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| **Name:**  **Organisation (if applicable):**  **Email address:**  **Website:**  **I want to receive further information about the review by email:** Y/N  **I am happy for this evidence to be attributed to me or my organisation?:** Y/N |

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| 1. **Quality**   There is no single measure of quality in education, although Ofsted provides independent, external evaluation of whether provision is judged to be good or better against its inspection framework. Whilst the share of schools and further education providers in the North West which are judged either “good” or “outstanding” is in line with the share across England, the picture across Greater Manchester varies.  Important steps forward have been taken: all of GM’s FE colleges are now graded Good or Outstanding by Ofsted (compared to the picture in 2016 when half were graded Requires Improvement). However, that does not mean there aren’t challenges and **more that we can do to ensure that more of our residents can benefit from good or outstanding learning**.  We think that the education workforce is key and that more could be done to join up existing local and national activity to improve the recruitment, continuing professional development and retention of high quality teachers and leaders in education and skills institutions.  Are you aware of any particular examples of good practice or innovation in this area, particularly where an organisation has ‘bucked trends’ to deliver better than expected outcomes for their learners? What other measures could we reasonably use as indicators of quality, such as balancing academic results with student well-being / ‘character’ education, and how might we support institutions in achieving their quality improvement agendas? |
| **Response:** |
| 1. **Clear line of sight**   We need to ensure that all GM residents, including young people, have a **clear line of sight into careers, occupational areas and opportunities across the city-region** and can access the information, experiences/encounters and mechanisms needed to help link the worlds of education and work. Bridge GM has been supporting this work for the last two years and early 2020 will see the full roll-out of GMACS, a UCAS style portal that will enable young people to explore career options and apply for apprenticeships and technical/vocational opportunities, alongside the Find An Apprenticeship service.  Some employers are actively contributing to this agenda alongside educators and careers professionals, working with schools and colleges to help embed careers education and employability into strategic planning. Yet despite reporting skills gaps, evidence suggests that, in general, employer engagement in workforce development is declining, both in terms of financial investment and wider commitment to the future talent pipeline, eg through engaging with schools/colleges and employment partners to support links with the world of work.  What are the main challenges and barriers facing employers to engaging in different elements of the skills and work system and how might they best be tackled? If you are an employer, where are you encountering particular challenges? What steps do you think would help you to tackle those challenges, and to encourage greater commitment and investment? What more can your organisation do to contribute? |
| **Response:** |

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| 1. **Core skills and talent**   Core skills and talent must be recognised and nurtured, going **beyond the knowledge and skills represented by qualifications to the competencies and qualities that employers are looking for** and that everyone needs to get ahead in life and in work. These include English (incorporating English for speakers of other languages), maths and digital skills. The devolved Adult Education Budget – worth £92m in 2019/20 – will support this and, through devolution, we have already been able to introduce a range of flexibilities that will support the development of our residents’ essential skills.  In addition to those essential life skills, we need to ensure that the system supports other **attributes that are valued in the workplace such as problem-solving, critical analysis, creative and entrepreneurial skills, together with leadership and management**, all of which go to the heart of helping to ensure that our businesses can thrive and grow.  How can we better ensure that everyone has the support they need to develop these core skills and talents, and that they help to deliver positive outcomes for residents? If you are a provider currently delivering AEB-funded provision, have the GM flexibilities helped you to support positive outcomes for learners, including feeding the pipeline into apprenticeships and technical education? Are there ways in which you are delivering, measuring and recording some of the ‘soft’ skills that help to make people more confident, resilient and employable? How can we improve the way in which they are assessed at the beginning and end of a programme or package of learning? |
| **Response:** |

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| 1. **Supporting people into work and to progress in employment**   Supporting residents to enter, sustain and progress in work is key, with a broad integrated support offer that aligns activity such as the AEB and GM Working Well (including but not limited to skills development, employment support and early intervention for those at risk of falling out of work) and helps GM’s residents to enter, sustain and progress in work. This encompasses everything from entry level jobs all the way through to highly skilled technical and professional roles, and helps tackle barriers for residents such as older workers, people with adverse health conditions and those with caring responsibilities.  4a. We think that more can be done in particular to **help people in low-skilled, low-paid employment to progress**, filling the skills gaps reported by employers and helping to move people out of in-work poverty/income deprivation. In your experience are there variations by sector, or by place? What more can be done to encourage employers to value/develop – and pay more for – higher skills within the workforce?  4b. We also think that more needs to be done to better support employers and workers in order to reduce the number of people leaving the workforce earlier than they would like to because of their age, or from falling out of work because of poor health or disability. Do you agree? Are you aware of examples of good practice around effective support for and **retention of older workers or those with health problems**? |
| **Response:** |
| 1. **Increasing technical skills**   We need to **improve and expand the technical skills base in GM** and ensure that businesses can access a suitably skilled workforce – now and in the future – to thrive, grow and compete. This is particularly important in **GM’s LIS frontier sectors**, where we have globally competitive strengths and growth potential, and **in our foundation sectors**, which see high employment but often in low skill/low pay roles.  The technical education talent pipeline will be supported up to and including level 3 with the roll-out of T levels, commencing this autumn. However, whilst employers report most difficulty in filling mid- to high-level technical roles requiring L4/5 skills, this is the area where there is least co-ordinated public support; increasing take-up and improving quality of technical education and Apprenticeships will be a crucial part of meeting those needs. We are already piloting a sector-based approach in the digital industry, with the Fast Track Digital Workforce fund delivering short, intensive upskilling programmes to people in work to help fill skills gaps, and this model will be extended to other industries.  Whilst changes to the Apprenticeship Levy (locally or nationally) and how Apprenticeships are funded are out of scope for this call for evidence, we think that more must be done to deliver the technical skills (including at Levels 3-5) that employers need, particularly working with SMEs. If you are an employer or a provider, which specific areas/occupations are a particular challenge? In your experience are there variations by sector in terms of the issues, barriers and potential solutions? Are there things you have been able to get on and do that are having a positive impact? If not, what would you like to do in this space, and what are the barriers that are preventing you from doing so (with reference to particular occupations / roles where possible)? |
| **Response:** |

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| **Any other comments**  Please use this box to provide any other comments which don’t fit under one of the priorities above. |
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**Thank you for your response.**