



NETWORK MEETING



Wednesday 17th September 2025



9.00–12.00



Online

Agenda

- Open | Mark Currie
- Your Views
- Manchester Growth and Development | Simon Joos, Work and Skills Specialist, Manchester City Council
- Skills England Update | Gemma Marsh, Deputy CEO, Skills England
- GM Economic Update | Chris Fletcher, Policy and GMLSIP Director, GMCC
- Coffee Break
- Tackling AI Misuse in Written Assessments | Sharon Brown, The AI Detective
- GM FE Innovation Programme | Coral Grainger, GMColleges Innovation Project Director
- GMLPN Updates
- Greater Manchester Update | Nicola McLeod, Director - Education, Work & Skills, GMCA
- Close | Mark Currie

Welcome

Mark Currie

Chair | GMLPN



Your Views

Charlotte Jones

Head of Operations | GMLPN



Mentimeter



<https://www.menti.com/alje34p6udre>

Manchester Growth & Development

Simon Joos

Work and Skills Specialist



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL



Manchester Growth & Development

Simon Joos

Work and Skills Specialist
Manchester City Council



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL



unesco

Member
Global Network of
Learning Cities

Manchester is a thriving city



- The economic heart of the North and **one of the UK's fastest-growing cities.**
- Manchester has a significant pipeline of investment and **contributes over £28 billion in GVA annually.**
- As a UNESCO City of Lifelong Learning, Manchester is **globally recognised for its world-class learning eco-system.**



Manchester Context



23,000 businesses in Manchester, and the business base is growing.

453,000 staff employed in Manchester, and employee numbers are growing.

630,000 residents in the city, and the population is growing and diversifying.



Growth - Unprecedented opportunity



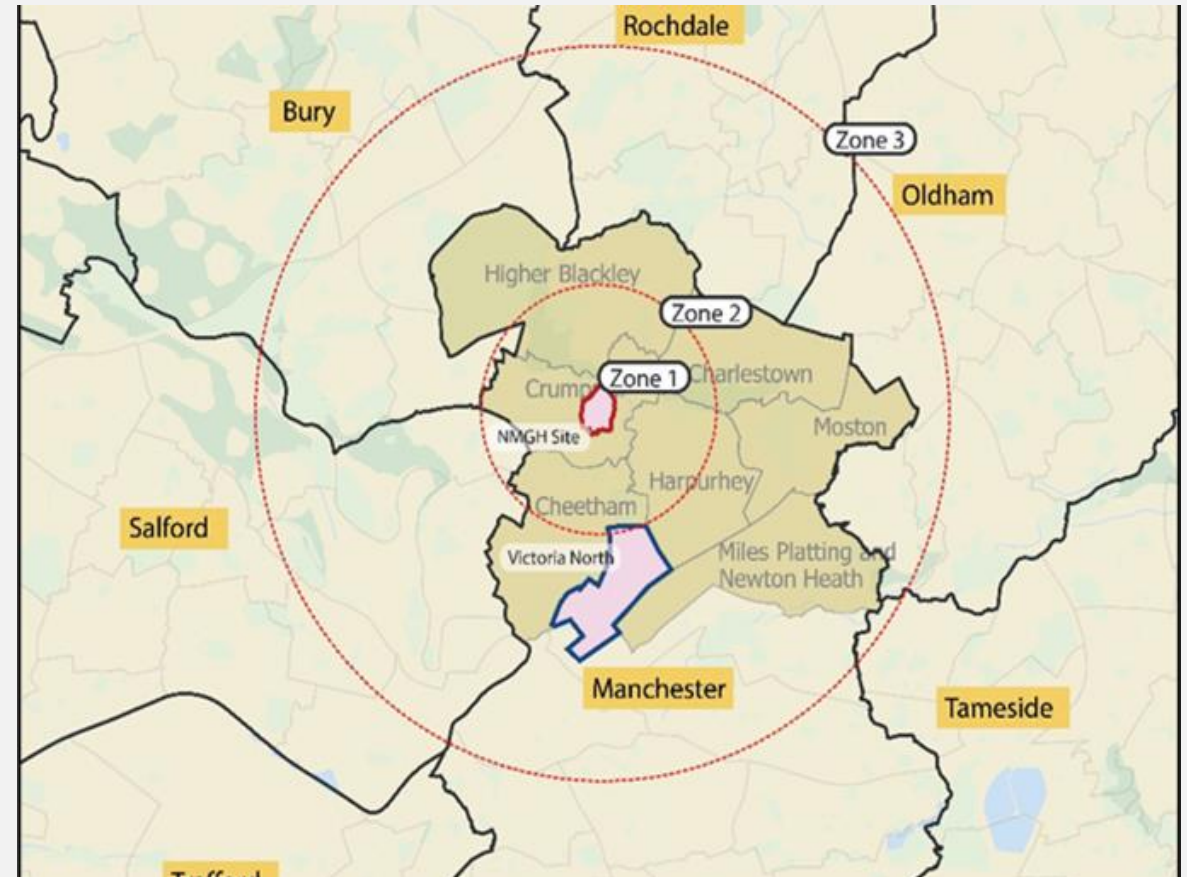
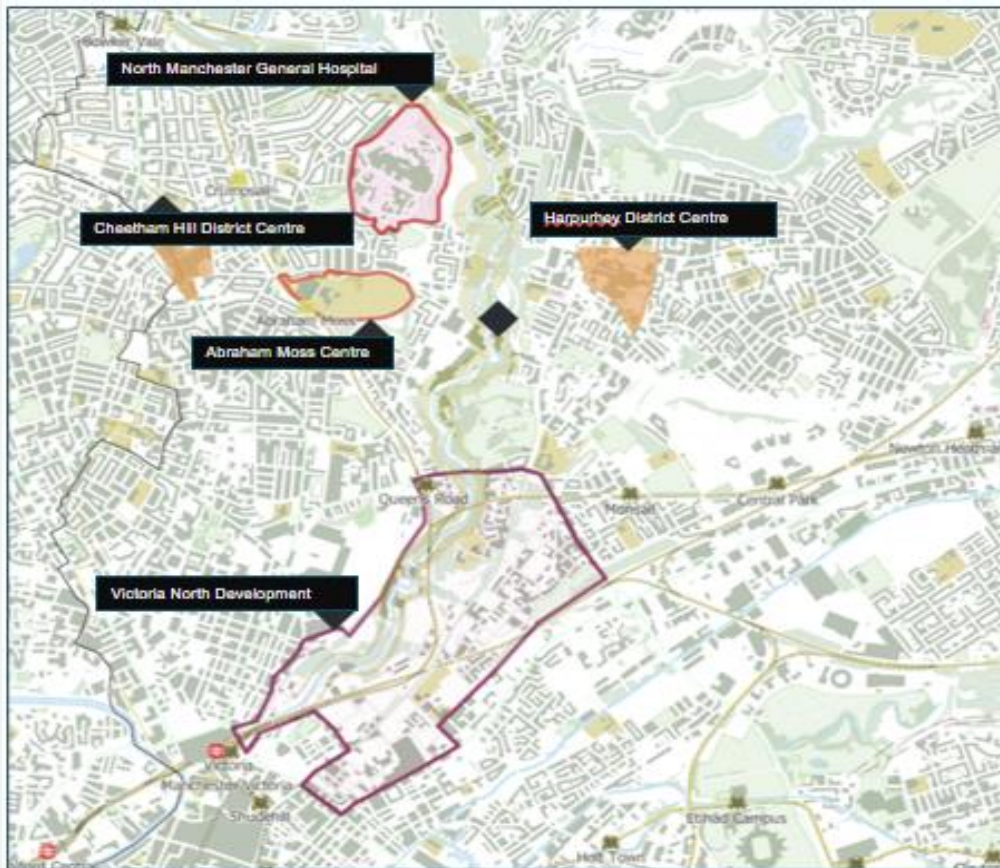
- **£14BN verified construction development pipeline** for 2025-2028 (source GM Chamber).
- **NORTH: £6BN** - FEC developments Victoria North, Redbank & NM General Hospital.
- **East: £2BN** pipeline Co-Op Live , Holt Town, MCFC, Man Life, GPA, Grey Mare Lane.
- **South: Circa £2.5 BN** – Wythenshawe Town Centre, Mix Manchester, Wythenshawe Hospital, Davenport Green and transport infrastructure.
- Plus: Major housing investment, programmed highways works and capital programmes.

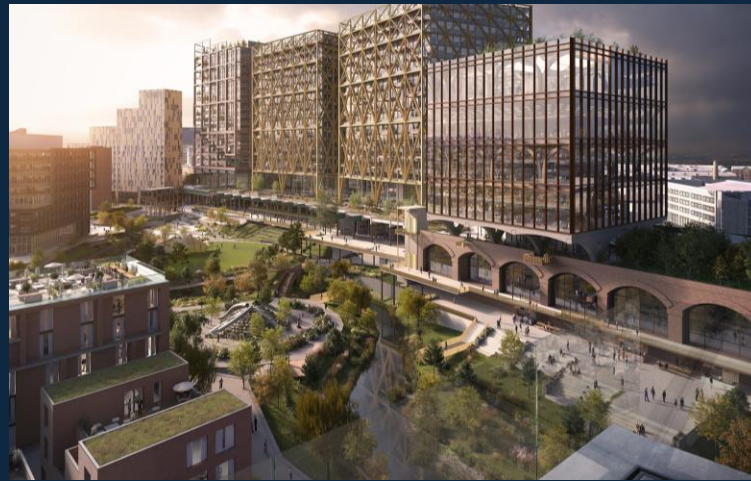


Regeneration in North Manchester



Planned investment focus and targeted interventions





Regeneration in East Manchester

- MCFC's Etihad expansion investment
- Grey Mare Lane Masterplan 1,000 new homes
- Mayfield
- Government Property Agency
- Holt Town
- Co-Op Live

Regeneration in South Manchester



Five developments:

Wythenshawe Civic | Mix Manchester |

Wythenshawe Hospital | Davenport Green

| Transport Investment

Multiple partners:

Manchester City Council | Manchester

Airport Group | Manchester Foundation

Trust | Trafford Council | Muse | TFGM |

Bruntwood, amongst others...





Key developments – At a glance

Name	Type	GDV	Jobs Created	Scale
Airport City	Mixed-use commercial led	£1billion	16,000	5million sq ft office, advanced manufacturing and logistics space
Circle Square	Mixed-use commercial led	£750million	9,000	>400,000 sq ft office space, new public realm, 650 apartments
Electric Park	Commercial	£175million	3,000	350,000 sq ft new office campus and public realms
First Street	Mixed-use commercial led	£300million	TBC	>750,000 sq ft office space, cultural space, public realm and hospitality
ID Manchester	Mixed-use commercial led	£1.7billion	10,000	Brand-new 4million sq ft mixed-use neighbourhood and innovation district
Kendals/House of Fraser	Commercial	£325million	4,500	436,000 sq ft new office space and prime city centre building refurb
Manchester City Football Club	Sports and Leisure	£300million	TBC	Expansion and improvement of stadium, new hotel and hospitality offering
Manchester Science Park	Commercial	>£100million	5,500	New and expanded specialist commercial office space
Mayfield	Mixed-use commercial led	£2.2billion	10,000	New urban neighbourhoods centred around a new city centre park. 1.6million sq ft workspace, 1,500 homes

Name	Type	GDV	Jobs Created	Scale
NOMA	Commercial	£800million	5,400	4million sq ft new office space, homes, retail and leisure
North Manchester General Hospital	Public services led, commercial	£600million	TBC	Cutting-edge health campus
Renaissance Deansgate	Hospitality	£200million	660	Refurbished city centre hotel and 300 apartments
St Michael's	Mixed-use commercial led	£137million	1,800	Five-star hotel and 180,000 sq ft workspace
St John's	Commercial led	£1billion	10,100	>560,000 sq ft office space
Upper Brook Street	Mixed-use commercial led	>£200million	6,000	700,000 sq ft specialist office space, 2,000 student beds and associated public realm
Victoria North	Residential led	£4billion	N/A	15,000 new homes plus new park and public realm
Wythenshawe Hospital	Public services led, commercial	£1.4billion	TBC	>800,000 sq ft commercial and industrial space plus key worker accommodation and community care

What this means for us



A changing labour market



Increased demand for labour



Skills needs and gaps



A need for inclusive growth



Labour demands - Manchester

1,400 separate construction projects in the pipeline.

1. **Professional, Scientific & Technical** - Largest sector (grew by 61.5%).
2. **Health** - 2nd largest sector / 52,000 employees
3. **Business Information** - 3rd largest sector / 50,000 employees

Information & Communication - Highest level of growth (76.5%) followed by property.

Broad Industry Sector	Employees 2023	Change Since 2015	% Change Since 2015
Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	100	25	33.3%
Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D and E)	1,250	0	0.0%
Motor trades (Part G)	2,250	750	50.0%
Construction (F)	8,000	2,000	33.3%
Manufacturing (C)	13,000	0	0.0%
Wholesale (Part G)	13,000	2,000	18.2%
Property (L)	14,000	6,000	75.0%
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (R,S,T and U)	17,000	4,000	30.8%
Public administration & defence (O)	24,000	8,000	50.0%
Financial & insurance (K)	25,000	6,000	31.6%
Transport & storage (inc postal) (H)	27,000	3,000	12.5%
Information & communication (J)	30,000	13,000	76.5%
Retail (Part G)	34,000	3,000	9.7%
Accommodation & food services (I)	38,000	8,000	26.7%
Education (P)	42,000	6,000	16.7%
Business administration & support services (N)	50,000	12,000	31.6%
Health (Q)	52,000	7,000	15.6%
Professional, scientific & technical (M)	63,000	24,000	61.5%



Construction of the UK's largest entertainment arena, Co-op Live, commenced in 2021

We supported:

- Recruitment activity for up to 2,000 casual workers and 330 upskilling opportunities
- Co-op Live Recruitment Event - 12 partners and 120+ residents attended
- Coordinated cross-LA, partnership approach working with MCC departments, Growth Company, DWP, Tameside Council, Salford Council.
- North Manchester roadshows in focused areas to recruit local talent.
- Co-designed a bespoke skills plan, incorporating funded learning including SWAPS, to build a skilled workforce..



Construction Skills Hub model



THE COLLYHURST PARTNERSHIP

Manchester City Council
The Construction Skills People Ltd
Yes Manchester
Far East Consortium (FEC)





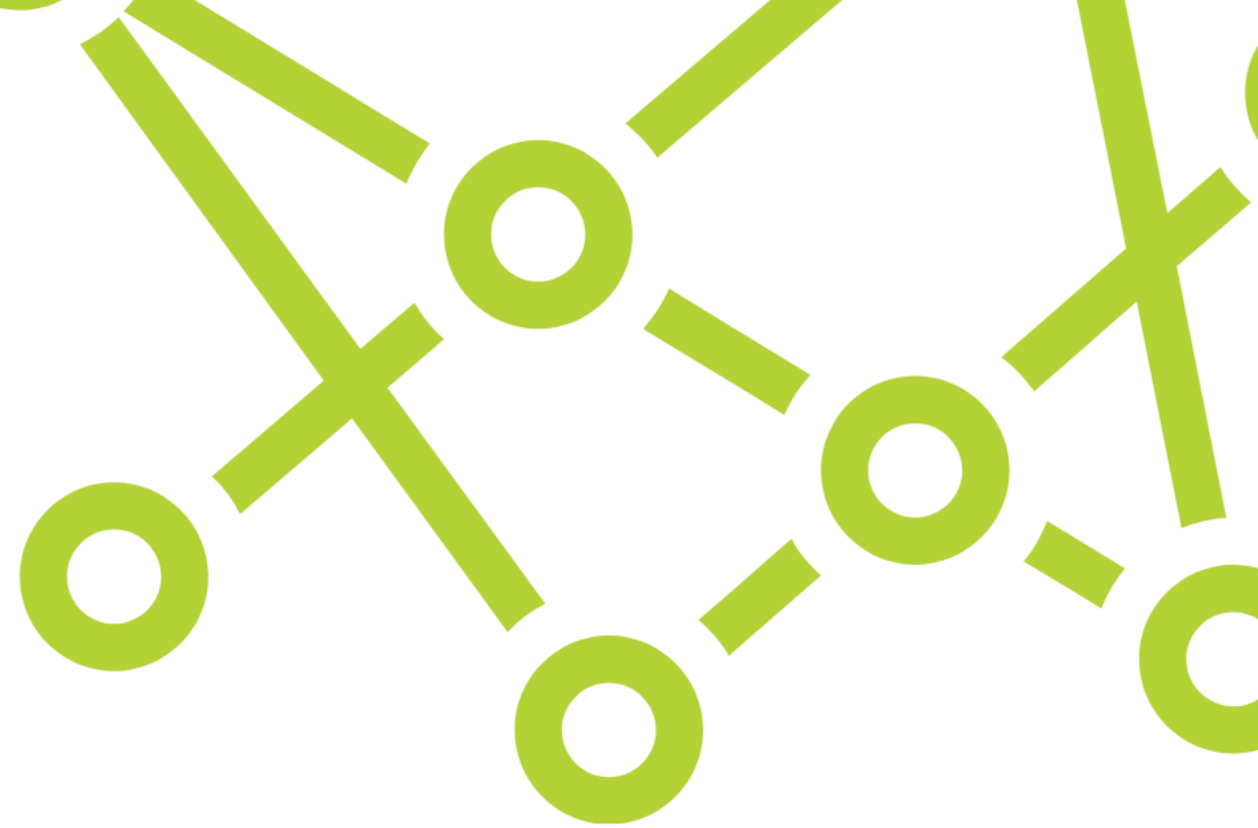
Skills England Update

Gemma Marsh

Deputy CEO



Skills England



GM Economic Update

Chris Fletcher

Policy & GMLSIP Director



Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce



GM Chamber Economic Update

17th September 2025

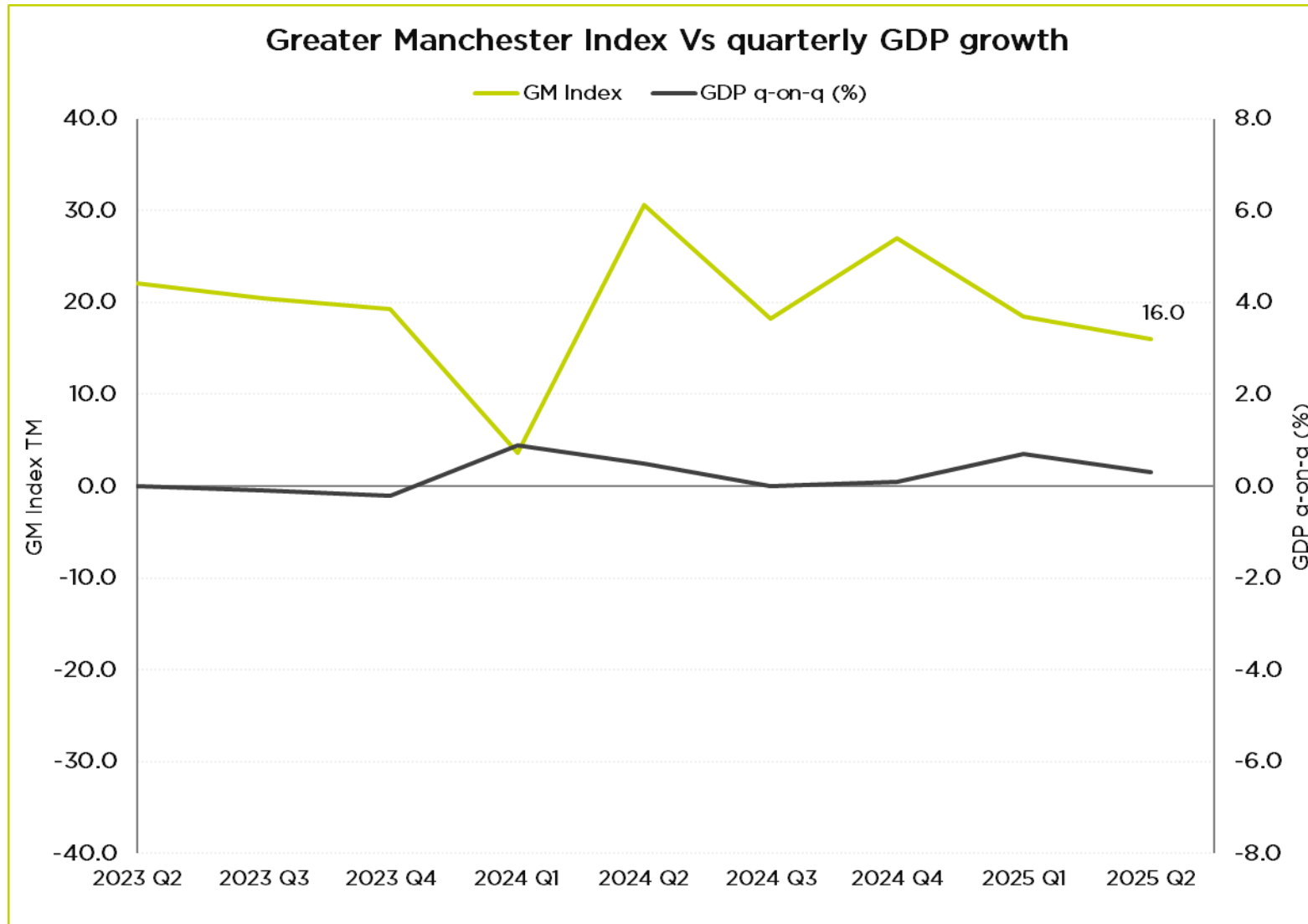




- **Economic Update – QES Q2 results**
- **Government policy update**
- **LSIP**



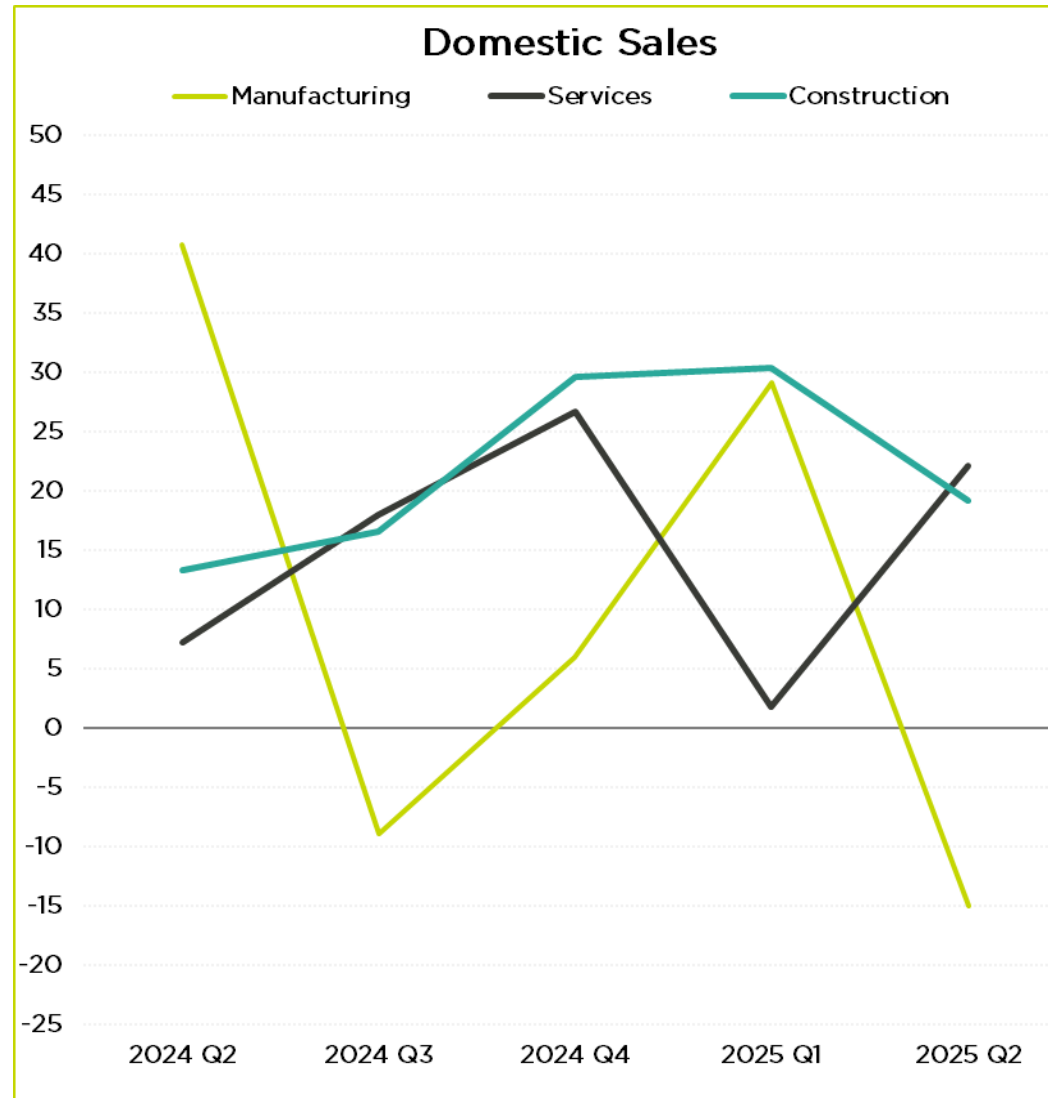
Where are we now?



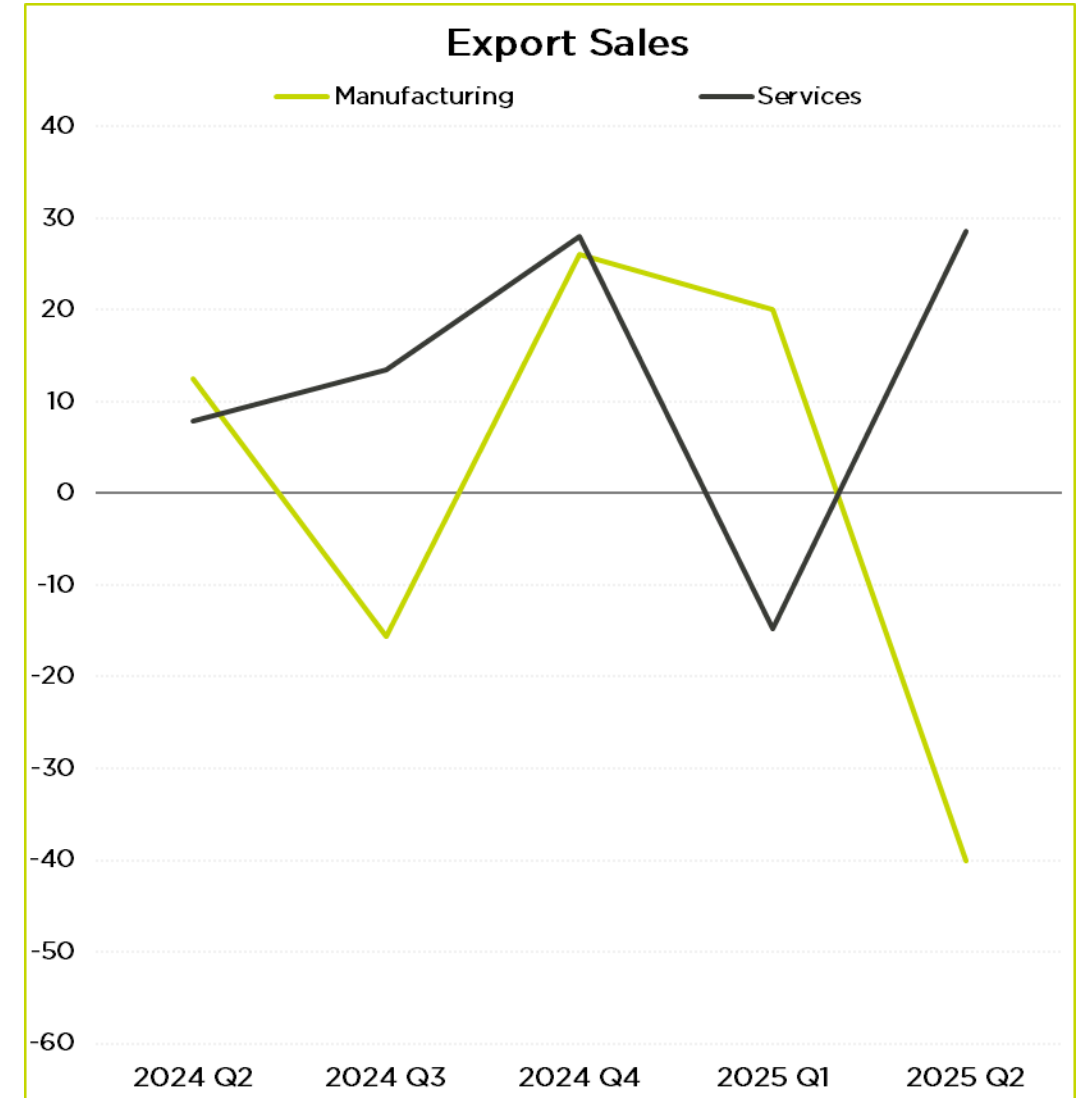
- GM Index in Q2 2025: **16.0**
- Weakening in international trade
- Manufacturing sector stress
- Impact of NMW / NLW and NIC increases on employment.
- Services sector performance and construction fuelled by public spending

Source: GMCC QES, ONS GDP Quarter on Quarter growth: CVM SA %

Demand: sectoral



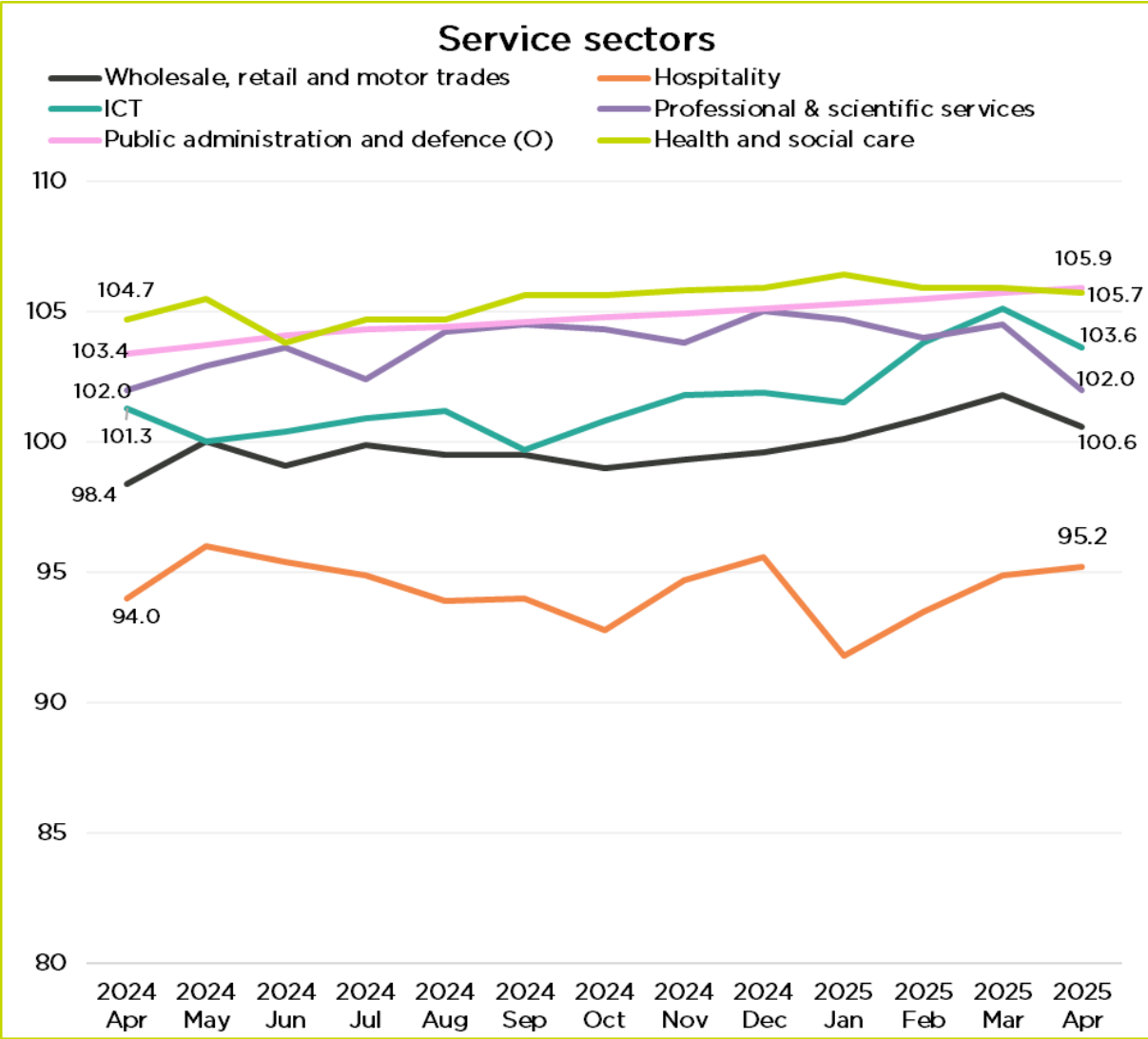
Source: GMCC QES



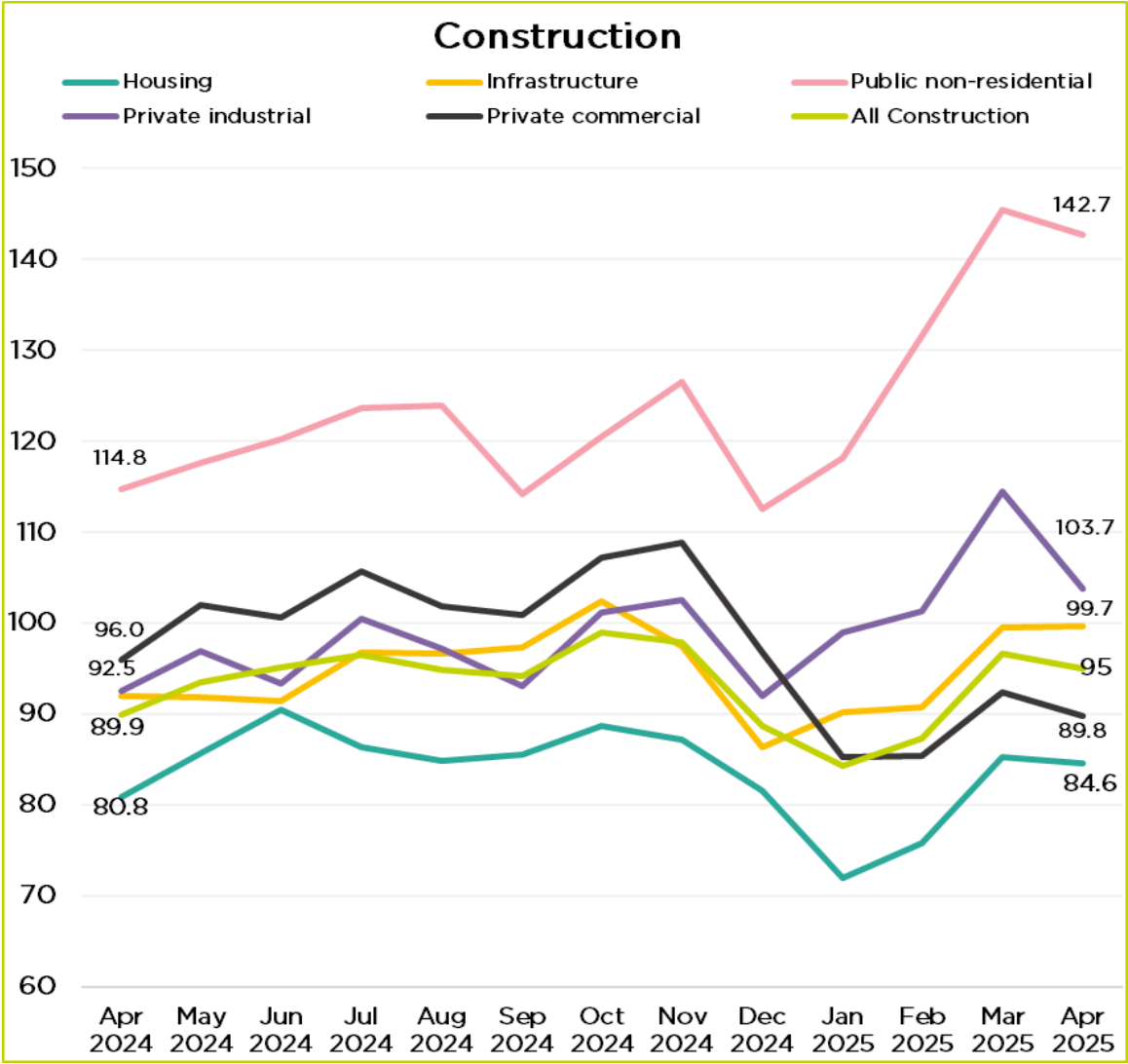
Source: GMCC QES



UK Sector Performance (indices)



Source: ONS



Source: ONS

Business concerns – Q2 2025

- “As an Irish co newly landed in Manchester we feel the city is very pro business and supportive.”
- “The national insurance hike hurts and will slow our growth plans and activities.”
- “Q2 has been one of particular volatility in our market - FX. While we have seen sterling strengthen (to the benefit of importers) this has typically been detrimental to export clients. While headlines have focused on US Tariffs, the implications on currency have been huge YTD.”
- “My business has been adversely affected. I have been unable to exhibit. Colleagues say Art Fairs are affected by drop in consumer spending.”
- “Huge downturn in the hospitality and food sector in Manchester. We need a VAT break as well as market confidence boosting.”
- “We operate in the health sector and changes to NHS England and Integrated Care Boards leads to uncertainty. In particular as they outsource to us and are continually driving to reduce costs.”
- “The government are not listening to small local businesses.”



Year 2 – the story so far.....

- Devolution White Paper
- Get Britain Working White Paper
- Employment Rights Bill *
- Autumn Budget 2024 *
- Skills England
- Spending Review
- Infrastructure Strategy





Industrial Strategy

- Invest 2035 Green Paper Autumn 2024, consultation.
- 8 priority sectors – high growth, high productivity
- Advanced Manufacturing ; Clean Energy; Creative; Defence; Digital and Technologies; Financial Services; Life Sciences; Professional and Business Services
- No construction, social and health care, hospitality, logistics.....
- 23rd June launched as a “10 year plan to make the UK the best country to invest anywhere in the world”
- IS-8
- Crossover and synchronisation with SR and Infrastructure Strategy
- New Industrial Strategy Council set up in 2026 and HQ'd in Manchester
- Whilst sector focussed, emphasis on place in the document and ‘structure’ behind businesses





Greater Manchester Strategy 2025 -2035

- Launched in July - a collective vision for the next decade
- Healthy Homes; Safe and Strong Communities; Transport System for a Global City Region; **A Clear Line of Sight for High Quality Jobs**; Everyday Support in Every Neighbourhood; **A Great Place to Do Business; Digitally Connected Places and People.**
- Build on GM Devolution journey – 7 deals so far – what can be done differently, better.
- 7 Gateway sectors -
Digital and Technology, Health and Social Care, Creative, Culture and Sport, Financial and Professional, Engineering and Manufacturing, Construction and Green Economy, Education and Early Years PLUS Local Government, Emergency Services and Transport Jobs (Bee Network)
- Mbacc – 45 day work placements for any young person that needs it





Small Business Plan

- Launched in late July, 5 themes:
- Tackling late Payment
- Revitalising the High Street
- Boosting Access to Finance
- Tax and Employment Reforms
- Global Ambitions

Over Summer:

- Launch and roll out of Construction Technical Excellence Colleges – CTECs – Wigan and Leigh College





LSIP

- Annual Progress Report live/local area reports live – www.gmlsip.co.uk/
- October - March 2026 work on the new LSIP, joint ownership with GMCA – initial application and outline plan of action gone to SE for approval
- April/May 2026 – send to Skills England for approval - new LSIP goes live from late Summer 2026
- This will be for 3 years and cover a lot of activity taking place in GM eg MBacc
- Mix of national priorities and GM needs and priorities; taking guidance from growth pipeline; employers still a critical and fundamental part of this.
- GMS, Get GM Working plan all critical elements within this and HE now a significant feature in LSIPs





NETWORK MEETING

COFFEE BREAK



Tackling AI Misuse in Written Assessments

Sharon Brown

Founder



The AI Detective: Tackling AI Misuse in Written Assessments

Sharon Brown FCMI, Cert. IOSH, CMgr, MBA



The Challenge



Growing pressure from AOs and employers



Managing risk



Achieving balance



Banning AI is not the answer

The Challenge



Frontline Stories & Risks

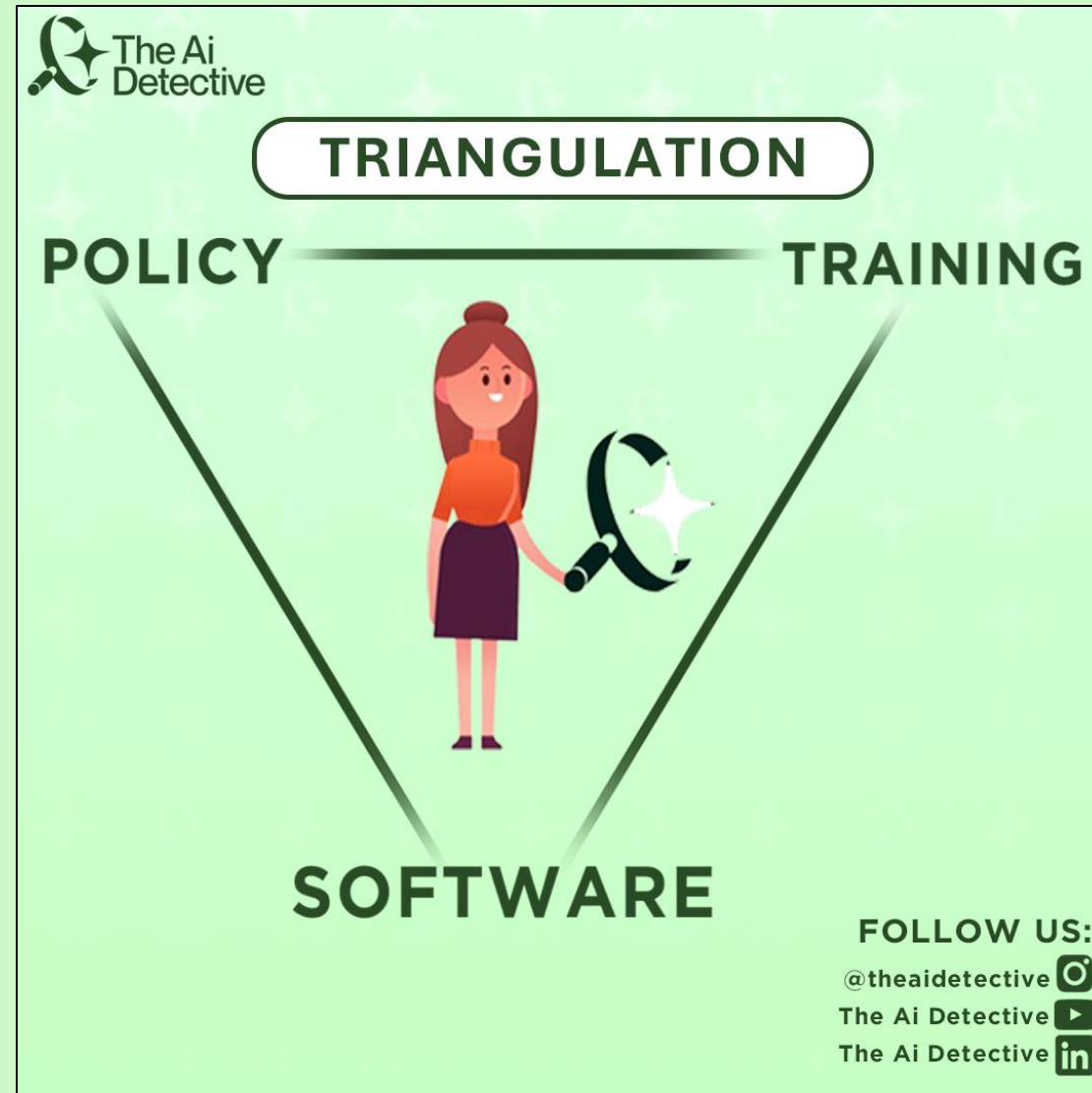
What happens
when the AO
spots it?

What if the
students deny
it?

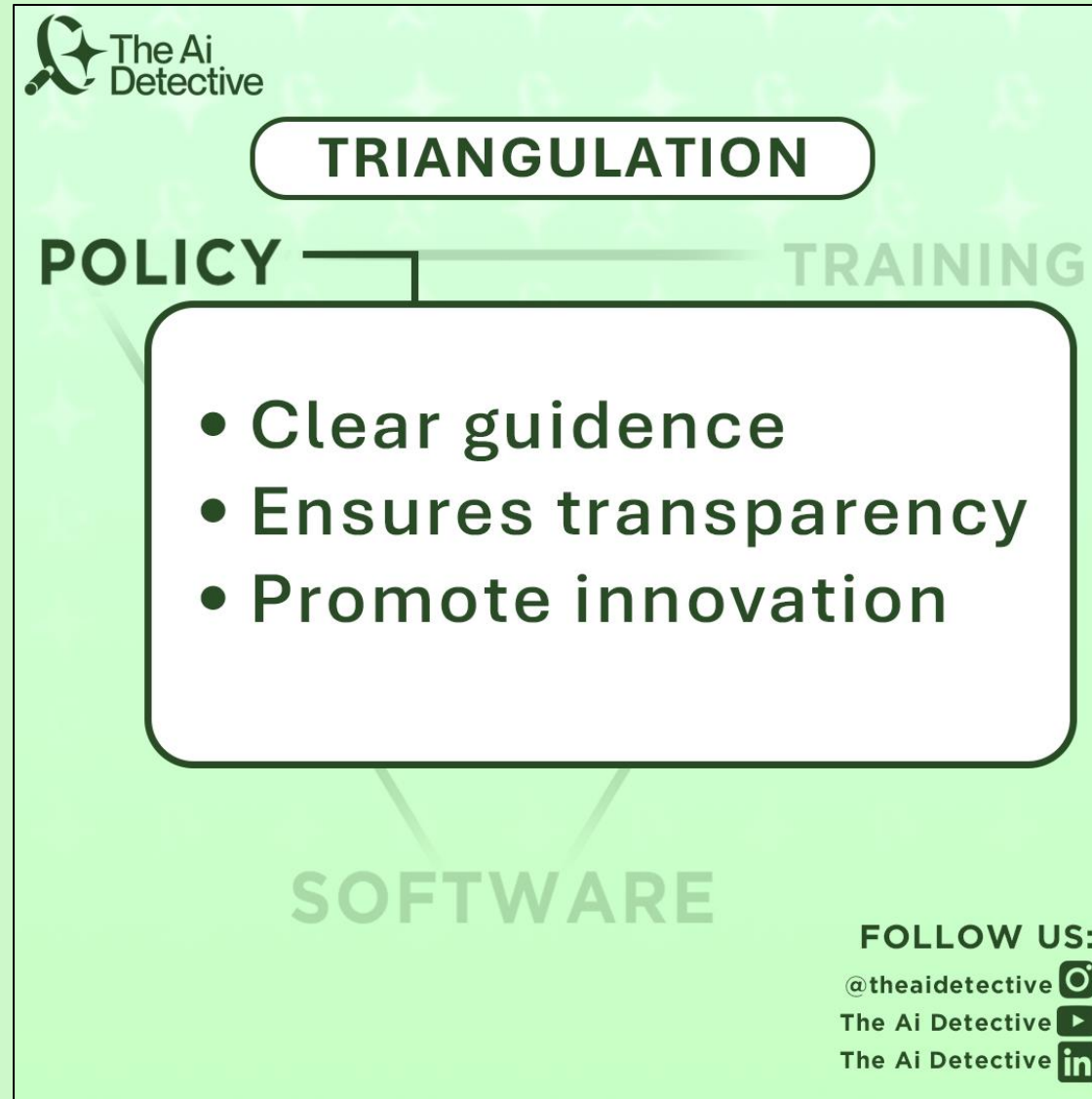
Alternative
assessment
methods????



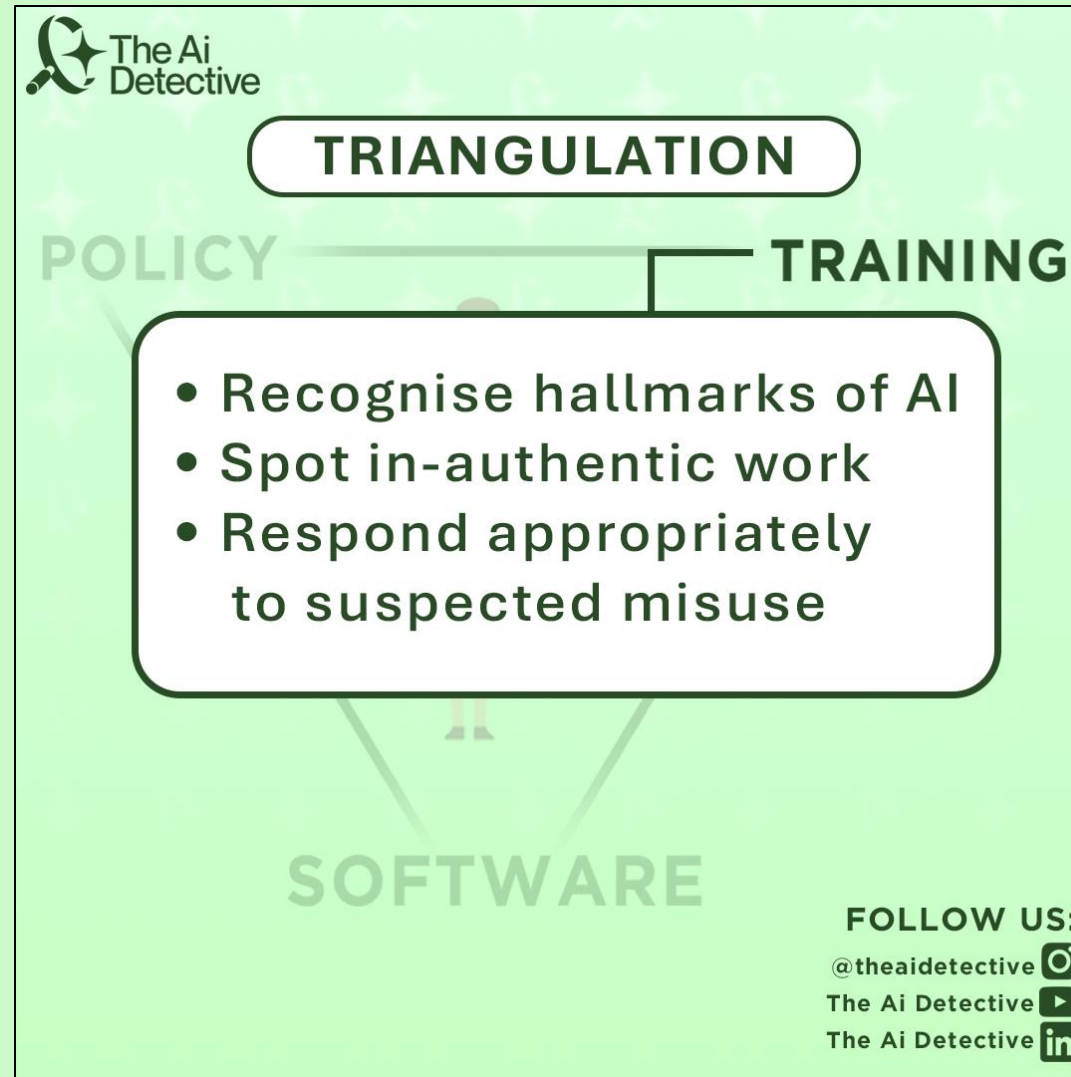
Managing AI Misuse: A Structured Approach



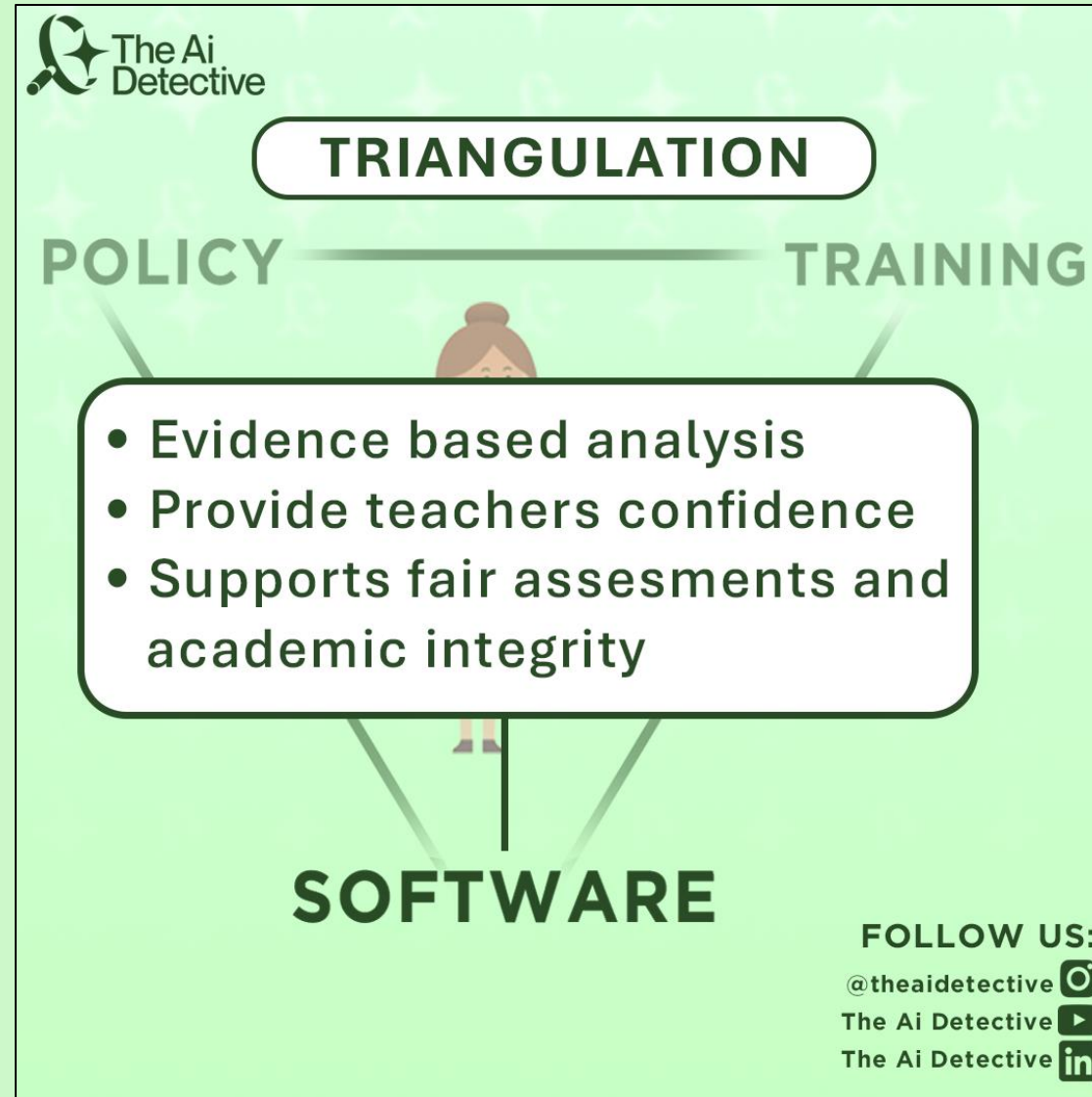
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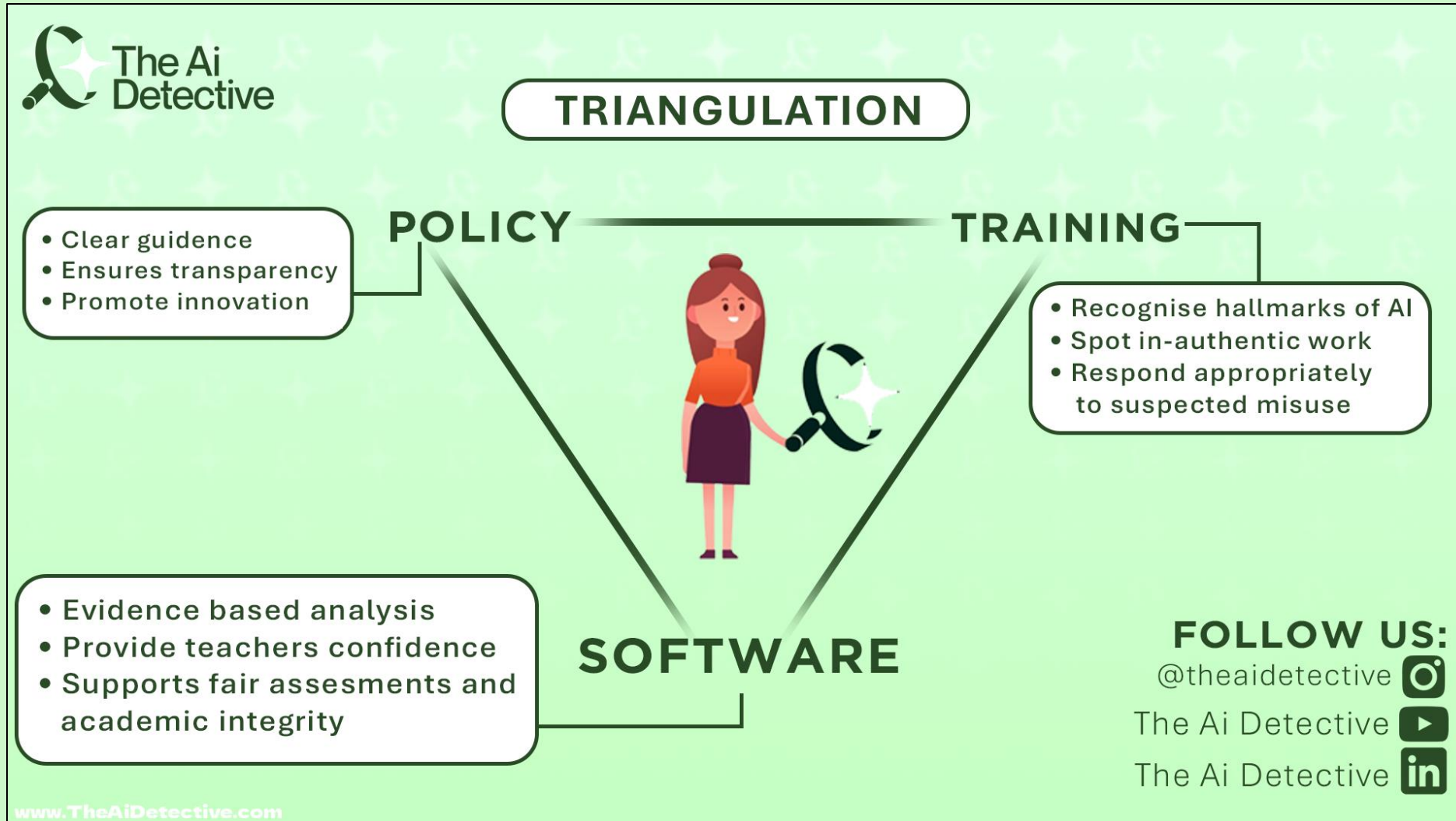
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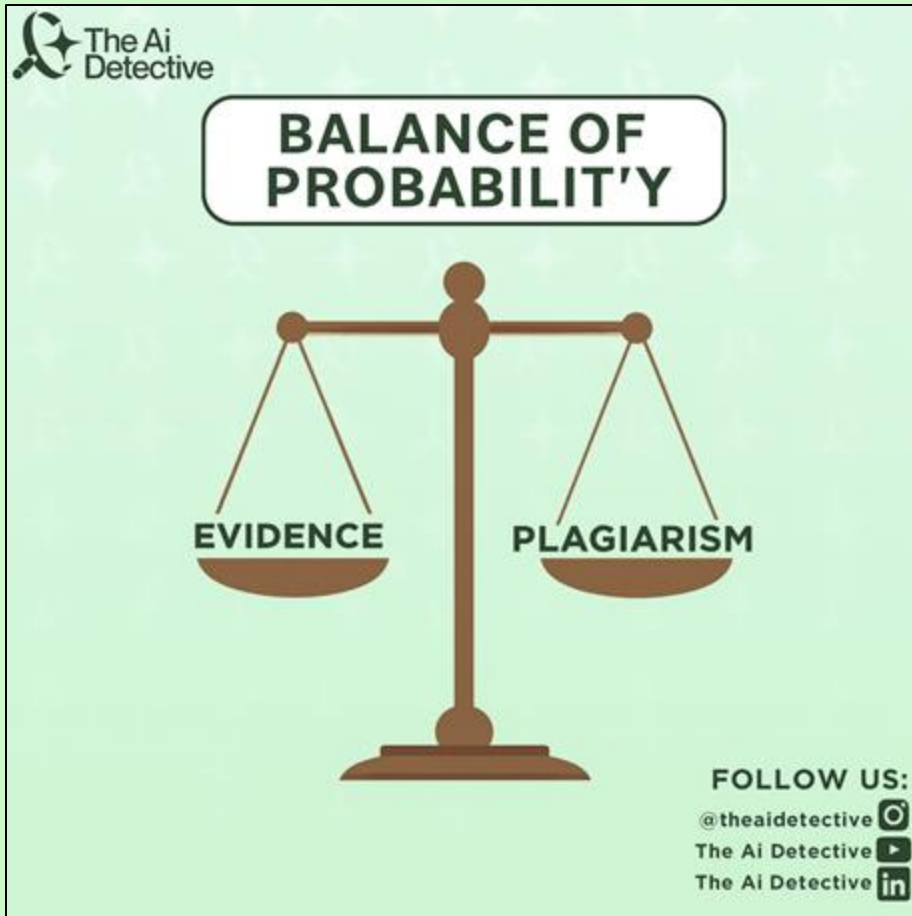
Managing AI Misuse: A Structured Approach



Managing AI Misuse: A Structured Approach



Balance of Probabilit'Y?



AI Misuse = Plagiarism



Consequences

Investigations

Defensible action

Audit trail

Aos and OfQual

Tools & Case Study





The Ai Detective

Upload Document



Drag & drop your file here
or

Browse files

Current file: No file chosen

Conversation



Upload a document and ask questions

Ask a question about the document...

Send

Takeaway for FE Leaders



- Treat AI misuse as **serious malpractice**
- Decisions should be evidence-based, judged on the **balance of probabilities**
- Have clear policies and processes aligned to awarding body and Ofsted expectations

Key Takeaways & Call to Action



Early Adopters – You can help



www.TheAiDetective.com

GM FE Innovation Programme

Coral Grainger

GMColleges Innovation Project Director





GM FE Innovation Programme

#GMFEIP

funded by IUK Further Education Innovation Fund
Coral Grainger, 17/09/25



What's the problem?

FEIF Bid Autumn 2023:

Lack of innovation capacity & investment in GM SMEs

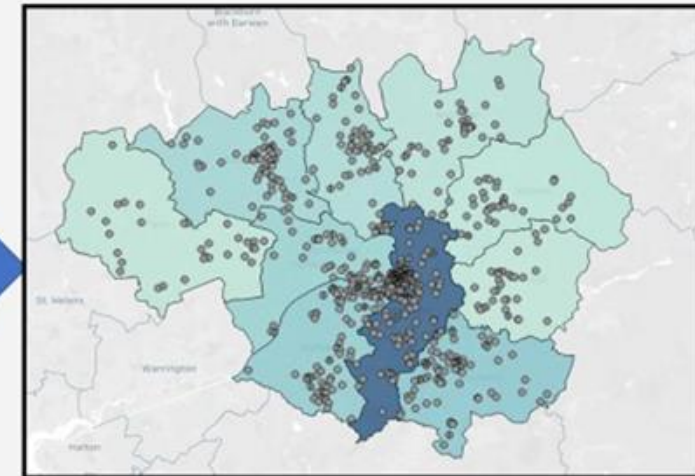
Innovation diffusion and support services not reaching outer boroughs

Firms accessing innovation support

Data was gathered on firms engaging with the following between 2015 and 2021:

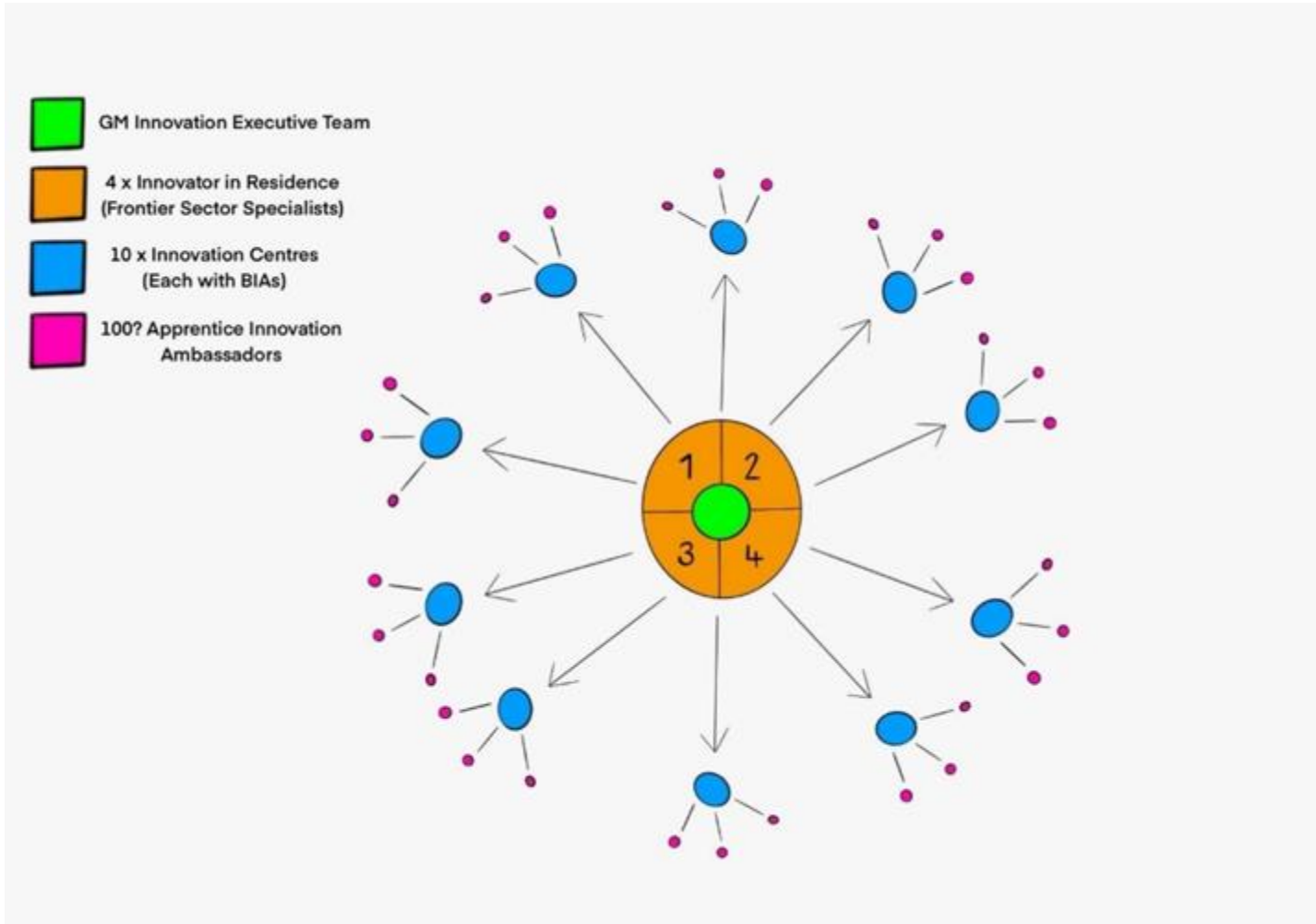
- The Growth Company ERDF funded innovation support programmes
- Made Smarter
- University of Manchester's Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre (GEIC)
- Research & Knowledge Exchange activities at Manchester Metropolitan University
- ERDF funded AI Foundry & Energy House Programmes, and KTPs at the University of Salford
- Innovate UK funding
- MIDAS
- University Spinout companies

890
companies



GMCA
GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

Delivery Model- the Radial Innovation Network*



*A novel conceptual framework designed by GMColleges to expand the reach of the established innovation ecosystem into less connected places

Y1 Impact : GMFEIP in Numbers



Innovate
UK



- **1,042** Businesses engaged
- **362** Referred for further support
- **153** Innovation Diagnostics Completed
- **74** – Apprentice Innovation Ambassadors
- **25** – Apprentices started but not yet completed full Innovation Literacy course.
- **166** college staff experiences of CPD re: Innovations in the Frontier Sectors



The strongest engagement came from SMEs that had never previously accessed innovation support.

Practical Support Through Good Ideas

FE colleges provided practical and accessible support by reframing innovation as simply ‘good ideas,’ making it approachable for SMEs. Businesses reported that focusing on practical solutions rather than complex innovation concepts encouraged active engagement and real-world application.

"The term ‘innovation’ can seem intimidating. When the programme focused instead on good ideas we could implement quickly, we immediately saw the benefits." SME Business Owner



Innovate
UK



Innovation Hub Offer to Employers

Diagnostic & Direction

- *Self assessment of Capacity & Challenges

Referrals & Intro to Innovation Ecosystem

- *Funding *IUK *Accelerators *Universities
- *R+D Tax Credits *IP advice

Training, Workshops & Events

- *Introductory AI *GreenTech
- *Supply Chain Sustainability School
- *Innovation Strategy & Leadership (SIAS course & ASB fundable)
- *Innovation Literacy Training > Apprentice Innovation Ambassadors (22 + 23 October)

Referrals to FE core offer

- *Apprenticeships → Work Experience → Placements
- *Bespoke courses



Innovate
UK



Access to Facilities

- *CAVE (immersive environments)
- *Anatomage + Digital Health
- *Podcasting Studios
- *Event Spaces





TRAFFORD &
STOCKPORT
COLLEGE GROUP



Innovate
UK



GREATER MANCHESTER FE INNOVATION PROGRAMME CASE STUDIES

Grassroots Recruitment

Support provided:

As the **FEIP team at Stockport College**, we moved the employer from AI curiosity to action: delivered myth-busting and “AI Means Business” workshops; ran a 1:1 to map processes and opportunities; signposted and supported a successful application to a 4-month AI Empower pilot; provided ongoing resources and training; and hosted their networking event in the Immersive Cave during Neurodiversity Celebration Week



Outcomes and Impact:

Grassroots Recruitment moved from AI awareness to delivery. New initiatives include a custom GPT for Hiring Insights Reports and an n8n-powered outreach workflow, Measurable impact: consultants save 2–4 hours weekly on admin; the MD saves a further 4 hours on operations—releasing 208 hours a year. Expected next: stronger pipeline, improved win rates, revenue growth, and potential headcount increase as automations scale and adoption spreads.

Headline statement:

Through FEIP support at Stockport College—workshops, 1:1 guidance, AI Empower and immersive support—Grassroots Recruitment achieved strategic AI adoption, Hiring Insights and automated outreach..

Employer Quote:

“This was a lightbulb moment—the workshops went far beyond ‘quick wins’ and helped us apply AI strategically across the business. With the FEIP team’s support, we’re already saving hours each week and moving ahead with AI-powered Hiring Insights and automated outreach.”

RUCHE MARKETING

The Challenge

When we founded Ruche Marketing in July 2022, our vision extended beyond being a strategic content marketing agency specialising in the legal sector. From the outset, we had ambitious plans to expand into two additional services:

- An Academy to share our expertise with startups and small businesses
- A content marketing platform designed to help regulated firms keep their marketing content compliant

By 2024, we had already started building momentum, growing our network and laying the groundwork for both projects. But as we moved deeper into the platform development, we recognised the value of strengthening our connections in the tech and innovation space. We knew what we wanted to achieve; what we needed were the right people and insights to accelerate our progress.

That's when we met Ruth Potter - Business Innovation Advisor at The Manchester College at a tech event.

"Ruth's deep industry knowledge and generous network have since become a powerful part of our journey. Ruth took the time to understand our business goals and provided targeted support through the GM Further Education Innovation Programme."



CASE STUDY 21/08/2025



GREATER MANCHESTER FE INNOVATION PROGRAMME CASE STUDIES



Here is how she has helped us move forward:

Support Provided

- ⚙️ **Insightful Guidance** - offered practical advice tailored to our platform development journey.
- ⚙️ **Event Signposting** - pointed us to tech events that expanded our knowledge and helped us stay on top of sector trends.
- ⚙️ **Network Building** - introduced us to key contacts who will be invaluable as our platform evolves.
- ⚙️ **Funding Support** - informed us about funding options and signed us up to the Open SME platform.
- ⚙️ **Strategic Introductions** - Most notably, connected us with contacts at the CDI, who encouraged us to apply for their Sensing/Seizing Cohort. We were accepted, and the programme begins in September 2025, a milestone that could lead to support for building our initial prototype. She also introduced us to key contacts at DiSH, where we'll be applying for a future cohort and additional support.
- ⚙️ **Academy Support** - Also helped shape our Academy strategy by sourcing answers to strategic questions quickly and effectively, giving us greater clarity on direction.
- ⚙️ **AI Upskilling** - introduced us to the Modern-Day Workplace Programme, enabling us to complete their AI course and build our confidence in applying AI to our work.

Outcomes and Impact

With Ruth's support and the Further Education Innovation Programme, we've:

- ⚙️ Strengthened our roadmap for developing the platform
- ⚙️ Expanded our professional network in tech and innovation
- ⚙️ Informed and sharpened our Academy strategy
- ⚙️ Gained opportunities for funding and prototype development
- ⚙️ We're particularly excited about the upcoming CDI Cohort, which has the potential to accelerate our platform journey significantly.

"Ruth's input has been an important addition to the strong foundations we'd already built, helping us move faster and with greater confidence."

"We've already recommended the programme to friends launching a tech startup, who told us they think Ruth is 'fantastic.' We couldn't agree more."

Upcoming Events #GMFEIP

23/09 : Innovation & Finance in Construction - Bolton

23/09 : Greener Thinking for SMEs: From Awareness to Action – Oldham

30/09 : Health & Social Care Innovation - Tameside

04/11 : AI Essentials for SMEs – Salford

22 & 23 / 10 : Innovation Literacy Open GM Cohort - Campfield Market

Innovation Literacy -
Register Interest



Thank you & Questions?

Coral.Grainger@oldham.ac.uk

Mark.Compton@salfordcc.ac.uk - Business Innovation Support

Dave.Murat@oldham.ac.uk - Innovation Literacy

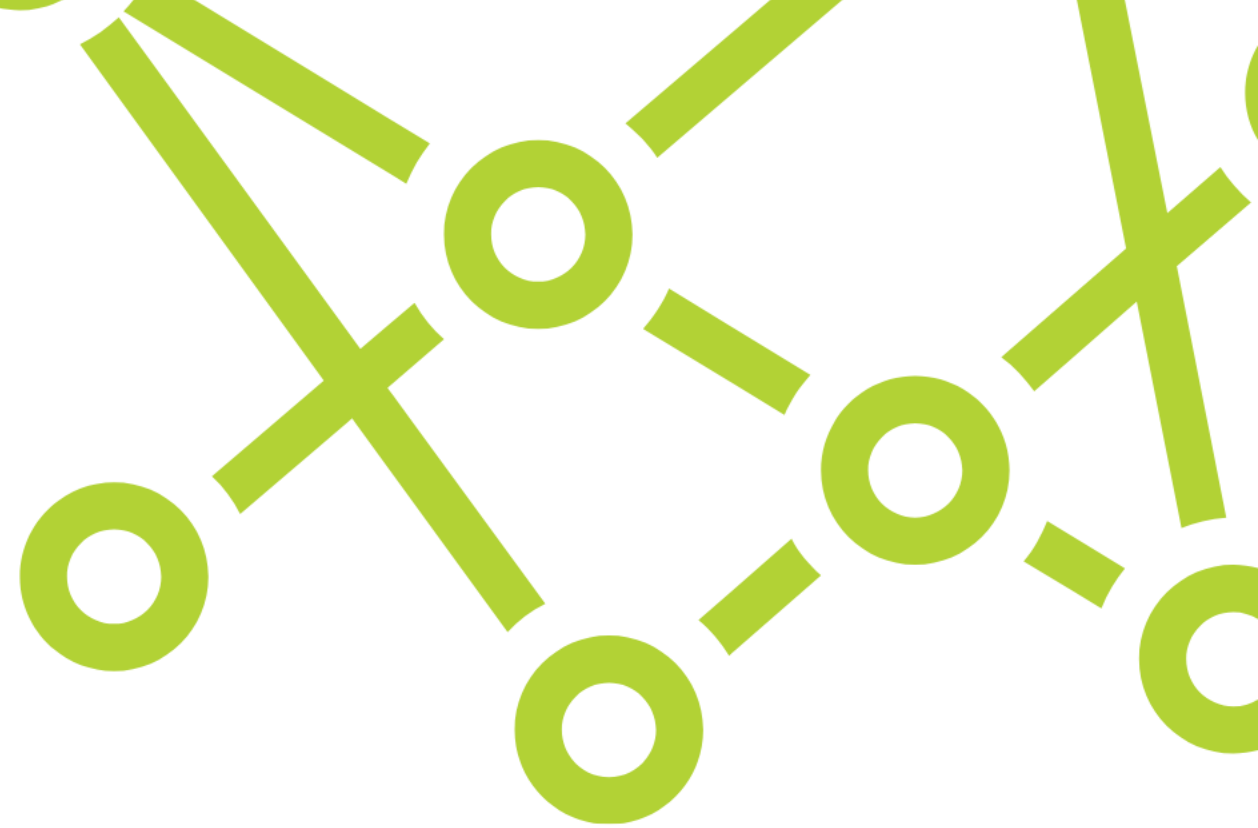
@GMColleges

HelloGMFEIP@Oldham.ac.uk



GMLPN Updates

Charlotte Jones & Chloe Forrest



GM Position Paper Launched – Tackling the NEET Challenge Across GM

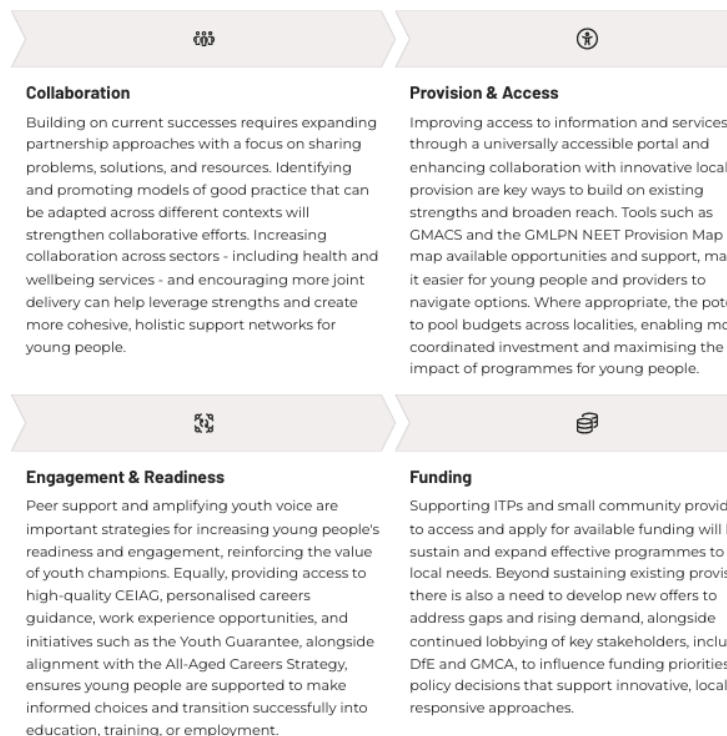
Current Challenges

Young people face a range of complex challenges that impact their education, engagement, and career pathways. Issues such as limited employer engagement, gaps in provision, systemic barriers, and societal pressures all contribute to these difficulties. Additionally, mental health concerns, parental influences, and staffing shortages further complicate the landscape. Understanding these challenges is essential to developing effective solutions and improving outcomes.



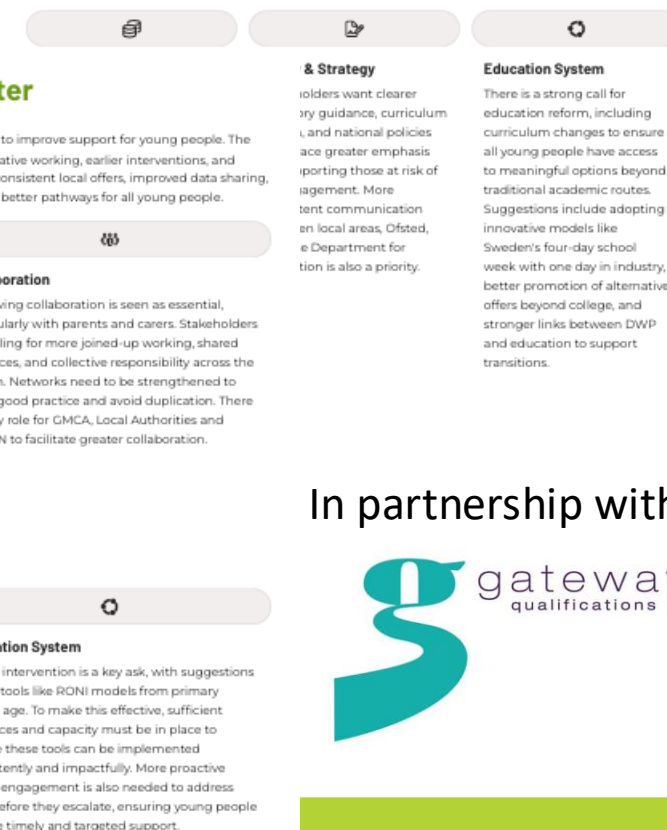
How can we build on what is already working well?

While positive progress is being made, there are clear opportunities to build on existing strengths. Strengthening partnerships, sharing good practice, and expanding flexible, youth-focused provision will help to create more consistent support for young people. By building on what works, the system can become more responsive, accessible, and effective.



Key asks at a National Level

Local partners have identified several national-level changes needed to better support young people into education, employment, and training. The key asks centre around education reform, better collaboration between departments, improved data sharing, and funding models that enable more targeted, flexible support.



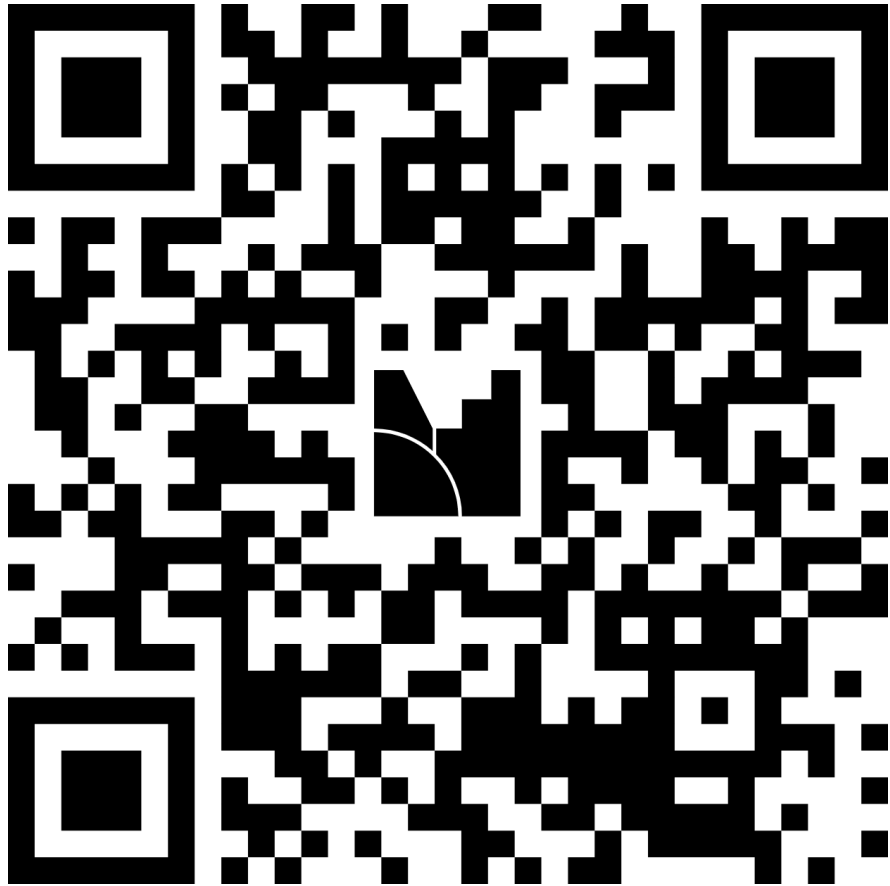
In partnership with:



Apprenticeship Assessment Consultation Response

- **Support for in the proposals in principle.**
- **Consistency** – Strong call for alignment across Assessment Organisations.
- **Employer confidence** – Assessments must be robust, independent, and trusted.
- **Clarity** – Need clear guidance on synoptic assessment, marking, and grading.
- **Fairness** – Standardised grading and quality assurance essential.
- **Employer & apprentice focus** – Engagement must be meaningful; equality impacts addressed.
- **Transition** – Phased approach with clear timelines to minimise disruption.

Provision Promotion



<https://www.menti.com/alg1bxr6jp29>



Get the Nation Learning Charter



We've signed the charter

Now let's Get the Nation Learning

getthenationlearning.org.uk

Get the Nation Learning Week



**When adults learn,
our society and
economy thrive**

Get the Nation Learning Week

3 – 7 November 2025

getthenationlearning.org.uk



[Get the Nation Learning Week - Get the Nation Learning](https://getthenationlearning.org.uk)

Upcoming Events

- **Exchanges**

- [Quality Exchange, Thu, Sep 25, 2025 at 9:30 AM](#)
- [CEIAG Exchange, Thu, Oct 2, 2025 at 9:00 AM](#)
- [Business Development Exchange, Thu, Oct 23, 2025 at 10:00 AM](#)
- [FE Recruitment & Workforce Exchange, Thu, Nov 6, 2025 at 10:30 AM](#)
- [SEND Exchange, Thu, Nov 20, 2025 at 10:00 AM](#)
- [Mental Health & Wellbeing Exchange, Thu, Dec 4, 2025 at 10:00 AM](#)

- **Northern Skills Network**

- [Green and Sustainable Development Showcase, Tue 30 Sep 2025 at 09:30](#)
- [FE Futures: Recruitment & Retention Blueprint, Mon, Oct 13, 2025 at 2:00 PM](#)

Upcoming Events

- [Lessons Learnt from Functional Skills Maths, Fri, Oct 10, 2025 at 12:00 PM](#), delivered by Pearson
- [Ofsted Update Session, Mon, Oct 20, 2025 at 1:00 PM](#), delivered by Paul Cocker, Ofsted
- [How to Prepare for and Manage Inspection Effectively, Fri, Nov 14, 2025 at 9:00 AM](#), delivered by Marina Gaze

Save the Date

- Menopause, Wellness & the Workplace (online) 16th October
- GMLPN Network Meeting, Toughsheet Community Stadium – 26th November, 9.00-15.00

Welcome to our New Members!



New Partnerships!

TEACHERMATIC
AVALLAIN GROUP



positive
planet



HIGHER HEALTH

GM Skills Awards 2025



HEADLINE SPONSOR:



Apprentice of the Year (Level 2-3) | Sponsored by Trafford & Stockport College Group

Winner: Gerrard Ashcroft, IACS Training and Education, Hopwood Hall College

Highly Commended: Aston Aldred, Electrium Sales Ltd, Wigan and Leigh College

Apprentice of the Year (Level 4-7) | Sponsored by City & Guilds

Winner: Niamh Clarke, PwC, Kaplan

Highly Commended: Grace Ormesher-Southall, Sellafield Ltd, Wigan and Leigh College

16-19 Learner of the Year | Sponsored by Gateway Qualifications

Winner: Kelsie Fitzsimmons, Wigan and Leigh College

Highly Commended: Lewis Morrison, Hopwood Hall College

Adult Learner of the Year | Sponsored by NCFE

Winner: Sean Doyle, Paul Taylor Construction, Construction Skills People

Highly Commended: Lewis Morrison, Hopwood Hall College

Shining Star of the Year | Sponsored by NQual

Winner: Maksym Kokhan, The Casey Group, Hopwood Hall College

Highly Commended: Leon Williams, PVS Group Ltd, The Growth Company

IN PARTNERSHIP:



GM Skills Awards 2025

Unsung Hero of the Year | Sponsored by Mesma

Winner: Dave Bradbury, Elevated Knowledge

Highly Commended: Catherine Perkins, The Manchester College

Team of the Year | Sponsored by Bud

Winner: Supported Internship Team at Pure Innovations

Highly Commended: 3t Training Services

SME of the Year | Sponsored by Rochdale Training

Winner: IACS Training and Education

Highly Commended: R&B Switchgear

Large Employer of the Year | Sponsored by Pearson

Winner: LWC Drinks

Highly Commended: Hyde Group



IN PARTNERSHIP:



GM Skills Awards 2025



HEADLINE SPONSOR:



Community Initiative of the Year | Manchester, A UNESCO City of Lifelong Learning

Winner: RISE UP

Highly Commended: Re-Engage Programme, Wigan and Leigh College

Outstanding Innovation of the Year | Sponsored by Coyne Recruitment

Winner: Engaging Rochdale & Rochdale Youth Works, Positive Steps & Rochdale Borough Council

Highly Commended: Funding Futures

Partnership Project of the Year | The Growth Company

Winner: Manchester, A UNESCO City of Lifelong Learning

Highly Commended: Health Education Initiative, Bolton College

Outstanding Contribution to FE & Skills 2025

Winner: Mark Currie, Chair of GMLPN and Chief Executive of Mantra Learning & The National Logistics Academy

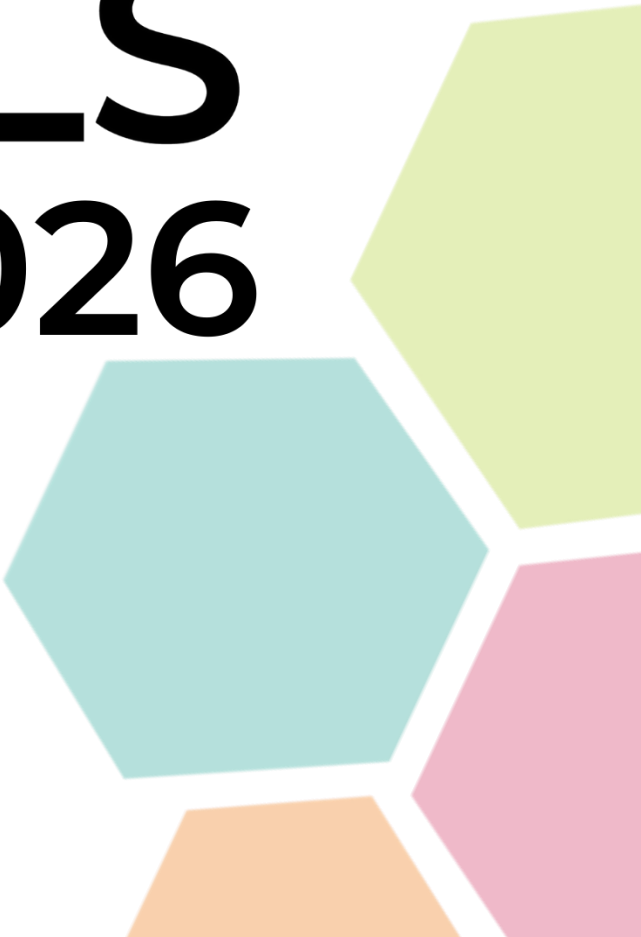
IN PARTNERSHIP:



Coming Soon



GM SKILLS AWARDS 2026



IN PARTNERSHIP:



Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce

Greater Manchester Update

Nicola McLeod

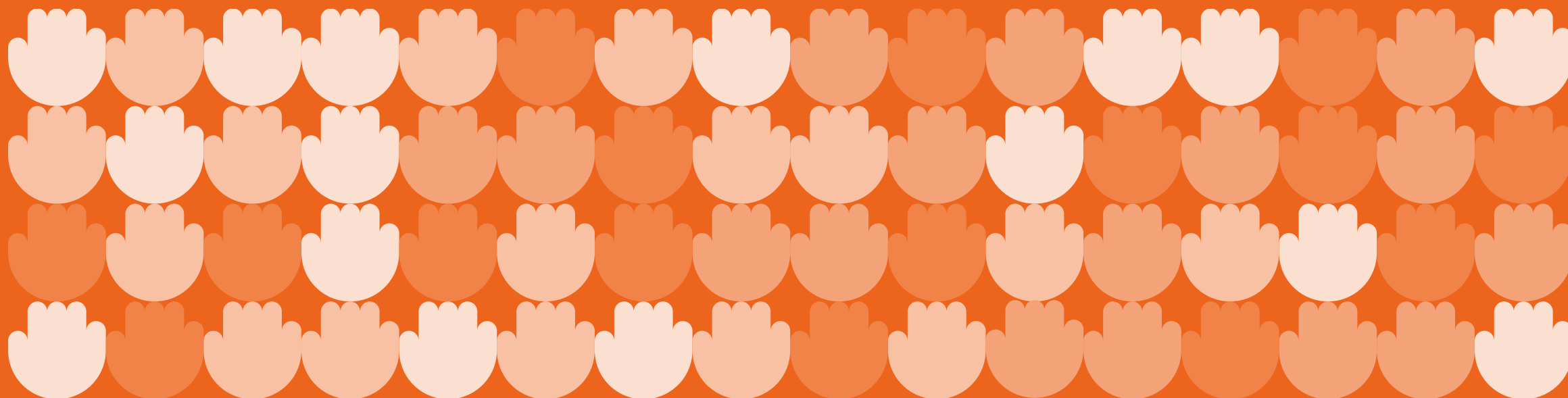
Director - Education, Work & Skills

GMCA GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

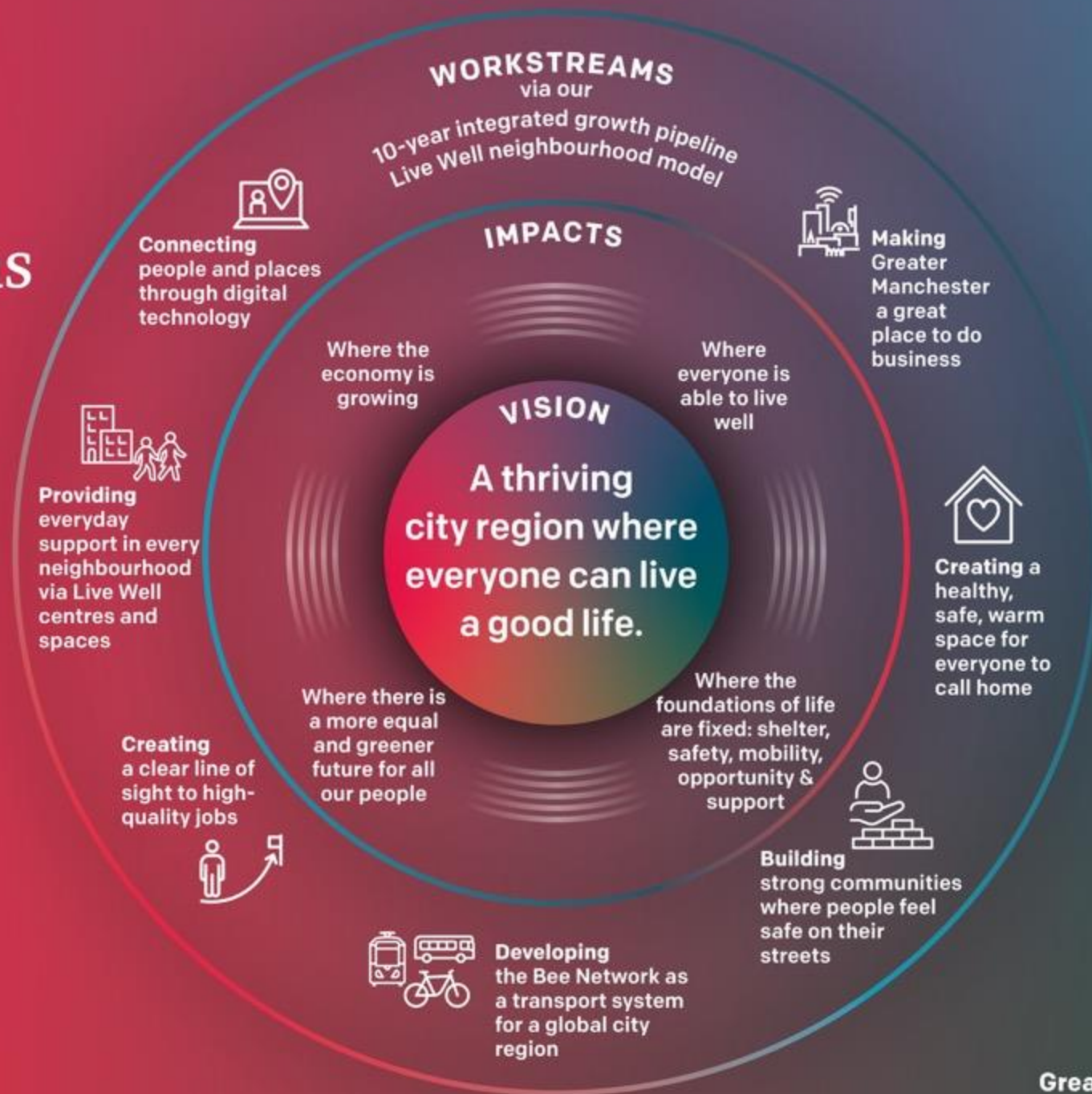
GMLPN 
Greater Manchester
Learning Provider Network

GMLPN Network Meeting: GMCA EWS

September 2025



Together we
are creating
the conditions
for people
to thrive.



GMS

Workstreams:



Employment Support:

By 2030 everyone will get the support they need, in their neighbourhood, to live well. We will narrow the gap between the GM employment rate and national avg. w/ good sustainable jobs, that pay well and provide equal access opportunities for all residents

Adult Skills:

Residents supported to enter and progress at work by building people's confidence and skills, offering tailored employment support for those facing barriers. Employment, skills, careers, health and social support will be fully integrated and delivered through a no wrong door approach.

Young people and MBacc:

We will ensure that young people and adults have access to high-quality CEIAG that provides a clear line of sight to good jobs, connecting them to meaningful progression opportunities that reflect their skills, interests, and the needs of the local labour market.

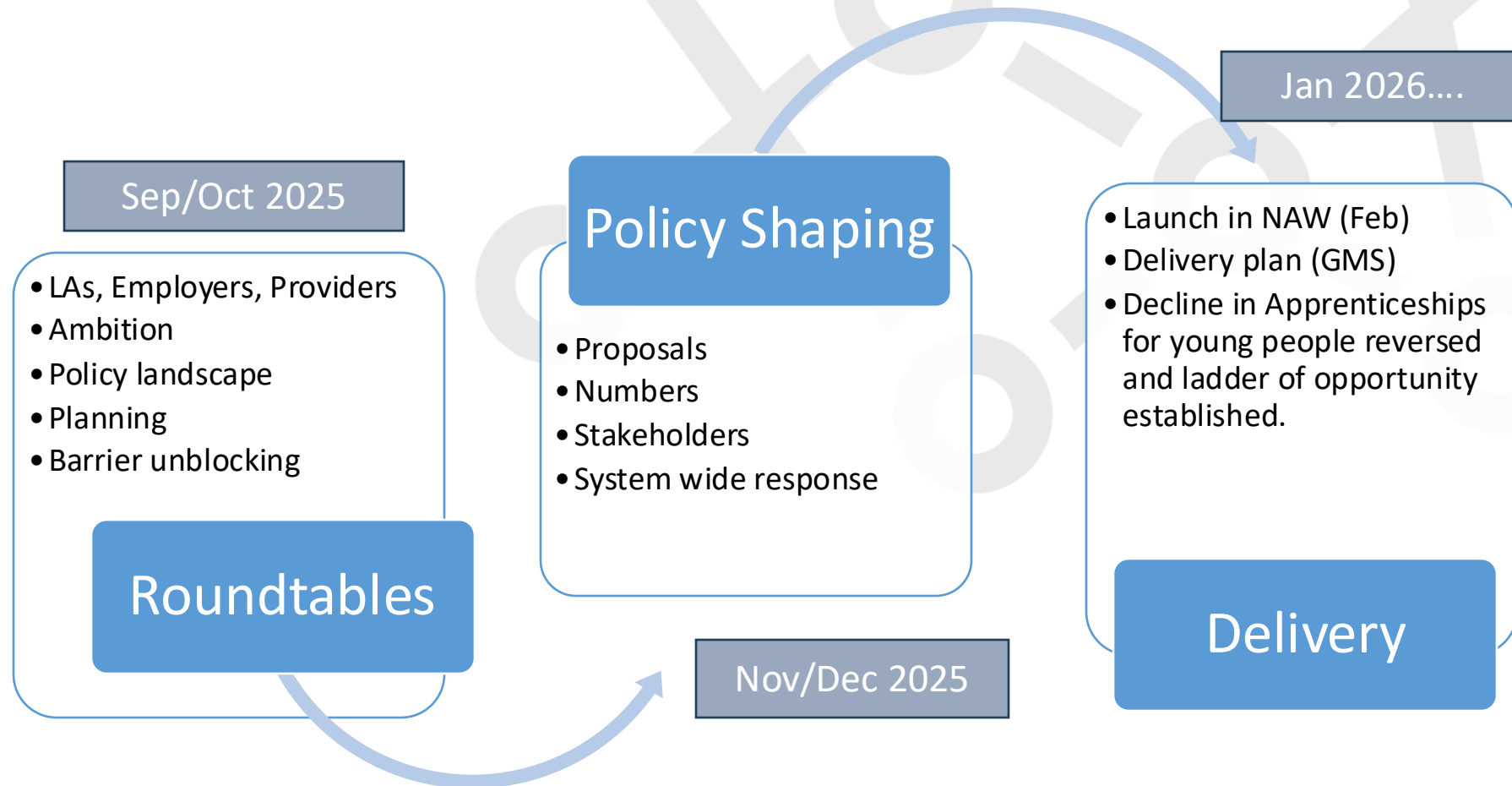
We will ensure every young person has the opportunity to be in employment, education or training .

Young people will have access to a progressive inclusive model of work experience and placements that offer choice, build social capital and tackle inequalities.

Apprenticeships: direction of travel

Mayoral Manifesto Commitments:

- Significant expansion in number of Apprenticeships and Degree Apprenticeships. 'Big and visible target' - year on year. (App accelerator)
- Pilot: Halls of Apprentices.
- Ensure there are sufficient supported pathways for young people who are neurodiverse, have learning disabilities, SEN, or other disabilities. We will work with employers to make reasonable adjustments where needed.



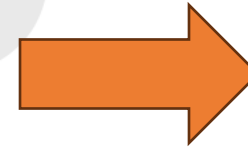
Adult Skills Fund

Funding context:

- Integrated Settlement (IS) brought together three AS funding streams & programmes under one approach (AEB; Free Courses for Jobs and Skills Bootcamps)
- Total funding in IS: £108m for 2025/2026 – 3.58% reduction
- IS provides greater freedoms and reduces the 'shackles' of different funding streams with differing rules, eligibility and structures.

Work with providers and partners to:

- Understand impact: which delivery and models are effective (and which aren't)
- Reduce duplication and repetitive nature of delivery
- Embed clear minimum standards of delivery, e.g. CEIAG, assessments, referrals etc.
- Agree positive, strong models of delivery



Likely future focus for delivery:

- A focus on positive outcomes in learning, employment – rather than quantity of learners
- Ensure the relevance of funding structures – move away from programmes towards broad functions
- Alignment with employment support activity
- Relevance to sectoral and higher-level skills for priority sectors
- Capturing outcomes which positively contribute to GMS and the IS outcomes

Careers

Review of Careers provision in GM and consultation:

Fragmented:

- overlapping/ duplicated services;
- lack of continuity and clarity for users;
- inconsistent quality and access

Access and inclusion gaps:

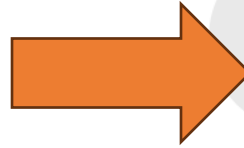
- not universally accessible or visible;
- missed opportunities for early sustained guidance

Workforce challenges:

- shortage of qualified advisors, and limited CPD.

Systemic weaknesses:

- national model lacks local flexibility, evaluation and employer alignment.
- Siloed funding and data inhibit accountability and strategic responsiveness.



Ambition: Deliver a high-quality, needs-led and employer responsive GM eco-system offering tailored and consistent Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) at every age and stage of the journey. This will be underpinned by robust labour market information and locality insight. Driven by an integrated service approach, delivered by a skilled and agile workforce and enhanced by accessible digital tools.

Delivery should be:

- **Strategically aligned** – GMS, MBacc etc
- **Accessible and inclusive** – co-location, all-age, in-person and online
- **High Quality:** quality assured, benchmarked, delivered by a well-trained workforce

Expected Outcomes :

- **High impact all age CEIAG ecosystem** aligned to local needs
- **Employer informed pathways**, stronger labour market fit
- **Reduced inequalities** through earlier accessible guidance
- **Continuous improvement** through robust evaluation.

Govt reshuffle and Skills policy

Positives:

- Alignment with employment support reflects the Mayor's direction of travel on Live Well and purpose of NJCS
- Likely to be a positive move in terms of essential skills and supporting early careers – reducing benefits bill as a key objective
- The new SoS for WP has a strong reputation and made decisive early statements about intended focus on young people NEET – welcome in GM

Challenges:

- Higher/ sectoral skills – risk that this becomes untethered from the rest of the system. DBT arguably a more useful owner of skills policy in this space
- DfE will seemingly retain control of 16-19 (FE & HE) skills policy (excl. apprenticeships) – Dept organisation ahead of continuity for learners?
- Need to invest more time on building new relationships – good relations w/ previous SoS for WP

Unknowns:

- The Minister for Skills will now report to both the SoS for Education and Work and Pensions – alignment or bottlenecks/ confusion?
- Substance of change in terms of official-level organisation is still being established
- Effect on Skills England yet to be seen – although Ministers insist it already works cross Govt and therefore unlikely to be affected.

Close

Mark Currie

Chair | GMLPN





NETWORK MEETING

Thank you!

