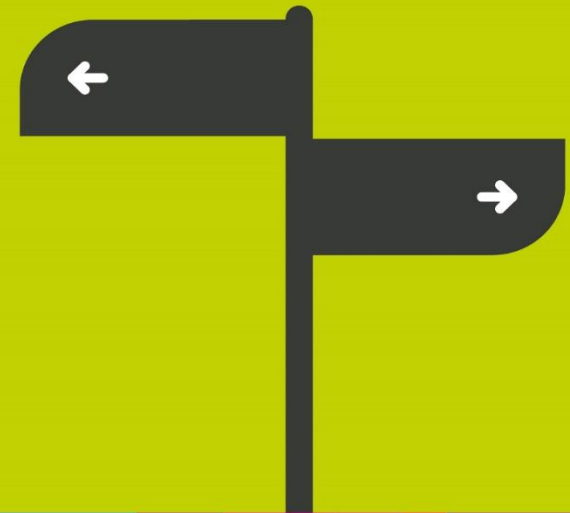


Future of Skills 2028

THE STARTING POINT

#FUTUREOFSKILLS2028

www.gmchamber.co.uk



Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce
Chamber of the Year 2017/18

What's it about?

As part of our 2018/19 Campaign for Business, Greater Manchester Chamber is campaigning on 'The Future of Skills 2028'. Our campaign will take a look at the key opportunities and challenges employers may face over the next decade in developing a skilled workforce, which contributes to economic growth.

We want to understand the demands of businesses across Greater Manchester and encourage the main stakeholders - schools, training providers and businesses - to work together to ensure young people are prepared for the world of work and those in employment continue to learn and progress.

Why are we campaigning on this issue?

Greater Manchester is forecast to grow fasterⁱ than the national average over the coming years, but to unlock our true potential we must make sure that the employees of the future are given the skills they need to succeed.

- Following the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, the number of Apprenticeships has fallen by 61% nationallyⁱⁱ
- Greater Manchester (GM) has the highest demand for digital skills in the Northⁱⁱⁱ
- Within GM and the North West, there are areas that have levels of youth unemployment above the national average^{iv}

The need to improve the effectiveness of our skills and education system has never been greater.





Jane Boardman,
President,
Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce

FOREWORD

"This is just the starting point."

When I became President of Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, I was given the opportunity to spearhead a campaign that would benefit the businesses and people of this region.

In my various roles, I often talk to employers about the difficulties they face in accessing the skills that businesses need. Being a mother of two young children, I am also aware of the need for excellent careers advice and guidance that helps young people make the right decisions, which result in the right career choices.

In Greater Manchester alone, we have around 15,000 young people (aged 16-24) who are not in education, employment or training, and when our members consistently tell us that finding the right people is getting harder and harder, something clearly isn't working.

The world of work is changing at a rapid pace, and we can expect that the jobs and skills that fuel our economy will be very different in ten years' time than they are today.

The time is right to develop solutions that enable the skills system to deliver the needs of business and young people not just for today, but for the

future. That is what our campaign 'The Future of Skills 2028' is all about.

We are a network of over 4,800 businesses, and have close connections with schools, universities and training providers, as well as local government and key policy makers.

By working collaboratively, we want to create a system in Greater Manchester that helps businesses to define and access the skills they require, and ensures that our young people are prepared for the workplace of the future.

One thing is clear, we cannot spend more time simply talking about the same issues that we've been discussing for decades. This first piece of work gave our members the opportunity to define the issues they face. Now we must work towards solutions. This is just the starting point.



**Joy Sewart, Director
of Skills & Social
Enterprise, Greater
Manchester Chamber
of Commerce**

Where are we now? The current situation in Greater Manchester

It is an important time for all of those involved in education and training in Greater Manchester.

Our skills system has been through a long and quite difficult process of reform, but arguably we are getting closer to a more stable and robust model.

We all have the opportunity to work with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to influence how the devolved power of the adult education budget will shape training for the future that employers need and want.

Through the work of our elected Mayor, we can all contribute to the vision of the 'Greater Manchester Strategy', exploring how we can make our region the best place to live, work and learn. Moreover, it is important we work collectively with our schools and colleges to ensure every child receives regular high quality careers, employment, advice and guidance.

At the same time, we must work with government to ensure skills policies, especially those impacting on apprenticeships and Technical Levels are

properly thought out and the impact on business is positive. Over the coming months and years, the development and implementation of a strong 'Local Industrial Strategy' will help us make best use of available funding for skills to help us strengthen our local economy and increase productivity.

Finally, as we move towards the final stages of Brexit, whatever that may look like, we have to measure the impact on our labour market and supply of skills, our universities and the future of European funding.

Chambers of Commerce have a critical role in acting as a translator for the public sector, skills policies and making them useful for SMEs. For us in Greater Manchester, we have key role through our formal structures in influencing our local and national authorities, encouraging skills reforms to make them better for business, wherever necessary.

Through 'The 'Future of Skills 2028' campaign, we have the opportunity to develop the right collaborative partnerships and frameworks to ensure our businesses, educators and residents develop the right skills for the next decade.

The survey

Each quarter, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce carries out the Quarterly Economic Survey (QES), the UK's largest business confidence survey, rolled out by all 53 accredited Chambers of Commerce across the country.

In our second quarter QES in 2018, we included additional questions to support our 'Future of Skills 2028' campaign and discover what businesses see as the major opportunities and barriers contributing to or inhibiting the success of the skills system within Greater Manchester, as well as their thoughts on some of Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham's proposed solutions.

We have broken down the responses to each question in this report, providing an insight into the reasons for the responses and highlighting key findings, as well as outlining ways to get involved with the 'Future of Skills 2028' Campaign.



274 respondents



Sharing the business
perspective



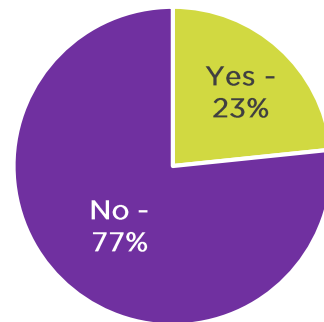
Based in
Greater Manchester



Over 750 individual
comments received
from members

Head to page 10 of the report to read about the next steps and ways to get involved.

Q1: Do you feel that young people in Greater Manchester are leaving school equipped with adequate careers advice and guidance to be able to successfully enter the world of work, and why?



- Many said that careers guidance is often a one-off rather than being continual throughout the final years of education.
- The narrative responses highlighted a clear problem with the system rather than with individuals, suggesting that there is a large variation in the quality of business engagement and quality of career's guidance between schools.
- Many young people leave school with good knowledge but a lack of life-skills required for the workplace such as communication skills, and have unrealistic expectations of what may be expected in employment.

Members said:

"In the absence of any careers guidance, young people are not provided with enough opportunity to explore those options for a career that they are not currently exposed to and therefore tend to follow their immediate role models. Business has a role to play in exposing young people to those possibilities and realities of the work place."

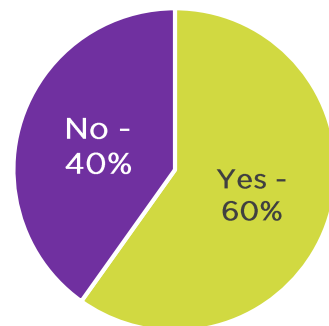
"There is a large gap between a school leaver and an 'oven ready' employable person. The final year of schooling needs to lessen the focus on exam pressures a little and build 'ready for work' programmes."

"I think careers advice is provided at a time when it doesn't make enough sense to the student. It should be given consistently over a longer period, including after leaving school. To push students out into the world with only vague idea of what they can achieve and how, based on exam results, is doing them a disservice."

If you'd like to get involved with offering careers advice, talks or mock interviews, let us know! Help us bridge the gap between schools & businesses - if you take part, you will receive a GM Social Value Award.

Find more information on the 'Next Steps' page.

Q2: As part of Andy Burnham's manifesto, would you use a dedicated UCAS-style system for Greater Manchester to advertise employment and training opportunities for young people and why?



- Overall, businesses were mostly positive about the idea of a single point of entry, but many questioned if it would replace existing comparable platforms or just sit alongside them.
- Some businesses mentioned that Local Authorities already have platforms like this, and that many young people cannot travel that far, so a GM-wide system may not be beneficial.
- Many were supportive but asked for more information.

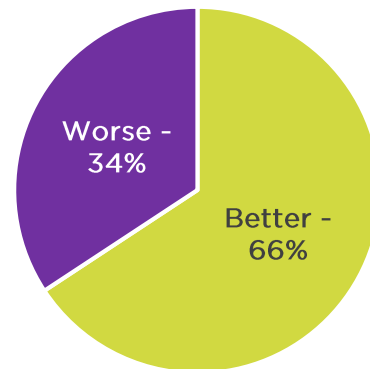
Members said:

"Why not? A well-managed, comprehensive, centralised system would undoubtedly be better than the fragmented approach we have now. All prospective employers and candidates would be able to easily connect through one system. Everyone would waste a lot less time and be more assured of actually connecting. Today - many good potential matches are no doubt missed."

"The apprenticeship website is fine. Another system would mean additional work for posting vacancies."

"Only if this didn't duplicate other national systems that we are required to use and that functionality of the system was fit for purpose."

Q3: In terms of image, do you feel that Apprenticeships are in a better or worse place than they were a decade ago and why?



- Businesses were positive about the overall image, variety and awareness of Apprenticeships, stating that they are more accessible and attractive to young people.
- Concerns were expressed over confusion caused by the Apprenticeship Levy and new range of standards.
- Whilst many praised the intentions of the Apprenticeship Levy in encouraging employers to consider taking on Apprentices, some see it as a burden.
- Employers who have had bad experiences with apprentices in the past do not view the system in a good light

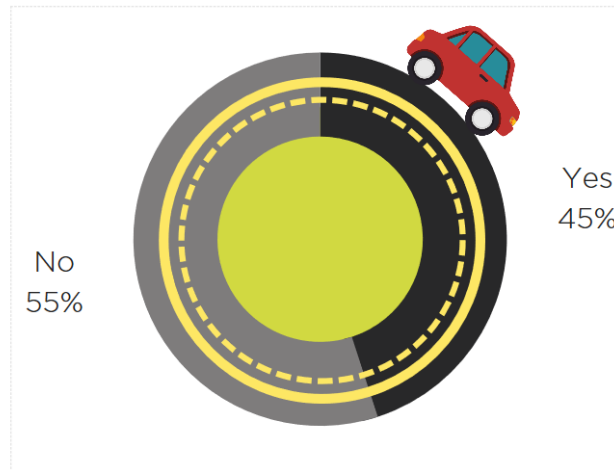
Members said:

"The Apprenticeship reforms and the introduction of the Levy have raised awareness of Apprenticeships with a wider range of employers.

"However, many employers do report being confused by the introduction of the Apprenticeship Service and the use of digital accounts and many particularly in the Health Sector are put off by the requirement to make a financial contribution to Apprenticeships. Providers are having to work extra hard to myth bust with employers and demystify the whole process of the Apprenticeship Service."

"The visibility of apprenticeships has increased significantly, there is still some work to do in highlighting apprenticeships as an equal (if not in some cases better) route into work at the teacher and parent level. Our experience with apprenticeships would suggest that people are career ready earlier and have a greater employee loyalty."

Q4: Subsidised travel for 16-17 year olds to access employment and training opportunities is part of Andy Burnham's manifesto. Is this something you would be happy to financially contribute towards and why?



- Despite there being support for the idea of helping young people find work, businesses expressed quite a few concerns about how best to achieve this.
- Many were averse to the idea of a new tax on businesses, suggesting this should be part of an employer's responsibility.
- Others were simply concerned with the extra financial burden, and many suggested the transport infrastructure is not good enough for it to work.

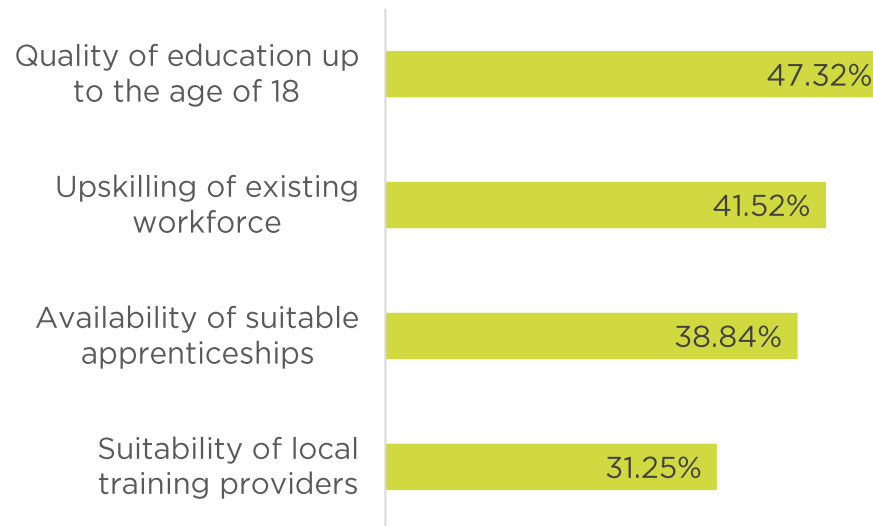
Members said:

"Yes, I believe everyone up to the age of 18 should be given free or reduced travel. Financial constraints are worse than ever for younger people, and the cost of public transport generally I find has doubled within the past 10 years. It's a great incentive to young people if they are able to get to work or training without it affecting them financially."

"I don't have an issue with a subsidised policy for 16-17 year olds but this should be dealt with as part of an employer's responsibility and form part of the employment package."

"I feel the financial burden on businesses is already too great with increases in minimum wage, working wage, compulsory pension scheme, maternity and paternity rights, NI contributions."

Q5: In terms of offering everything needed to support the development of people within your business, where do you think Greater Manchester is lacking the most and why?



Digital skills, attracting young people into industry, infrastructure and lack of life-skills highlighted as other areas of major concern.

Members said:

"The quality of education is mixed in Greater Manchester and there is still a social mobility topic which is not supporting students who need the greatest level of intervention at an early age.

"Upskilling the existing workforce is an evolving topic for us; in particular, how do you retain early career professional with continuous professional development."

"When looking for training providers to work with on apprenticeships, our experience has mainly been poor. It is down to the company to select the training provider and is often too late if you choose what proves to be a bad one. A good scoring system and real feedback 'tripadvisor' style would be great."

Next steps

Some clear themes emerged from the results, including the quality and quantity of careers guidance in schools, the difficulties of effectively navigating the apprenticeship system and making the most of the Levy, and the lack of digital and soft skills. There is support for some of the ideas put forward by GM Mayor Andy Burnham, but with concerns over how they will work in practice.

Now, rather than going over the same old issues again and again, we are looking to work with stakeholders from across education, business and local government to work towards effective solutions that can help businesses and people thrive.

This campaign is not just about the workplace of today. We need Greater Manchester to be future proof, meaning a skills system that can deliver the needs of tomorrow rather than today. We are working with market research company Join the Dots to paint a picture of what the world of work in 2028 looks like, exploring how the changing expectations of our young people and the impacts of new technologies on the way business operates will affect the need for skills in the future. We shall be releasing this report in Autumn 2018 to help with the next stage of work.

join the dots

We've outlined 3 quick ways to get involved.

Want to work with schools & colleges?

We'd love for businesses to get involved with schools across Greater Manchester – offering careers talks or mock interviews to help young people prepare for the world of work.

If you or a representative from your business is willing to get involved, you'll also receive a GM Social Value Award.

Roundtable discussions on taking action

If your business or organisation has initiatives in place that can act as examples of best practice when thinking about solutions to some of these issues, or if you are in a position to help inform the next phase of our campaign work, please get in touch with us. We are looking to hold roundtables with stakeholder groups in Autumn 2018 and your contributions are vital.

Questions about upskilling, apprenticeships or more?

You can book a free consultation with one of our impartial workforce development advisors. Get all the information you need about apprenticeships and developing your workforce.

E: research@gmchamber.co.uk

T: 0161 393 4321

Respondent Breakdown

In terms of business sector and areas in which they operate, the 274 respondents to the skills questions break down as follows:

Bolton	Bury	Manchester	Oldham	Rochdale	Salford	Stockport	Tameside	Trafford	Wigan	Outside GM
35	28	81	27	32	34	40	28	30	28	24
13%	10%	30%	10%	12%	12%	15%	10%	11%	10%	9%

(Businesses can select more than one area)

Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0	0%
Mining, quarrying and utilities	0	0%
Manufacturing	59	22%
Construction	36	13%
Motor trades	1	0%
Wholesale	11	4%
Retail	12	4%
Transport and storage (inc. postal)	7	3%
Accommodation and food services	7	3%
Information and communication	17	6%
Finance and insurance	7	3%
Property	19	7%
Professional, scientific and technical	29	11%
Business administration and support services	28	10%
Public administration and defence	1	0%
Education	18	7%
Health	9	3%
Arts, entertainment, recreation and other services (inc. charities)	13	5%

ⁱ Greater Manchester Forecasting Tool (2017); GMCC QES (Q2 2018)

ⁱⁱ Department for Education (Oct 2017)

ⁱⁱⁱ IPPR North - Devo Digital: Digital Skills for the Northern Powerhouse (2017)

^{iv} ONS Annual Population Survey (2018)



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