

Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub

City Deal Call for Grant Proposals

Pilots and Innovation

A proposal developed by

New Economy

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Produced in partnership:



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Foreword

The Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub was established during 2012/13 to grow the market for apprenticeships in Greater Manchester as a key priority for the Skills and Employment Partnership and as part of a programme of activity to respond to the priority in the Greater Manchester Strategy of 'preventing and reducing youth unemployment'.

There are currently 3 funding strands associated with the growth and reform of apprenticeships in Greater Manchester:

- £6m of City Deal funding
- £2.8m of Growth Deal funding
- £5.1m of Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) incentive funding from April 2015.

During the financial year 2012/13, City Deal funding to a value of £6m was received to develop the Hub, to grow the market for apprenticeships in Greater Manchester, and to deliver a set of strategic objectives (shown below) alongside a stretching target for Greater Manchester of increasing the number of 16-24 year olds starting apprenticeships by 10% a year every year until 2017/18.

The Hub's strategic objectives are:

- Maximising employer take up of apprenticeships across key sectors;
- Improve information, advice and guidance services for young people
- Develop the capacity of providers ensuring supply is matched to demand.

The core partners in the Hub are:

- New Economy
- National Apprenticeship Service/Skills Funding Agency
- Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network
- Greater Manchester Colleges Group
- Greater Manchester Local Authorities.

Further details about the Apprenticeship Hub are available at:

http://neweconomymanchester.com/stories/1845-gm_apprenticeship_hub

1 Introduction

In light of Devolution and the reform of apprenticeships standards, a review has taken place of how to best utilise the remaining City Deal funding and align with other large-scale programme activity, including the devolved Greater Manchester AGE grant, ESF and the revised Growth Deal funded Trailblazers project.

With most City Deal milestones met, there is an opportunity to re-shape the forward-looking delivery supported by the remaining funds to ensure that apprenticeships in Greater Manchester continue to provide high quality relevant career stepping stones for people whilst contributing to the economic growth of individual businesses and the wider Greater Manchester economy.

Four key themes have been identified for the remaining City Deal funding to enable the commissioning of large scale programmes, while New Economy continues to undertake policy work and facilitate the Hub developing its strategic influencing role across Greater Manchester.

The 4 themes are:

- Research and Understanding
- Marketing and Communications
- Pilots and Innovation
- Employer Engagement.

These revised themes are not changing the outcomes for apprenticeships, but changing the shape of how they will be achieved to ensure a better fit with future needs.

This call for proposals comes under the third of these strands, Pilots and Innovation.

1.1 Background

The Pilots & Innovation theme offers an opportunity to test new models and respond to gaps highlighted by previous apprenticeship/traineeship research outcomes. It will do so through a series of targeted pilot projects in themes/areas which have the potential to respond positively to innovative ways of delivering City Deal aims and objectives, and to create high profile activities which facilitate a positive shift in apprenticeship activity in Greater Manchester.

Already commissioned or in development are:

- the creation and rollout of a UCAS-style post-16 single application process for use by young people in schools when applying for all learning/training destinations including vocational routes and apprenticeships; and
- a project to develop / promote science-based apprenticeships linked to Greater Manchester's world-class science assets and tying in with Manchester's status as European City of Science in 2016.

A third strand of activity within this theme relates to piloting innovative ways of tackling some of the barriers to apprenticeship take-up for young people.

2 Grant Proposals

Proposals are invited from organisations wishing to design and deliver GM wide pilot projects with the aim of testing innovative ways of enabling young people to access high quality apprenticeship opportunities in Greater Manchester. These projects will run between autumn 2015 and March 2017 and are likely to last for around 12 months, although the duration of individual projects may vary.

Total funding of up to £550,000 is available for this activity (inclusive of any VAT incurred). It is envisaged that this budget will support a number of projects, and the grants may differ in value depending on the nature and scope of the project proposals. Innovation is key.

Proposals may come from individual organisations or from consortia of partners. If the latter, it is expected that a lead organisation and an appropriately experienced project manager will be identified.

Proposals should:

- identify the barrier/issue/cohort that the pilot project aims to address, providing evidence of need and demand
- demonstrate an innovative approach to tackling the issue identified, rather than simply the extension of activity already underway
- demonstrate links to other complementary activity already planned or commissioned across GM, whilst avoiding duplication. Such activity includes a substantial programme of apprenticeship marketing and communications and the projects mentioned in paragraph 1.1 above.

NB: We are not looking for proposals linked predominantly or solely to employer engagement, unless they can demonstrate a response to a very specific need within the budget parameters set. Employer engagement is a strategic priority in and of itself which cross-cuts the full range of skills and employment policy in Greater Manchester and a dedicated tender will be released over the summer focusing on strategic needs in this area.

Full details and expectations are set out below.

3 Project Description and Expectations

3.1 Overview

The overarching objectives of this strand of activity are:

- to highlight gaps, barriers or inequalities which have been identified within the existing apprenticeship landscape in Greater Manchester, and
- to test innovative, scalable projects which address the need(s) identified in the proposal.

A number of themes and issues have been highlighted by research outcomes and discussions with partners and stakeholders. They include (but are not limited to) consideration of:

- inequalities around gender, ethnicity and disability:
 - in 2013/14 the gender split amongst 16-18 year old apprentices in GM was 55% female and 45% male, yet there remains significant disparity around participation within individual sectors. Research commissioned by British Gas in March 2015 found that parents were more likely to encourage sons to consider apprenticeships than daughters, and that over 70% of girls surveyed thought they were most suited to careers in beauty, childcare, nursing or education¹
 - young people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately under-represented within apprenticeships: in 2013/14, just 11% of 16-18 year old apprentices in GM were non-white, compared to 25% of the cohort²
 - young people with a disability are twice as likely to be not in education, employment or training aged 16-18 compared to their non-disabled peers, and three times as likely aged 19-24³
- issues and barriers for young people at risk, for example:
 - opportunities for, and barriers facing, looked-after young people and care leavers: local authorities have a duty as a 'corporate parent' to provide support, advice and guidance for looked after young people. Apprenticeships offer a significant opportunity for care leavers to continue in learning while earning a wage yet there currently appears to be little consistency in what support is available to this cohort across GM
 - work with young people within the youth justice/probation system to help reduce reoffending
 - financial barriers facing lone and/or returning parents of young children
- addressing financial issues around apprenticeships, such as confusion around the impact upon benefit entitlement amongst young people and their parents and consideration of a living wage for apprentices
- activity to improve access to and participation in apprenticeships within particular priority industries and sectors, including innovative models of collaborative working within and between groups/networks of employers
- mechanisms to take advantage of the opportunities presented by working across ten local authorities, such as:
 - pooling applicants and vacancies across GM so that where interest has been stimulated it does not go unfulfilled
 - acting collectively across GM where capacity-building challenges have been encountered by individual providers/LAs
- supporting progression from traineeships to apprenticeships
- addressing barriers around access and consideration of alternative delivery mechanisms, eg e-learning
- tackling reported shortages of specialist, higher level tutors and assessors for Higher Apprenticeship delivery.

In support of the overarching objectives, the successful bid must:

¹ British Gas (March 2015), <http://www.britishgas.co.uk/media/releases/ReleaseDetailPage.aspx?releaseld=1308>

² SFA data cube, 2013/14

³ *Creating an Inclusive Apprenticeship Offer* (Skills Funding Agency, May 2012)

- demonstrate an evidence-based understanding of the nature and scope of the issue under consideration, including the source of the evidence
- demonstrate how the proposed project will meet the needs of young people and how it will support and encourage take-up of/progression into traineeships and apprenticeships
- identify the range of partners and interested parties to be engaged over the duration of the project
- indicate how the activity has the potential to be scaled up in the future in order to demonstrate the legacy of the pilot beyond the lifespan of the funded project.

3.2 Project Outputs/Impact Measures and Evaluation

The project outputs will vary depending on the issue identified and the nature of the proposal. However, the projects should, ultimately, contribute to an increase in apprenticeship take-up. Applications will be expected to specify:

- the intended scope and impact of activity, in terms of both quantifiable measures and their qualitative depth and reach
- the number of young people to be engaged within the relevant cohort
- if relevant to the project, the number and type of employers and/or providers to be engaged
- if relevant, details of any events, materials, resources, etc to be developed
- activity milestones within the project.

3.3 Project Governance

It is envisaged that regular reporting and monitoring will take place through New Economy's project monitoring framework. In addition, more in-depth quarterly review will be undertaken by New Economy as the commissioning agency. Projects will be expected to provide updates for the GM Apprenticeship Hub e-update and / or at workshops as requested.

3.4 Sustainability / Project Legacy

This investment is an opportunity to test activity which has the potential to offer long-term benefits in terms of apprenticeship take-up and progression in Greater Manchester. There is no guarantee or implication of future funding being made available for similar activity after the duration of this grant. It is expected that the application should set out a legacy for the future, including:

- potential for upscaling the pilot and/or integrating best practice and lessons learned into mainstream activity
- recommendations for ongoing/future activity.

4 What the funding can support

A full and detailed budget breakdown is required as part of the bid. The grant can be used to fund activities which directly support relevant activity, including:

- staffing/project management directly linked to project activity
- specific events/campaigns (subject to the guidance above in relation to avoiding duplication of or competition with other activity in relation to apprenticeships)
- the development of materials and resources
- specific campaigns/targeted media activity.

The grant cannot be used for costs which are not directly relevant to the project, for example capital expenditure or core staffing costs.

5 How to apply

The City Deal grant application form can be found on the New Economy website.

Applications should be completed and returned to lisa.quigley@neweconomymanchester.com **before 5pm on Monday 10 August 2015.**

Your application will be assessed by an appraisal panel comprising representatives from partner organisations and networks.

The table below sets out the bidding timescales for this call for proposals:

Call released	8 July
Deadline for return of applications	Monday 10 August
Appraisal panel	w/c 24 August
Grant awarded	Early September

If your application is successful, you will be notified and further discussions will take place with New Economy to set out requirements of the Grant Agreement.

A draft copy of the Grant Agreement is available on the New Economy website; please ensure you read all conditions relating to this grant.

If your application is unsuccessful, you will receive notification of the outcome. Feedback is available on request.

If you would like to discuss the application process further then please contact Lisa Quigley, Contract Manager, at New Economy on 0161 237 4157 or email lisa.quigley@neweconomymanchester.com .