

# Breaking barriers

Increasing employment  
opportunities for young people  
from low-income backgrounds  
in Greater Manchester



EY Foundation

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# 1

## Executive summary

Following independent research that identified the barriers to employment facing young people from low-income backgrounds in Greater Manchester (carried out by Little Lion in 2022), the EY Foundation delivered a series of activities to provide new insights that could change the employment prospects of young people in the region.

This report summarises the findings, which brought together young people from low-income backgrounds and employers in growth sectors of the regional economy. The purpose of the activities was to better understand the often-hidden barriers experienced by young people from low-income backgrounds and how they can be overcome.

Our approach was designed in consultation with a range of stakeholders in Greater Manchester and the findings were fed into the region's Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). As such, the recommendations generated are aimed at: the Chamber of Commerce (the designated Employer Representative Body leading the LSIP), employers, training providers and Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) services.

In addition, insights from the activities will be used more widely to:

- ▶ Help employers across other sectors in the UK improve socio-economic diversity and inclusion by changing their recruitment approach and increasing their involvement in shaping provision and supporting the delivery of CEIAG services.
- ▶ Provide a blueprint for other LSIPs and examples of place-based partnership models to adopt, so young people from low-income backgrounds are prioritised, and empowered to influence the education, training, and employment opportunities in their area.
- ▶ Shape the evolution of the LSIP over the next three years and future iterations of the policy initiative.
- ▶ Influence provision and CEIAG services across the UK to address barriers and dissatisfaction on both sides of the labour market.

## Reflections on our approach

To understand and tackle the practical and local barriers that employers and young people experience, an action-orientated approach was taken, rooted in place, youth voice and employer practice. Bringing both sides of the labour market together was impactful for employers that heard the views of young people first-hand and empowering for young people from low-income backgrounds that rarely have an opportunity to share their experiences with decision-makers.

Using the LSIP as a vehicle for sharing insights to shape technical education has the potential to improve social mobility. Achieving this requires:

- ▶ Equal, accessible, and flexible progression pathways into technical education, with wrap-around support at key transition points.
- ▶ A commitment to good employment practices and employer focus on socio-economic diversity and inclusion from outreach through to progression.
- ▶ A focus on transferable skills and high-quality CEIAG that prepares young people for the future world of work.

## Recommendations

### Employers

- ▶ The voice of young people from low-income backgrounds should be embedded within decision making processes. To do this, employers should provide paid opportunities to work with young people from low-income backgrounds who would assess how the organisation works with that demographic, from recruitment through to progression.
- ▶ Employer engagement in supporting the provision of high-quality careers education to address labour market shortages and futureproof the workforce is vital.
- ▶ The traditional approach to job descriptions and the way that roles are advertised must be overhauled to remove barriers experienced by young people from a low-income background in accessing employment opportunities.
- ▶ The application process must be revised to incorporate inclusive practices and provide more guidance to create a better experience and outcome for both employers and young people from low-income backgrounds.
- ▶ Employers should adjust expectations during the probationary period and increase the level of support

during the onboarding process to ensure young people from low-income backgrounds are equipped to thrive.

- ▶ Overcoming recruitment challenges and diversifying the workforce requires a commitment to good employment practices.

### Policymakers

- ▶ Include the voices of young people as part of the LSIP process by providing the opportunity to: contribute evidence, assess the accessibility of provision, co-design employability strategies and careers services.
- ▶ Develop a clear strategy for the supply side to help address the mismatch and remove barriers for those furthest away from the labour market, including young people from low-income backgrounds.
- ▶ Maintain and increase employer engagement in the LSIP, ensuring both large employers and SME's are actively involved as part of the governance structure.
- ▶ Support colleges and providers to implement all eight Gatsby Benchmarks of good career guidance, leveraging careers hubs, employers and charities to achieve this.
- ▶ Adopt the Skills Builder Universal Skills Framework, ensuring the skills are developed in an applied environment alongside technical skills and that this is integrated consistently across courses.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Provide additional support to young people from low-income backgrounds to remove barriers, accommodate needs, maintain engagement, and encourage the pursuit of level 4+ qualifications.



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1. [The Universal Framework \(skillsbuilder.org\)](https://skillsbuilder.org)

# 2 Addressing the labour market shortage

## The landscape in Greater Manchester

The labour market in Greater Manchester is growing strongly and the region is economically diverse, which means it does not rely on a single sector or occupational group. Over a quarter of residents in Greater Manchester are employed in roles that sit within Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) groups 6-9, which include foundation jobs in sectors such as health and social care, retail, manufacturing, logistics and distribution. Though these roles will remain core to the Greater Manchester economy, a shift has taken place in recent years which now means almost half of residents in Greater Manchester work in roles that sit within (SOC) groups 1-3, which encompass management, professional and associate professional occupations, and typically require qualifications at level 4 or above.

Addressing the regional skills needs within these growth sectors, focusing initially on digital, financial and professional services should be included as a priority within the LSIP. This aligns with Greater Manchester's Local Skills Report and Labour Market Plan, which identified these industries as 'frontier sectors' and feature in GM's Local Industrial Strategy as well as reflecting national priorities.<sup>2</sup> The LSIP can help drive change in this area by ensuring employers within the digital, financial and professional services sectors are involved in shaping provision to address their skills needs.

Greater Manchester's population is lower skilled than the national average.<sup>3</sup> There are 30,000 16-19-year-olds in Greater Manchester living in low-income households and in areas with low levels of progression to university. Based on demographic trends, this is likely to increase over the next decade. Young people who leave education at eighteen are more likely to become unemployed compared to a young person with a level 4+ qualification. In contrast, young people from more affluent backgrounds in Greater Manchester are more likely to work in sectors that are expected to grow. Greater Manchester employers within the digital, financial, and professional services sectors, are under employing university graduates to fill vacancies and plug skills gaps which create inefficiencies.



Transforming the employment prospects of young people from low-income backgrounds should be included as a priority within the LSIP. This aligns with GM's strategy 2021-2031 'good lives for all' which makes a series of cross-cutting commitments to tackle inequalities, drive inclusive growth, and ensure children and young people leave education and training ready to succeed in the labour market with a balance of academic, technical and 'life ready' skills.<sup>4</sup> Ensuring those who are more disadvantaged in the labour market are not left behind, will support the region's economy and increase living standards.

## Understanding employers' skills needs

During the pilot's development phase, EY Foundation consulted a variety of stakeholders including employers within Greater Manchester's digital, financial, and professional services sectors. This revealed that most employers have a 'hire for soft skills and train for technical skills' approach when recruiting for entry level positions. The way in which employers described their core recruitment requirements varied in language, often using skills, competencies, and attributes interchangeably. The following core requirements were identified: dependability, collaboration, communication, integrity, growth mindset, problem solving, curiosity, resilience, and positive mindset.

2. [gm-esap-local-skills-report-update-march-2022-final.pdf \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

3. [230414-qualifications-accessible.pdf \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

4. [gmca\\_gm-strategy\\_our-plan\\_summary\\_11-01-22.pdf \(aboutgreatermanchester.com\)](#)

This overlaps findings from the 'Joint Dialogue: How are schools developing real employability skills' conducted by the Edge Foundation, which found employers sourced from a range of industries frequently referenced seven employability skills (problem-solving, communication, self-management, teamwork, creativity, numeracy, digital skills and informed), and five competencies (confidence, drive, resilience and reflection). Key findings from the research noted that these skills and competencies should be seen as 'interdependent' and acknowledged the use of 'meta-cognitive strategies' (activities to help students re-contextualise and apply them to new situations) cognisant with their development.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, when compared with the Skills Builder Universal Skills Framework, there is an overlap between their eight essential skills (listening, speaking, problem solving, creativity, staying positive, aiming high, leadership and teamwork) and employers core recruitment requirements.<sup>6</sup> This is significant based on the initial findings published in February 2023 from the GM LSIP survey, which found employers relate skills shortages with the recruitment process rather than to their current workforce, and in particular face a soft skills barrier during recruitment.<sup>7</sup>

## Our approach

Improving equality, diversity and inclusion practices is key for employers to remain competitive and access a pool of untapped talent. This will accelerate innovation, creativity, productivity, reputation, engagement, and business results. According to the 2023 Business Barometer report published by The Open University and British Chambers of Commerce, despite 73% of UK organisations reporting a current skills shortage, just over half (54%) of organisations have no specific initiatives, skills programmes or workplace adjustments in place for specific talent pools including underrepresented groups.<sup>8</sup> The employers consulted in the pilot, recognise the value they would get from having a more diverse workforce but need support to change how they attract and recruit staff to achieve this.

On the other side of the labour market, supporting young people from low-income backgrounds to understand employers specific skills and training requirements will help them secure jobs that provide good pay and progression opportunities.

EY Foundation is well placed to deliver this new approach due to their experience of working directly with young people eligible for Free School Meals, and corporate partners within the digital, financial, and professional services sectors across Greater Manchester.

Work started in March 2023 to bring the two sides of the labour market together by placing a much stronger focus on understanding the core recruitment requirements and approach of employers in the digital, financial and professional services sectors, and the often-hidden barriers preventing young people in poverty from accessing employment opportunities in these growth sectors.

Nine employers in the digital, financial and professional services sectors participated in the pilot including: Anthesis Consulting Group, Alvarez & Marsal, Axon Moore, Barclays, CMS, EY, Microsoft, Shoosmiths and TalkTalk. Insights into their core recruitment requirements and approach were shared, through a series of focus groups to better understand the barriers young people from low-income backgrounds experience in meeting these requirements and accessing employment opportunities.

EY Foundation partnered with Young Manchester, a membership organisation and a Young People's Foundation, to deliver focus groups with 50 young people aged 16-19 from low-income backgrounds across Greater Manchester. Organisations specifically in the North of Manchester and in Salford were targeted. These locations demonstrate the potential for significant job creation in digital, financial, and professional services, but is also where there are higher levels of deprivation, and a lower proportion of residents with level 4+ qualifications. To ensure young people beyond the 'usual suspects' had an opportunity to share their experience and exert influence, self-selecting as well as youth selected by participating organisations engaged in the pilot. This included young people from: EY Foundation, Salford College, Career Connect, Youth Focus North West, MGT Youth and ReflecTeen.

In June, a summit convening key stakeholders including the pilot's participating young people and employers took place, so young people could share their views with decision makers directly and discuss possible solutions to remove employment barriers.



5. [joint\\_dialogue\\_-\\_final\\_report\\_update-2\\_De4kkxs.pdf \(edge.co.uk\)](#)

6. [Towards a Universal Framework for Essential Skills \(skillsbuilder.org\)](#)

7. [Findings | Gmlsip](#)

8. [New report: The Business Barometer 2023 | Open University](#)

# 3 Key findings

## Employers

- ▶ Under a quarter (22%) of employers ringfence opportunities for young people eligible for free school meals. Most employers with recruitment strategies in place are informed by DEI targets but these rarely consider social mobility.
- ▶ A third of employers (33%) have lowered requirements and grade expectations with some internships opening to non-graduate students. Others indicated they are exploring this, demonstrating a growing shift in attitudes.
- ▶ Most employers offer recurring paid entry level opportunities. Smaller employers tend to offer opportunities on an ad-hoc basis to which young people are expected to reach out proactively.
- ▶ Entry level opportunities almost never require more than the right soft skills for the specific position. Exceptions to this include opportunities exclusively pitched at university students and graduates.
- ▶ The criteria for success and other requirements such as the interview dress code, are always communicated with the candidates during the recruitment process. A third of employers (33%) offer additional support and guidance such as webinars.
- ▶ Typically, the application process consists of an online application, sometimes an assessment phase (25% of the time), and between 1-3 interview stages with either scenario or competency-based questions and can include the preparation of a task beforehand. Candidates receive information about the interview format.
- ▶ All employers notify candidates if they are unsuccessful in progressing to the next stage, but feedback varies in quality and delivery, some of which depends on the volume of applicants. Larger employers with the resource and capacity (22%) signpost unsuccessful candidates to other opportunities where possible.

## Young People

### **Inconsistency in the quality of careers guidance and a lack of opportunities experienced by young people have led to:**

- ▶ Ambiguity over career aspirations and future goals. One participant felt the career pathways were narrow, giving the example that if they enjoyed biology, they were encouraged to pursue medicine. This made them feel they were put

into boxes they didn't fit in. Another participant recalled how they were shown the National Careers Service website which was the extent of the guidance they received. They found the website inaccessible and didn't help them plan their next steps.

- ▶ Limited knowledge of the variety of jobs available within a sector and what they entail is too abstract. One participant wanted to know what the day-to-day life of a lawyer looked like and felt their work experience placement didn't provide any useful insights.
- ▶ Making decisions without fully understanding their implications. Participants recognised the advantages of doing an apprenticeship but expressed concern over whether the wages would be able to offset the rise in living costs.
- ▶ Feeling pressured to know the pathway they want to pursue post-16 and disillusioned with the options presented. One participant reported that pupils would receive a detention if they failed to submit College applications and would apply for courses they didn't want to do.
- ▶ An inability to secure employment without the opportunity to have mock interviews or guidance on how to prepare for a job interview. Many participants perceived the experience they did have to be irrelevant or expressed concern that it would be deemed irrelevant by prospective employers.

### **Barriers during the application and interview process included:**

- ▶ A lack of experience to reference in job applications due to an inability to secure work experience placements and participate in extracurricular activities. Participants cited the pandemic, financial struggles, and a disparity in opportunities available across Greater Manchester as barriers.
- ▶ The resilience to bounce back from unsuccessful applications, thus lowering the self-esteem and confidence of young people from low-income backgrounds, that are entering employment for the first time and therefore don't have the experience or support network to navigate this process better.
- ▶ Unclear job titles, a lack of pay transparency and ambiguous job specification with inaccessible language, jargon, acronyms, and restrictive criteria.

- ▶ Faceless employers that don't provide a contact or option to have an informal conversation in the early stages to better understand the opportunity.
- ▶ Overly formal interviews with unclear expectations and feelings of discomfort stemming from feeling inadequate or judged based on appearance, accent and oracy skills.
- ▶ Providing limited feedback and constructive criticism following an interview, which prevents young people learning from the experience. Employers failing to inform applicants of the outcome was a recurring comment from participants, with the Retail sector referenced as particularly bad offender.

**On mental health and Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, young people reported:**

- ▶ Difficulties in disclosing needs during the interview process due to stigma or lack of opportunity to discuss adjustments. One participant with anxiety started crying during an interview because they found the experience overwhelming and felt this went against them.
- ▶ A lack of understanding about mental health issues, limited and tokenistic well-being initiatives as well as inadequate support systems in the workplace to support struggling employees.
- ▶ Pressured probationary periods with a lack of coaching or opportunities to receive feedback.
- ▶ A lack of representation and inclusivity in the workplace, leading to feelings of isolation. For participants, employers

that don't have multi-faith prayer rooms, gender-neutral toilets or accessible social events for example, are perceived to be apathetic towards DEI.

- ▶ Experiences of toxic working environments with unclear processes for dealing with challenging situations such as unfair treatment.
- ▶ Experiences of being underpaid, feeling undervalued and unwelcome.
- ▶ Feeling misunderstood by employers with unrealistic expectations of their junior employees, and rather than take a collaborative approach to support them, they are labelled as a poor performer.
- ▶ A disconnect between what some employers perceive as 'hard work'. One participant commented an employer said they weren't working hard enough because they weren't doing additional hours even though this wasn't listed as an expectation during the application process.
- ▶ Financial barriers experienced by young people from low-income backgrounds include:
  - ▶ Costs associated with job interviews and entry level roles with poor pay.
  - ▶ Stigma in asking an employer if they reimburse expenses over concern this would negatively impact their application.
  - ▶ Dress codes that are formal or ambiguous which causes anxiety.
  - ▶ Feeling excluded from opportunities with poor awareness of services that can offer advice and support.



# 4 Recommendations

## Employers

### **Employer engagement in supporting the provision of high-quality careers education to address labour market shortages and futureproof the workforce is vital.**

- ▶ Employers should work closely with schools, colleges, and careers hubs in areas with higher levels of deprivation, to provide up-to-date information about career pathways, and ring-fence a variety of accessible opportunities for young people from low-income backgrounds, so they gain valuable insights and experiences at various stages of their education. This includes:
  - ▶ Careers talks from a range of professionals that are representative of an organisation's different functions, to relate subjects to various real-world job opportunities.
  - ▶ Attending careers fairs outside of university settings to engage a broader demographic of young people from low-income backgrounds via colleges and Jobcentre Plus, with the opportunity to speak with junior employees to better understand their experience and available pathways.
  - ▶ Employer-led competitions such as tech tournaments or bar mock trials provide enrichment learning and exposure to real-world scenarios whilst developing key soft skills. These can be organised by groups of employers which may be more favourable for SMEs that are only able to offer a small number of opportunities.
  - ▶ Mentoring so young people receive a longer-term intervention with wrap-around support from someone external to their immediate network, that can raise career aspirations and help them plan their next steps during key transition stages.
  - ▶ Insight days so young people can shadow different team members and understand what a 'day in the life' looks like.
  - ▶ Paid work experience (with the living wage) for young people still in school/college, in recognition that there are financial barriers preventing this demographic from accessing opportunities lasting a week or more. Work experience should be meaningful project-based work with opportunities to develop soft skills, gain insights into the various functions of the organisation and world of work.

- ▶ Paid internships (with the living wage) should be accessible for young people that both do and don't pursue higher education, with interns automatically fast-tracked for entry level roles, apprenticeships school-leaver programmes, or graduate schemes.
- ▶ Opportunities to support colleges and providers create lesson plans that connect the curriculum with career pathways.

### **The traditional approach to job descriptions and the way that roles are advertised must be overhauled to remove barriers experienced by young people from a low-income background in accessing employment opportunities.**

- ▶ A recruitment strategy with DEI targets that also factor social mobility will enable employers to develop a more diverse workforce. Employers should refer to the Social Mobility Foundation to understand how they can monitor and improve social mobility within the organisation.<sup>9</sup>
- ▶ Listing opportunities on sites such as Indeed or LinkedIn is unlikely to reach young people from a low-income background. A more targeted approach is needed by circulating opportunities with schools, colleges, universities, local careers hubs and other agencies in areas with higher levels of deprivation. Advertising rolling schemes on Instagram and TikTok that feature junior employees in a 'day in the life' can provide valuable insights.
- ▶ Job advertisements should provide specific information about the salary, including whether it's full-time or pro-rata. Explaining what pro-rata means and providing a link to a salary calculator would allow young people to assess the actual salary they would receive. Similarly, adverts should state clearly whether the organisation offers flexible work arrangements including working hours and hybrid-working so young people can assess whether the role is suitable.



9. Social Mobility Employer Index - Social Mobility Foundation

- ▶ Focus on advertising for skills and potential by lowering qualification requirements for entry level opportunities.
- ▶ Employers should ensure that job titles accurately reflect the responsibilities and scope of the role. This helps young people understand the nature of the job and whether it aligns with their interests and aspirations.
- ▶ Job descriptions should be simplified, avoiding jargon and acronyms. Employers should explain their values and requirements, providing definitions for skills, attributes, and competencies. A shared language to articulate skills is vital, employers should adopt the Skills Builder Universal Skills Framework for consistency.
- ▶ Employers should explain the organisation's grade scale and progression pathways to contextualise the level of the vacancy and highlight the opportunities for progression.

**The application process must be revised to incorporate inclusive practices and provide more guidance to create a better experience and outcome for both employers and young people from low-income backgrounds.**

- ▶ Employers should avoid competency-based questions in recognition of the disparity in opportunities available which disproportionately impacts young people from low-income backgrounds. Instead, employers should opt for scenario-based or strength-based questions to assess whether candidates' skills, competencies and attributes are suitable.
- ▶ To help young people better understand what makes a successful application, employers could run webinars, provide videos, list FAQs and a contact detail for the hiring manager.
- ▶ Remove formal business attire dress code for interviews and provide examples in the guidance.
- ▶ Informal interviews and an opportunity to participate in work shadowing could enable both parties to better assess the fit in a more relaxed and organic environment.
- ▶ Consider whether it is necessary to have more than two people on a panel, ensure it has diverse representation, and if possible, involve an employee that is similar in age to the candidate, that has previously been through the organisation's apprenticeship, graduate scheme or other entry level opportunity.
- ▶ To create a more inclusive process that better prepares candidates on what to expect during the interview process, employers should provide information on the number of stages, the purpose of each stage, what this entails, and when they can expect to hear an outcome. This includes

providing tasks and questions ahead of the interview to allow young people time to prepare their responses.

- ▶ Employers should inform unsuccessful candidates of the outcome at any stage during the application process and include the opportunity to speak to the hiring manager. Candidates that were successful in getting to the interview stage but didn't progress further, should receive written feedback comprising of three key points explaining why the candidate was unsuccessful. Employers could include a list of links to signpost services such as the local careers hub, mentoring charities, skills bootcamps etc to support unsuccessful candidates. This empowering approach provides a more positive experience to a negative outcome.

**Employers should adjust expectations during the probationary period and increase the level of support during the onboarding process to ensure young people from low-income backgrounds are equipped to thrive.**

- ▶ To support new employees during the probationary period, remove performance expectations and provide coaching to address areas for development instead. As one youth participant commented 'you hired me, so stick with me.'
- ▶ As part of an organisation's induction, employers should provide additional training for young people entering employment, in recognition that tasks such: as minute taking, diary management, email etiquette and organisational filing systems will be unfamiliar.
- ▶ Assign a buddy to new joiners to help them settle in and understand how to navigate the organisation's culture.
- ▶ Line managers should receive additional training to help set realistic expectations and in preparation that they will likely need to offer more extensive support and guidance. This helps create an environment where employees feel guided and supported, increasing their chances of success.





**Overcoming recruitment challenges and diversifying the workforce requires a commitment to good employment practices.**

- ▶ Creating a healthy work environment requires employers to prioritise mental health and wellbeing. Employers should openly discuss mental health and encourage young people to provide feedback on the support they need. This promotes a culture of openness and inclusivity, allowing young employees to feel comfortable seeking help and speaking up about their mental health.
- ▶ Employers should train and appoint mental health and wellbeing champions to promote mental health awareness and support line managers to create a supportive environment.
- ▶ Employers should provide various options for flexible work arrangements, such as adjustable working hours, remote work, or days which are clear of meetings to support individuals with mental health struggles. These are just some suggestions, but it is recommended a collaborative approach is taken with employees to make reasonable adjustments.
- ▶ Addressing the labour market shortage requires a commitment to good employment practices by becoming living wage employers and engaging in initiatives such

as The Social Mobility Index<sup>10</sup>, Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter<sup>11</sup> and Good Youth Employment Standards<sup>12</sup>.

**Employers should provide paid opportunities to work with young people from low-income backgrounds who would assess how the organisation works with that demographic, from recruitment through to progression.**

This would lead to actionable steps that employers can implement to improve their approach, whilst simultaneously creating valuable encounters with employers and experiences of workplaces (Gatsby Benchmarks 5 and 6 for good quality careers education). Examples include sourcing trained youth inspectors to:

- ▶ Review outreach initiatives such as work experience placements to ensure they meet the needs of young people from low-income backgrounds
- ▶ Youth-proof job adverts and the application process to make it accessible
- ▶ Provide feedback on the onboarding process and progression pathways
- ▶ Assess the accessibility and appropriateness of mechanisms and initiatives to promote DEI, mental health, and wellbeing.

<sup>10</sup> The Social Mobility Employer Index

<sup>11</sup> Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter ([gmgoodemploymentcharter.co.uk](http://gmgoodemploymentcharter.co.uk))

<sup>12</sup> Good Youth Employment Standards - Youth Employment UK

## Policy makers

- ▶ To ensure young people from low-income backgrounds are not left behind, LSIPs should have a clear strategy for the supply side to help address the mismatch and remove barriers in accessing skills training and employment opportunities.
- ▶ An evaluation conducted by the Learning and Work Institute into the pilot phase of the LSIP, found increased levels of engagement from employers.<sup>13</sup> The success of LSIPs rely on maintaining and increasing employer engagement, ensuring both large employers and SME's are actively involved in shaping technical education and training provision. LSIPs should consider how this can be achieved as part of the governance structure.
- ▶ Research from the Careers and Enterprise Company found schools with more economically disadvantaged students that engage more with careers, report higher performance and progress faster.<sup>14</sup> The LSIP should focus on supporting colleges implement all eight Gatsby Benchmarks of good career guidance, leveraging careers hubs, employers, and charities to achieve this.
- ▶ Adopt the Skills Builder Universal Skills Framework, ensuring the skills are developed in an applied environment alongside technical skills and that this is integrated consistently across courses.<sup>15</sup> Crucially, learners should be able to demonstrate a good understanding of these skills, why they are important for the workplace, and how they would convey these during the application process. This echoes findings from The Edge Foundation Joint Dialogue research project.<sup>16</sup>
- ▶ Provide additional support to young people from low-income backgrounds to remove barriers, accommodate needs, maintain engagement, and encourage the pursuit of level 4+ qualifications. Pastoral support advisors, career coaches and mentors can help provide timely wrap-around support, spanning the duration of their training and transition into employment. A joined-up approach with schools, local authorities, careers hubs and other services is imperative to prevent young people 'slipping through the net' during transition points.
- ▶ Provide meaningful opportunities for young people from low-income backgrounds to participate by adopting the four inter-related concepts as part of The Lundy Model: space- the opportunity to express a view; voice- being facilitated to express those views; audience- having those views listened to; influence- having those views acted upon appropriately.<sup>17</sup> In practice, young people from low-income backgrounds could: contribute evidence to the LSIP, assess the accessibility of provision, co-design strategies and services that impact them.



13. Skills accelerator pilot evaluation - Learning and Work Institute

14. cec-ready-for-the-future-2022.pdf (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

15. The Universal Framework (skillsbuilder.org)

16. joint\_dialogue\_-\_final\_report\_update-2\_De4kkxs.pdf (edge.co.uk)

17. Enabling the meaningful participation of children and young people globally: The Lundy Model (qub.ac.uk)

# 5 Appendix

## Organisations engaged

EY Foundation engaged a variety of stakeholders during the planning and delivery of the pilot to transform the employment prospects of young people from low-income backgrounds in Greater Manchester.

Employers, Bodies and Forums	Youth Organisations and Providers	GMCA Organisations	Other Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ GM Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>▶ Pro-Manchester</li> <li>▶ Manchester Tech Forum</li> <li>▶ BITC North West Leadership Board</li> <li>▶ EY</li> <li>▶ Barclays</li> <li>▶ Microsoft</li> <li>▶ TalkTalk</li> <li>▶ CMS</li> <li>▶ Shoosmiths</li> <li>▶ Axon Moore</li> <li>▶ Anthesis</li> <li>▶ Alvarez &amp; Marsal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ EY Foundation</li> <li>▶ Young Manchester</li> <li>▶ Youth Focus North West</li> <li>▶ Salford College</li> <li>▶ MGT Youth</li> <li>▶ ReflecTeen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Greater Manchester Combined Authority</li> <li>▶ Careers Connect</li> <li>▶ GM Good Employment Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Gatsby Foundation</li> <li>▶ Skills Builder</li> <li>▶ The Edge Foundation</li> <li>▶ Careers &amp; Enterprise Company</li> </ul>

## About the EY Foundation

The EY Foundation is a UK registered charity that works directly with young people, employers and social entrepreneurs to create or support pathways to education, employment or enterprise. EY Foundation operates and is incorporated independently of EY and is governed by a separate trustee board.

The EY Foundation is a charitable company registered in England and Wales and Scotland with registered charity number 1157154 and SC045076. It is also a member firm of Ernst & Young Global Limited.

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