

# Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub

## City Deal Call for Grant Proposals

### Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Marketing & Communications

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A proposal developed by

**New Economy**

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**Produced in partnership:**



## Contents

Foreword.....	3
1 Introduction.....	4
2 Grant Proposals .....	4
3 Project Description and Expectation .....	5
3.1 Overview.....	5
3.2 Marketing Activity .....	6
3.3 App hub Online Presence .....	7
3.4 Key Milestones .....	7
3.5 Target Audiences.....	8
3.6 Project Outputs.....	8
3.7 Project Governance .....	9
3.8 Core partners.....	9
3.9 Sustainability / project Legacy.....	9
4 What the funding can support .....	10
5 How to apply.....	10

## Foreword

The Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub was set up 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, £6m City Deal funding 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.

Strategic objectives:

- 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.

Further details about the Apprenticeship Hub are available at:

**[http://neweconomymanchester.com/stories/1845-gm\\_apprenticeship\\_hub](http://neweconomymanchester.com/stories/1845-gm_apprenticeship_hub)**

## 1 Introduction

In light of Devolution and the changes to 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 Tax Incentives project. A summary of activity currently supported by City Deal funding is set out at Appendix 1.

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 infrastructure.

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.

Cross cutting all the activity, and underpinning the current and future work of the Hub, a significant marketing and communications programme must be commissioned to promote apprenticeships and the Apprenticeship Hub. It must also act as an umbrella for the myriad of information available to employers, to young people and their advisors, and to providers within Greater Manchester. It is envisaged that this will provide a framework for key stakeholders' local marketing activities and act as a catalyst for an increased number of jointly delivered activities at a Greater Manchester level.

## 2 Grant Proposals

Proposals are sought from partners wishing to deliver the design and development of the Hub's on-line presence, and to manage and deliver a co-ordinated and sustainable programme of marketing and communication campaigns over the period **June 2015 to March 2017**.

The maximum funding available for this activity is £500,000 (inclusive of any VAT incurred).

Although proposals from a partnership will be welcomed, a lead organisation and an appropriately experienced dedicated project manager must be identified. In addition, the proposal will need to demonstrate clear engagement with professional marketing and communications services, ideally with an organisation or agency which is familiar with the apprenticeship agenda and which understands the opportunities and challenges of working on a publicly funded programme of this nature. Input from a professional marketing and communications partner should be evident within the proposal.

In addition, the proposal must:

- demonstrate links with other complementary activity
- embrace a partnership approach - a collaboration of partners across Greater Manchester working together
- build on, and enhance existing apprenticeship marketing and communications activities; taking account of National Apprenticeship branding, communications and campaigns and

crucially adding value - it must not be just an extension of activity that is already planned and/or underway

- clearly demonstrate an innovative approach – it should include activities and impact which reflect the substantial funding which is being made available
- increase the reach, scale and time frame of activities that are seen as good practice
- demonstrate that they do not duplicate existing activity but draw together other projects in a cohesive fashion
- deliver a coherent and co-ordinated programme of promotional activity across the city region which has a distinctive Greater Manchester flavour but which is adapted appropriately to the needs, priorities and media within each of the ten local authority areas.
- offer demonstrable value for money and include timely and measurable impact in terms of increasing the number of apprentices across Greater Manchester.
- demonstrate a flexible and agile approach to accommodate on going developments with apprenticeships nationally – including AGE devolution, Trailblazers and following the May election.
- take account of and promote Traineeships and other pathways towards Apprenticeships.

Full expectations of the activity are described in the section below.

### **3 Project Description and Expectation**

#### **3.1 Overview**

As outlined above, underpinning the current and future work of the Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub, this funding will enable a significant 2 year marketing campaign to promote the Hub and act as an umbrella for the myriad of information available to employers, young people and their advisors and providers within Greater Manchester.

This programme of activity will deliver the City Deal milestones around marketing and communications alongside the creation of a hub online presence. It will share information and Greater Manchester case studies and opportunities (including AGE) alongside encouraging take up of apprenticeships for young people and their advisors / supporters (parents), employers and providers. The programme will also bust myths and misconceptions around apprenticeships, and will be required to reflect any shifts in emphasis or national changes to the apprenticeships landscape during the duration of the programme, as identified and directed by the steering group.

Two overarching objectives were identified by the Marketing and Communications Steering Group and agreed for the marketing and communications programme:

- to increase take-up of apprenticeships
- to promote the activity of the Hub.

Underpinning those objectives are a number of key principles for the marketing and communications activity (detailed in Appendix 2), including:

- ensure consistency of message with national materials/campaigns
- more than just a publicity campaign (needs to be targeted and demonstrate measurable impact)
- we are not looking for a rebranding exercise – rather, we need a strong and consistent theme for Greater Manchester
- needs to target peak periods of activity for young people, providers and employers
- must stimulate demand but also tell the story of what is already happening through case studies, etc
- co-ordinate and build upon the work of all the existing projects

- ongoing and regular evaluation and monitoring of impact during the programme: not just in terms of starts/numbers but 'soft', qualitative feedback – are the key messages being received and understood? The programme must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate a shift in message in the event that ongoing evaluation during the course of the programme shows that a change in focus is required
- needs to show why Greater Manchester is unique: links to Devolution, GM AGE incentive, apprenticeship reform (national and local), priority growth sectors, etc.
- needs to promote and highlight the pathways towards apprenticeships which are available, such as Traineeships, not only to young people and their parents but also to referral agencies and front-line information, advice and guidance (IAG) advisors. Evidence received by the Public Accounts Committee in November 2014 suggested that only 17% of 11-16 year olds have heard of apprenticeships<sup>1</sup>
- legacy/sustainability: as well as the sustainability of direct elements of the marketing and communications programme, a key legacy will be using this activity as evidence to support lobbying and influencing, enabling partners to demonstrate to the government and other stakeholders that apprenticeships and the Apprenticeship Hub are working well in Greater Manchester.

### 3.2 Marketing Activity

In addition to an initial campaign launch there should be significant marketing activity which promotes apprenticeships across Greater Manchester, with a message and approach tailored to the various core segments of the audience, as well as to each local authority area in a way which best meets their needs. This activity must commence in adequate time to tie in with peak recruitment times during the school summer term, national campaigns and any Greater Manchester-specific marketing related activities. Due to the importance of hitting these key periods, it is envisaged that the marketing and communications activity should commence at the earliest opportunity, rather than waiting for the Hub's online presence to be up and running.

Existing marketing collateral and branded materials are available. It is expected that the proposed activities will utilise existing materials (such as those produced by the National Apprenticeship Service) alongside some linked Greater Manchester materials. However, they should be more than simply an extension of existing materials. Further details of available resources can be discussed with grant applicants.

Apprenticeships are not within the scope of the Devolution agenda in Greater Manchester and will remain within national planning and funding mechanisms. However, as a core part of the skills and employability landscape, it is crucial that all marketing and communications activity around apprenticeships must be consistent with corresponding activity being undertaken within Greater Manchester on other aspects of the Skills and Employment agenda as Devolution plans progress.

The successful bid must also demonstrate awareness of the links between Apprenticeships and progression into higher learning and workforce development.

Key principles for the marketing activity:

- review the use of Apprenticeships branding within Greater Manchester and build on the existing national and local brands to give a distinctive Greater Manchester flavour

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<sup>1</sup> House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, *16- to 18-year-old participation in education and training – Thirty-First Report of Session 2014-15* (January 2015)

- partnership working will be critical, both to effective stakeholder engagement and to ensuring that the activity is fit for purpose
- demonstrate links with, and an understanding of, other projects and initiatives that are underway, including media activities planned and/or underway from, for example, the Skills Gateway
- ensure that the key messages are delivered and reinforced, including myth busting and progression.

### **3.3 Apprenticeship Hub Online Presence**

The concept of developing a Greater Manchester Apprenticeships website and portal has always been in the Apprenticeship Hub project plan, in order to provide a one stop shop approach for residents and businesses wishing to access information about apprenticeships and the opportunities available.

Members of the Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub concluded that a web presence is required, with signposting to national and local information, resources and vacancies. In addition, the site should have a strong emphasis on use of social media and push technology to engage with users and create dialogue rather than become an outdated and static site.

At the core of this element of the project will be an umbrella website for Greater Manchester, providing a point of focus for all the information and resources that are deemed high quality and relevant to the residents, employers, training providers and support structures within Greater Manchester. The bulk of this will be through structured links to other sites (not re-creation or duplication of existing resources), however additional content will need to be developed where gaps exist in order to ensure that the online presence adds value, rather than simply, in effect, acting as a directory of providers and agencies. Appendix 3 outlines a potential structure for the site.

The site will need to be dynamic enough to engage people and provide consistently high quality, up-to-date information through as few clicks as possible whilst building a social media profile through LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc. alongside using push technology to ensure key messages / notifications are shared with site subscribers. It might also have a facility to enable communication and co-ordination between projects.

Key principles for the online presence:

- must be consistent with and complementary to National Apprenticeship Service activity and guidance
- signposting to existing tools and resources rather than trying to reinvent the wheel, and incorporating the best elements of what has started happening at local authority level
- importance of underpinning IAG and support when young people express interest
- legacy/sustainability: the web portal should have intrinsic longer-term value and will be relatively inexpensive to maintain.

### **3.4 Key Milestones**

- Produce two inter-related project plans: one for the marketing and communications programme including key campaigns, and one for the development and launch of the Hub's on-line presence. They clearly need to interlink
- Review and develop (if required) existing theme for Apprenticeships in Greater Manchester
- Provide a calendar of campaigns and media activity throughout the two year programme, to include links to:

- National Apprenticeship Weeks
- Results days
- Apprenticeship recruitment peaks
- Other relevant sector-specific activities, for example Manchester's status as European City of Science in 2016, (any such campaigns identified should be specified within the grant application)
- First significant activity is likely to target summer recruitment of school leavers
- Specification for umbrella site
- Launch of web presence
- Social media profile
- Evaluation of impact.

### 3.5 Target Audiences

As well as a clear message to young people who are considering an apprenticeship, activity should demonstrate to influencers/advisers the positive impact they can have on young people when providing information, support and encouragement. There should be distinct messages to:

- Potential apprentices,
- Referral agencies – including those who may refer into pre-Apprenticeships /Traineeships
- Parents/carers
- Schools generally (including schools with 6<sup>th</sup> forms and six form colleges), as well as specific marketing to staff with careers education/IAG responsibility
- Employers, particularly targeting SMEs but including employers of all sizes and sectors.

### 3.6 Project Outputs

This programme of activity represents a significant investment and must make a demonstrable contribution to an overall increase in apprenticeship awareness and participation by young people and employers. This project will therefore:

- Create an overarching web presence that acts as an umbrella for the multitude of projects, resources and opportunities around apprenticeships – this should be operational by late September 2015
- Promote and launch the umbrella site and web presence to a wide audience (within target groups)
- Promote GM AGE grant to ensure its targets are met
- Create additional Greater Manchester-specific resources and information where gaps are identified
- Develop a social media profile for the Apprenticeship Hub activity
- Support identified campaigns over the 2-year life of the project, such as National Apprenticeships Week, Adult Learners Week and others identified in the bid
- Link to other marketing and communications activity promoting Apprenticeships across Greater Manchester.

In doing so, it is envisaged that quantifiable impact measures will be specified in relation to:

- Web presence
- Web hits and registrations by target audience group
- Case studies/life stories of apprentices and employers



- Events linked to campaigns, including an indication of the numbers of young people, parents, employers, providers, etc engaged
- Advertising approaches using both traditional and digital media.

Qualitative evaluation is also required in respect of the:

- Depth and reach of the programme of activity with the target groups
- Extent of partner engagement
- Fitness for purpose of the messages and media used.
- Providing value for money

### **3.7 Project Governance**

A steering group for this project has been established from the Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub partners for significant decision-making and ongoing direction of the project. The Apprenticeship Hub has indicated that this group should include:

- New Economy
- Skills Funding Agency/National Apprenticeship Service
- a young person, such as an Apprentice Ambassador, and an employer, to ensure the project is relevant to the target audiences
- GM Chamber of Commerce
- GM Learning Provider Network
- Local Authority representation.

The successful lead organisation will be expected to coordinate but not Chair these meetings, and to respond accordingly to any recommendations the group makes.

### **3.8 Core partners**

Partnership working will be required with a wide range of organisations, including employers. The core partners in the project are:

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

### **3.9 Sustainability / Project Legacy**

This substantial investment must lay the groundwork for sustainable longer term marketing and communications activity around apprenticeships. There is no guarantee or implication of future funding being made available for similar activity after the duration of this grant, and it is expected that the application should set out a legacy for the future, including:

- plans for the future maintenance and development of the Hub online presence
- recommendations for ongoing/future marketing and communications 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 support all the costs of activities which support an enhanced Greater Manchester marketing and communication campaign for Apprenticeships, including:

- Staffing
- Professional marketing and communications services
- Web development
- Specific campaigns
- Social media activity
- Traditional and digital media
- Advertising
- Printed materials
- Project management (break down required).

As has been set out above, it is not expected that proposals will seek to use funding for the creation of a new Apprenticeship brand, but will build on the existing activity to give a strong Greater Manchester flavour.

The grant cannot be used for costs which are not directly relevant to the project, for example agency retainer fees, etc.

Capital expenditure is not eligible for this funding.

#### 5 How to apply

The City Deal Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub Grant application form can be found on the New Economy website.

A briefing session will be held at the New Economy offices at 3.15pm on Thursday 19 March 2015. Please email [lisa.quigley@neweconomymanchester.com](mailto:lisa.quigley@neweconomymanchester.com) to reserve a place.

Applications should be completed and returned to [lisa.quigley@neweconomymanchester.com](mailto:lisa.quigley@neweconomymanchester.com) **before 5pm on Friday 17 April 2015.**

Your application will be assessed by an appraisal panel comprising representatives from partner organisations and networks identified by the Apprenticeship Hub. After the initial appraisal has taken place, shortlisted applicants may be invited to present their proposal to an expanded panel, augmented by apprentice and employer representatives.

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

Call released	w/c 2 March 2015
Briefing Session	3.15pm, Thursday 19 March 2015
Deadline for return of applications	5pm, Friday 17 April 2015
Appraisal panel and presentations from shortlisted applicants	Panel: Thursday 30 April 2015 Presentation: Thursday 7 May 2015
Grant awarded	w/c 11 May 2015

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 this further then please contact Lisa Quigley, Contract Manager, at New Economy on 0161 237 4157 or email [lisa.quigley@neweconomymanchester.com](mailto:lisa.quigley@neweconomymanchester.com) .

## Appendix 1 – Existing City Deal funded project activity and key contacts

<b>Project Name &amp; Delivery Organisation</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Email</b>
You Tell Us – The Manchester College	John Anderson	JAnderson@themanchestercollege.ac.uk
Engineering Futures – Skills & Works Solutions	Daniel Robinson	daniel.robinson@engineeringfutures.org
The Hidden Sector - GMCVO	Yvonne Fox Burmby	yvonne.fox-burmby@gmcvo.org.uk
GM Apprenticeship Ambassadors – Manchester City Council/GMLPN	Matt Leigh	matthew.l@gmlpn.co.uk
GM Apprenticeship IAG Service – Positive Steps	Donna Graham	DonnaGraham@positive-steps.org.uk
Inspiring IAG – Positive Steps	Steve Murphy	stevemurphy@positive-steps.org.uk
Career Point – Economic Solutions	Gareth Nixon	Gareth.Nixon@careers-solutions.co.uk
Skilled & Ready – Skilled & Ready	Jane Harris	jane.harris@skilledandready.co.uk
The Dream Job – Greater Manchester College Group	Robin Newton-Syms	r.newtonsyms@wigan-leigh.ac.uk

## Appendix 2: GM Apprenticeships - Key Principles for Marketing and Communications activity

Apprenticeships offer a range of benefits to the economy/local businesses:

- filling very real skills gaps across GM which are currently preventing businesses from achieving growth
- the benefits far outweigh the costs: it is estimated that Apprenticeships contributed almost £5 billion to the North West economy and £34 billion to the UK economy in 2014, representing a return of £21 for every £1 of funding spent<sup>2</sup>
- hiring Apprentices can help businesses of all sizes to develop a skilled, motivated and qualified workforce
- Apprentices stay with an organisation longer than other recruits
- Apprentices help businesses to grow
- providing valued employment to young people
- sharing responsibility for training and development with providers with an established track record.

Apprenticeships offer a range of benefits to individuals:

- Apprenticeships are a real job with training, providing an invaluable opportunity to “earn and learn”
- providing an opportunity to start a valued career (across a range of sectors and levels)
- allowing planned and structured progression within an organisation
- providing an alternative to college/university, resulting in a comparable qualification but with the added value of real-world skills and experience which can give Apprentices a head start in the job market.

The profile-raising campaign will:

- bring in real life stories of GM Apprentices
- give a real world idea of what it means to be an Apprentice
- highlight the level of progression (over time) an Apprentice can expect to reach
- demonstrate to influencers/advisers the positive impact they can have on young people when providing information, support and encouragement.

Apprenticeship progression will form a strand of the programme narrative. This will involve talking to Apprentices who are:

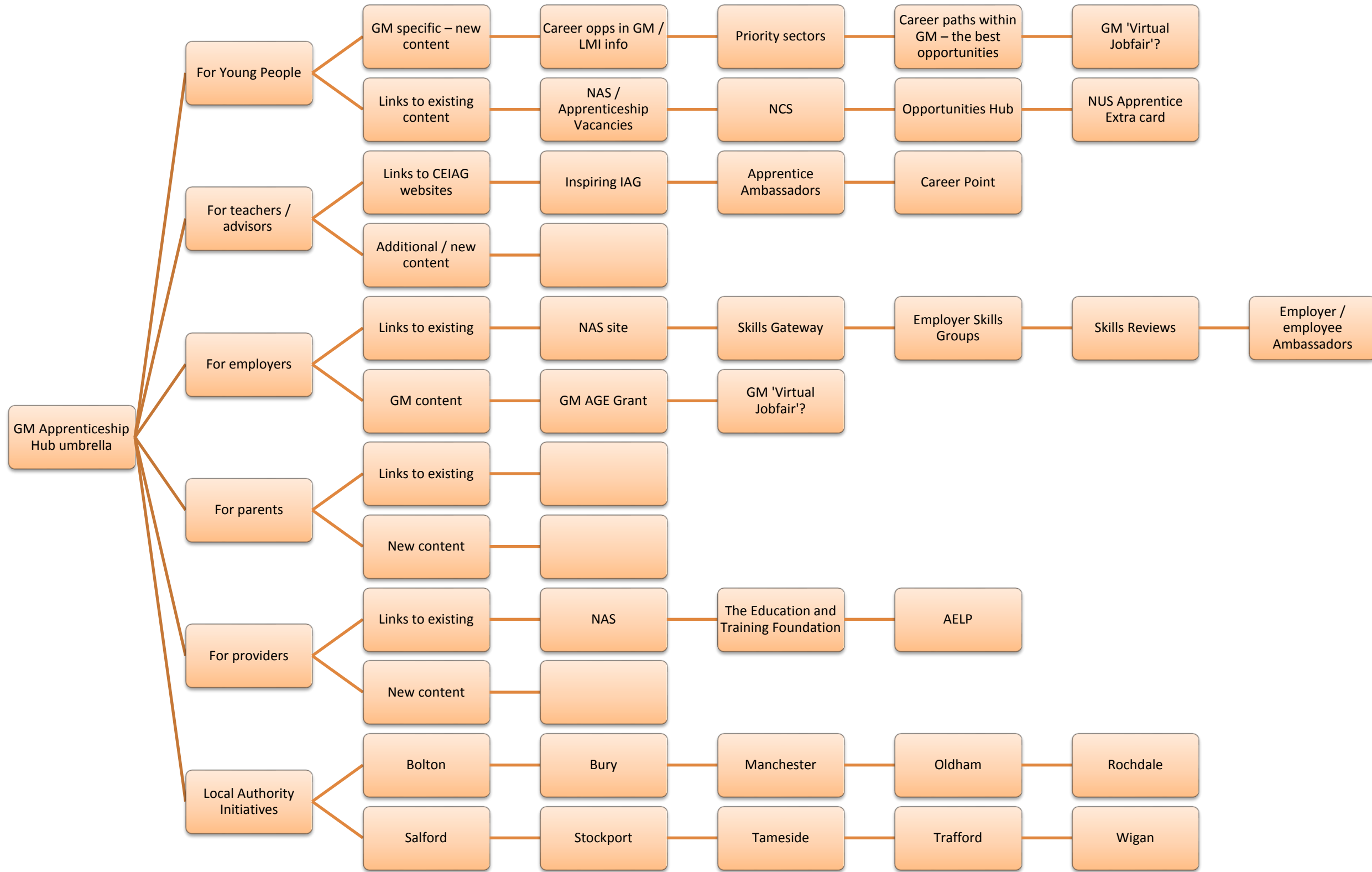
- currently in a range of jobs (learning over a range of frameworks);
- those who are 5 plus years beyond their apprenticeships;
- those who are 10-15 years beyond their apprenticeships (ideally business owners/employers/senior managers)

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<sup>2</sup> Centre for Economics and Business Research, *Economic Impact of Apprenticeships: A CEBR Report for the Skills Funding Agency* (London, November 2104)

By including progression as a key campaign element, we can illustrate that valued careers can (and do) begin with Apprenticeships. It also shows that all of the aspirational elements which young people would like to achieve are possible by undertaking an Apprenticeship, as well as demonstrating to employers that Apprenticeships can support the retention of staff in whose development they have invested.

Appendix 3 – Potential online presence overview/starting point



Produced in partnership:



Produced in partnership:

