

Removing Barriers to Apprenticeships
Call for Project Proposals

Specification and Guidance for Applicants

Timeline	
Call for Projects Opens	Monday 17 th February 2020
Market Engagement Event	Monday 9 th March 2020
Call Closes	Thursday 16 th April 2020
Evaluation Period	Monday 20 th April – Monday 4 th May 2020
Sign off of Procurement	Monday 11 th May 2020 *
Contract Notification and Award	Monday 11 th May – Monday 18 th May 2020*
Feedback to Unsuccessful	Monday 11 th May – Monday 18 th May 2020*

*Dates subject to change.

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1. Introduction

Apprenticeship numbers have continued to drop following government reforms. We are still seeing disparity and under-representation between different genders, cultures, ages and disabilities in different sectors and across the apprenticeship workforce as a whole.

As part of the Skills Underspends paper agreed by GMCA in October 2018, £328k was allocated to develop activity that supports under-represented groups to access apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship activity leading to improved social mobility for the individual.

This is a call for proposals from across the public, private and VCSE sectors to pilot, through a test and learn approach, a number of projects supporting small cohorts of under-represented learners to remove identified and evidenced barriers to apprenticeships, including but not exclusive to BAME, single parents, care leavers, people with mental or physical health conditions, women in STEM, older people (50+).

Funding available for each project will be between £25,000 and £50,000 and apprenticeship starts must be an output.

Proposals need to be built from a partnership that includes an employer with apprenticeship vacancies, a provider and potential apprentices (or access through a support organisation to potential apprentices). They must include identified new apprenticeship vacancies and innovative delivery models that meet the needs and address the barriers of identified potential apprentices such as part-time models, digital delivery and targeted pre-apprenticeship programmes. Proposals must be sustainable beyond the initial cohort and be scalable in the future to build on lessons learnt.

Projects will be managed collectively with lessons learnt feeding in to future project activity and programme design.

2. Background

The need to remove barriers for individuals to access and achieve apprenticeships continues to come up through Scrutiny, is highlighted in Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network's Ambition statement, and through conversations with employers.

This suite of projects will support Priorities 2 (Young people equipped for life) and 3 (Good jobs, with opportunities for people to progress and develop) of the Greater Manchester Strategy: Our People, Our Place. It will also support the Life Readiness agenda, Greater Manchester's Apprenticeship Ambition, wider approaches to

supporting NEET young people, and the work of the Greater Manchester Ageing Hub.

It will support our Local Industrial Strategy, which sets out how Greater Manchester can, and will, respond to the economic and technological challenges of today, and the future. It is the vehicle for driving social and economic progress for all our residents. It is centred on four growth sectors - clean growth, advanced materials and manufacturing, digital and creative, and health innovation. By supporting underrepresented groups into good quality apprenticeships in a range of sectors, we can improve the chances of all our residents.

This call for project proposals stems from Greater Manchester's ambition to be the best place in the world to grow up, get on and grow old. Apprenticeships are a key part of this ambition to create more and better opportunities for anyone looking to develop their career at any time. Despite our ambition we are acutely aware that barriers exist excluding groups from accessing and achieving apprenticeships.

We know that multiple and interconnected barriers increase the likelihood of exclusion of groups from accessing and achieving in apprenticeships. Those starting apprenticeships are more likely than average to be white. In Greater Manchester 2018 to 2019 20% of working age residents are from BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) communities, however only 14% of apprentices are from a BAME background. BAME apprentices are particularly under-represented in engineering and construction. Which are key occupations which are highly paid, and core to the Local Industrial Strategy.

There are also significant gender gaps, with women apprentices making up the bulk of low pay sectors. In 2018 to 2019, 81% of Health, Public Service and Care apprentices are female. Whilst only 6% of Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, and Construction, Planning and the Built Environment are female. Traditional approaches to diversifying apprenticeships tend to offer 'more of the same'. And with less than 1 in 10 apprentices working under 30 hours a week, this lack of part-time opportunities disproportionately impacts women, and those with caring responsibilities.

There are also demonstrable barriers to people with a disability, learning difficulty or long term health problem, who make up 23% of the working aged population, but only 11% of apprentices in 2018/19.

Age shouldn't be a barrier to accessing apprenticeships. For example, 50-64 year olds make up 28% of the workforce, but only 5% of apprentices fall into this category. Apprenticeships provide an excellent opportunity to re-train, change career or return to the workforce but need to be made more attractive to this age group.

Opening up opportunities to groups who are currently excluded from the apprenticeship workforce can only be beneficial to society and the economy.

References and further reading are in the appendix of this document, where you can read more about the groups who face structural, financial, and cultural barriers. You can also find information about the work GMCA is doing on apprenticeships, and the broader work and skills landscape.

3. Scope of the Grant and Project Requirements

3.1 What is the grant for?

This grant programme is designed to pilot and test new approaches that remove barriers to apprenticeships for currently underrepresented groups in the Greater Manchester Apprenticeship landscape. The grants will deliver projects that:

- Target an underrepresented group and support them to start, and achieve an apprenticeship
- Through the programme delivery model, test and learn approaches that remove barriers for the underrepresented group supporting pathways into and achievement of apprenticeships
- Share learning and increase the understanding across GM about how to remove barriers to apprenticeships
- Stimulate further delivery beyond the timeframe of this project supporting underrepresented groups in to apprenticeships.

The grants can be for:

- Adaptation of an apprenticeship delivery model to meet the needs of the target cohort
- Creation of a programme for a particular employer linked to an underrepresented group
- Pre-apprenticeship activity that better prepares the target cohort for an apprenticeship.

The grants are not for:

- Extensions of existing projects
- Projects with no evidence of under representation or barriers

In all cases, we will need to see evidence of real apprenticeship opportunities within the grant application and the cohort achieving a minimum of 10 sustained apprenticeship starts (apprentices on programme for more than 4 months).

The delivery needs to test a new approach for GM and not extend an existing project.

Proposals must be sustainable beyond the initial cohort and be scalable in the future building on the lessons learnt.

Promotion must highlight the role of GMCA, a case study will be required at the end of the project (feeding into a wider evaluation). The successful bidders must agree to act as advocates for the work and its outcomes, promoting across their networks and encouraging others to follow the model.

3.2 Partnership

We want to see project proposals submitted by partnerships of apprenticeship providers, employers with apprenticeship opportunities and organisations representing or providing support for the target cohort. We would also encourage applicants to state wider stakeholders they can work with locally to add value to the project.

3.3 Project examples

We do not want to dictate the type of project we will fund as long as it meets the programme objectives to increase representation and apprenticeship starts for an identified cohort. However, examples of projects may include:

- A flexible or part time delivery model for young single parents
- Talent attraction of older apprentices in to vacancies within a specific employer
- Autism friendly delivery and / or preparation for apprenticeships
- Supported apprenticeship model for people with LLDD
- Wraparound support for a vulnerable group
- Different approaches by an employer to recruit from a particular cohort
- Working with an employer to create a more inclusive pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship programme

It must include identified new apprenticeship vacancies at a viable scale for a provider to deliver to.

Projects must focus on either Apprenticeship delivery models or a pre-apprenticeship programme that leads to pre-identified apprenticeship opportunities.

They must include innovative delivery models that remove the barriers for identified potential apprentices such as part time models, digital delivery.

3.4 Who can apply?

Applications can be led by any of the organisations identified within the partnership as long as they can evidence that they are financially robust and properly constituted. Apprenticeship Providers must be registered on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (ROATP).

3.5 Delivery requirements

Whilst not dictating the project delivery methodology we will expect to see a clear project plan with milestones that show how delivery will achieve the stated project outcomes. We will want to see evidence of all proposed activity that leads to sustained apprenticeship starts for the target group.

Any project proposals must also be compliant with Apprenticeship funding [rules](#).

Recruitment of learners to the programme must be considered, alongside any personalised support or signposting they need reflecting the particular needs of the target group. This must be evident in the programme design.

The project proposal must also provide evidence and thinking as to how and why the project will be scalable beyond the funded period.

3.6 Delivery timescale

We anticipate projects starting between June and August 2020, and completing in early 2022.

A project will be defined as 'complete' once there have been 10 apprentices on programme for a minimum of 4 months (a sustained apprenticeship). This will allow case studies to be developed and shared with other projects, partners and stakeholders.

We recognise that individual apprentices are unlikely to have completed their programme at this stage, and will require commitment from the partnership that they will support all apprentices through to achievement.

3.7 Target audience

Projects will need to focus on a particular cohort of people that are underrepresented across the apprenticeship workforce in Greater Manchester for example BAME, single parents, care leavers, people with mental or physical health conditions, 16-18 year olds, women in STEM or construction, older people (50+), ex-offenders, etc. This list is not exhaustive and there may be groups not identified here that you can evidence experience barriers, which could also be a suitable target audience.

Projects will need to work with these cohorts to understand their barriers and create programmes of apprenticeship delivery or pre-apprenticeship activity that allows them to successfully start and achieve an apprenticeship.

Some evidence of under representation in the apprentice workforce is provided in this document, however grant proposals will be expected to include more detail and a strong evidence base for the project activity.

3.8 Funding

Project proposals must be for between £25,000 and £50,000 grant funding.

Match funding is not essential however if the partnership will be bringing match in cash or kind, this can be highlighted in the funding section of the application form.

The table below sets out what the grant funding can and cannot be used for.

What we will fund	What we won't fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership development • Development of appropriate materials and curriculum • Wraparound support for apprentices • Pre apprenticeship activity (with direct progression to apprenticeships) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery cost to provider • Apprentice salaries • Support or resource available through other sources

Grants will be paid in 3 stages:

- 50% at the start of the project
- 25% after 1/3 of the project timeframe
- 25% after 2/3 of the project timeframe

Your organisation needs to be legitimate, financially stable and have appropriate financial controls in place to be able to deliver effectively the programme of work that you propose and have evidenced in the application form.

We will expect your application to demonstrate clear value for money (like efficiencies through collaborating with other partners and minimising overheads)

and that the lowest level of grant needed to support the proposed activity is requested.

Where it is appropriate, we will also take into account the extent and strength of financial support from other partners, such as other funders and agencies.

3.9 Outcomes

At least 10 sustained apprenticeship starts per project. A sustained apprenticeship start is an individual remaining in their apprenticeship for at least 4 months.

A tested new model or approach that removes barriers for an under-represented group within the apprenticeship workforce.

3.10 Governance

Projects will be monitored and performance managed through the GMCA contracts team.

We will also establish a steering group for all the successful projects, key partners and the evaluators with Terms of Reference that set out a shared responsibility for sharing learning as it is developed throughout the project lifespan.

3.11 Evaluation

Alongside the project delivery grants, we will be commissioning an evaluation organisation to work throughout the project timeline capturing lessons learnt, producing case studies and supporting the development of recommendations. Successful projects will be expected to work with the evaluation organisation throughout their project lifespan.

3.12 Legacy

GMCA wants to see a clear legacy from these projects that improves the quality of apprenticeship delivery for the widest possible range of potential apprentices. We want to learn real lessons that can be used to grow the provision of tailored delivery for under-represented groups.

Ultimately we would like to see an apprenticeship workforce that truly represents Greater Manchester's working age population.

4. Completing the Application Form

4.1 Market engagement event

GMCA will be hosting an event for potential bidders and interested parties on Monday 9th March.

Partnerships that are considering bidding for funds are encouraged to attend.

Organisations that are interested but don't (at that point) have a full partnership for project delivery are also encouraged to attend as we will facilitate the development of partnerships where individual organisations have yet to have all the partners in place

At this event, we will talk through this funding opportunity in detail and respond to any queries to support project development and completing the application form.

4.2 Responding to questions

The table below lists each question on the application form, provides some notes for its completion alongside the word count and weighting that is given to each question.

Responses to questions need to be evidence based and within the word count. Embedded documents or appendices will not be considered as part of the evaluation.

The evaluation process is explained in Section 5 of this document.

Please ensure you complete all questions whether scored or not scored

Question	% of total score	Word count	Notes
Project Information			
Details of your partnership	Unscored	N/A	List the requested details for lead and partnership organisations
Funding request and budget	12%	N/A	Complete the 2 tables with funding and budget information
Stage 1 questions			
1 Project Summary	15%	500	Give an overview of your proposal for testing a new model or approach to Removing Barriers to Apprenticeships in Greater Manchester. Include details of the target audience, why they are under-represented

				and the barrier(s) they face. Also detail the Apprenticeship opportunities being created including the number and the Apprenticeship Standard. Outline how the proposal meets an identified gap or need across the apprenticeship workforce.
2	Delivery Model and Timeline	15%	1000	Describe the delivery model (or theory of change) you intend to use, including key referral pathways, staffing programme delivery and on programme support. Please include a timeline that illustrates key milestones throughout the project.
3	Partnership arrangements and Collaborative Working	12%	500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Detail who is the lead organisation and the key partners? What will the role be of each of the partner organisations? b. Why is your partnership best placed to deliver your proposed project? Details to include general track records; any quality standards (include the Apprenticeship Providers UKPRN number); experience of working with the target group and delivering apprenticeship programmes; length and strength of working relationship between partners; and the partnerships access to potential apprentices.

				c. Explain the steps you will take as the lead organisation to ensure all partners policies and procedures are in place (e.g safeguarding, health and safety etc.)
4	Target audience	12%	500	<p>a. Which under represented group will your proposal look to create apprenticeship opportunities for and what specific barrier(s) will be addressed through the provision? How have you identified these barriers? Please include an evidence base that demonstrates the need for the project.</p> <p>b. The groups you work with are likely to be vulnerable, how will ensure robust safeguarding and minimisation of risk?</p>
5	Outcomes and impact	12%	300	<p>a. What outcomes do you expect to achieve, including number of apprenticeships you expect to create through this programme? What added value will the project have?</p> <p>b. How will you monitor the impact of your work?</p>
6	Scalability and legacy	12%	300	How will your programme be scalable beyond the funded

				period? What is your plan for further rollout?
7	Social Value	10%	300	Please detail how, if your project is successful and beyond the stated project outputs and outcomes, you will contribute to social value across Greater Manchester. Please refer to Greater Manchester's Social Value Policy to inform your response.
Balancing Criteria questions				
	We want our investment to benefit learners throughout Greater Manchester. Which GM Boroughs will you work in?	N/A	150	Brief summary of geography and anticipated learners from each area
	We want our investment to reach the most diverse range of potential learners. Who is your target audience and how will you ensure your project reaches your target audience?	N/A	150	Brief summary of underrepresented group to be supported and how they will be initially engaged with the project
	We want our investment to support a variety of apprenticeship standards. Which standard will you be delivering and how does that connect to the Local Industrial Strategy?	N/A	150	Short explanation of the apprenticeship standard that will be delivered, and the role it will play in the employer partners workforce

4.3 Declaration

You need to have appropriate governance, leadership and management to be able to deliver effectively the programme of work that you propose. You will be asked to confirm that your application is supported by the governing body of your organisation.

The declaration must be completed by the Chair of your Board/Management Committee or Chief Executive Officer.

4.4 Additional information

We will need evidence to confirm your business is solvent, and you have all the appropriate policies and procedures in place. The initial financial assessment will be carried out by means of an Experian credit assessment. Where the rating is below 40, GMCA will undertake further Financial Checks and Analysis.

Please ensure you complete the self-certification table in the application form and submit the requested documents and policies with your application: (on following page)

1. The Combined Authority requires a minimum level of economic and financial standing for this grant. The requirements will include the follows:
 - a. The filing of accounts at Companies House must not be overdue.
 - b. The organisation must be making a profit before tax.
 - c. Any unsatisfied County Court Judgements may be taken into account depending on their value against the organisation's annual turnover.

You must be able to have a positive response to all the above to self-certify as 'Yes'.

2. If requested at a later stage, are you able to provide a copy of Audited /Independently Verified Accounts for your organisation for the last two years?

If answering no, then please indicate an alternative means of demonstrating financial status below:

- a. A statement of the turnover, Profit and Loss Account/Income Statement, Balance Sheet/Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Cash Flow for the most recent year of trading for this organisation
- b. A statement of the cash flow forecast for the current year and a bank letter outlining the current cash and credit position
- c. Alternative means of demonstrating financial status if any of the above are not available (e.g. forecast of turnover for the current year and a statement of funding provided by the owners and/or the bank,

charity accruals accounts, or an alternative means of demonstrating financial status)

3. Please self-certify whether you already have, or can commit to obtain, prior to grant award, the levels of insurance cover indicated below:
 - a. Employer's (Compulsory) Liability Insurance = £10 million
 - b. Public Liability Insurance = £10 million
 - c. Professional Indemnity Insurance = £5million

It is a legal requirement that all companies hold Employer's (Compulsory) Liability Insurance of £5 million as a minimum. Please note this requirement is not applicable to Sole Traders. GMCA may request evidence of valid policies ahead of grant award.

4. Health and Safety Policy that complies with current legislative requirements attached
5. Safeguarding Policy (Please attach safeguarding policy of apprenticeship provider)
6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

4.5 Submitting your Application Form

You can submit your application for from Monday 17th February 2020 until the closing date on Thursday 16th April 2020. All application forms should be sent to: ApprenticeshipandTechEd@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

5. Proposal Evaluation

There will be 2 stages to evaluation of the proposals:

1. Project evaluation and scoring
2. Balancing criteria and negotiation

5.1 Project Evaluation and Scoring

In the 1st stage, proposals will be individually scored by an independent panel and then through a moderation phase. There will be a minimum scoring threshold whereby any organisations who score 0 or 1 on any questions will be automatically excluded from the process.

We will make our assessment on the basis of the information you provide in your application, including any further clarification information that we request from you or other stakeholders.

Questions are weighted as above, and each response will be scored on the following basis:

Score	Definition	Assessment
0	Does not meet the requirement. Does not comply and/or insufficient information provided to demonstrate that the supplier has the ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to provide the supplies, with little or no evidence to support the response.	Unacceptable
1	Does not satisfy all the requirements and therefore major reservations. Considerable reservations of the supplier's relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to provide the supplies, with little or no evidence to support the response.	Serious Reservations
2	Satisfies the requirement with minor reservations. Some minor reservations of the supplier's relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to provide the supplies, with little or no evidence to support the response	Minor Reservations
3	Satisfies the requirement. Demonstration by the supplier of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to provide the supplies, with evidence to support the response.	Acceptable
4	Satisfies the requirement with additional benefits. Above average demonstration by the supplier of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measure required to provide the supplies. Response identifies factors that will offer potential added value, with evidence to support the response.	Good

5.2 Balancing Criteria

The 2nd stage considers how activity proposed by applicants fit into a portfolio of organisations and services which will achieve a balance of outcomes against the priorities.

These will be considered after stage 1 is complete.

We will use a process of balancing criteria and negotiation to ensure this funding benefits a diverse range of projects across Greater Manchester so will take the following 3 themes into consideration for final decision making.

- Geography – to ensure a spread of projects across Greater Manchester

- Diversity- to ensure the projects cover a range of underrepresented groups
- Apprenticeship Standard – to ensure we are supporting routes to a range of occupations

5.3 Decision Making

Following recommendations made by the evaluation panel and GMCA's Principal Skills Manager (Apprenticeships and Technical Education), final decisions on grant award will be made by Greater Manchester's Work and Skills Exec Board and the GMCA Treasurer.

6. Contract Management and Review

The provider and the GMCA are required to meet at quarterly contract meetings, and as and when deemed necessary by the GMCA, to evaluate and monitor their performance under the Grant Agreement. These meetings are intended to promote co-operation and efficiency.

The Provider will be requested to supply quarterly Monitoring pro – forma (with KPI and performance targets) at least 7 days prior to the quarterly Contract Meetings. Meeting dates will be communicated in advance.

Within the quarterly contract meetings, the Provider will share monthly performance reports with the GMCA.

Within the quarterly monitoring meetings, the GMCA and the Provider may discuss and agree any reasonable adjustments to be made to the specification or delivery of the Service in order to enable the contract outcomes to be delivered.

7. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Privacy Impact Assessments (PIA) and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

With regards to Data Protection Legislation providers of the service must ensure that they fully apply with legislative requirements and provide evidence of this to the GMCA within 30 days of the signing the grant agreement, including:

- a. evidence of a compliant processing contract with any sub processors and/or providers,
- b. a copy of the relevant privacy notice incorporating the notification to participants that the GMCA will be receiving statistical data derived from the data they provide,

- c. a copy of the organisations Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this delivery.

Freedom of Information Act (2000)

The GMCA is a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "Act").

As a public body, the GMCA is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) in respect of information it holds (including third-party information). Any member of the public or other interested party may make a request for information.

The GMCA shall treat all bidders responses as confidential during the procurement process. Requests for information received following the procurement process shall be considered on a case-by-case basis, applying the principles of FOIA.

While the GMCA aims to consult with third-party providers of information before it is disclosed, it cannot guarantee that this will be done. Therefore, bidders are responsible for ensuring that any confidential or commercially sensitive information has been clearly identified to the GMCA in the template provided

Bidders should be aware that, in compliance with its transparency obligations, the GMCA routinely publishes details of its contract(s), including the contract values and the identities of its suppliers on its website.

8. Modern Slavery Act 2015

As part of Local Government, the GMCA recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking. In addition to the GMCA's responsibility as an employer, it also acknowledges its duty to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking as introduced by section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The GMCA is absolutely committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in its corporate activities and to ensuring that its supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking. The GMCA requires that all direct suppliers, service providers and contractors to the GMCA are absolutely committed themselves to preventing slavery within their own activities and through their supply chain which includes manufacturers, and producers.

9. Equality and Diversity

As a public service, GMCA is required by Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty) to demonstrate that it has due regard in the exercise of all of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be undertaken and equality will be given due regard during the assessment process.

10. Contact Us

ApprenticeshipandTechEd@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

11. References and Resources

Greater Manchester Strategies

[Our People, Our Place Greater Manchester Strategy](#)

[Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy](#)

Social Mobility and Apprenticeships

[Better Apprenticeships Report](#)

Women in aerospace engineering

['I was the only girl in A-level electronics' BBC News article](#)

Women in construction

['I love concrete', says woman causing stir in construction - BBC News article](#)

[Apprenticeship pay gap: gender stereotypes are holding women back - The Guardian article](#)

Care Leavers

[Supporting care leavers on apprenticeships: Case studies](#)

[Barriers to learning for disadvantaged groups: Report of qualitative findings](#)

Asylum Seekers

[Skills Audits for Asylum Seekers and Refugees: A Practitioner's Manual](#)

Supporting young apprentices

[Supporting young apprentices: Guidance for employers](#)

BAME Apprentices

[Apprenticeships and diversity in context in Greater Manchester Report](#)