



**Laying the Foundations:
Green Shoots from
Greater Manchester Baccalaureate Year 1**

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Our vision is that, by 2030, the Greater Manchester Baccalaureate will guarantee that every young person growing up in our city region will have a clear path and line of sight to the good jobs and training opportunities in Greater Manchester, enabled by a system that places a high value on technical education and harnesses Greater Manchester's rich employer base across our seven MBacc Gateways.

The first year of Greater Manchester Baccalaureate (Macc) delivery has seen a number of important steps taken towards realising this vision, working in partnership with a growing number of stakeholders across the worlds of education and work. Schools, colleges, employers/employer networks, sector experts and Greater Manchester's Equalities Panels have all played vital roles, but most importantly, in response to the challenge laid down by the Mayor of Greater Manchester when he launched his MBacc vision, the design and delivery of MBacc has involved young people themselves at every possible opportunity.

This is an ambitious programme of change but, with the support and commitment of partners who have co-developed and tested the activities set out in this report, momentum is building.

This highlight report sets out the progress made in Year 1 of the journey towards MBacc 2030 vision and highlights the green shoots that will grow into six key outcomes that, over time, will be our indicators of success.

Outcome 1

Young people and parents experience information about the technical route in the same way as the academic route, and that has been driven by the same quality/values.

- We have worked with young people and their parents/carers to **establish a clear baseline picture of experiences of and attitudes towards technical and academic routes**, as well as levels of confidence in discussing them.
- This baseline will help to inform future design, delivery and engagement, and to monitor delivery over the coming years to ensure that young people and their parents/carers are receiving better support to make and advise on informed decisions.

“I hadn’t really thought much about cloud technologies before these lessons. There is so much more to local jobs in this area other than just coding.”

Young person on Digital Agency project

Outcome 2

The education system and employers work together to ensure a responsive curriculum and opportunities for young people.

- **A powerhouse network of Greater Manchester’s employers has been established across the seven MBacc gateways** (which together account for more than half of the jobs in Greater Manchester), with a specific focus on supporting technical education pathways and opportunities. The **Employer Integration Board (EIB) and Employer Supporters Action Network (ESAN)**, which together account for over 130 major Greater Manchester organisations employing tens of thousands of Greater Manchester residents,

are working more closely than ever with education partners and playing a key role in galvanising their industry peers.

- The insights generated through these employers are helping to nudge system change, by shaping both the fundamental design and principles of the MBacc, and a **suite of tools and resources that have been rolled out within schools** to introduce the MBacc into classrooms, beginning with a test and learn group of 10 schools.
- We have worked with Raspberry Pi Foundation, in a partnership that brings together curriculum design and employer insights, to develop a **new Certificate in Applied Computing** that will be the first of its kind to deliver the up-to-date applied digital skills needed in jobs and occupations across all parts of the economy. Following a pilot which saw 92 students in seven schools enrol on the programme, delivery will begin this summer, with further development planned around the specialist applied skills required in digital and tech occupations.
- Employers have generated opportunities for thousands of young people, from webinars to industry placements and workplace experiences, and are helping to test **innovative new approaches to the ways in which workplace experiences** can play a more meaningful part in helping young people explore and pursue technical pathways.
- In total, **33 schools have been testing new approaches** across a number of projects.

“Anything that keeps the employer voice engaged - not passive, not just a consultation exercise - is vital... At the Employer Integration Board, people come to the table to get their view across, not just as individuals, but as a shared view of the world. There’s a lot to learn from that.”

Clive Memmott, Chief Executive of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Chair of the Employer Integration Board

“I think the MBacc is such an amazing thing. I think it is something that...has been missing in terms of opportunities for students and making sure that students can access the best opportunities... including the companies in Manchester and actually listening to what it is that they need, being able to feed that back directly into schools and, at some point, hopefully making that gap between the two much closer. [This will] make sure that we are giving our students the skills, the education that they need to be successful in the modern world, not 25 years ago.”

Jess Heap, Assistant Headteacher, Rayner Stephens High School

Outcome 3

Young people have clear line of sight from education into jobs in the Greater Manchester economy.

- This is one of the key areas of system change prioritised in the MBacc vision.
- We have **rolled out and tested a range of new resources**, informed by timely and detailed employer insights, that are helping educators to understand MBacc and embed it into the classroom. The Educator Toolkit has been tested with educators and launched in January 2025 with over 200 downloads to date.
- We launched [Beeline](#), an exciting **new digital platform with accompanying lesson plans**, that can be explored both in structured careers lessons or by young people in their own time and/or with their parents, carers and advisers:
 - Since its launch in early September 2024, **Beeline has had over 4,500 users**, meaning around 100 users each week are exploring the MBacc gateways and the wide range of jobs available across Greater Manchester.

- Website data shows that users are not only exploring the pathways but also going on to look at a range of live jobs linked to the gateway information.
- We have also taken the MBacc out of the classroom into the workplace and in partnership with the Careers & Enterprise Company begun **testing new approaches through the equalex pilot**, a new framework for delivering enhanced, multiple and progressive workplace experiences and activities for young people that build and progress over time:
 - In the first test phase, **330 students across years 8, 9 and 10** have received high quality workplace experiences with 10 employers under the pilot framework
 - **This year's Meet Your Future campaign, delivering virtual workplace experiences with employers, will be aligned to equalex activities. 18 live webinar sessions will be delivered to tens of thousands of young people** during the Festival of Technical Education across Greater Manchester, including those in the equalex delivery cohorts.
 - The MBacc Educator Panel, steered by leaders from education institutions from across Greater Manchester, ensures that the MBacc is being proactively and strategically shaped by insights and needs of the education system.
- Taken together, these steps are giving young people the insights and agency to make more informed decisions about where they want to go and how they can get there, by helping them to think about their longer-term journey rather than seeing GCSE subject choices in isolation.

“[Knowing how to get to the jobs that I am interested in, such as in the fashion or railway sectors, is] not easy, I would say, but it's very useful to see the way, the paths that I can take to get to those places that I want to be in the future. And it just makes it a lot easier to get there...I think [Beeline] helps me like visualise the way that I can get to places.”

Malik, Rayner Stephens High School

“One of our jobs has been to keep the optimism, but also to bounce back legitimate concerns from our sector peers. The MBacc Educator Panel has helped create a sense that MBacc is responsive, not dogmatic — this pragmatism has been vitally important. At first, there was cynicism, but now, there’s a much bigger recognition that MBacc is spearheading the national conversation.”

James Eldon, Principal, Manchester Academy, Chair of Manchester School Headteachers Group and MBacc Educator Panel member

Outcome 4

More young people are pursuing technical education pathways and gaining jobs in key growth sectors.

- **The numbers of young people following technical education pathways across the MBacc gateways have risen:**
 - Particular increases have been seen in Digital and Tech, Construction and Green Economy, and Manufacturing and Engineering
 - At the outset of MBacc, the **upward trend has been seen across a range of technical education courses/qualifications**, including apprenticeships, T levels and other applied technical qualifications such as BTECs
 - For example:
 - The number of 16-18-year-olds starting Apprenticeships in the Financial and Professional gateway has risen substantially in the two years to 2023/24, by nearly 25%.

- As T-level roll-out gathers pace, provisional data for the latest year shows that starts in Education and Early Years had risen by 86.1%.
 - Digital and Technology courses are an increasingly attractive offer for 16-18-year-olds in Greater Manchester, with BTEC numbers rising by nearly 23% in the two years to 2023/24.
- We have worked to ensure this trajectory continues. Across Greater Manchester's further education colleges, employers, Growth Company and other partners, **more than 650 new 45-hour industry placements** have been generated for young people. With significant numbers of T level completers remaining in the same field, often with their placement employer, this is an encouraging sign that these technical education pathways are supporting more young people into jobs in Greater Manchester's key growth sectors.
- This has included '**industry firsts**', **with new ground being broken** in organisations and occupational areas that have not offered these kinds of opportunities to young people in the past. These include Greater Manchester's first T Level placements in Midwifery at the Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust, as well as new placement pledges from The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, (the largest single-site cancer centre in Europe), Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust, and other health and care organisations.
- A new pledge from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), Bee Network operators, Network Rail and train operating companies will also create 160 new T Level and apprenticeship placements in 2025, including in engineering, transport operations, and project support.

"At the Employer Integration Board, we see T Level placements as a practical solution to both immediate skills challenges and long-term workforce development. These young people bring energy, new thinking, and ambition – and businesses that invest in them now are investing in their own future success."

Lou Cordwell OBE, Chair of the Employer Integration Board

“It's been really insightful, and as I have an interest in event management, it's kind of given me more insight into how that would work and what to expect... It has clarified the career path that I want to take in the future because it gave me opportunities to kind of test out what it would be like working in different environments”

Amana, T Level student at First Bus

Outcome 5

Employers create good jobs with confidence they can recruit a talent pipeline.

- Employer confidence and engagement is a key area in which the MBacc is helping to galvanise employers to play the more pro-active role required to drive stronger connections between technical education pathways and the local economy, in ways that work for, and make sense to, employers. Good practice in this important aspect of system change is building momentum, and interest in our work, and in the partnerships that are driving it, is beginning to grow nationally.
- With employers across the MBacc gateways continuing to report strong demand for job-ready talent in their organisations, we have **tested ways of helping young people apply the knowledge and skills they are developing to improve work readiness**.
- This has been piloted in one of the most in-demand cross-cutting areas reported by employers – digital skills – through the **Digital Agency pilot**, which has immersed around 50 young people from three schools in ‘real world/real work’ projects to help them consolidate and apply their learning, and supported curriculum development and delivery by connecting educators with industry experts.

“This has given [students] a real feel of working in industry where each of them is working towards a common goal and each has a different input to the process. I believe that they have been able to make links with what they have learned and how they will be able to apply those skills in industry.”

Educator at Melland High School

Outcome 6

More young people feel hope and optimism about their future.

- We have reflected the **Mayor’s commitment to a pathway “for young people, by young people”** by working closely with them to design the MBacc in ways that not only reflect their hopes and ambitions, but also take account of concerns, frustrations and inequities in the levels of hope and optimism that young people across Greater Manchester experience.
- We are continuing our comprehensive longitudinal tracking via the #BeeWell survey and, in response to variations and inequalities in levels of hope and optimism reported between/within different cohorts and neighbourhoods, we have **embedded an equalities focus in all aspects of MBacc design and delivery**.
- Greater Manchester’s Equalities Panels, Young Manchester and Young Ambassadors, the Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority, have been instrumental in shaping the ambition to date and will continue to be key co-design partners moving forwards.

“I think this is a really good opportunity presented to young students like us because a lot of people don't know where to go in the future. I think that since you guys are helping us do this, this is just going to help us like get better jobs in the future...”

Nurturing the green shoots of success: MBacc Year 2

As we progress on the journey towards the MBacc 2030 vision, we will cultivate these green shoots in year two of delivery.

Our focus will be on strengthening the clear lines of sight for young people into the Greater Manchester economy, continuing to help young people develop the skills employers tell us they need, ensuring MBacc is inclusive and widens opportunity, and equipping adults who support and advise our young people (including but not limited to families and educators) with the tools and resources they need to support young people in their MBacc journeys. Specifically, we will work with partners to:

- Create more workplace experiences across the MBacc Gateways
- Develop a holistic offer to empower young people
- Focus on pathways and provisions so that all young people have opportunities
- Build tools and information to empower youth support networks.

Thanks and acknowledgements

None of this would have been possible without the time, commitment and enthusiasm of our policy and delivery partners – local, national and even international – who have shared this journey so far, including educators in our schools and colleges, employers, organisations and individuals who have contributed to date.

In particular, our thanks must go to the Educator Panel, Educator Test and Learn Group, the Greater Manchester Colleges, EIB members (led by co-Chairs, Clive Memmott OBE and Lou Cordwell OBE) and the ESAN network, and youth

organisations spearheaded by the Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority, who are playing such a central part in the MBacc's development and delivery.

We extend our sincere thanks to all concerned, and look forward to working with them, and with many others, in the next phase of our journey towards MBacc 2030.

Annex

The MBacc Educator Panel:

- Juliette Barrett, Head of School Improvement, Cranmer Education Trust
- Hannah Gregory-Harris, Deputy Headteacher, New House Academy
- Andrew Howard, Executive Head, New Bridge Group
- Tim Bowman Director of Education Services, Stockport Council
- Joanna Munnely, Head of Digital Policy, GMCA
- Ella Wardleworth-Philips, Head of Development and Programmes, Careers & Enterprise Company
- Rebecca Parks, Group Principal, Salford City College
- James Scott, Principal and CEO, Trafford & Stockport College Group
- Damian Dallimore, Assistant Director, Safer and Stronger Communities, GMCA
- Peter Taylor, Principal, Audenshaw School
- Jonathan Knott, Assistant Director of Teaching & Learning, Highfields College
- Matthew Grant, Headteacher, Highfields College
- Katie Dallender, Director of Partnerships and Teaching School Hub, East Manchester Teaching Hub
- James Eldon, Principal, Manchester Academy

MBacc toolkit Educator Test and Learn Group:

- Jane Livesey, Widening Participation Lead, Atlas Trust (Kingsway Park High School and Edgar Wood),
- Richard Bond, Assistant Principal (Raising Aspirations), Audenshaw School
- Jo Tidbury, Assistant Principal, Copley Academy
- Jon Banks, Assistant Headteacher, SLE (Careers), Crompton House
- Theresa James, Assistant Principal Curriculum, Great Academy Ashton
- Cate Calveley, Careers Leader, Hollingworth Academy
- Nikola Westhead, Co-Headteacher, North Chadderton School
- Amanda Marsh, Assistant Director, North Chadderton School
- Jess Heap, Assistant Headteacher - Careers Leader, Rayner Stephens High School
- Sam Jackson, Assistant Headteacher - Careers Leader, Sharples School
- Tony McCabe, Headteacher, St Joseph's RC High School

Greater Manchester Employer Integration Board:

Co-Chairs:

- Lou Cordwell, Greater Manchester Business Board
- Clive Memmott, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Member organisations:

- BNY Mellon - Financial and Professional Services gateway
- Booking.com - Digital and Technology gateway
- Cloud Imperium Games - Digital and Technology gateway
- EY - Financial and Professional Services gateway
- Factory International - Creative, Culture and Sport gateway

- Manchester Metropolitan University - Education and Early Years gateway
- Milliken - Manufacturing and Engineering gateway
- Murphy - Construction and Green Economy gateway
- Nexperia - Manufacturing and Social Care gateway
- Siemens - Construction and Green Economy gateway
- WPP - Creative, Culture and Sport gateway