

Employer Ownership of Skills (EOS) Pilot
Round 1
Greater Manchester

Final Evaluation Report
December 2017

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) is the UK's largest accredited Chamber, representing over 4,700 businesses that together employ over 400,000 people, over one-third of the working population of the country's largest area of economic activity outside London and the South East. We are a not-for-profit private company, working proactively to create a better business environment for our members by helping to connect them to business opportunities in Greater Manchester, the UK and across the globe.

GMCC has covered the ten local authority areas within the Manchester City Region since 2004 but traces its roots back to the Manchester Commercial Society in 1794. It delivers over 120 events each year offering outstanding networking opportunities to its member companies. It works closely with its partners on a local, national and international scale to provide its members with unique opportunities to develop their business and to provide them with a mechanism to interact with local and central government on issues affecting the city region. To have a look at everything we offer, visit www.gmchamber.co.uk.

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Executive Summary

EOS and GIF initiatives in Greater Manchester

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA), Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) and UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) provided funding to the Greater Manchester (GM) area, through the Employer Ownership of Skills (EOS) programme and the Growth Innovation Fund (GIF). The EOS programme was designed to test a more employer-centric view of the design and provision of training and the development of workforce skills, while the GIF funding focused on both the stimulation and maintenance of employers pursuing innovative skills development strategies. A total of £11m was invested in testing a new employer-led skills system in Greater Manchester, designed to aid employers by investing in the skills that they needed, rather than simply relying on what the market provided.

The pilot agreed to deliver 1,843 training outputs, with the following composition:

- 410 16- to 18-year-old apprenticeships
- 763 19+ apprenticeships
- 670 19+ other qualifications

Greater Manchester delivered this activity through Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce (GMCC), aggregating employer demand via the route of new sector-specific Employer Skills Groups. These supported the development of a system that opened new markets for work-based learning and encouraged training providers and further education colleges to work more closely with employers in new sectors. Overall, more than 350 companies benefitted from participation in the programme in terms of training and skills development.

The Role of Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

GMCC as an intermediary

GMCC's key role in this pilot was that of an intermediary, supporting the complex issues between skills demand for employers and the supply of training provision from the market. This intermediary role was vital in supporting employers to both navigate the complexities of the skills system, with multiple types of provider with different access routes, and the administration of the programme overall, both of which often deter employer participation in programmes such as these. GMCC's position as a trusted operator within the GM area, with experience of working closely both with business and the public sector and its agencies, supported its role not only as the contract deliverer, but ultimately as an independent and neutral skills broker that was able to work as an interpreter for the public sector and training providers, translating skills policies into workable solutions for businesses.

GMCC as an anchor institution

Increasing amounts of research in local economic development refer to the critical role held by anchor institutions within local areas. These include large public-sector employers, including schools, colleges and universities, as well as major private sector employers and trade and business associations such as chambers of commerce.

Anchor institutions are identified as having a long history, being deeply-rooted in their local economy, of sufficiently large scale, have immobility (i.e. are not likely to relocate to another area), are often not-for-profit, and have significant relationships that support wider economic activity in a local area.

This pilot was enhanced by the ability to leverage GMCC's role existing position as an anchor institution in GM. Its long-term history, trusted and neutral brand, and its connectedness across multiple parts of the GM economy, further supported by its own experience in engaging with multiple bodies, public and private, over many decades, allowed for a greater involvement in the EOS pilot than just its core, contractual role.

In a number of areas throughout the pilot, overall effectiveness and successful delivery was supported by existing infrastructure within GMCC, where long-standing expertise and institutional knowledge were ready and available to be deployed to support employers, students and training providers to overcome challenges that emerged during the programme.

Establishment of Infrastructure

Employer Skills Groups

Using its position of influence within employers in GM, GMCC created and maintained 17 separate Employer Skills Groups (ESGs) across 15 sectors, allowing the aggregation of employer demand and better penetration of the hard-to-reach SME space than traditional routes that rely more heavily on large corporations. The ESGs ensured that employers were the driving force in the development of components such as skills and training and were also used as GMCC's key means of combining demand-side information from employers on their current and future needs as well as bringing to the table representatives from the skills industry directly to better connect them to their ultimate customers.

This programme of ESGs was the primary means of engaging with around 200 companies, academics and training providers to develop the overall EOS programme, which not only facilitated the conversations required to establish the needs and desires of business and how best to support the response of the training providers, but also further improving GMCC's own knowledge of the challenges that its local businesses were facing.

The collaborative approach of the ESGs was fundamental in the development of the pilot and its success, and they supported the effective co-ordination between key stakeholders, meeting quarterly to ensure that businesses were able to collectively deliberate on how to respond to key changes in their sectors over time.

Employer networks: driving demand

GMCC also facilitated the necessary operating infrastructure and networks for new work-based learning markets, stimulating the collaboration of training providers and further education colleges with employers, in sectors which had previously been neglected in the skills development and support area. The EOS pilot resulted in an increase in the supply of apprenticeships. It is clear that assume the demand for apprenticeships in the legal sector increased as a result of the innovative approach adopted by legal ESG. This was followed by the implementation of strategies designed to advertise the paralegal apprenticeships and encourage applicants to apply for apprenticeships. These included organising open days and developing recruitment brochures. However, changing demand levels may

also have influenced the creation of uptake apprenticeships and increasing the demand for apprenticeships overall would require a more active influence on the requirements of employers within each sector.

GM Apprenticeship Hub

The GM Apprenticeship Hub, funded through Greater Manchester's £6m City Deal, was built around three key objectives: maximising employer offerings of apprenticeships, improving information, advice and guidance for young people in making career and learning decisions, and developing the understanding of training providers to support their provision of learning aims that match employer demand. This programme ran simultaneously with the EOS pilot, and GMCC worked with other key organisations, including Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network and others to deliver the objectives. In particular, GMCC worked to support the capacity building of employers to support training opportunities, developing greater market intelligence through its work with ESGs to better identify opportunities for innovation within the training provider network and engage meaningfully with employers, trainees and providers to build coherence in the system as a whole.

Developing new qualifications

Part of the role of the ESGs was, when provision was required that did not exist even out of area, was to develop new qualifications, such as the Paralegal Apprenticeship, co-designed by the Legal ESG. The Paralegal Apprenticeship was created in partnership with a number of law firms and was a direct response to changing demands within the legal sector. A number of innovations were brought forward in the approach to this scheme which supported its success. The ESG agreed that successful applicants would be paid a starting salary of £12,000 per annum which supported a higher volume and quality of applicants who were invited to assessment by GMCC of general skills and capability before being followed up by an interview with the employer. The apprenticeships were conceptualised by law firm themselves and, as a result, were designed to provide exactly the training demanded by employers. Whilst initially these were offered only at level 3, they were later extended up to level 6. These were the highest-level qualifications offered through this pilot, but it is not clear how transferable this model, of offering much higher-level qualifications, is to sectors that are not similar in approach to law or perhaps professional services.

Supporting Trailblazer development

Experience gained within this pilot, particularly in the innovative and successful use of ESGs to aggregate employer demand and the supporting of employers to design new qualifications, was recognised in the government's implementation plan of the Richard's Review which brought forward Apprenticeship Trailblazers, where groups of employers work together to design new apprenticeship standards for occupations, new or existing, within their own sectors. Building on the work of the ESGs in the GM pilot, these bring together employers, professional bodies, trade associations, training providers and awarding bodies to support the development and deployment of new qualifications across a range of industries.

In response to the changing structure of the legal sector and with the intention of creating a new, robust career path, the EOS pilot adopted the trailblazer approach within the legal sector to create paralegal apprenticeships. The legal sector ESG meeting identified significant components such as the need to change the working environment to give respect and credibility to non-degree qualifications and attracting young people to the new options in the legal sector. Moreover, from Level 4 onwards trailblazer standards were to be adopted. Eventually paralegal apprenticeships were developed up to level 7. These initiatives were designed to encourage applicants to apply for the apprenticeships.

Sourcing provision from other areas

A repeated challenge was the lack of the suitable provision within GM to deliver courses for which employers indicated there was demand, but no market supply in the area. The challenge here is less one of training providers being inflexible or unwilling to offer, but often instead was a lack of knowledge on their part of what employers were seeking, and a challenge when the demand was clear in delivering the new provision speedily enough to meet employers' needs.

In total, there were 202 courses for which the training provision was sourced out of area, including four dementia courses which were delivered in partnership with the University of Stirling. This sourcing successfully demonstrated the demand for this type of healthcare training, despite a lack of provision accessible in the Greater Manchester area, in turn leading to provision becoming available at the University of Salford.

The pilot has highlighted that the speed of delivery is crucial: it has shown that there remains, despite the infrastructure developed above, and the strong relationship between GMCC and local employers, the difficulty in converting conversations with companies into firm training commitments. When an employer is ready to move forward with training, it is critical that it is readily available and, if not, that the timescales to preparing the training must be swift: responsiveness and agility is key. Therefore, access to existing training provision from out of area is an important catalyst in assessing and highlighting latent demand in the local market which can they be used to support business cases for more local providers.

Headline Performance

The fundamental requirements of the pilot were achieved, delivering 1,969 training outcomes, representing a 6.83% return on the initial investment. The pilot worked with nearly 1,800 individuals overall, with 350 companies benefiting from enhanced training and skills development.

Whilst the overall target was achieved, its final composition was different: the total volume, surpassing the contractual target was supported by the relative popularity of 19+ non-apprenticeship qualifications, which led to a larger share of learners in this group (52%) than expected. The distribution of these three different groups also varied considerably by sector. Financial services, facilities management and health and social care were dominated by learners in the 19+ (100%, 90% and 95%) group, whilst the information technology sector was dominated by 16-18-year olds, who made up 80% of the learning starts.

The pilot highlighted the existing challenges in the marketplace of increasing apprenticeship take-up by employers, though it also encouraged new routes to employment such as the paralegal

apprenticeship and the recruitment of under 19s into IT through new provision. However, the dominance of non-apprenticeship courses, and particularly of non-accredited (QCF) provision (which accounted for three-quarters of all non-apprenticeship provision), suggests that many employers favour shorter training courses over more extended, formal qualifications. Therefore, future policy needs to recognise the important role that these courses may have in shaping GM's future ambitions of improving the skill-set and productivity of its workforce.

This is not to say that accredited qualifications do not have a role, but their popularity is clearly limited to certain sectors, with over 95% of these delivered to the health & social care and hospitality sectors, where accredited training is mandatory as part of the staff development process, and there is little demand for these from other sectors.

Achievement Against Objectives

The efficacy of the pilot was measured in relation to four pre-determined objectives. The four main objectives of the pilot were:

- To create an employer led skills system which leads to an increase in competitiveness and the provision of good jobs and training opportunities across Greater Manchester
- To lead the marketplace by developing employers to take the opportunity to lead new activities to improve skills and employment in their sectors, supply chains and localities
- Work with appropriate public/private/social sector partners to maximise employer take-up of Apprenticeships across the range of employment sectors
- To improve the recruitment of young people and adults of all abilities into Apprenticeships

An independent evaluation, conducted by New Economy in 2015, stated that two of the targets had been fully accomplished, whereas the remaining two had only been partially completed. There is evidence that this pilot invigorated employer engagement across various sectors with high quality and well-regarded training, enhancing employee prospects and opportunities for improved employment.

However, it is evident that although employers possess the ability to shape the skills based initiatives for their own industry, they lack the knowledge, capacity, and, crucially, the desire to genuinely *own* the skills system. Indeed, the research shows that the success of the pilot was supported by a heavy reliance on pre-existing GMCC infrastructure, in designing training courses, liaising between employers and training providers, and supporting and simplifying the administrative burden.

The use of ESGs was fundamental in bringing together the various stakeholders in the local skills economy and improved its impact and supported open discussions about the challenges and solutions for each sector, improving collaboration.

The pilot may have supported the pursuit of Advanced and Higher apprenticeships in several sectors, in accordance with the GM's outlined strategic objectives, however, the profile of trainees accessing the pilot funded training was less diverse than GM's labour market overall.

Conclusion and recommendations

Previous research has noted that employers lack the capacity and desire to effectively lead the skills system on their own, and that programmes have been most successful and had the greatest impact where there is heavy reliance on the infrastructure of intermediaries. Additionally, BIS found that of all the pilots, those which were not intermediary led cited the bureaucratic burden of the pilot as the

main challenge. This suggests that, overall, the administrative duties managed by GMCC both enhanced the effectiveness of the EOS pilot overall and significantly mitigated risk for the programme in general.

GMCC's role as a neutral entity with both links to businesses and a good understanding of the wider Greater Manchester area, allows it to fulfil the UKCES criteria of an anchor institution, showing ambition to support local businesses; an understanding of the challenges faced by society, and opportunities for growth and development; the vision to reach the wider aims and objectives of the local community/economy; and the ability to forge strong local partnerships.

The sector-led approach, empowering groups of employers through ESGs to design workforce training is an apparent success, providing faster methods of designing, sourcing and procuring reputable training, to meet the needs of local businesses and the wider economy. These initiatives follow UKCES findings, who demonstrated the importance of the creation of these conditions for greater employer ownership, including designing skills solutions which meet industry needs, and collaborative approaches to support the attainment of relevant skills. A combination of the knowledge of sector-led groups, combined with existing infrastructure within the intermediary allowed for rapid response to employer needs, including the sourcing of existing training from further afield where it did not exist in the local area.

The ability to bring together, through ESGs, not only employers but also the supply-side of the skills sector allowed not only aggregation of SME market demand to ensure penetration of the employers, but also a level of mature collaboration that allowed for the design and development of new qualifications and new frameworks, essentially paving the way for the future Apprenticeship Trailblazer scheme.

GMCC's strategy appears to perform well in terms of maximising the overall effectiveness of the pilot, however, even with a robust and experienced intermediary with experience of both SME engagement and the wider skills system, there remain challenges that should be noted and, where possible, addressed in future schemes.

Whilst GMCC has further significantly strengthened its comprehension of the embedded apprenticeship system and has identified its integral role as a neutral intermediary that both acts as a translator between training providers and businesses as well as an aggregator of SME intelligence and collaboration, large-scale selling of apprenticeships and training into businesses remains a challenge. The pilot shows that the number of business engagements required to convert interest into a firm training opportunity was six times higher than originally expected at the start of the programme.

Opportunities to deliver different types of training varies enormously by sector with there being little interest in some sectors for longer-term, structured training, where employers instead rely more heavily on short, intensive training, even where unaccredited, and the relative perceived importance of these to employers needs to be considered. A significant amount of investment in infrastructure is required to drive new apprenticeship starts within some sectors, particularly where it is not a traditional route to either new start employment or skills development of existing staff.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of the pilot was enhanced by GMCC's role as an intermediary, linking employers and training providers, managing project administration, and intervening to support employers and ESGs when companies' day-to-day work ends up taking priority. In many ways, it is the

“hand-holding” role of the intermediary, maintaining overall strategic focus and keeping conversations open between different parties, that may have proven a key part of the overall success.

Depending on the different employer and training markets and products being delivered, there are highly variable requirements for the monitoring of training providers, to ensure consistency of training, to limit inefficiency, and to guarantee quality of delivery is maintained in adherence to the objectives of the project.

Whilst the pilot highlighted new ways of supporting businesses to shape the skills market, there remain other challenges that need to be met. Employers can invest time and effort into the construction of new training modules, but ultimately the accreditation qualifications are only available through providers and/or assessors, who operate on a payment framework. Training provider responsiveness and the employer’s ability to source training to meet business need to move quickly in parallel: the pilot highlighted the importance of immediate delivery to meet employers’ needs, particularly after a long period of discussion and engagement to support conversion.

The employer-centric viewpoint moved the focus away from the locally identified growth sectors and strategic plans, meaning that less strategically important sectors in the local economy may have benefited more than would be expected given existing local economic strategies. If the pilot were to be repeated there would be a compelling case to place greater emphasis on fewer sectors of the GM economy, enabling greater dedication and support to strategic sectors, expanding the duration and subsequently channelling more funding to establish a system with greater longevity, including the creation of further ESGs to keep pace with the emergence of new and high growth sectors and to ensure consistent progress in provision of training.

The pilot has highlighted how a restructuring of the future design and delivery of the skills and training system could yield more effective results, but the scale of the pilot was too small and brief to support a permanent, systemic change to the skills system and to the relationship between employers and training providers. However, this pilot successfully set the foundations for the establishment of sector-focused, employer-led groups to aggregate demand, genuinely penetrate the SME space, provide a forum for honest collaboration between employers and providers, and to monitor ongoing progress of training and qualification design and development.

It has shown the importance of responsiveness and agility from training providers, and employers generally are not prepared to wait long periods of time for new qualifications to be designed, unless perhaps, they are directly involved in their evolution and development. Whilst this pilot successfully supported both new deliveries in GM of existing frameworks that were previously delivered in other parts of the country, and new frameworks designed specifically through this pilot and its employer groups, it is clear non-accredited vocational frameworks are at least as important to employers as apprenticeships.

Introduction

As a result of an understanding of the importance of employer led education and training, the EOS pilot was implemented to ensure that the skills individuals were gaining were indeed those demanded by employers. Such an initiative has positive implications for addressing key issues such as skills shortages through bridging the gap between the demand and supply of labour. This report analyses the effectiveness of the EOS Round 1 Pilot in Greater Manchester, in which GMCC acted as an intermediary between employers and training providers. The analysis measures the effectiveness of the pilot and highlights the externalities and trends which seem to exist. This will be useful in terms of providing insight into how the EOS pilots of the future, could be created and framed in a way to maximise their effectiveness.

As per the 2011 Employer Evaluation of Skills document, the initial objective of the EOS pilot was for business to be given the resources required to innovate and develop new ideas. Employers would themselves be able to tackle the skills issues central to their sector, and as a result account for the skills they demand both now and in the future. The expectation was that this would increase the competitiveness and the provision of employment and training opportunities in Greater Manchester. As noted in the interim report, other objectives included encouraging employers to lead innovative activities to improve skills and employment within their sectors and encouraging relevant public and private sector stakeholders to partner up to maximise the number of employers who take up apprenticeships, and as a result improve the recruitment of individuals into apprenticeships. These targets have remained relatively unchanged. Analysis of achievement of these targets, however, needs a nuanced consideration of the data and other relevant findings.

The data used to empirically test the effectiveness of the model in Section 7.0, is cross-sectional data from the 1,969 learning starts delivered across Greater Manchester through the EOS pilot. Several variables across multiple demographic factors are included in the dataset. The full list of variables can be found in Appendix 1. This learner dataset was readily available from GMCC.

Interim Report Findings

The effectiveness of an employer led training system in Greater Manchester has been illustrated in various research project measuring the effectiveness of the intervention. The interim report on this pilot suggested the initiative appeared to be successful. Following the implementation of the pilot the target level of training outputs of 1,843 was exceeded with 1,969 training starts. However, one must note this is largely a result of higher than expected 19+ non-apprenticeships starts, as targets for both 16-18 apprenticeships and 19+ apprenticeships were not met. The effectiveness of the EOS pilots overall, is further illustrated in the BIS evaluation project, which measured the effectiveness of the 36 Round 1 pilots using qualitative interviews with a number of stakeholders. Overall, the findings suggest a significant positive effect of the project on the provision of employer led training pilots, leading to more targeted and relevant training provided. An unexpected advantage of the pilots, illustrated in the BIS report, is that such coordination between employers and training providers has created opportunities for businesses in the same sector to work together, either directly or via an intermediary.

In terms of training participant's feedback, the interim report found that 83% of trainees would recommend the training they received in the pilot. Moreover, the training also had a positive effect on motivation and self confidence in the workplace. This is further illustrated in the BIS report, which found that the pilots had a positive effect on components such as employee confidence levels with more structured routes to employment. In terms of the effects on businesses as a whole, employers have reported increases in productivity and efficiency, with employers being generally positive about the initiative.

A major limitation identified in the BIS report illustrated by employers, was the bureaucratic nature of the programme. Many employers found the task of data collection and recording difficult. This illustrates the important of an intermediary role such as that GMCC played in the Greater Manchester pilot. Many employers relied heavily on the infrastructure provided by GMCC when designing training courses and selecting training providers, and indeed those who had greater reliance of GMCC infrastructure, performed better. A more in-depth analysis into the importance of an intermediary can be later in the report.

The interim report, however, found that the pilot was not equally successful in encouraging employers to take up apprenticeships with little evidence of the recruitment of young people in apprenticeships. This shows that additional steps are required to encourage employers to recruit such individuals into apprenticeships and also provides the background for initiatives such as the apprenticeship levy. The rationale behind its introduction is to highlight the importance of the provision of apprenticeships, and an awareness of the responsibility of the employer in contributing to a training programme aimed to create skilled workers. This increase in the supply of skilled workers would be an advantage for employers, in terms of mitigating wage inflation and the supporting of hiring quality workers.

Importance of an Intermediary

Though the role of intermediaries has particular significance in the case of the EOS pilot, the concept is not at all new. The advantages of ‘anchor institutions’, which act as a connection between different sections of the economy and provide a leadership service, have been evaluated significantly by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). The reason such institutions are necessary is illustrated by a UKCES report which found that small organisations are often held back by lack of leadership and direction. Projects designed to test the role of anchors, found such an institution had a positive effect on business processes, and have the ability to account for skills shortages particular to that area.

The importance of the role of such an intermediary in the EOS pilot in particular, is illustrated plainly in the findings of the pilots. In the case of GMCC, the significant administrative burden associated with acting as an intermediary is vast, with claims on behalf of the employers sent to the Skills Funding Agency monthly. Moreover, GMCC managed the risk of the project and worked with the Skills Funding Agency on a regular basis. The task of data collection and accumulation, carried out by GMCC is significant, and it is apparent some employers would have great difficulty in carrying out these bureaucratic obligations.

Furthermore, the organisation of forums by GMCC with employers, not only aided the coordination between training providers and employers, but employers were also able to provide valuable insights into the training programmes. From a European perspective, the importance of an intermediary in the training process is considered particularly crucial. In a report evaluating the effectiveness of apprenticeship pilots, the European Commission (2016) states that intermediaries play a crucial role in providing a link between employers and potential employees.

The most significant finding which explains the importance of an intermediary is illustrated in the New Economy (2015) report, which finds that though employers play a crucial role shaping the skills required subject to each sector, it is apparent some employers lack the ability to proactively lead training pilots. However, GMCC has successfully accounted for this issue by acting as an intermediary between employers and training providers. This implies that the lack of an intermediary would have significant consequences in terms of the effectiveness of the EOS pilot.

In terms of the ability to act as an anchor intuition, GMCC seems to have all the characteristics illustrated by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2016), which are considered necessary to allow such institutions to have a positive effect on the society they represent. These characteristics are:

- Ambition to support local businesses, using the resources they possess.
- An understanding of the challenged faced by society, and opportunities for growth and development.
- The vision to reach the wider aims and objectives of the local community/economy
- An understanding of how helping local businesses, will aid them in achieving their own organisational goals.
- The ability to forge strong local partnerships.

As a neutral institution, with links with several businesses, GMCC has a thorough and unique understanding of the needs and problems faced by businesses in the area. Furthermore, dialogue between the employers and training providers provides GMCC with recognition of the challenges faced by society. As GMCC seems to fit the criteria extremely well, it seems to have all the necessary qualities required to successfully carry out the responsibilities of an intermediary. As a result, the effectiveness of the Greater Manchester EOS pilot can be attributed to the role of GMCC as an intermediary, and a significant contributor to its success.

Bid Objectives

An analysis of whether GMCC followed through with what was proposed in the initial bid is a indicator of success. The main objective in the initial bid for the Employer Ownership of Skills funding was to develop ESGs to bring together businesses to work on the development of skills, central to each industry. This was to be focused on two key areas: firstly, to address the skills shortages in Greater Manchester, and secondly, to increase productivity in the Greater Manchester area. The initial areas in which ESGs were developed, were Construction, Information Technology, Engineering, Health and Social Care, Financial and Professional Services and Hospitality. Subsequently, more ESGs were set up, eventually totalling up to 17 ESGs in additional sectors including Legal, Housing, Creative Technology and Infrastructure and Manufacturing. Such ESGs were useful in promoting dialogue between businesses in terms of the skills shortages, and interventions which could be implemented to tackle such issues.

Employer Skills Groups

The successful outcome of the Greater Manchester EOS pilot is in part a result of an understanding of the importance of working with employers and catering to their needs. This is illustrated by the ESGs, which were created by GMCC. The objective of ESGs was to use employers as a means of developing skills to promote business growth, in various sectors. Groups were created subject to sector, and GMCC provided a key service in terms of liaising with several representatives of each group, in order to gain an understanding of the training requirements which, exist in each sector, and identifying areas in which training programs can be enhanced and developed. 17 ESGs were created, with just under 200 companies participating in these groups. ESGs met quarterly to discuss challenges, such as skills shortages, and collectively discuss various ideas to tackle issues and respond to key changes. The groups developed new qualifications and tested the skills system. For example, in the housing sector, formation of the necessary employer skills group, which included 13 housing associations, allowed the employers of the sector to couple both the development of apprenticeships, and training for current employees, with the objective of enhancing both skills and employment opportunities.

Legal Employer Skills Group and New Qualifications

The Legal Sector Employer Skills Group aimed to gain an insight into the skills needs of firms in the legal sector and provide these skills via apprenticeships. The Legal Services Act of 2007, which allowed non-legal representatives to own law firms, had significant effects on the legal market. As illustrated by Legal Services Board (2012), the effects of the act included an increase in competitiveness in the market, with legal services available at a more affordable cost. Therefore, to compete effectively with the firms in the market, it was apparent innovation was required by law firms. Following the act in terms of expected demand levels for paralegal workers, Welsh et al (2012) forecasted paralegal employment was to grow by 18% in 5 years. This is further illustrated by Legal Education and Training

Review (2012) who states as a response to changing demand trends, new qualifications for paralegal workers in the law sector were being created, with emphasis non-graduate employees.

The Paralegal apprenticeship scheme was launched by GMCC as a response to such changing demand levels and was built on a partnership with several law firms, including Pannone. In the first stage of the process GMCC invited applicants to carry out an assessment to test general skills and capability. This was followed up with an interview with the employer. Overall, all applicants were of a high quality. The salary for the Paralegal apprenticeship, finalised after a discussion during a Legal ESG meeting, was decided to be £12,000 annually. GMCC provided more than 100 Paralegal Apprenticeships in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University, who carried out the training by tender.

As these apprenticeships are directly conceptualised by law firms themselves, they ensured that the skills gaps were being addressed. Though initially the group provided Level 3 paralegal apprenticeships, this has expanded to include apprenticeships up to Level 6. Furthermore, a paralegal apprenticeship open day was organised by GMCC, to attract applicants. For this apprenticeship, UCAS style application was launched. An advantage of such a UCAS style application system is as it is comparable to that of university application, it may reduce the bias associated with non-university education. This Paralegal Apprenticeship open day event, aimed at attracting the interest of law firms or businesses who have employees in the legal sector, provided such individuals with an understanding of how to address skills shortages by employing apprentices. As training programs, such as apprenticeships are often considered inferior to university education, a UCAS style application system may go some way to reduce this bias. As a result of the lack of mainstream data on Paralegal apprenticeships, an analysis on the effectiveness of the apprenticeship is problematic, though the success rates of the apprenticeship, at 91%, were particularly high. The pilot has, therefore, provided a new opportunity for school leavers to enter the legal sector with the skills that employers needs them to have. Such examples illustrate the vital role of GMCC in being an intermediary between employers and training providers, to ensure that the funding provided, is used in the most efficient manner for training.

Though Paralegal apprenticeships have expanded from Level 3 to include levels up to Level 6, this model may not be replicable in other sectors. The creation of Level 6 apprenticeships, was a direct response to a demand for higher level apprentices. As demand for skills levels varies across sectors, a fundamental understanding of such demand for skills, in each sector is crucial in order to propose such innovative solutions. As a neutral entity with links to businesses in various sectors, GMCC already has an informed insight into such demand trends. Moreover, in 2013 a UK wide paralegal apprenticeship scheme was launched by a Skills Sector Council, Skills for Justice, also a not for profit organisation. Though data concerning the effectiveness of this apprenticeship is not readily available. The actions of GMCC in terms of the creation of ESGs, follow the proposal outlined by UKCES (2013), who demonstrated the importance of the creation of conditions for greater employer ownership. Steps include designing skills solutions which meet industry needs, and collaborative approaches to support the attainment of relevant skills. Such actions match the fundamental purpose of ESGs.

Non-Greater Manchester Provision

A significant challenge which was identified was lack of training availability in the Greater Manchester area. For some training courses, for which skills were in demand, courses simply did not exist or were only available in the long term. Meaning even after employers were engaged and prepared to go

ahead with the training, they would need to wait till the training became available. High level qualifications were difficult to create quickly following changes in demand, therefore GMCC had to utilise provision which was readily available. This problem was accounted for by the provision of training, outside of the Greater Manchester area. Of the 34 training providers, 10 were based out of area. Of the 1,969 training starts, 202 starts were of learning providers, which were outside of the Greater Manchester area. A significant example is the provision of 4 Dementia training courses demanded by CLS, provided by the University of Sterling, which was otherwise unavailable in the Greater Manchester Area.

Legacy and Sustainability

One crucial outcome from the EOS pilot was the creation of initiatives such as Employers Skills Groups and the Skills Gateway Service. Firstly, such endeavours further illustrate the importance of co-ordination between employers and training providers, in terms provision of skills and training. Secondly, because such enterprises encourage dialogue and coordination between employers, employers are increasingly acting as a driving force in the workforce. Furthermore, meetings within ESGs identify developing markets and potential issues, and promote discussion on how to account for and deal with problems or how to tap into emerging markets. Such groups also ensure constant development and greater innovation as a response to changing trends and patterns.

In terms of how the EOS pilot has proved advantageous for GMCC, it has allowed GMCC to further broaden its links with business in Greater Manchester, as well as outside of Greater Manchester. The provision of skills has gone some way to aid businesses, which as a not for profit organisation, is a key component of the ethos of GMCC. Furthermore, GMCC were able to gain a fuller understanding of skills demand in various sectors in Greater Manchester. As an impartial service, GMCC were able to establish secure relations with training providers, both public and private and businesses. Such links are highly advantageous for GMCC. The resources required by GMCC to ensure the constant progression and sustainability in terms of acting as an effective intermediary, include funding to expand the number of training providers and employers they currently have on board.

A key finding of this analysis was that the effectiveness of the pilot was significantly influenced by GMCC and the role it played as an intermediary. The existing connections GMCC had already established aided co-ordination and encouraged the partnerships the necessary entities in ensuring the pilot was a success. GMCC were able to recognise demand trends which were illustrated by employers. As a result, it was the existing nature and characteristics of GMCC which allowed it to effectively lead this pilot. A key example was the conception of the paralegal apprenticeships, which would have been unviable for other intermediaries, as they lacked the existing connections. Furthermore, both the paralegal apprenticeships and the provision of Dementia courses illustrate examples of creating new initiatives designed to meet previously unmet employer needs. A significant limitation of the system is that there is no formal procedure for illustrating demand levels for skills. Though GMCC were able to aggregate information between employers and training providers, and translate between the two entities to ensure understanding, a more intuitive strategy may be useful to ensure training is responsive to demand levels.

Implications Subject to the Aims of the Pilot

To create an employer led skills system which leads to an increase in competitiveness and the provision of good jobs and training opportunities across Greater Manchester. The EOS pilot has led to an employer driven system, as employers are able to directly state the demand for skills which exists in their sector. Employers would then be able to hire employees, which have the skills that perfectly match the requirements for the job. This has allowed these firms directly to shape the skills system and fill their skills gaps in a proactive and efficient manner, while employees gain employment opportunities. Through the creation of new qualifications, it is apparent the pilot has increased competitiveness, a key example is the creation of the paralegal apprenticeships. However, there is little evidence which suggests that the pilot has increased the number of employment opportunities in the Greater Manchester area.

To lead the marketplace by developing employers to take the opportunity to lead new activities to improve skills and employment in their sectors, supply chains and localities. Aside from leading the EOS pilot, GMCC has encouraged employers to lead innovate new activities, with the objective of improving skills and employment in specific sectors. Using ESGs, employers are able to discuss the skills problems subject to their own sector, and collectively find possible solutions. Such practices encourage the conception of new and innovative activities, collectively improving skills and as a result positively influencing employment in their sectors. Furthermore, regular forums between employers, organised by GMCC, also help encourage businesses to provide an indication of skills demanded in each sector. However, it is clear employers have been shaping and not directly leading skills provision, with effectiveness being improved by greater reliance on the infrastructure provided by GMCC to design training courses and interact with training providers. Employers often lack the desire and capacity to effectively carry out this role.

Work with appropriate public/private/social sector partners to maximize employer take-up of Apprenticeships across the range of employment sectors. GMCC has worked in partnership with several public and private sector establishments, with the objective of maximising apprenticeships. Public sector coordination with several businesses during the conception of several employer skills group encouraged such businesses to share skills demands needs and collectively discuss how problems could be solved. Furthermore, GMCC has interacted with various public-sector training providers in the quest for the provision of training. These interactions include partnerships with institutions outside of the Greater Manchester area.

To improve the recruitment of young people and adults of all abilities into Apprenticeships. The recruitment of adults and young people is encouraged by ensuring that the training they are provided with, matches up to the skills required in employment. This is to ensure the skills they gain, directly match up with those which are required in the workforce. Though it is apparent in terms of social inclusion, the majority of the sample are of a white ethnic background (93%), with ethnic minorities making up a small part of the sample. The analysis section, Section 7.2, illustrates the various demographic trends in the sample. Though the pilot has not had a significant effect on the total number of apprenticeship starts in Greater Manchester.

Meet previously unmet employer needs. The EOS pilot has demonstrated an improvement in the meeting of the needs of employers which were previously unmet. For example, the provision of Dementia training which was otherwise unavailable, illustrates a new and innovate method of meeting

employers previously unmet needs and considering the provision of skills in a new way. Furthermore, the creation of the Paralegal apprenticeship, also illustrated a new innovative apprenticeship programmes, which previously did not exist. Furthermore, regular interaction with employers, in forums and ESGs ensures employers can proactively provide information of the skills needs which exist in their sectors.

Analysis of the pilot

It is crucial to note that while theoretically, employer engagement in the provision of skills and training is conceptually sound, it would be prudent to test the strategy using various analysis techniques. Analysis of the data of the EOS pilot in Greater Manchester can provide a thorough understanding of the effectiveness of the pilot. Such analysis will outline significant, and perhaps unexpected trends and relationships which exist in the data. Furthermore, such analysis is crucial in terms of generating a fundamental understanding of the effects of the pilot, which will be crucial in terms of creating programs in the future with higher levels of effectiveness.

QCF Accreditation

QCF accredited courses, are those in which the credits gained from these courses are transferrable, and learners are given the opportunity to achieve their training goals at their own rate. In terms of vocational training, 25% of the courses offered were QCF accredited. This is perhaps an indication of the demand that exists in terms of accredited training provision. As illustrated in Figure 1, of all the accredited vocational training courses, 69% are in the hospitality sector, 28% in the health and social care sector and 3% in the construction sector. It is apparent the demand for QCF accredited courses, exists in the sectors in which having such qualifications is a legal obligation, and aside from such legal obligations there seem to be a lack of demand for accredited training. For example, in health and social care sector accrediting is required to provide social care, in hospitality to handle food and in construction QCF operate heavy machinery. The level at which accredited courses are most in demand is level 2 qualifications, with 46% of accredited courses being in level 2, followed by 27% in level 1 and 27% in level 3.

Figure 2: Accredited Per Sector

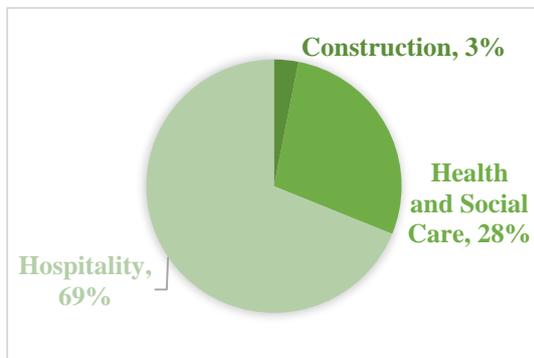
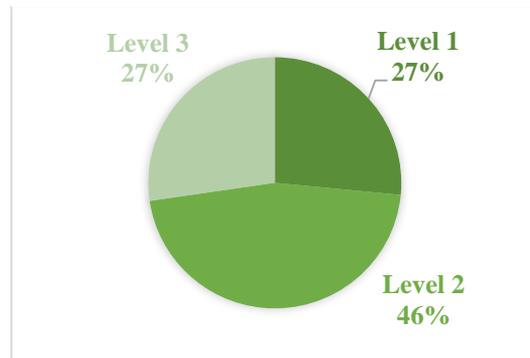


Figure 2: Accreditation per Level



Analysis

It is apparent firstly, that the target number of starts for the pilot, of 1,843, was exceeded with 1,969 total starts. Of the 1,969, 59% were male and 41% were female. This difference is perhaps an indication of a trend in Greater Manchester, in which males are more likely to pursue such training as opposed to females. Gender variation is most significant between the ages of 16-18, with 67% male and 33% female. This suggests that at the point in time individuals consider post high school education, males seem to be more likely to enter vocational training programmes than females. In terms of the age of the sample, as illustrated in Table 1, the largest age group which make up 52% of the sample, is that

of 19+ NA, followed by 19+ with 34%, and 16-18-year olds at 13%. In terms of the various other demographics of the sample, the majority of the sample, 93%, was of a White background, as illustrated in Table 2, suggesting a clear bias in the ethnicity of the sample as a whole.

Table 1: Age of Sample

Age	Count	Percentage
19+ Non-Apprenticeship	1,025	52.06%
16-18	263	13.36%
19+	681	34.59%

Table 2: Ethnic Background of Sample

Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
Asian	50	2.5%
Black	37	1.9%
Mixed	30	1.5%
White	1,835	93.2%
Other	14	0.7%
Not Provided	3	0.2%

In term of how the ages of the individuals vary, subjective to sector, Table 3 provides an illustration of percentages of trainees in the 16-18 and the 19+ category. It is apparent for the majority of sectors, there are a larger number of individuals who are in the 19+ category. A notable exception is the Information Technology Sector, in which 80% of the individuals were in the 16-18 category, while only 20% were in the 19+ category. Furthermore, there seems to be an even split in the Engineering Sector, with 50% of individuals being in the 16-18 category and 50% in the 19+ category. The sectors of Facilities Management, Financial Services and Health and Social Care are much more heavily reliant on individual sin the 19+ age group, with the percentage of people in the age group being 90%, 100% and 95% respectively.

Table 3: Age Group of Trainees in Each Sector

Sector	16-18	19+
Construction	40%	60%
Engineering	50%	50%
Facilities Management	10%	90%
Financial Services	0%	100%
Health & Social Care	5%	95%
Hospitality	13%	87%
Housing	33%	67%
Information Technology	80%	20%
Legal	27%	73%
Sales & Marketing	14%	86%

In terms of the level of training provided to learners, the programmes ranged from Level 1 to Level 5. Overall, as illustrated in Table 4, the most common level of training provided to the sample over the time-period, was Level 3 with 40.5% of individuals training for this qualification. As the level of qualification increases, the percentage of individuals training for the said qualification decreases. Assuming GMCC has been successful in terms of ensuring the skills provided are those which are demanded by the employers, this suggests in terms of employment opportunities, there is more demand for those with Level 2 qualification, followed by Level 3, Level 1, Level 4 and Level 5. As a result, this provides an illustration of the demand for skill levels in the Greater Manchester area.

Table 4: Count of Learners at Each Qualification Level

Level	Count of Learners	Percentage
NULL	1	0.1%
Level 1	380	19.3%
Level 2	798	40.5%
Level 3	636	32.3%
Level 4	141	7.2%
Level 5	13	0.7%

Table 5 illustrates the training providers which provided the apprenticeships and vocational training. The provider which provided the largest number of programmes, is Frederic Robinson, with 459, 23% of the total outputs. However, this large figure is made up of training provision in the hospitality sectors, and therefore, illustrates the relatively high number of hospitality employers, 12% of all

employers (Figure 1). The training providers with the lowest include Sharp Futures, Myerscough College, Alliance Learning and Bolton College, whose outputs independently are lower than 1% of the total outputs. These training providers mainly provided training in the Facilities Management and Engineering sectors, which may reflect low numbers of employers in these sectors, 3% and 5% respectively, (Figure 1).

Table 5: Training Provider's Outputs

Service Provider	Training Output	Percentage
Alliance Learning (EOS)	7	0%
Apprenticeship Academy (EOS)	36	2%
B4Box (EOS)	40	2%
Bolton College (EOS)	7	0%
City South Housing Trust (EOS)	59	3%
CTC Training and Assessment Ltd (EOS)	20	1%
Exporter Training (EOS)	18	1%
Frederic Robinson (EOS)	459	23%
Herbert T Forrest (EOS)	14	1%
Heyrod Training Services (EOS)	106	5%
Hyper Island Ltd (EOS)	25	1%
Manchester Metropolitan University (EOS)	94	5%
Mantra Learning Limited (EOS)	16	1%
Morgan Sindall (EOS)	128	7%
My Futures Bright Ltd (EOS)	11	1%
Myerscough College (EOS)	6	0%
North West Skills Academy (EOS)	66	3%
Oldham College (EOS)	8	0%
Oomph Wellness (EOS)	2	0%
Preston College (EOS)	8	0%
Progress to Excellence (EOS)	115	6%
Salford City College (EOS)	15	1%
Sharp Futures (EOS)	1	0%
Skills Solutions Limited (EOS)	147	7%
Smart Platform Rental Ltd (EOS)	90	5%
Sysco Business Skills Academy (EOS)	28	1%
Tameside College (EOS)	7	0%
The Manchester College (EOS)	113	6%
Total People (EOS)	11	1%
University of Stirling (EOS)	4	0%
WA:UKCE (EOS)	26	1%

West Cheshire College (EOS)	109	6%
Wigan and Leigh College (EOS)	1	0%
Winning Pitch Trading (EOS)	172	9%

As illustrated in Figure 4, in terms of the learner count in each sector, the sector with the largest learner count of the sample at 23% is hospitality, followed by Sales/Marketing and Construction with 21% and 16% respectively. The sectors with the lowest count of learners include Facilities Management, Logistics and Engineering, with such learners making up 1%, 1% and 2% of the sample respectively. Assuming the intermediary, GMCC, successfully carried out their role in ensuring that the skills provided by training providers are these in demand, Figure 4, which illustrates the count of learners' subject to sector, can be considered the supply of skills in each sector. While Figure 3, the count of employer's subject to sector can be considered an indicator of demand for the skills in each sector. Alternatively, assuming the EOS project has been effective in bridging the gap between employers and training providers, one would expect both diagrams to be broadly in line. As such, both diagrams seem to roughly match up, with Sales & Marketing, Construction and Health and Social care counts being very similar. A significant outlier is that of hospitality, in which though the learner count is 23%, the demand for labour, employer count is significantly lower at 12%. This illustrates that perhaps it may be appropriate to direct skills programmes away from the hospitality sector, towards sector with more employment opportunities. Though alternatively, it may just reflect a higher number of employees demanded per employer. Moreover, there are apparent issues considering the Hospitality sector, owing to the transient nature of its employees.

Figure 3: Count of Employers Subject to Sector

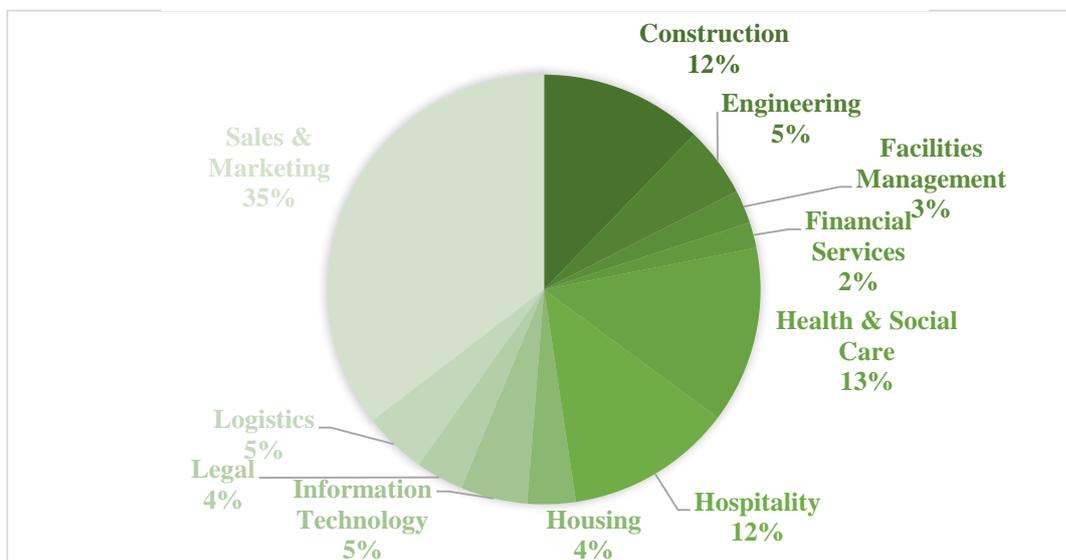
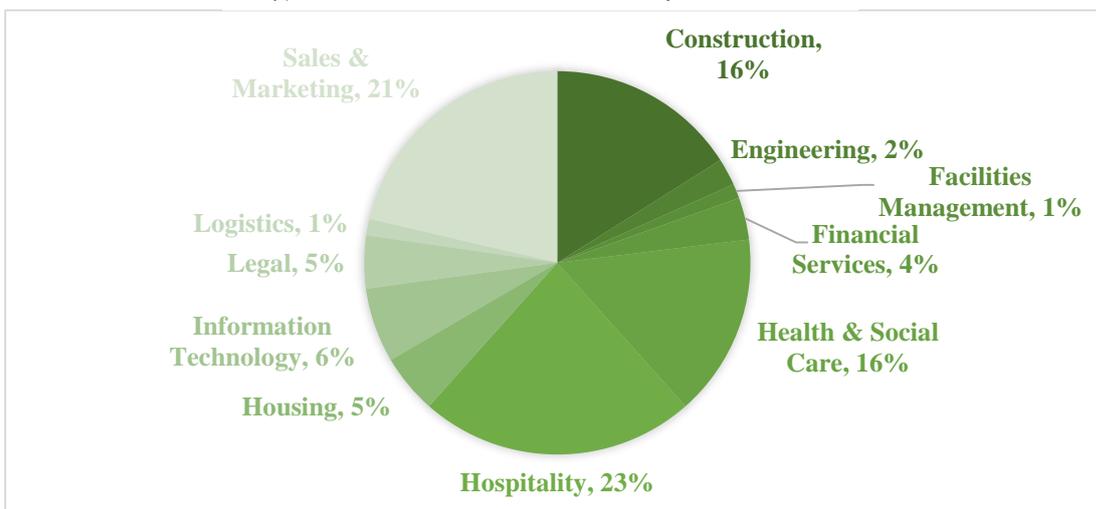


Figure 4: Count of Learners Subject to Sector



As illustrated by Figure 5 below, of the 359 training providers, most of them, 25% of the sample, were from the Manchester area, followed by out of Non-Greater Manchester (Non-GM) at 19% and Salford at 11%. The lowest however, was Bury at 3% of the sample, followed by Bolton, Oldham, Rochdale and Wigan all at 5%. Though it must be noted that these values may just be a representation of the geographical size of each area, and not training demand in each area. In terms of count of learners, subject to area, Figure 6 illustrates the largest number of learners seem be from out of Non-GM, at 37% of the total sample of 1969. The second largest is that of Manchester at 12%. The areas in which the lowest number of learners seems to be from Rochdale, at 2% of the sample, Bolton at 4% and Bury at Trafford both at 5%. Though these figures may be an indication of the demand for training, demanded by individuals in each area, they just be a representation of each areas population size.

Figure 5: Count of Employers Subject to Area

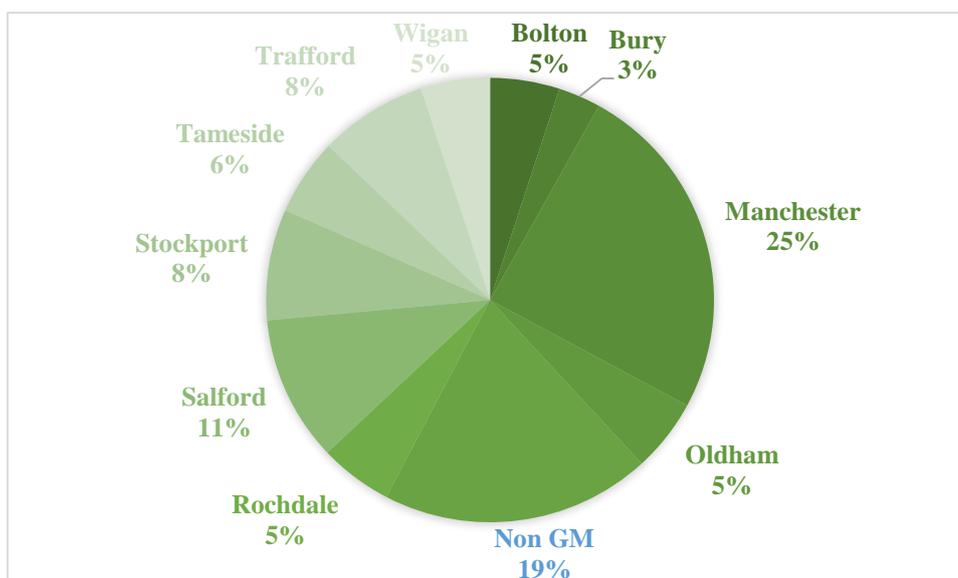
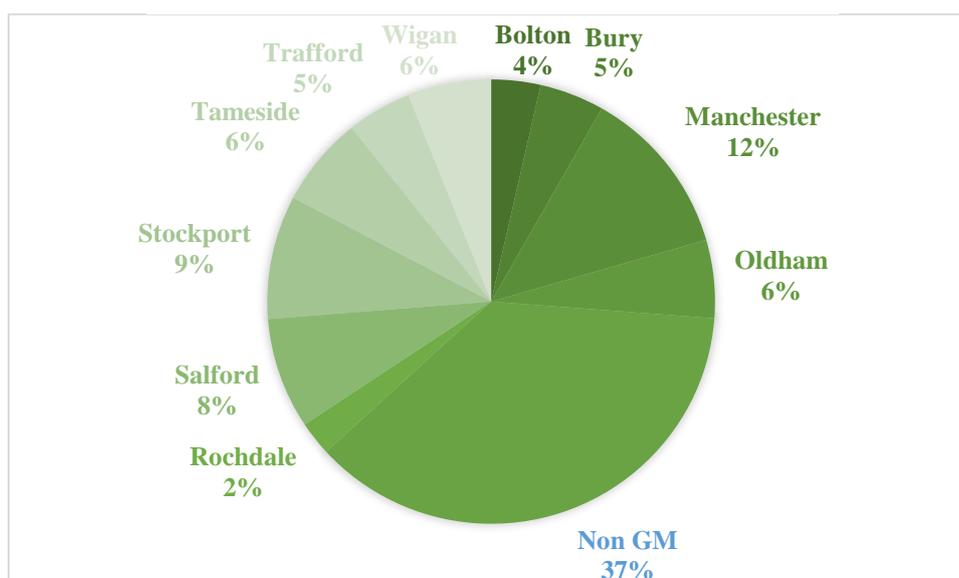


Figure 6: Count of Learners Subject to Area



Further analysis into the key sectors of hospitality, sales and marketing and construction, provides vital illustrations of the level of skills which seem to be demanded by each sector. As illustrated in Table 6 in the largest sector, hospitality, 45% of the trainees have level 1 qualifications, unlike that of sales and marketing and construction in which the majority of trainees are gaining level 2 qualifications. In terms of higher skill levels, it is apparent that construction is the sector which demands such skills, with 9% of the sample training for Level 4 and 5 qualifications, compared to 7% for sales and marketing and 0% for hospitality.

Table 6: Qualification Level Subject to the Three Largest Sectors

Level	Hospitality		Sales & Marketing		Construction	
	Starts	Percentage	Starts	Percentage	Starts	Percentage
Level 1	203	45%	0	0%	90	29%
Level 2	191	42%	253	60%	167	53%
Level 3	61	13%	136	32%	28	9%
Level 4	0	0%	31	7%	22	7%
Level 5	0	0%	0	0%	7	2%
Unknown	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%

Completion rates in terms of training output are particularly relevant as such analysis would provide an in-depth illustration of the effectiveness of training providers as a whole, in retaining their trainees. As illustrated in Table 7, the sector with the highest completion rates are that of logistics with a 100% completion rate. The lowest however, is that of facilities management with 42% of learners not competing the training. Though one must consider that both the logistics and facilities management sector make up only 1% of the learner count each. Furthermore, in terms of facilities management the majority of the learners withdrew from the programme as a result of a change in career. A significant

finding however, is the relatively low completion rate of 72% in the Sales and Marketing sector, which is made up of 21% of the learner count. In terms of the reasons for not completing the training, of the 111 people (all age brackets) who did not complete the training 22%, cited a change in career¹ as an explanation, 27% cited personal reasons², 21% unable to establish and 17% contract closed. It is worth noting in the case of Sales and Marketing, reports of learner satisfaction for a reason for withdrawing, and were much larger with 8 reports compared to that of 3 in the hospitality sector and 1 and 2 in the construction sector. In all age ranges, personal reasons were the most common explanation of why individuals did not complete the programme.

Table 7: Completion Rates Subject to Sector

Sector	Completion (%)	Withdrawn (%)
Hospitality	84%	16%
Sales & Marketing	72%	28%
Construction	87%	13%
Health & Social Care	70%	30%
Housing	76%	24%
Information Technology	86%	14%
Legal	96%	4%
Financial Services	91%	9%
Engineering	69%	31%
Logistics	100%	0%
Facilities Management	58%	42%

In term of completion rates by level, as illustrated in Table 8, completion rates were highest in Level 1 qualifications, as 100% of individuals completed their course. Completion rates for level 4 qualifications are also significantly high as 91% of individuals completed their course. However, for level 4 and 5 qualifications, there seems to be much lower completion rates, at 67% and 62% respectively.

¹ Change in Career includes explanations such as Change in Career, Change in Qualifications, leaving for University and Leaving Employment

² Personal Reasons include Maternity Leave and Retirement

Table 8: Completion Rates Subject to Level

Level	Success Rates (%)
Level 1	100%
Level 2	78%
Level 3	67%
Level 4	91%
Level 5	62%

It is apparent from Table 9, that completion rates have varied significantly over the course of the pilot. Overall, the number of starts per month have increased over the time period, beginning at 14 in June 2013, increasing to 59 in September and 536 in February 2014. Though generally completion rates have increased over the time-period, at 64% in June 2013 to 80% in January 2014, it is apparent the success levels of programmes which start on months such as February 2014 are much higher, at 98%. The lowest completion rates were for programmes which started in November 2013, in which completion rates were 61%. January 2015 has been disregarded as there was only one training start.

Table 9: Completion Rates Subject to Start Date

Start Date	Total Starts	Success Rates (%)
Jun-13	14	64%
Jul-13	64	89%
Aug-13	27	74%
Sep-13	59	80%
Oct-13	131	73%
Nov-13	87	61%
Dec-13	107	64%
Jan-14	327	80%
Feb-14	536	98%
Mar-14	149	68%
Apr-14	171	64%
May-14	53	62%
Jun-14	101	75%
Jul-14	142	75%
Jan-15	1	0%

In terms of the demographics of those who withdrew from their programmes, as illustrated in Table 10, 31% of those who withdrew were in the 16-18 age bracket, 42% were in the 19+ bracket, while 3% of those who withdrew were in the 19+ NA brackets. Overall, it seems the higher the age bracket the less likely individuals were to withdraw from their programme.

Table 10: Completion Rates Subject to Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16-18	180	68.44%
19+	393	57.71%
19+ NA	992	96.78%

Of the 440 individuals of sample who withdrew from the training process, as illustrated in Table 11, Personal Reasons, was the most common explanation provided. 36% of the sample cited Personal Reasons as an explanation of why they withdrew from their particular course. The next most common explanation was that of career change, which 24% of the sample cited as their reason for withdrawal. The explanations cited smaller number of times, such as learner dissatisfied which made up 4% of the explanations implies that the majority of the sample were satisfied with their course, suggesting the quality of the education and training was of a high standard.

Table 11: Reasons for Withdrawal from Course

Withdrawal Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Career Change	105	24%
Contract closed	20	5%
Disciplinary	32	7%
Learner Dissatisfied	17	4%
Personal Reasons	158	36%
Service Provider Initiated	3	1%
Unable to establish	101	23%
Employer Reason	4	1%

In order to establish the effectiveness of the EOS pilot in Greater Manchester, it is apparent a comparison overall achievement rates in Greater Manchester, compared to that of other areas is crucial. If one considers overall completion rates, it does not illustrate that Greater Manchester's pilot was especially effective with overall achievement rates of 67%, as of the 40 area 19 had overall achievement rates exceeding 67%. However, more careful analysis suggest that this relatively low overall completion rate is likely to be a result of low completion rates of 54.2% for Level 4+ Higher Apprenticeships. If one considers overall cohort number only 3 regions exceeded Greater Manchester

overall cohort number of 28,350, with London (37,580), and South East (26,550). However, it may be likely these figures are representative of population size in each of these areas.

Summary

- The majority of the sample (52%) all into the 19+ age bracket, and are of a white ethnic origin (93%)
- Largest Sectors in terms of Learner Count are Hospitality (23%), Sales and Marketing (21%) and Construction (16%)
- The most common level of qualification over the whole sample is Level 2 (40.5%), with Level 3 as second most common (32.3%)
- Those qualification levels vary depending on sectors, for example the Hospitality sector has no learners above a level 3 qualification, meanwhile Level 4 and 5 in the construction make up 9% of the construction learners. Illustration of level of skill demanded in each sector
- Completion rates are highest in the 19+ NA age cohort
- Completion rates are relatively high in many sectors, in terms of the largest sectors Hospitality and Construction completion rates were 83% and 86% respectively.
- However, in the second largest sector, Sales and Marketing, the completion rate is noticeably lower at 72%, this may be due to relatively higher learner dissatisfaction rates, providing an indication of the quality of the training in the Sales and Marketing Sector.

Discussion

Overall, in terms of providing a link between employers and training providers it seems the EOS pilot has been effective. This is illustrated by New Economy (2015) who states a key strength of the pilot was it allowed employers to control training processes, and as a result design training programmes more relevant to their individual working environment. Furthermore, this report clearly illustrates how the existence of GMCC as an intermediary had a significant influence on the success of the pilot. As the burden of employers and training providers in terms of coordinating with each other and bureaucratic obligations were reduced, the success of the pilot was more effective than others who did not have an intermediary organisation.

In terms of the strengths of the project, in the case of target starts is apparent the 19+ NA course was the most successful. This number of 19+NA starts are particularly large relative to that of the 16-18 cohort. Though this may be an indication of demand for such skills in Greater Manchester, a more thorough analysis would be required to establish the existence of such a relationship. The overall impact of the project has been positive when one considers that such a pilot has provided a clear example of a relatively successful initiative aimed at encouraging the provision employer led training. Though not perfect, the pilot has provided an outline of how such an initiative can be implemented, which can be built upon each area independently.

This report has in particular highlighted the importance of an intermediary in the EOS pilot. Although various steps have been taken to achieve the objectives of the pilot, it is apparent government entities, such as the Skills Funding Agency, have perhaps overestimated the ability of employers to independently create the fundamental infrastructure required to achieve the primary objectives of the EOS project. As some employers have neither the ability nor the desire to proactively engage with training providers, the importance of an intermediary is reinforced. Furthermore, when considering GMCC in particular, it is apparent it is an institution with both the resources and motivation to be able to effectively carry out the duties of an intermediary in relation to the EOS. This has significantly mitigated the risk of the pilot for the Skills Funding Agency. As GMCC is a neutral institution with the partnerships and connections to be able to effectively provide a link between employers and training providers. As a result, it is apparent the role of GMCC as an intermediary has greatly encouraged co-ordination between employer and training providers, through endeavours such as ESGs, and has therefore a significant contributor to the success of the pilot. ESGs not only consider the skills required in each industry, but also tackle other issues central to each sector. This provides an illustration of the creation of a group by GMCC, in which employers have the knowledge and expertise required to continue to tackle issues into the future.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In terms of future recommendations of how the research from all the EOS Round 1 pilots can be used, there are two components which need to be analysed in particular. Firstly, it is important that all pilots are assessed and studied to fully understand the effects of them and the externalities of such initiatives. Such analysis will provide a basic outline of the most optimum intervention required to promote employer led education. It is important to note here that the most 'perfect' intervention will differ subject to area, as a role of the contextual factors which exist in different area, therefore areas need to be studied independently. For example, a focus on sectors which are expected to expand and grow in the future may be appropriate in terms of the provision of education and training. Secondly, the analysis of the role of an intermediary, in terms of pilot effectiveness, is crucial, as such investigations will provide a thorough understand of if intermediary play a significant and vital role. If such an intermediary is considered vital in terms of the effectiveness of the project, the existence of such an intermediary in each area must be considered.

Despite uncertainly regarding the effectiveness and sustainability of the EOS pilot, the role of employer led training is vital when considering the provision of skills for employment, especially with significant issues in terms of skills shortages. Therefore, the analysis of the EOS pilots and research into new more optimum interventions strategies is crucial in terms of long term objectives.

For Greater Manchester in particular, a greater emphasis of English and Maths skills is crucial, simply because of the importance of such training in the workforce. This is further illustrated by the Skills Funding Statement (2014), which states that funding for Math and English remains crucial. GMCC has followed the fundamental message of the Skills Funding Statement (2014), of employer led education and the importance of apprenticeships. The importance of Maths and English skills is highlighted by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011), which found that the net economic benefits for every £1 the government has invested into English and Maths is £23. Future endeavours should include monitoring training providers, not only to ensure quality training, but to ensure that funding is being used in the most efficient way to gain the most benefits.

Appendix

Variables	
Training Provider	Prior Attainment Level
Employer	Course Level
Ethnicity	Sector
Gender	Employer Area
Disability	Size of Employer
Learner Area	Completion Status
Age	

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