must be delivered in full and be tutor-led, i.e. no self-directed learning will count. Small concession for catch-up.
- **Completion:** Learners will need to pass a skills test, delivered by the provider, to demonstrate they have acquired the skills and knowledge set out in the apprenticeship unit. Employers will need to validate the result to confirm the learner has been successful.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-unit-funding-rules-2026-to-2027/apprenticeship-unit-funding-rules-april-2026-to-31-july-2026>

Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR)

Overall achievement rates by detailed level between 2022/23 and 2024/25							
		Leavers			Achievement rate		
		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Total		293,370	290,680	299,510	54.6%	60.5%	65.4%
Intermediate Level	Total	77,170	72,250	64,640	54.1%	59.7%	64.0%
Advanced Level	Total	129,650	125,600	130,990	55.3%	60.2%	66.4%
Higher Level	Total	86,560	92,840	103,890	54.0%	61.4%	64.9%
	Level 4	29,560	30,600	35,560	47.2%	56.8%	60.9%
	Level 5	23,480	22,390	25,790	51.9%	59.6%	66.2%
	Level 6	15,370	20,730	23,050	65.7%	69.1%	69.3%
	Level 7	18,160	19,120	19,490	57.8%	62.5%	65.4%

- Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR) published last month.
- Overall QAR increased again significantly, for the 24/25 academic year, to up to 65.4%
- Secretary of State Pat McFadden has reset an ambition of achieving 70%+ but has no specific timeline for this target.
- More broadly, 93% of apprentices are studying with a training provider deemed as good or better under the old outgoing Ofsted inspection methodology and single-word judgments.

Draft DWP Funding Rules Apprenticeships 26/27



Draft apprenticeship funding rules

August 2026 to July 2027

April 2026

Draft

[Apprenticeship funding rules and assessment plan guidance, 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules-and-assessment-plan-guidance-2026-to-2027)

Disappointingly, no movement on addressing visa eligibility issues.

However, version 1 could still include an update on decoupling full co-investment collection and the final 20% completion payment.

Version 1 is also likely to have more detail on the new non-levy £2,000 new hire 16-24 employer hiring grant.

Draft Funding Rules Apprenticeships: Key Points of Interest (1/2)

Update: The reference to Annex C has been removed. The minimum volume of off-the-job training for each standard can now be found on the Skills England website (on each standard).

Individuals who are not eligible for funding

33. A provider must not claim funding for individuals who:

33.4. Are undertaking another apprenticeship or apprenticeship unit.

33.5. Are undertaking a skills bootcamp funded by government.

197. The provider must agree a contract for services with the employer and this must include the funding band (or negotiated price if less) for the programme and details of the co-investment policy which applies (if applicable).

197.1. There is no requirement to break down the price into the eligible cost areas but the provider must include a statement in the contract to confirm that the funding band will only be used directly on eligible costs (see paragraphs 104 to 108).

197.2. The funding band and any agreed price does not include VAT (although VAT may be charged on employer co-investment).

67. All new apprentices must start on an approved [apprenticeship standard](#) that is eligible for funding. Providers must ensure that they comply with any restrictions / limits on the delivery of specific standards as detailed in the terms and conditions of their individual funding agreements.

67.1. We will fund an apprentice to undertake an apprenticeship at a higher level than a qualification they already hold, including a previous apprenticeship.

67.2. We will fund an apprentice to undertake an apprenticeship at the same or lower level than a qualification they already hold, if the apprenticeship will allow the individual to acquire significant new skills and the provider can show that the content of the training is materially different from any prior qualification or a previous apprenticeship.

67.3. If a non-mandatory qualification is being used, this qualification must not be at a higher level than the level of the standard (e.g. a Level 7 qualification must not be used to deliver Level 6 content / standards).

Draft Funding Rules Apprenticeships: Key Points of Interest (2/2)

Selecting a subcontractor

252. The provider must only use subcontractors that satisfy one of the following 5 criteria:
- 252.3. They are not on the published APAR but will deliver less than £25,000 of apprenticeship training, under contract across all main providers and employer-providers, between 1 August and 31 July each year.
- 252.3.1 The subcontractor must have a current UKPRN, must not have engaged the 'Funding higher risk organisations and subcontractors' policy and cannot deliver full apprenticeship standards. They can work with any main provider or employer-provider, even those that have not achieved the subcontracting standard.
- 252.4. They are not on the published APAR but will deliver between £25,001 and £99,999 of apprenticeship training under contract across all main providers and employer-providers, between 1 August and 31 July each year.
- 252.4.1 The subcontractor must have a current UKPRN, must not have engaged the 'Funding higher risk organisations and subcontractors' policy and cannot deliver full apprenticeship standards. They can only work with main providers or employer-providers who have written confirmation from us that they have fully achieved the subcontracting standard, at the point of subcontracting.

Subcontractor

A separate legal entity or an individual that has a contract for service or a written agreement with a provider to deliver, for a fee, any element of the education and training we fund. A separate legal entity can include but is not limited to companies in the provider's group. An individual could include a person who is a sole trader or is self-employed.

We do not consider the following to be a subcontractor: a) an individual who has a contract of employment with the provider; b) an individual who has a written secondment arrangement with the provider (so long as they have no financial stake in the company they are legally employed by or released from); c) a person who is 'directly managed and controlled' (see glossary definition) in the same way as the provider's own employees; d) an assessment organisation; and e) a company or individual who is solely providing a non-training delivery service such as marketing.

Directly managed and controlled (part of 'Subcontractor' definition)

Someone who is embedded within a provider's organisational structure to a degree equivalent to its own staff. For this to be true this person would be: a) closely managed with their hours / working days / location set by the other party; b) offered and / or able to access maternity, holiday and / or sick pay; c) provided with the equipment needed to do the work (e.g. laptop, materials); d) unable to send a substitute. If this is proven to be the case, this is not subcontracting. (Conversely, if the person is functioning as an autonomous operator or an independent, this would be subcontracting).

(This terminology (directly management and controlled) is linked to IR35 – see glossary term).

178. We will pay the remaining balance (the completion payment) of the total negotiated price, up to the funding band maximum, to the provider when the apprentice has undertaken all the activity relevant to the apprenticeship, including completing all elements of the end-point assessment; and where applicable, the employer co-investment has been collected and recorded on the ILR (see paragraph 180). NB: The completion payment is not aligned to the assessment costs.

202.1. For levy paying employers who have insufficient funds, the employer co-investment rate is 25%

202.2. For employers who do not pay the levy, if at the start of their apprenticeship training the apprentice is aged 25 or above, the employer co-investment rate is 5%



aelp)

LEARNER PANEL – DANNY WELLS (GMLPN BOARD MEMBER)



LIAM ELEBERT-MORGAN
APPRENTICE – WIGAN & LEIGH
COLLEGE
MBDA



MARK PHILIPS
SECURITY LEARNER
MANTRA LEARNING



RONDELL GREGORY ELLIOT
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NICHA MILLER
COMMUNITY LEARNER
FUNDING FUTURES



ASANDA DUBE
YEAR 2 HEALTHCARE T LEVEL
LEARNER (ADULT NURSING)
SALFORD CITY COLLEGE

NETWORK MEETING & 25TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

**CHLOE ATKINSON –
COGNISOFT**

**SENIOR SOFTWARE SALES CONSULTANT
& ACCOUNT MANAGER**



Headline Sponsor:



GMLPN **25**
Greater Manchester
Learning Provider Network
25 YEARS OF COLLABORATION & IMPACT

Just to recognise what 25 years means in this sector.

- policy shifts
- funding bodies
- funding reforms
- inspection changes
- growing learner needs

Then	Now
Paper files	Digital records
Manual reports	Real-time insight
Isolated systems	Connected data
Reactive support	Earlier intervention

The mission stays the same.

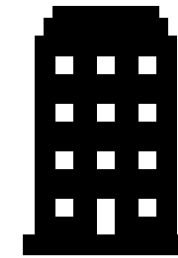
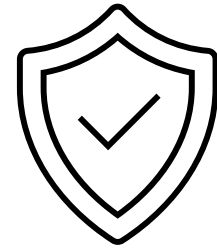
Learners still come first.



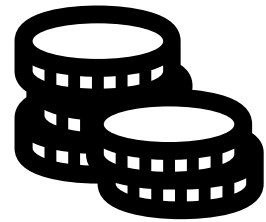
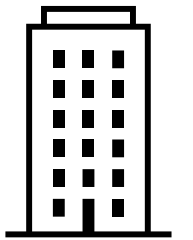
The growing challenge



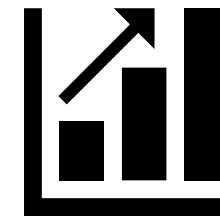
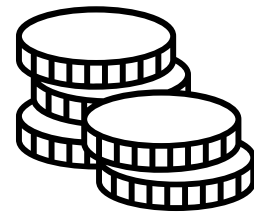
Compliance



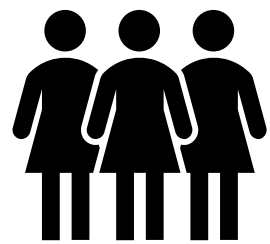
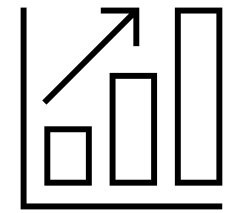
Employer Needs



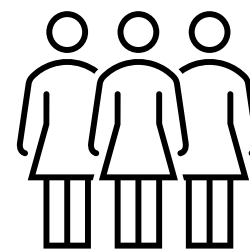
Funding



Reporting



Learner Engagement



Quality Assurance



Where technology should help



Reduce

- ❖ Duplicate data entry
- ❖ Manual checking
- ❖ Fragmented systems

Improve

- ❖ Confidence in data
- ❖ Visibility across teams
- ❖ Learner tracking
- ❖ Earlier support
- ❖ Better decisions
- ❖ Stronger compliance

Enable

The real benefit

Less admin. More impact.

- ❖ More learner conversations
- ❖ Earlier intervention
- ❖ Stronger relationships
- ❖ Better outcomes



Using data to act earlier

Data should:

- ✓ Identify attendance issues
- ✓ Flag missing evidence
- ✓ Spot disengagement
- ✓ Reveal performance trends
- ✓ Support leadership decisions



Looking ahead

- Simplifying complexity
- Connecting systems
- Using AI thoughtfully
- Protecting time for learners



Supporting what matters



Thank-you



**NETWORK MEETING
& 25TH BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION**

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& ACCOUNT MANAGER

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 **CogniSoft**

Creating more time, for what matters.



NETWORK MEETING & 25TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

CLLR EAMONN OBRIEN

LEADER OF BURY COUNCIL
PORTFOLIO LEAD – TECHNICAL
EDUCATION & SKILLS AND CLEAN AIR



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RAFFLE!

CELEBRATING

25

years

**OF COLLABORATION
& IMPACT**



NETWORK MEETING & 25TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

LUNCH & NETWORKING

Sponsored by:





**Submit your
opportunities for Growth
and Collaboration in the
FE sector >>>**



Quiz time!

Hosted by Andy Turner
(GMLPN Board
Member)

CELEBRATING
25
years
**OF COLLABORATION
& IMPACT**

NETWORK MEETING & 25TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

KEYNOTE SPEAKER CHLOE COMBI



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What Does The Future Look Like?

(In a very rocky present) #GenA #GenZ

*TEST YOUR
GEN Z/GEN A
KNOWLEDGE!*

RED-PILLING/BLACK PILLING

4B

SNAP-BACK

Dink Doink

OZ-FACE

LooksMaxxing

Mogging

The Numbers.

16.9%

1 million

33.8

7.5

31 > 68

9

17.1 > 19.4

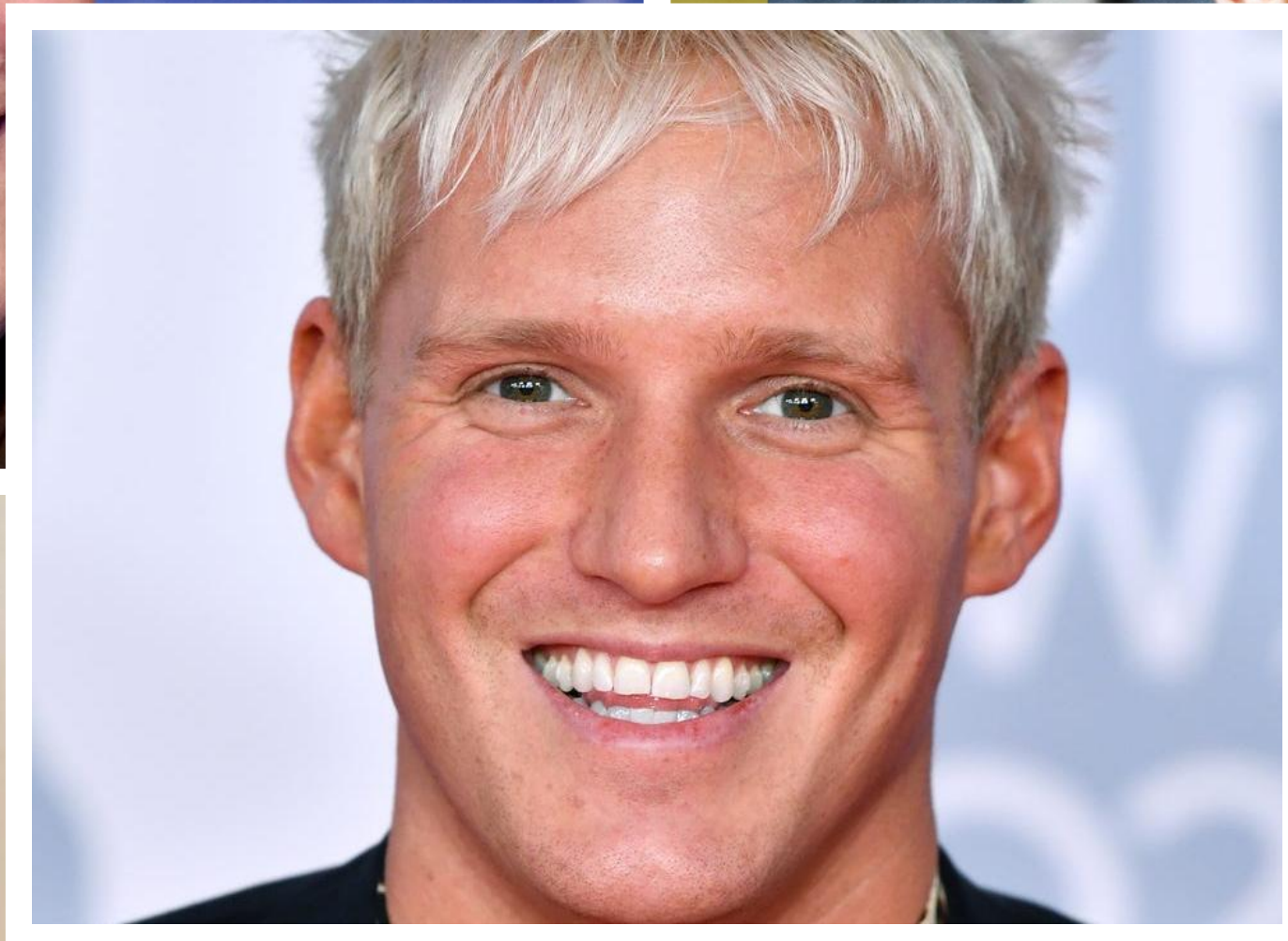
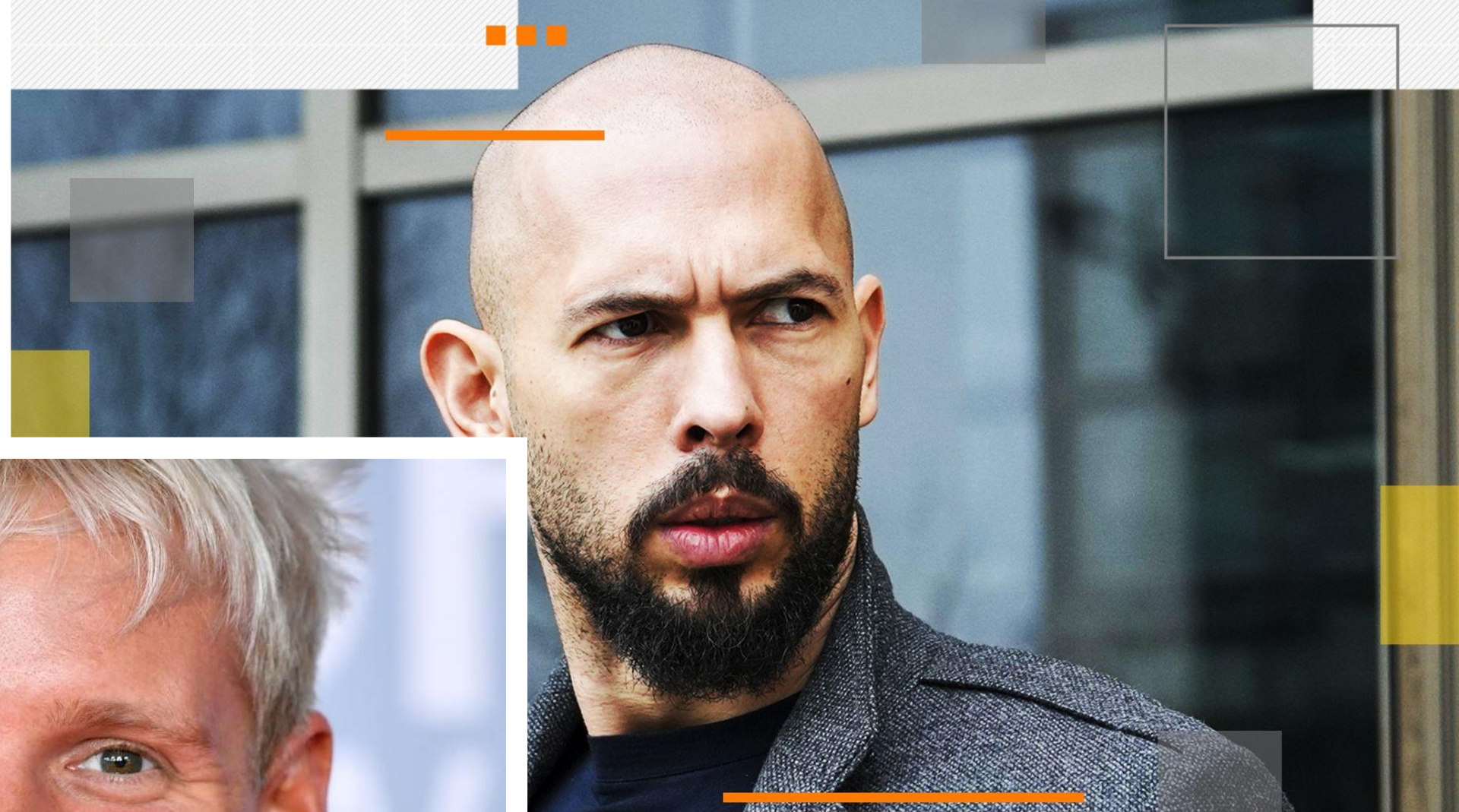
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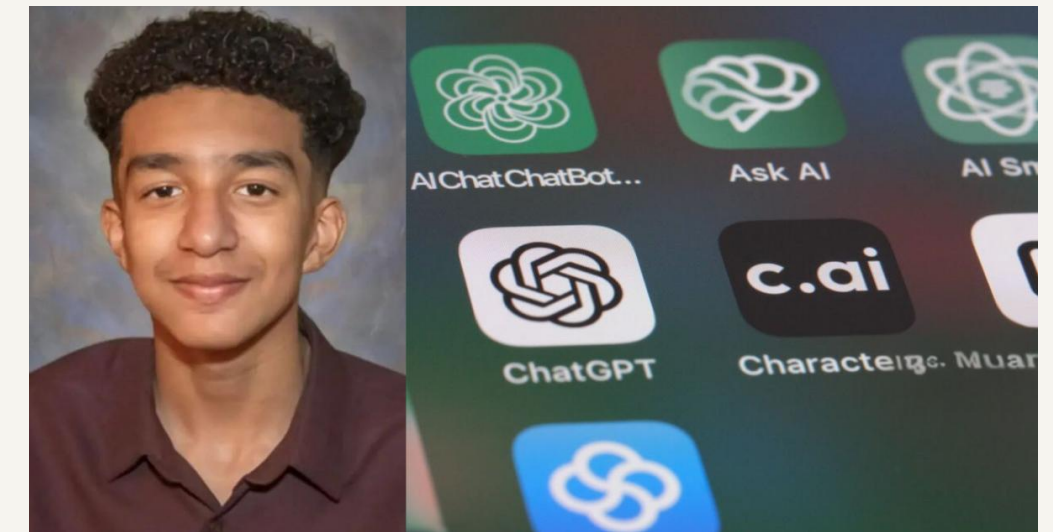
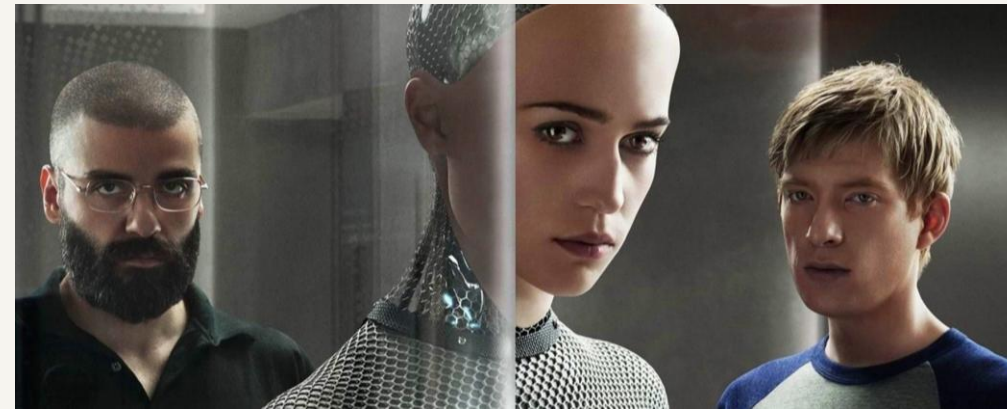
23



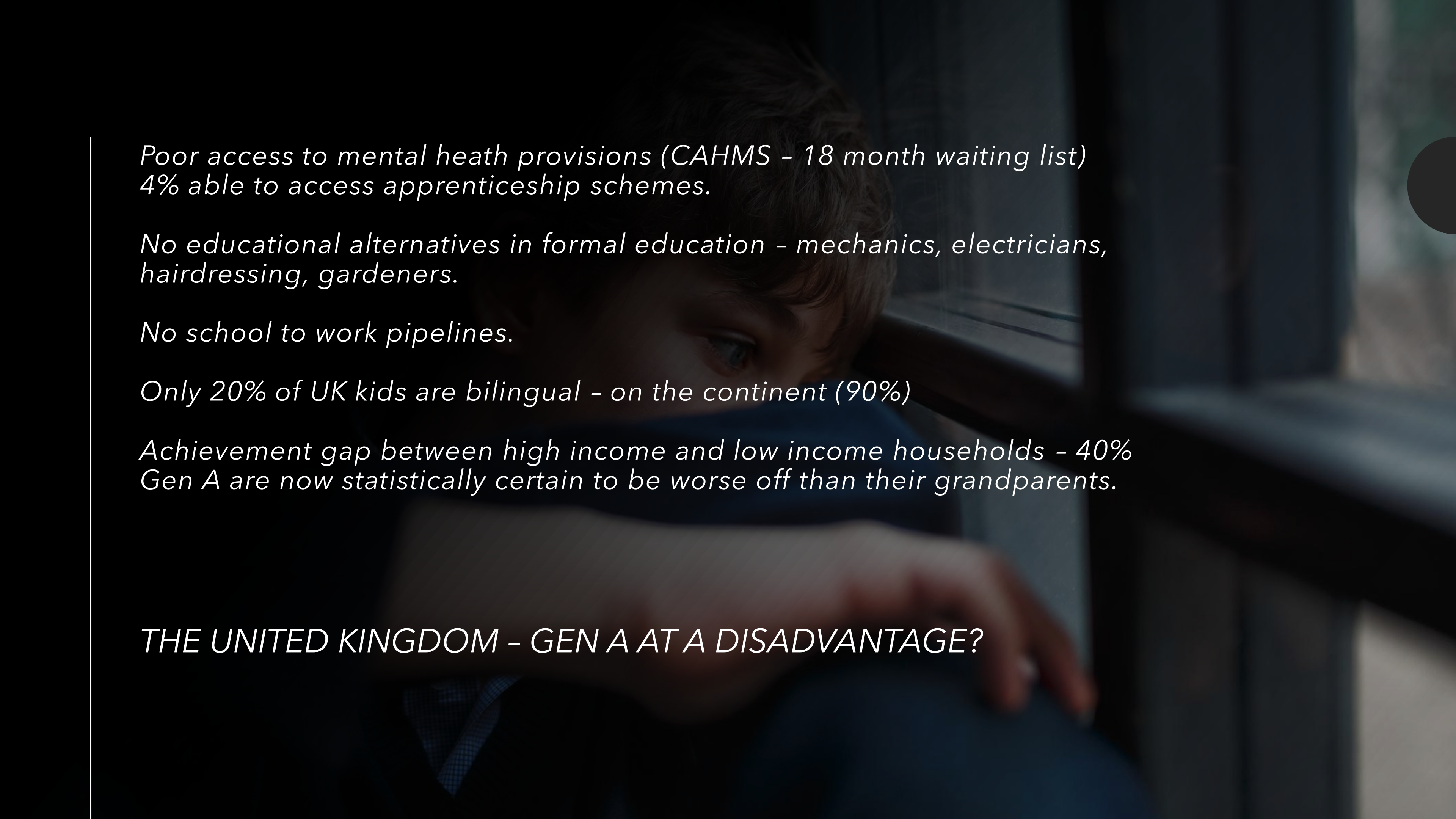
*The Entrepreneurial
Mindset: Friend or Foe
(89% of Gen A would
like to be content
creators.)*

"School and jobs are for losers and suckers." Jake Paul.





AI - what's the impact on THEIR future?



*Poor access to mental health provisions (CAHMS - 18 month waiting list)
4% able to access apprenticeship schemes.*

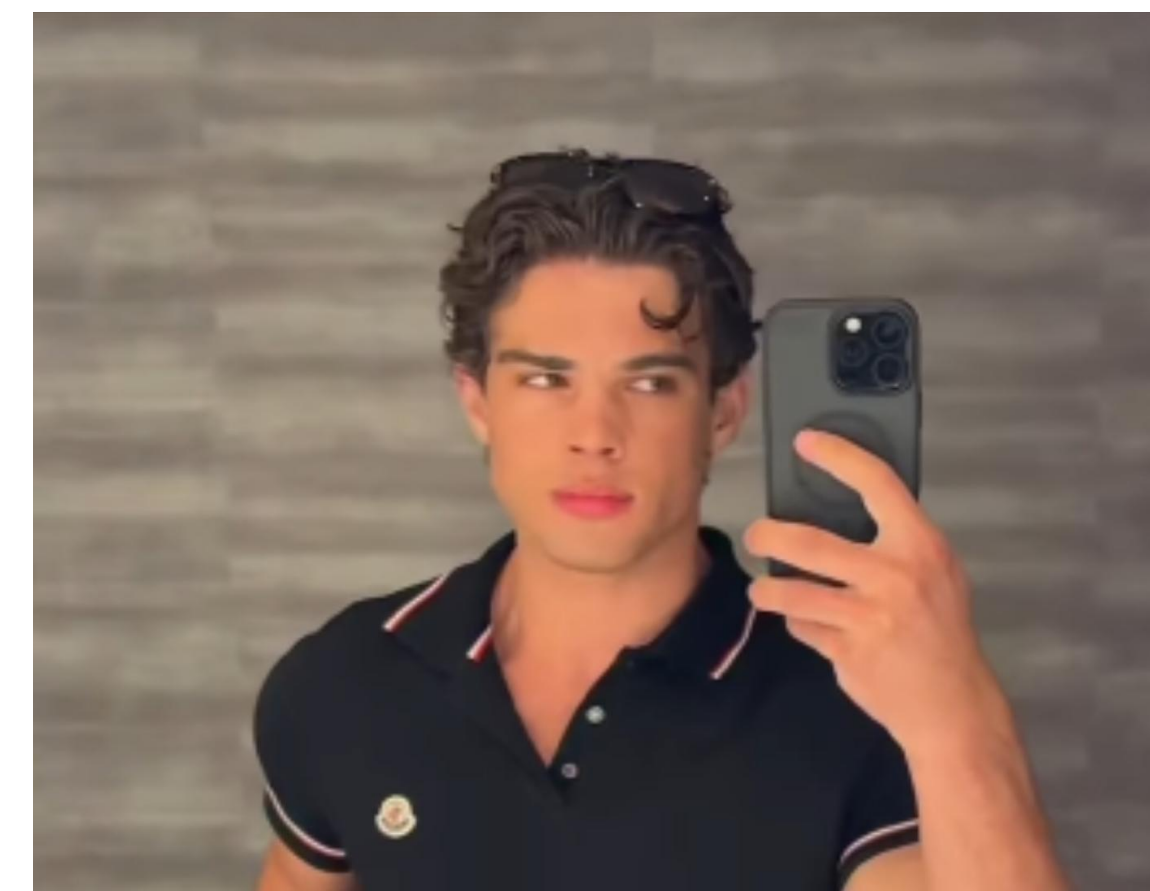
No educational alternatives in formal education - mechanics, electricians, hairdressing, gardeners.

No school to work pipelines.

Only 20% of UK kids are bilingual - on the continent (90%)

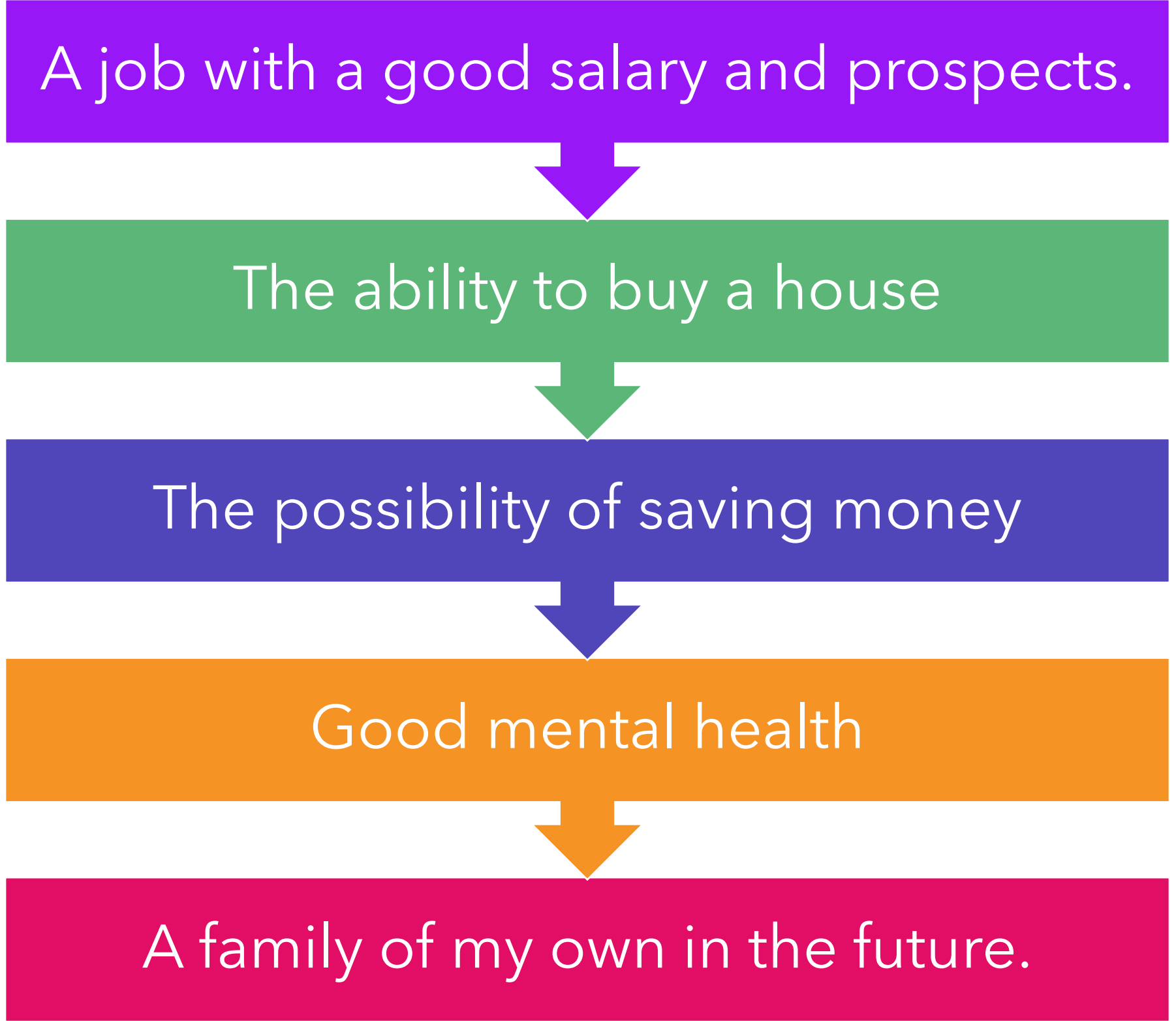
*Achievement gap between high income and low income households - 40%
Gen A are now statistically certain to be worse off than their grandparents.*

THE UNITED KINGDOM - GEN A AT A DISADVANTAGE?



What's the one thing that would make you feel better about the future?

A job with a good salary and prospects.



```
graph TD; A[A job with a good salary and prospects.] --> B[The ability to buy a house]; B --> C[The possibility of saving money]; C --> D[Good mental health]; D --> E[A family of my own in the future.];
```

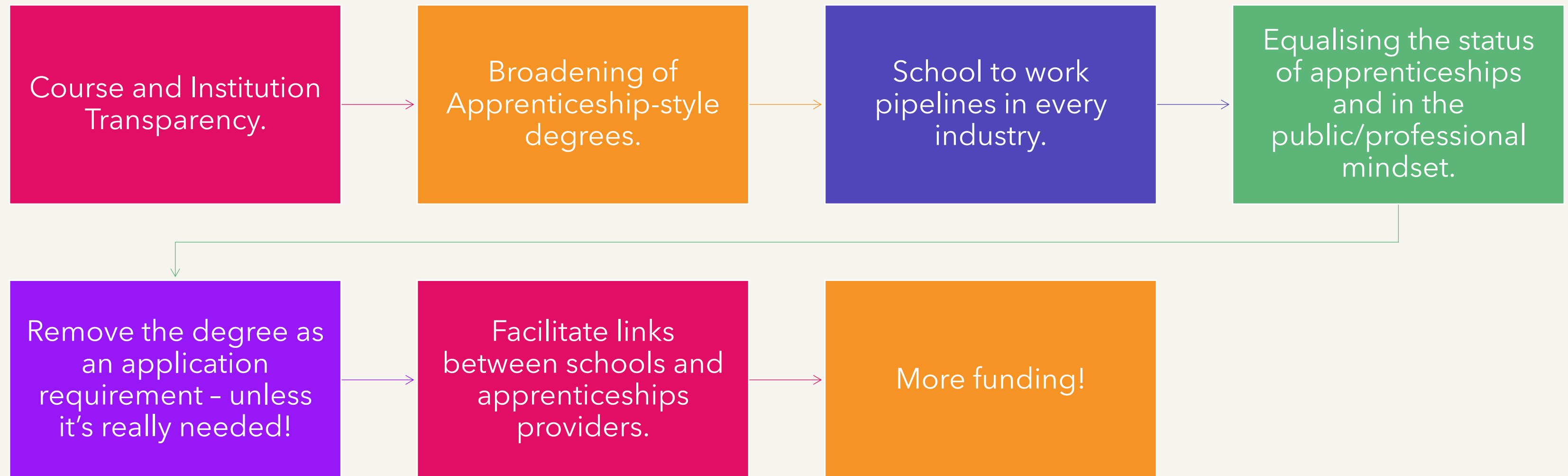
The ability to buy a house

The possibility of saving money

Good mental health

A family of my own in the future.

Restructuring of School, Higher Education + Learning.



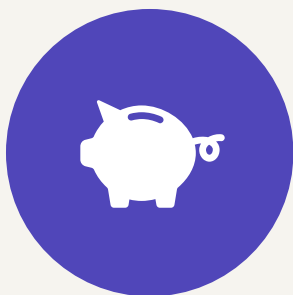
Helping Gen A and Gen Z Thrive.



MAKE WORK EXPERIENCE GREAT AGAIN!



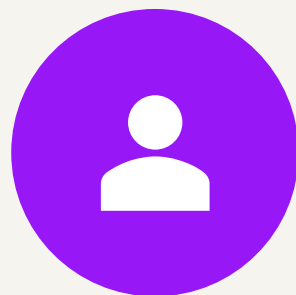
MODERNISATION OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM: FINANCE, PERSONAL SKILLS AND CAREERS ADVICE (A DEDICATED DEPARTMENT IN TOUCH WITH INDUSTRY.



PAY INTO A HOUSING FUND + PENSION FUND.



RENT + TRAVEL SUBSIDIES.



WORK MENTORS (GEN Z + X = EXCELLENCE)



COMPANIES DEVELOPING 2030-READY TRAINING.

The Best Outcomes.

A population that thrives and survives
(UK: Mean Age UK: 42, Africa: 19.3, Japan: 50.8)

Less division.

Lowering of the cultural temperature

Better mental health.

Thriving industries

Less divisive and populist politics

A sense of unity and purpose unseen since the early 1990's.

Come and say hello - further reading!

<https://www.independent.co.uk/author/chloe-combi>

<https://chloecombi.substack.com>

Chloecombi.net

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/chloe-combi-332b02146/>

<https://www.instagram.com/chloecombi1/>

OFSTED Q&A



PAUL COCKER

**ASSISTANT REGIONAL
DIRECTOR, NORTH WEST**



ALLAN MILNE

**(GMLPN BOARD
MEMBER)**

NETWORK MEETING & 25TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

LSIP UPDATE

CHRIS FLETCHER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SKILLS POLICY

GREATER MANCHESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (GMCC)



Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce

GMLPN 25
Greater Manchester
Learning Provider Network
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PANEL- SUBRAH KRISHNAN-HARIHARA (GMLPN BOARD MEMBER)



CHRIS FLETCHER

**GREATER MANCHESTER CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE (GMCC)**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SKILLS
POLICY**



ANTONY GRACE

**ASH INTEGRATED
SERVICES LTD**

DIRECTOR



HELENA ZAUM

AMAZON WEB SERVICES

**SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER EMEA,
AWS RE/START**

Close

Mark Currie

GMLPN Chair



CELEBRATING

25

years

**OF COLLABORATION
& IMPACT**

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**Thank you for
celebrating with us -
and being part of our
growing network!**