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| <b>Exchange</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Quality                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Date of Meeting</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 19/05/2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Location</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Microsoft teams                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>GMLPN Staff</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Charlotte Jones, Chloe Forrest, Hannah Bolsher                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Exchange Chair</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Emma Lowe-Hewitt – Rochdale Training                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Speakers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | The Growth Company - Emma Thorpe & Jack Higson<br>NowSkills – Daniel Wells                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Attendees</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Melanie Bailey (Oldham Council), Hannah Cutler (Oldham College), Ryan Ellershaw (Manchester City Council), Anna Clarke (Rochdale Training), Shelley Donnelly (Pareto), Eileen Moran (SRCC), Amanda Bradford-Hunt (Now Skills), Tim Cutler (NLTG), Alex Jones (WEA), Laura Meakin (System People), Jane Wilson (GMFRS), Joann Percy (Acorn Training), Hannah Eyre (Uni of Salford), Christine Edwards (Creating Excellence), Anne Marie Horan (Manchester First), |
| <b>Key Themes / Discussion Points</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>Providers (Growth Company and NowSkills) shared detailed insights from recent inspections under the new framework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong emphasis on inclusion, with inspectors focusing heavily on SEND support, the graduated approach, and learner case studies.</li> <li>• Increased scrutiny on data, including accuracy, accessibility, and ability to analyse multiple data cuts.</li> <li>• Inspections felt more collaborative and conversational, though still highly detailed and evidence-heavy.</li> <li>• Early indication of grades during inspections (from day 2) is now common.</li> <li>• Preparation for Inspection</li> <li>• Importance of early adoption of the toolkit and aligning all processes (SAR, QIP, data, CPD).</li> <li>• Need for clear document management, tracking uploads, and consistent naming conventions.</li> <li>• Value of knowing team strengths and preparing staff for engagement with inspectors.</li> <li>• Inclusion and SEND</li> <li>• Inclusion was a central theme throughout inspections, regardless of area.</li> <li>• Inspectors focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Graduated approach (assess, plan, do, review)</li> <li>○ Impact of CPD on staff capability</li> <li>○ Learner journeys and case studies</li> <li>○ EHCP accuracy and updates</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Challenges around EHCP updates and local authority delays highlighted.</li> <li>• CPD (Continuing Professional Development)</li> <li>• Increasing expectation that CPD, particularly for inclusion, is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ongoing</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

- Impactful
- Measurable
- Providers using a mix of:
  - Workshops, online training, newsletters, and internal sharing
- Discussion around whether CPD is effectively embedded and improving staff confidence.

### Assessing Learner Needs

- Early identification of needs is critical, ideally starting at application or onboarding.
- Tools like Cognassist used as a starting point, but emphasis on combining tools with ongoing conversations.
- Importance of adapting support throughout the learner journey rather than a fixed approach.

### Operational Challenges

- Sector-wide challenges include:
  - Constant regulatory and funding changes
  - Pressure on smaller providers
  - Uncertainty around funding rules and assessment models
- Concerns around apprenticeship reforms and impact on delivery and staffing.

### Teaching, Learning & Quality

- Growing interest in:
  - Sharing best practice for interactive teaching and engagement
  - Moving away from graded observations towards developmental approaches

### Resources / Links Shared

[Further education and skills inspection toolkit](#)  
[Further education and skills operating guide for inspectors - GOV.UK](#)  
[Home - 9000 Lives - Expert SEND Consultancy & Training](#)  
[Cognassist | Inspectable, Evidence-Led Inclusion for FE](#)

### Actions

#### GMLPN team to:

- Continue regular engagement with Ofsted (e.g. Paul Cocker).
- Feedback provider requests for more frequent updates on inspection trends.

#### Providers to:

- Review and strengthen inclusion practices and graduated approach implementation.

- Evaluate and evidence impact of CPD, particularly for SEND.
- Ensure data systems and dashboards are inspection-ready.
- Strengthen processes for early identification and tracking of learner needs.
- Consider collaborative approaches to staff development (peer support, mentoring, sharing practice).

### Next Steps

Future Exchange Topics Suggested:

- Further Ofsted inspection experiences and feedback
- Compliance and audit insights
- Teaching, learning and assessment (methods, engagement, best practice)
- Observation and learning walk approaches
- Office for Students (OfS) involvement
- Ongoing updates on sector trends from Ofsted

Upcoming Activity:

- GMLPN team to confirm and share the next Quality Exchange date.
- Continue to build a peer-sharing environment, with providers encouraged to contribute experiences and case studies.

[Ofsted: What have we learned in the first 6 months of the new regime? Tickets, Friday, May 22 • 10:30 AM - 12 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite](#)