Evaluation of Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub

Phase 1 Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

October 2014
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub

1.1.1. The Greater Manchester City Deal\(^1\) which was agreed in 2012 committed to the creation of a City Apprenticeship and Skills Hub. The aim of the Hub as outlined in the City Deal is to channel skills participation funding for Apprenticeships and other skills provision funded by the state direct to employers, particularly SMEs. This will empower SMEs in the skills system and deliver higher levels of employer engagement and investment in skills.

1.1.2. Work to develop the Apprenticeship Hub Delivery Plan highlighted a number of significant and critical issues in delivery:

- Low volumes of level 3 and above apprenticeships available
- Low recruitment into apprenticeships of young unemployed
- Limited availability of impartial information, advice and guidance for young people that is restricting demand amongst learners
- SMEs not fully engaged in the skills system, which they often perceive as complex and disjointed

1.1.3. The Apprenticeship Hub Delivery Plan was produced in January 2013\(^2\) and set out three core objectives:

- Objective 1 - Work together to maximise employer take up of apprenticeships across a range of employment sectors.
- Objective 2 - Improve the recruitment of young people of all abilities into apprenticeships and increase both the volume and proportion of advanced and higher apprenticeships.
- Objective 3 - Establish an apprenticeship offer in Greater Manchester which includes all frameworks and levels which are likely to employ young people and meets the needs of the GM economy.

1.2. The Phase 1 Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Project

1.2.1. This report reviews the City Deal Phase 1 Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) project that falls under Objective Two of the Apprenticeship Hub. Under this objective the following priorities were identified:

- Priority 2.1: Deliver activities to increase the proportion of 16-18 year olds that participate in learning via an apprenticeship.

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\(^1\) GCMA (2012) Greater Manchester City Deal.

Introduction

- **Priority 2.2:** Raise awareness of apprenticeships amongst young people and assist school, college and other IAG services to promote apprenticeships.
- **Priority 2.3:** Encourage take up of work experience, employer engagement activities and pre-apprenticeship offers. Ensure there is a supportive route for all young people capable of achieving an apprenticeship at L2 or higher.
- **Priority 2.4:** Encourage young people of all backgrounds, particularly from groups that are currently underrepresented and unemployed young people, to consider and take up apprenticeships thus supporting social inclusion.
- **Priority 2.5:** Support apprentices to enhance retention, achievement and progression, including progression to higher level learning.

1.2.2. Each GM local authority area received an initial grant of £24,100 to deliver projects from 1 April to 30 June 2013 with the aim of contributing collectively to the following GM targets:

- Engagement in project activity by at least 50 schools and 6th forms across GM, at least 5 per LA area
- At least 3,000 new registrations by young people aged 15 - 18 on NAS’s AV website (as a milestone towards 2013/14 target of 6,000 registrations) across GM, 300 per LA area

1.2.3. Local Authorities were required to develop work aligned to the following activities:

- **A programme of structured interventions in Y10 and Y11** to support young people’s post-16 applications, leading to Apprenticeship as a ‘first choice’ post-16 destination. Using activities such as:
  - Materials for use with young people in tutorials, assemblies, school-based careers events etc which raise awareness of Apprenticeship opportunities and progression pathways and support young people in applying for vacancies in Y11
  - Electronic resources for wider use across Greater Manchester
- **A programme to raise awareness of Apprenticeship/work-based routes with key influencers of young people in KS4.** Using activities such as:
  - Materials to engage headteachers, heads of KS4 and careers guidance, pastoral staff and parents
  - Electronic resource for wider use across Greater Manchester
- **A programme of structured interventions in Y12 and Y13** to support young people’s post-18 applications leading to Apprenticeship, particularly at advanced/higher levels, as a ‘first choice’ post-18 destination. Using activities such as:
  - Materials for use with young people in tutorials, sixth form/college-based careers events etc which raise awareness of advanced and higher Apprenticeship opportunities and progression pathways and support young people in applying for vacancies in Y13
  - Electronic resource for wider use across Greater Manchester
• A programme to raise awareness of Apprenticeship opportunities, particularly at advanced/higher levels, with key influencers of young people in KS5 (for example principals of sixth form colleges and sixth form centres in FE, head teachers of schools with sixth forms, heads of careers guidance, pastoral staff and parents). Using activities such as:
  ➢ Materials to engage principals of sixth form colleges and sixth form centres in FE, head teachers of schools with sixth forms, heads of careers guidance, pastoral staff and parents
  ➢ Electronic resource for wider use across Greater Manchester
• Development of resources to support increased awareness of Apprenticeship opportunities and work-based routes for young people by governing bodies of schools/colleges and employer representative groups. Using activities such as:
  ➢ Presentations/materials for use with governors and employer representative groups
  ➢ Electronic resource for wider use across Greater Manchester

1.3. Evaluation objectives & method

1.3.1. The original project specification required Local authorities to work in partnership with one or more other LA areas, pooling resources, to lead one area of activity and to support other areas as appropriate. LAs also outlined how they intended to work with other organisations, for example providers or networks or providers; employers; agencies supporting young people etc and how the grant funding will be used to support such activity.

1.3.2. This evaluation assesses the value that bringing partners together as a ‘hub’ to work in a strongly collaborative manner brings to growing apprenticeships and improving associated policy development across GM.

1.3.3. The research included:

• A review of secondary information sources including Local Authority Funding Agreements, local evaluations of provision undertaken as part of the project and project data.
• Telephone discussions with each of the ten GM Local Authorities involved in the project.
• Telephone discussions with careers information staff from 10 schools from across the Local Authority areas.
• Telephone discussions with Apprenticeship providers.

1.3.4. This report is structured as follows. Chapter 2 sets out the delivery context for the projects. Chapter 3 provides an overview of project delivery mechanisms and the activities undertaken. Chapter 4 then reviews project performance. The final chapter sets out key conclusions and recommendations.
2. RATIONALE FOR INTERVENTION

2.1. What is the nature of the problem which the project seeks to address?

2.1.1. Young people have not fully participated in the expansion of apprenticeships in England and more needs to be done support the use of apprenticeships as a bridge between education and work. In 2012, the BIS Select Committee Report into Apprenticeships identified a range of issues with regard to the promotion of apprenticeships in schools and colleges including:

- colleges lacking the knowledge or resources to properly advise any student who did not want to go to university;
- teachers too focused on the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS);
- perceptions that apprenticeships are somehow inferior to academic education, despite the importance of vocational training to the economy

2.1.2. The issue of low take-up of apprenticeships among young people is therefore a national issue and one which each area has been attempting to address.

2.2. What is the empirical evidence supporting intervention?

2.2.1. In Greater Manchester, as in England, the proportion of Apprentice starts filled by 16-18 year olds has fallen rapidly from 59% in 2005/06 to 22% in 2012/13 (figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1: Proportion of total Apprenticeship starts filled by 16-18 year olds**

Source: SFA Data

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3 http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmbis/83/83.pdf
2.2.2. Although, in absolute terms, the number of 16-18 year olds starting an Apprenticeship has risen slightly from 6,610 in 2005/06 to 6,720 in 2012/13 this 2% rise has been outpaced by a 113% increase in the 19-24 year old age group and the introduction of adult Apprenticeships with a rise from 10 starts to 13,920 over the nine year period.

2.2.3. There is some evidence to suggest that 16-18 year old starts have begun to improve (from 2011-12). This upturn appears to have increased in absolute terms in the first few months of 2013-14, but as yet, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that these improvements will be sustained.

**Figure 2.2: Apprenticeship starts in GM by age 2009-10 to 2013-14**

![Graph showing Apprenticeship starts by age group from 2009-10 to 2013-14]

Source SFA data, 2012-13 and 2013-14 data to month 9 only

2.3. **What are the barriers to engaging young people?**

2.3.1. Stakeholders considered that the barriers to engaging young people in Apprenticeships vary between the year 10 & 11 (16 year old) leavers and the year 12 & 13 (18 year old leavers).

2.3.2. The former group has seen the most significant decline in Apprenticeship starts at the national level. This is considered to be linked to a range of factors including:

- **Careers advice provision** – a recent study by Ofsted found that three quarters of schools were not implementing their duty to provide impartial careers advice effectively⁴. The review reported that ‘Vocational training and apprenticeships were rarely promoted effectively, especially in schools with sixth forms. The A-level route to universities remained the ‘gold standard’ for young people, their parents and teachers’.

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• **Work experience provision** - the removal of the requirement for schools to offer work experience has resulted in a significant fall in opportunities. GM careers advisors report that less than half of the schools in GM now offer some form of work experience.

• **Young people’s awareness of the labour market** – issues in the above typically mean that many young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, lack the social capital that is fundamental to (i) helping them work out what they would like to do when they leave education based on ‘real life’ examples and discussion with employers in that sector and (ii) obtaining a very close understanding of what employers expect of them. A recent International review of Youth Transitions found that 40% of UK youth believe that their post-secondary studies improved their employment opportunities, the lowest proportion of the nine countries studied. The International review found that just 30% of UK youth knew which careers had many jobs when they were choosing what to study, also the lowest of the nine countries.

• **Raising the participation age** – there is some evidence of confusion around this by young people, parents and teachers with some thinking that it is about raising the school leaving age rather than ensuring that young people maintain participation in some form of learning through a variety of pathways.

• **Parents’ perceptions** – parents were considered to be a key gatekeeper by many stakeholders. A recent survey carried out by the Association of Accounting Technicians with 1,242 Netmums members found that nearly two-thirds (63%) of parents don’t understand apprenticeships well enough to explain them to their kids and 81% don’t realise that higher apprenticeships are on a par with foundation degrees and, in some cases, even bachelor’s degrees. Almost three quarters (73%) underestimated the amount that a young person’s lifetime earnings are boosted by doing a Higher Apprenticeship. A similar number (72%) believed the starting salary for a young person doing a Higher Apprenticeship at a top firm like KPMG to be significantly lower than the actual £20,000 figure

• **Employer perceptions** – employer perceptions regarding the recruitment of school leavers are mixed. The 2012 Employer Perspectives survey reported that just 24% of employers had recruited any 16-18 year olds in the past 12 months (53% had recruited 19-24 year olds). Although in two fifths of cases this was due to no young people applying other significant reasons included poor attitudes, motivation and/or personality (18% of employers) and poor quality applications (13% of employers). A significant number of employers also cited issues around lack of skills (23%), lack of qualifications (15%) and lack of experience (29%) suggesting a reluctance to invest in the training of young people.

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5 Moursed, M, Farrell, D, Barton, D Education to Employment: Designing a System that Works. McKinsey, Center for Government


2.3.3. For the older age group stakeholders highlighted a difference set of factors. Perceptions over quality and affordability were key and well as concerns over the range of opportunities available:

- **Affordability issues** - Careers advisors considered that some young people at put off from applying for an Apprenticeship by their parents because of the potential impact on the household’s Child Benefit payments and Child tax credit. An investigation by FE week in 2011\(^8\) found that in some cases this loss could be substantial and not offset by the Apprentices salary. FE learners, in contrast, retain their entitlement to Child Benefit and tax credits.

- **The Apprenticeship package** – a number of stakeholders reported that some young people (and many of their parents) are put off by the low wage rate of £2.68 per hour. This minimum rate is used in Apprenticeship marketing materials as if it is a positive. Few stakeholders thought that it was attractive but many identified that the core barrier (once any issues of affordability are addressed), is the poor opportunities for progression offered by some Apprenticeships and the perception that they are just seen as ‘cheap labour’.\(^9\) The number of Higher Level Apprenticeships remains low (2.2% of Apprenticeship starts in GM in 2013/14).

- **The range of opportunities available** – some stakeholders considered that young people are put off by the limited range of opportunities available. For example data from NAS on Greater Manchester Apprenticeship vacancies by Framework Area for April 2013 to February 2014 showed that almost half of all vacancies (45%) were in a single framework area, Business Administration and Law whereas just 14% of total jobs were in this sector (table 2.1). Sectors with a possible under-supply of Apprenticeships compared to employment include retail, health, public services and care, engineering, construction, education and science and mathematics.

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### Table 2.1: Apprenticeship Vacancies in GM compared to total employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework area</th>
<th>% of AV*</th>
<th>BRES sector division</th>
<th>BRES Employment*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business, Administration and Law</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>Business administration, financial and insurance</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retail, warehousing, transport &amp; storage,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>accommodation &amp; food service, property</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail and Commercial Enterprise</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>Health, public administration and defence</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, Public Services and Care</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>Manufacturing, motor trades</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and Manufacturing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Information and communication</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technologies</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>Arts, entertainment and recreation</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure, Travel and Tourism &amp; Arts,</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and Publishing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction, Planning and the Built Environment</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>quarrying and utilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Training</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>Prof, scientific and technical</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Science and Mathematics</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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- **The changing economy** – in some parts of GM there has been a dramatic shift aware from manufacturing and engineering to more office based roles. An examination of the NAS AV website revealed that (at the time of writing) 68% of adverts were for two sectors, business administration & law and retail & commercial enterprise.
3. PROJECT ACTIONS TO PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT

3.1. What mix of activities were undertaken?

3.1.1. The table below summaries the main activities undertaken in each of the Local Authority areas. The focus for the intervention has been on working directly with young people (in particular those in years 10 and 11), which is the group which has seen the most significant drop in starts. In some cases the support has also been open to those in years 12 and 13 although there appears to be limited support specifically targeted at this group.

3.1.2. Activities targeted on governers and working with employer representative groups are scarce – only one partner proposed activity with governors and none had any direct engagement with employer groups. Equally, projects were not strong on raising awareness among key influencers are KS4 and particularly at KS5.

Table 3.1: Activities by area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project examples</th>
<th>Y10 &amp; Y11 interents</th>
<th>Raising awareness with key influencers at KS4</th>
<th>Y12 &amp; Y13 interents</th>
<th>Raising awareness with key influencers at KS5</th>
<th>Awareness raising resources for governors and employer representative groups</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Sharp Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>An Oldham based project delivered by Positive Steps</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Rochdale based project delivered by Positive Steps</td>
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<tr>
<td>A pop-up Apprenticeship shop</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Salford a Key103 Media bus was commissioned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salford published an Apprenticeship prospectus</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Wigan a Theatre Group to promote RPA to all schools, parents and young people was commissioned. Apprenticeships were the focal point of the production and during the performance actors completed an AV registration. After the performance students were signposted to an AV registration site which was set up in each school.</td>
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</table>
### Project Actions to Promote Engagement

<table>
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<th>Raising awareness with key influencers at KS5</th>
<th>Awareness raising resources for governors and employer groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stockport, Wigan, Tameside worked in partnership to produce a pack of literature that will be given to all Year 11 students. The pack will consist of a step by step guide to completing a quality AV registration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tameside provided an Apprentice Fair, where local employers publicise their vacancies and young people and their families improve their understanding of apprenticeships and how to apply for opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tameside funded a 12 month fixed term post within the Council’s Investment &amp; Development team to provide dedicated support to engage schools, businesses and young people in increasing levels of apprenticeships and skills in Tameside.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trafford appointed a project worker to specifically work with schools and young people to deliver information sessions on apprenticeships and support young people in registering on NAS’s AV website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bolton worked with all secondary schools across the borough. Bolton MBC have utilised the information held through UCAS on-line application system to identify year 11 learners that have not yet made applications. Those young people have been targeted with support from Personal Advisors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bolton produced information packs that raise the awareness of Apprenticeships as well as other progression routes and can be used to compliment the use of UCAS search and apply. Included in this information pack is a leaflet specifically designed for young people explaining RPA. Packs are used with all the year 10 learners as part of the process to introduce learners to the UCAS Search and Apply system at the end of the summer term.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bury’s ‘Offer to schools’ offered a menu of work-related learning/ business engagement activities to schools including the following themes; speakers on sectors/careers, budgeting/finance, business speakers and mentoring. In return for ‘sign-up’ schools have been expected to: run at least one activity/session on Apprenticeships; engage learner registrations on the AV website; register for Stage 1 of the Inspiring IAG award – no cost to schools for registration or mentoring.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stockport published packs for teachers and careers advisors in schools, which provide information on the AV registrations and application processes, including how to log on as a Stakeholder. Packs have also included information about local opportunities for young people for example Stockport Council’s ‘work to work’ programme which encourages young people to re-engage by developing their employability skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trafford ran a ‘Meet the provider’s event’ – joint workshop between careers co-ordinators and learning providers to identify activities for academic year 13-14 that young people could be engaged in.</td>
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</table>
### Project Examples

| Bolton produced packs for teachers and Personal Advisers which provide information on the AV registration and application process. Personal Advisers support young people to register onto the AV website and provide a list of local providers who deliver Apprenticeships. |
| Y10 & Y11 interventions | Raising awareness with key influencers at KS4 |
| Y12 & Y13 interventions | Raising awareness with key influencers at KS5 |
| Awareness raising resources for governors and employer rep groups |

| Bury ran Group sessions on Apprenticeships aimed at 17 year olds in college and school 6th forms; group sessions on Apprenticeships in at least 4 schools; NEET clients to register on AV site; A local booklet for young people about Apprenticeships. |

| Bolton held a workshop on Apprenticeships for the Secondary Governor Forum delivered by Children’s service representatives with input from colleagues in Development and Regeneration |

### 3.2. What works in engaging with schools & colleges?

#### 3.2.1. Since September 2012, schools have been legally responsible for securing access to independent and impartial careers guidance for all their students in Years 9 to 11. Despite this a 2013 report by Ofsted reported that ‘most of the schools visited, especially those with sixth forms, were generally poor at promoting vocational training and, in particular, apprenticeships’. |

#### 3.2.2. GM Local Authorities employed a range of different strategies to engage with schools. Following previous difficulties in engaging with schools with lack of responses to emails and difficulties getting hold of the right person Bury employed an ‘Offer to Schools’ to increase engagement. They produced a covering letter from a senior director with the offer of £1,000 to every school which could be used to purchase from a menu of activities, one of which had to be Apprenticeship IAG. Other activities included a session on democracy, talks on employability skills and employer led workshops. This incentive proved to be very effective and 13 of the 17 High Schools in Bury took up this offer of support. |

#### 3.2.3. Another method which was successful in engaging with schools was the Apprenticeship bus. This approach was welcomed by schools as it did not |

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require any internal organisation and the bus visited five schools in Salford in June 2013.

3.2.4. The Key 103 Bus was originally set up under the Government Aim Higher Project and has been used in the past by NAS to promote Apprenticeships in the Salford town centre. Salford provided a specification to Key 103 for four one hour Apprenticeship information sessions with year 10 students. The aim of the sessions was to teach the young people about Apprenticeships and encourage them to sign up to the NAS website. The lesson plan was designed by Salford and aimed to give an overview of Apprenticeships as an alternative route. During the session each school was asked to produce a radio advert promoting apprenticeships. A competition was held and the winning school was asked to produce the advert in the Key 103 offices. The advert was then played on the radio in November as part of Apprenticeship week. The adverts aimed to highlight the wide range of Apprenticeships on offer and encourage people to visit the Apprenticeship.org website.

3.2.5. The project collated feedback from the 243 students involved in the second round of visits. Overall 96% of attendees felt the sessions were a good or very good way of delivering apprenticeship information. Two fifths felt that they definitely wanted to undertake an apprenticeship and a further 49% were considering an apprenticeship as an option. The vast majority (96%) said they would be likely to recommend apprenticeships to a friend and 85% requested more information about Apprenticeships.

3.2.6. Although the bus was effective in getting into schools and engaging with students there was recognition that teachers had not been particularly engaged by the sessions and preferred to use any time freed up by the bus to complete other work. A second round of sessions was held in late 2013 where they tried to get teachers more involved by offering them lunchtime sessions, however, attendance was again poor.

3.2.7. In Tameside funding was used to provide an Apprentice Fair, to allow local employers to publicise their vacancies and allow young people and their families to improve their understanding of apprenticeships and apply for opportunities. The Local Authority reported that the Fair was poorly attended by schools. This was considered to be due to issues surrounding the cost and logistics of transporting the young people to the fair. In the future they plan to provide a free bus to help increase participation.
3.3. **What works in delivering information to young people?**

3.3.1. The following four main methods of information delivery were employed:

- **External engagement** – IAG sessions run in schools and colleges by an external provider.
- **Internal engagement** – providing schools with information packs which can then be used internally.
- **Creative delivery through performance.**
- **Experience days** – where students learn about Apprenticeships through away days.

*Externally run sessions in schools and colleges*

3.3.2. IAG sessions were the most common method of delivery and were utilised in the majority of the Local Authority Areas. Overall the target of these sessions was to achieve registrations on the NAS AV website there was some variation in the delivery.

3.3.3. In Oldham and Rochdale, awareness raising activities with students in years 10 to 13 were undertaken by Positive Steps, an IAG provider of services to young people and adults. This decision to use external support was in part driven by a lack of internal resources however Positive Step’s existing profile in the area as a provider of impartial Careers Guidance information was recognised as being beneficial.

3.3.4. Active engagement and awareness raising workshops were designed to raise awareness of opportunities and the advantages of pursuing an apprenticeship as a progression route, including the potential for transition to higher level qualifications such as foundation degree the potential to convert those young people who secure employment without training into an apprenticeship.

3.3.5. A range of strategies were employed by Positive Steps Careers Guidance Staff to raise awareness of apprenticeships and NAS with young people. These included emails, letters, posters and factsheets, group sessions, Life Education activity, NAS registration during individual careers guidance and use of the Positive Steps website and social media. Information was relayed to young people individually and in small and large group sessions. In many cases school staff supported or led on group sessions.

3.3.6. The provider reported that the timing of the project was not ideal as it coincided with the final quarter of the school and college academic years.
This meant that in a number of schools it was difficult for Careers Advisors to arrange large scale formal training sessions for teaching staff, as they were involved in exam processes etc. However, awareness raising sessions were held with a range of school and college managers, careers teachers and advisors and pastoral support staff. The timing of the Project also meant that most opportunities to include information on apprenticeships in parent evenings had been lost. Where such events were undertaken by schools including Year 10 parent evenings, Career Advisers used these opportunities to raise awareness of apprenticeships and update parents on application routes.

3.3.7. In Bury Apprenticeship sessions were delivered by Apprenticeship Ambassadors who spoke about their experiences undertaking Apprenticeships. The use of Ambassadors to deliver the information was viewed by schools to be very important in both engaging and inspiring young people. Bury report seeing a dramatic increase in post-16 sign ups as a result of this activity.

3.3.8. Across the Local Authority areas a range of issues were identified with regards to the NAS website:

- Coverage was not comprehensive - because the site does not contain all available apprenticeship opportunities other application routes, such as applying for employer vacancies and opportunities offered by local training providers can be a more effective approach. Not all job types and sectors are listed and there is a lack of clarity on apprenticeship levels.
- Issues over registration - registration on the site require the young person to partially complete an application form and request registration. There are reported occasions when the site did not accept its own password criteria. The registration request generates an email to the address given that includes a response link that must be used to generate a further response and acceptance of registration. This allows the young person to complete the remaining more detailed second part of the registration which provides access to vacancies and enables further contact as vacancies arise. Career Advisers report that in general, only the most motivated and able of young people complete this process.
- Firewall blockages - some young people do not have a personal email address or are unaware of it as most will use social media platforms such as facebook and twitter rather than email. In these cases young people may use their individual school email address. However, school and college firewalls often block the response email from NAS that provides the registration link.
Information packs disseminated internally

3.3.9. Three of the Local Authority areas worked in partnership to produce packs for all year 11 leavers for use in Stockport Secondary Schools. The packs provide information linked to the ACEG Framework (careers guidance) and contact details for supporting agencies. The packs aim to raise awareness of Apprenticeships, support young people in applying for vacancies on the AV website, provide a list of local Apprenticeship training providers, as well as details of other progression routes, such as, FE colleges. The packs also detailed how to write a good AV Apprenticeship application and gave a step by step guide on the successful registration and application record on the AV.

3.3.10. The packs represent a cost effective delivery method and one which can be utilised by schools and colleges at their own convenience. Although there is a risk that the information provided in the packs will be not disseminated to the students, this did not appear to be the case and take up was good. Some schools were unsure how to deliver the information packs to learners so in addition to the packs lesson plans were produced for teachers about Apprenticeship registration/application/labour market intelligence at Key Stage 4 and 5 for careers teachers link to the ACEG framework.

3.3.11. Feedback was collated from eight schools which had been provided with the lesson plans. At the time of the feedback five of the eight schools had utilised the lesson plans and were able to provide feedback. Two of the three remaining schools were aiming to use the plans shortly. All of the five schools which had utilised the lesson plans found the lesson on AV registration useful and easy to deliver. Teachers particularly valued the step-by-step approach and the video clips and powerpoint presentations.

‘It helped delivery to students because it took teachers through the process…The lesson plans supported an existing programme.’ Kingsway School

‘Yes - this was really good and has been used with many students… Examples of resources available to use is helpful and saves staff time looking for the information’. Aquinas College

Creative methods of delivery

3.3.12. In Wigan, the Local Authority commissioned Enact Solutions to deliver a 35 minute ‘Raising the Participation Age’ (RPA) presentation to help to
promote the benefits of the educational reform and to inform, engage and motivate Key Stage 3 and 4 students who are amongst the first to be affected by RPA. The performance followed the learning journey of three friends and aimed to inform students of the diversity of choices and variety of progression routes available to them post 16. Apprenticeships were the focal point of the production and during the performance actors completed an AV registration. After the performance students were signposted to an AV registration site set up in each school. The theatre group visited 14 schools across Wigan delivering performances to students and parents.

3.3.13. Schools were generally very positive regarding the content and usefulness of the presentation and careers advisors commented that it was a good way of engaging young people and helping them to seriously consider their options.

*Experience days*

3.3.14. Manchester City Council developed a partnership agreement with SharpFutures, a social enterprise based at The Sharp Project that aims to seed, nurture and grow skills for the Creative Digital sector. The main objectives of this agreement were to engage with five schools or academies from Manchester, to deliver a full day experience of Creative Digital Sector at The Sharp Project including a combination of tours, workshops, taster sessions and overviews. The sessions included raising awareness of the apprenticeship opportunities and how apprenticeships work at The Sharp Project.

3.3.15. SharpFutures worked directly with each school to assess which pupils would most benefit from the opportunity. Each school were booked in on a different date (between 18th-28th June) and brought approximately 20 pupils plus two teachers or chaperones.

3.3.16. An internal review of the project by SharpFutures\(^\text{11}\) reported that five schools attended the Creative Digital Experience Days, 103 pupils were engaged against a target delivery of 100 pupils and 64 pupils signed up to the NAS website against a target delivery of 50 pupils. Feedback from the students attending the project was very positive and showed a clear impact on aspirations and knowledge of the creative digital sector:

\(^{11}\) SharpFutures (June 2013) Creative Digital Experience Days at the Sharp Project.
“I enjoyed today at SharpFutures. All of the activities and workshops were interesting and fun. Today made me consider getting a job in media or an apprenticeship.” Katie Swann, St Matthew’s R.C High School student.

“Today I learned that lots of jobs are opening up to do with technology. My favourite workshop was the product design.” Jared Milner, The East Manchester Academy (TEMA) student.

3.3.17. The project was also successful in engaging with SMEs, many of whom delivered workshops:

“It was great to meet Manchester’s new talent and share our passion for product design with them. Hopefully we will see some of them back here with their own businesses in a few years!” Bryn Morgan and Henry James, Inventid.

3.4. What works in engaging with young people outside school/college?

3.4.1. There were a few examples of projects where Local Authorities sought to raise awareness of Apprenticeships amongst young people outside the school/college setting.

3.4.2. Bolton worked with the Connexions Client Centre to engage those NEET. All young people who access the Connexions Client Centre were given a promotional leaflet prior to interview and PAs have discussed this option as part of the guidance interview process. If the young person has indicated that they are interested in pursuing this route PAs have explained the AV on line process and supported individuals to activate their accounts using the computers based in the learning zone. This group has required intensive support throughout this process with offers of follow up sessions to look at CV’s, application letters and signposting clients to the National Careers Service if appropriate for further guidance.

3.4.3. Wigan engaged young people in jobs without training. The project involved the college contacting individuals identified in JWT to discuss with the individual the possibility of commencing an Apprenticeship programme.

3.4.4. Manchester City Council worked in partnership with City of Manchester work clubs, youth fund providers, youth contract providers and Connexions to encourage providers to deliver information sessions on apprenticeships and get clients to register on the NAS website. Providers were paid £20 per registration.
3.4.5. In Rochdale, a pop-up Apprenticeship shop was opened for three months from January to March 2013 with the aim of showcasing the vacancies from the Rochdale Training Provider Network (RADAMA). RADAMA members agreed that there would be a minimum of 2 staff members at the unit at any one time. One of these would be ‘impartial’ and not associated with any training provider, the other being from one of the providers. ‘Slots’ covering the mornings and afternoons were allocated to providers, this being then their responsibility to staff for the duration of the project.

3.4.6. On two afternoons, staff from Rochdale’s commissioned IAG provider Positive Steps were available to talk to those 16-19 NEET’s requiring Impartial Guidance. National Career Service (NCS) staff were also available for face to face or telephone guidance on an as-needed basis.

3.4.7. An internal evaluation of the shop undertaken by Rochdale MBC\(^\text{12}\) showed that over the 3 month period 650 individuals were forwarded on for vacancies. Just over two fifths (42%) of these referrals were for young people aged under 19 and around half (51%) were for young people aged 19-24. A minority (6% were for adults aged 25+). Just over half of all applicants (54%) were unemployed, a quarter (25%) were interested in leaving their college course and 14% were looking for a change of career.

3.4.8. All visitors to the shop were given details of the Rochdale Apprenticeship vacancy website and website traffic increased significantly during the duration of the shop. In the previous three months prior to the shop opening there were 4,000 visits to the local Apprenticeship vacancy site. From January 6th to March 31\(^{st}\), there were 6,500 visits to the site. However, actual Apprenticeship starts were much lower, 18 (plus 41 young people engaged and are being assisted by training providers and are attending employer interviews). This equates to under 3% of those put forward for Apprenticeship vacancies (9% including those still in process).

3.4.9. Key findings with regard to this provision comprised:

- **The value of the shop in providing information about Apprenticeships to parents and third parties** - Outside of the applications, there were extensive enquiries from parents and carers about the Apprenticeship pathway on behalf of their children. The shop concept also attracted interest from local groups involved with young people, such as youth projects and those working with young mums.

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\(^{12}\) Turner, A (2013) Middleton pop-up Apprenticeship shop evaluation report, Rochdale MBC.
Many of these organisations then brought young people into the shop to make applications or obtain information.

- **Collaboration** - Training Providers worked to staff the shop and each referred applications to all providers, not just their own organisation. Any ‘gaps’ in staffing due to other commitments were covered by other providers. The Training Providers that utilised experienced, knowledgeable staff in the shop benefitted the most. Some providers however struggled to maintain the presence of more experienced staff in the shop and as a consequence did not benefit as much. Some staff that turned up to the shop were not briefed beforehand and some did not possess appropriate Apprenticeship knowledge. In busy periods, this sometimes led to inaccurate, inconsistent information being given to shop visitors.

- **The level of actual starts into Apprenticeships was low.** The evaluation highlighted several possible reasons for this:
  
  - The extensive ‘vetting’ of a candidate by a training provider before being submitted for vacancies is putting young people off. There is very little sharing of initial assessment results amongst providers and many will test young people for Maths and English irrelevant of the grades achieved previously. When a vacancy has ‘must have English and Maths at Grade C or above’ and a candidate has those, many queried why they had to sit a Basic Skills test beforehand when they met the criteria for the advertised role.
  
  - The training providers that managed to fix up the highest number of Apprentices and valued the shop the most were the ones that took great efforts to get the applicant in front of the employer in the shortest possible time. Those providers that undertake full assessments, irrelevant to previously achieved grades, reported fewer successes and placed less value in the success of the shop.
  
  - There was widespread resistance (especially from those over 19) to those vacancies at £2.68 an hour. The vacancies that generated the least number of enquiries were all pitched at this rate.
  
  - Another issue for young people was the number who had already achieved Level 3 qualifications at college. This was especially prevalent in Joinery and Childcare. Many providers are reluctant to work with anyone already achieving L3 in the same sector due to the reduced funding implications. However it is questionable whether funding should be available for funding further L3 qualifications for young people that already have L3 qualifications in the occupational area.
  
  - Linked to the above it is vitally important to support young people to make the right decision in the first place guided by appropriate labour market information. A large number of young people were looking to leave existing college provision. Some students stated they were unhappy with their course, others that they want something for when they finish this summer. Some said they wanted a job that they could combine with their ‘full time’ college course (as little as 11 hours). Many were referred back to either college or independent IAG services to seek a solution to their problem. Either way it is important to challenge the suitability of this route if young people are graduating from FE then looking for
Apprenticeships and feed back this information to young people and parents.

3.4.10. Lessons learnt highlighted in the evaluation were largely functional and included having a registered charity lead the negotiations on the lease in order to substantially reduce business rates. There was also an issue over whether there was sufficient demand for the shop to sustain it opening over the full 3 month period and it was noticeable in the 3rd month that many visitors to the shop were ‘returners’ who had already made applications over January and February.

3.4.11. There are also wider lessons about the nature of a shop versus an online presence (NAS/Careers service). Although the latter is widely available there is limited evidence that it caters for all peoples’ needs. There is evidence that people want to talk through concerns and queries regarding Apprenticeships and ask questions/ get confirmation of their answers rather than work it all out online.

3.5. What works in raising awareness with key influencers?

3.5.1. Activities under this heading most often took place indirectly as part of the structured interventions with young people. This included work with head teachers, heads of KS4 and careers guidance, pastoral staff and parents.

Raising awareness amongst school heads, teaching and careers staff

3.5.2. In Trafford, the Head teachers Conference had a presentation regarding actions that could be taken to increase awareness of young people of apprenticeships. As part of this schools were asked to identify the activities which they wanted, that would then be taken to the Apprenticeship providers meeting in order for a programme to be developed. Suggestions included: speakers, information at parents events, enterprise days, practice interviews; presentations at assemblies; session on how to complete a good application form linked to NAS website; road shows; and transport to events after school.

3.5.3. Stockport published packs for teachers and careers advisors in schools, which provide information on the AV registrations and application processes, including how to log on as a Stakeholder. Packs have also included information about local opportunities for young people for example Stockport
Council’s ‘work to work’ programme which encourages young people to re-engage by developing their employability skills.

3.5.4. Bolton produced packs for teachers and Personal Advisers which provide information on the AV registration and application process. Personal Advisers support young people to register onto the AV website and provide a list of local providers who deliver Apprenticeships.

**Raising awareness with parents**

3.5.5. A number of areas worked with parents to inform them about Apprenticeships. Stockport provided information evenings for parents in October 2013 which included colleges, training providers and higher education institutions. Rochdale ran parent information sessions at the local schools where they invite parents in to talk about the different pathways and they have a question and answer session. This also engages teachers by osmosis as they stay behind to run the session. Feedback from attendees has been very good. In Oldham parents’ events were run to raise awareness of and promote apprenticeships to parents of young people in year 10 and 11. These were most successful when combined with other information, for example as part of a work experience briefing or part of wider information on further education.

3.5.6. Other areas have taken a more passive approach, for example, by putting leaflets about Apprenticeships in young people’s school book bags. Although this is a low cost option, there is limited evidence of its effectiveness.

3.5.7. The evaluation of the Apprenticeship Shop reported extensive enquiries from parents / carers about the Apprenticeship pathway on behalf of their children. The evaluation did however highlight concerns amongst parents regarding the low wage rates on offer suggesting the need both to focus on the development and promotion of higher quality Apprenticeship opportunities which offer decent progression routes but also be aware of the variation in wage rates – not all vacancies are at the Apprenticeship rate.

**Raising awareness with school governors**

3.5.8. The governing body has a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum in order to promote high
standards of educational attainment and must ensure that all registered pupils at the school from year 8 to 13 are provided with independent careers guidance. Governors have the opportunity to play and important role in raising the quality of careers provision, for example:

- through ensuring the senior leadership team is fulfilling its statutory duties regarding careers guidance including the impartially of advice and the quality of coverage of the range of options;
- by seeking out appropriate opportunities to talk to learners about their experience of the school’s careers provision, e.g. by attending events or by inviting a group of young people to talk to the governors’ curriculum committee;
- through useful contacts in other education and training provision and in the community that can be harnessed to create opportunities for students; and
- providing business, financial and HR skills to support strategic planning, effective deployment of resources, recruitment of specialist careers staff, workforce development and review and evaluation.

3.5.9. Overall, there was limited work undertaken to raise awareness amongst school governors. One exception was in Bolton where a workshop was held for the Secondary Governor Forum delivered by Children’s service representatives with input from colleagues in Development and Regeneration. The presentation outlined the importance of skills for employability, decision making when identifying progression, the impact of RPA and the opportunities that can be made on the Apprenticeship route those for learners to take. The workshop also facilitated a discussion with Governors on the role they can contribute to this agenda.

*Raising awareness with employer representative groups*

3.5.10. Although this was not an area of focus a number of the Local Authorities engaged with employers through the organisation of Apprentice Fairs and Careers Events.
4. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

4.1. Project performance

4.1.1. The success criteria of the project was the registration of 300 young people on the NAS site during the project period (1st April to 30th June 2013) per LA area. Data from NAS shows that nine of the ten GM areas exceeded this target (table 2.1).

| Table 3.1: GM candidates aged 15-18 who have registered and activated their AV account |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Bolton                                          | 525             |
| Bury                                            | 246             |
| Manchester                                      | 925             |
| Oldham                                          | 66*             |
| Rochdale                                        | 59*             |
| Salford                                         | 488             |
| Stockport                                       | 466             |
| Tameside                                        | 446             |
| Trafford                                        | 413             |
| Wigan                                           | 925             |
| Total GM                                        | 5,505           |

Source: NAS LA monthly data. *Positive Steps evaluation report

4.1.2. While this was the nominated target for the IAG activities, it is clearly a partial measure of success – we cannot tell without more detailed data from SFA whether the individuals who registered subsequently secured an Apprenticeship, for example.

4.1.3. Data on Apprenticeship starts for the full 2013/14 year is not yet available. Table 2.2 therefore compares starts for the August to April period in 2012/13 prior to the commencement of the project to the August to April period in 2013/14 post project.

4.1.4. Overall, across GM Apprenticeship starts for the 16-18 year old age group have risen by 3.7% (190 starts). This is above the average for England where starts rose by 3.1% for this age group. There are significant variations by LA area with an 8.5% fall in Bury and smaller falls in Trafford and Manchester. Rochdale, Stockport, Salford and Tameside all had significant increases in starts for this age group.
Table 3.2: GM Apprenticeship starts aged 16-18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quarters 1-3 (Aug - April 2012/13)</th>
<th>Quarters 1-3 (Aug - April 2013/14)</th>
<th>change</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bolton</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bury</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>-29</td>
<td>-8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>-1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochdale</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockport</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tameside</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafford</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>-14</td>
<td>-3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigan</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total GM</td>
<td>5,157</td>
<td>5,347</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>90,900</td>
<td>93,700</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

5.1.1. A number of core messages can be identified with regard to the effectiveness of the IAG activities undertaken:

5.2. How effective was the project in meeting its targets?

5.2.1. Overall, the project exceeded its targets for Apprenticeship registrations. Although it is too early to provide any firm conclusions with regards to success in translating registrations into starts, initial data from two quarters suggests that the proportion of 16-18 starts in GM has increased and at a higher rate than for England as a whole.

5.2.2. There is evidence to suggest that the project was effective in informing young people about Apprenticeships as a route that had parity of esteem and informed that about provision and levels available.

5.2.3. The sustainability of the outcomes is mixed. The literature resources produced by the project continue to be used to raise awareness of Apprenticeships. The work in schools has impacted on careers provision with some careers advisors saying that they are now spending more time discussing Apprenticeships as an option as a result of the project. In many areas follow up support is being undertaken, for example, Stockport Council have funded sessions for schools who wished to partake in CPD apprenticeship raising sessions held in the Apprenticeships Store. Where the funding was used to support a specific post within the Local Authority for a set period there is however some concern that the understanding and capacity to deliver similar activities in the future has been lost.

5.3. How effective was the project in improving awareness & understanding Apprenticeships?

5.3.1. There are two main aspects to careers information, advice and guidance: firstly addressing young people’s aspirations and understanding about the options available to them (including Apprenticeships); and secondly, if they express interest in Apprenticeships, providing them with the practical advice and support necessary to apply for and secure one.
5.3.2. The requirement to meet Apprenticeship registration targets has meant that this project has largely focussed on the latter stage, providing young people with the practical advice and support necessary to apply for and secure an apprenticeship. In many cases, however, this support will not have been appropriate and there is an ongoing need to focus support on younger year groups to help inform aspirations and understanding. For example, research by the University of Southampton\(^\text{13}\) considered there to be a good case for schools to consider starting careers education and guidance much earlier, perhaps as early as Year 7. A recent international survey of young people\(^\text{14}\) found that just 40% of young people in the UK believed that their post-secondary studies improved their employment prospects, lower than the international average of 50%. Just 30% of UK youth had adequate knowledge to make educational choices, again lower than the international average of 35%.

5.3.3. With regard to this the following components are key:

- Informed by labour market information – there is an identified mismatch between young people’s aspirations and the needs of employers. For example, research by the Education and Employers Taskforce\(^\text{15}\) recently compared young people’s career aspirations with the labour market’s current and future needs. The research found huge mismatch – among 13-14 year olds, more than a quarter - 27% - said they would like jobs in culture, media or sport, whereas these sectors combined will provide only 2% of all vacancies between 2010 and 2020. None of the 11-12 year olds expressed interest in a career in manufacturing, even though the sector provides over 10% of all jobs in the UK economy.

- Linking curriculum learning to careers – subject teachers can be powerful role models and attract pupils to their subject and careers linked to it.

- Encounters with employers and workplaces – employers provide students with opportunities to learn about different types of jobs. Experience of workplaces is also important to provide students with practical experiences to inform choices.

- Encounters with employees, apprentices and older students – ambassador schemes can be of huge value in giving students the opportunity to see and talk to older students and hear about their experiences.

- Personal guidance on potential career choices. This is a challenge – the introduction of Higher Apprenticeships is positive but the number of places on offer is limited. The future potential of this route into employment for young people is not yet well-understood by the

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\(^\text{13}\) http://www.researchonline.org.uk/sds/search/download.do?jsessionid=2AAA39FCCF4C22581611B9221159802C?ref=Y3005


\(^\text{15}\) Education and Employers Taskforce (2013), Nothing in common: The career aspirations of young Britons mapped against projected labour market demand (2010-2020)
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‘traditional’ provider system as many of the Higher apprenticeship pilots are being delivered by HE institutions and Sixth-form colleges. Higher apprenticeships have the potential to offer an aspirational route for many young people but this is not yet running at sufficient scale.

- Stability of the careers programme – it is important to ensure that the provision of high quality careers advice is embedded in the school and is not subject to changes in external support.

5.4. What lessons have been learnt?

5.4.1. The evidence from the activities undertaken has highlighted that the majority of approaches have been successful in increasing the number of registrations on the Apprenticeship vacancy website, however, it is yet to be seen how many registrations translate into starts. A number of key lessons can be identified:

Challenging young people’s perceptions about Apprenticeships

5.4.2. In general, young people’s awareness of Apprenticeships is not seen as the biggest issue and the focus needs to instead be on challenging existing perceptions on the career pathways Apprenticeships offer, particularly around Level 3 and Higher Level Apprenticeships and the access to good quality jobs.

5.4.3. There is a clear need to demonstrate that Apprenticeships can offer decent progression routes and that they are suitable for pupils with a wide range of career aspirations.

- One positive example is provided by the Sharp Futures project in Manchester which provided young people in years 9 to 13 with a full day of experience in the Creative and Digital Sector. The project provided an overview of the sector and informed young people of the skills and employment opportunities as well as the apprenticeship opportunities. The project commissioned twenty professional organisations and individuals to support delivery of the experience in a range of disciplines including product design, motion capture and website design.

- There is a need to develop this good practice across other sectors to raise awareness of the opportunities available. For example, research commissioned by the AAT\(^\text{16}\) found that 71% of young people thought that a degree was required to enter the professional services sector, for example to work in accountancy. Research by EETF suggests that this is a more fundamental issue – young people have no basis to understand what their career aspirations imply – this is not something that can be delivered in a relatively short time frame after young people have already made their GCSE choices.

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- There is a need to share good practice in Apprenticeship marketing and positive student case studies. For example, The Manchester College has recently won a Heist Award for education marketing for its 50 in 5 Apprenticeship PR Campaign. The college has published several case studies highlighting the benefits of an Apprenticeship.\(^\text{17}\)
- Although there is some evidence\(^\text{18}\) to suggest that wage rates offered for apprentices in Greater Manchester are significantly lower than national figures there is significant variation in the averages. Care needs to be taken when raising awareness of Apprenticeships not to focus on the minimum as it is simply not attractive to young people or more importantly, their parents.

5.4.4. There is evidence that the use of Apprentice Ambassadors is very effective in supporting young people to make career choices. For example, in Bury schools reported that the attendance of Ambassadors at Apprenticeship events really helped to engage young people. Ambassadors can be key in directly demonstrating to young people the range of Apprenticeship progression routes available and talking them through and concerns.

5.4.5. There is a need to improve connections between schools and colleges and employers. Programmes such as Inspiring the Future include themed campaigns on Apprenticeships where current and former Apprentices are invited into schools to talk with young people about what an apprenticeship is and how to apply for one.

5.4.6. Sharing labour market information with young people is important in helping them to inform their decision making. This should include a list of opportunities and an understanding of the pathways that are possible for apprentices – who gets recruited at what age and with what qualifications and what are the subsequent career options. A recent international survey of young people\(^\text{19}\) found that fewer than half of youth surveyed said they had the right information to decide whether to pursue further education or understand what programs offered the best economic returns. Salford tried to make the information provided more labour market based by showing young people where the skills gaps are, for example, highlighting the creative and digital sector opportunities but trying at the same time not to block aspirations. Some Careers Advisors source labour market information from Careers Solutions.\(^\text{20}\) In some areas Local Authority contacts highlighted a

\(^{17}\) See for example http://www.themanchestercollege.ac.uk/apprenticeships/case-study/matt%E2%80%99s-creative-digital-apprenticeship-leads-work-bbc

\(^{18}\) New economy (2014) Explaining Patterns in Apprenticeships

\(^{19}\) Mourshed, M, Farrell, D, Barton, D Education to Employment: Designing a System that Works. McKinsey, Center for Government

\(^{20}\) http://www.economic-solutions.co.uk/service_brands/careers-solutions
mismatch between the level 3 qualifications available in college and employer demand. For example, in Rochdale particular areas of over-supply were considered to include joinery, animal care, hairdressing and childcare.

*Job search support and signposting*

5.4.7. There is a need to **offer young people a broader range of support** rather than simply encouraging them to sign up to the NAS website. For example, when signing young people up to the NAS website Rochdale arranged for additional provider support if they needed CV support. It was important to assist young people with their registration as their profile could be viewed by employers. The local careers advisors were also given details of the young people who wanted follow-up.

5.4.8. **Word of Mouth** remains an important channel for the recruitment of young people by employers. The 2012 Employer Perspectives survey reported that 26% of young people were recruited via this route (rising to 36% in the manufacturing sector and 40% in the construction sector). A further 14% of posts were filled by young people internally or through speculative enquiries. Other important channels included the employers own website (11%) local newspapers (9%) and Jobcentre Plus (15%). The NAS Apprenticeship Vacancy System was responsible for filling just 2% of these roles. There is a need to support young people to be more pro-active in their job search and to actively approach employers.

5.4.9. **Appropriate signposting is important.** The NAS AV website does not provide a comprehensive source of information on apprenticeships. UCASprogress.com was seen as more relevant for year 10s and younger as it allows young people to express interest for some time in the future and it offers a wider range of provision than apprenticeships. Projects’ signposted young people to a range of information sources and third parties. These included:

- Rochdale’s Apprenticeship vacancy website where they collect vacancies from the 9 main providers. This gets 2000 hits per month and currently has around 380 vacancies.  
  [http://www.apprenticeshipvacanciesinrochdalemiddletonandheywood.co.uk/](http://www.apprenticeshipvacanciesinrochdalemiddletonandheywood.co.uk/)
- In some areas young people have been directed to [www.UCAScom/progress](http://www.UCAScom/progress) which is seen to be more relevant than the NAS website for year 10s and younger as young people can express interest for some time in the future and it offers a wider range of provision than just apprenticeships.
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- The Greater Manchester cnx2jobs website (http://www.cnx2jobs.com/) advertises opportunities for young people aged 16 – 19 for jobs with training, training, apprenticeships, traineeships, internships, voluntary opportunities and work experience. As of August 2014 of the 869 vacancies available 636 were for Apprenticeships.

- Some careers advisors are signposting students to www.notgoingtouni.co.uk which provides advice about non HE options including apprenticeships, college courses and work experience.

Appropriate timing of support

5.4.10. It is important to focus on young people earlier in year 11 to attract the highest quality applicants. This needs to be paired with ensuring higher quality apprenticeships are on offer. Many schools and colleges encourage their students to complete their UCAS application in October and targeting students at this point would better enable Apprenticeships to feature in their decision making. A related issue is that training providers tend to approach school leavers in March however those with a higher aptitude tend to have all been enrolled in college the previous September. Salford chose to target year 10s as they felt it was too late to engage with those in their final year. They considered that the timing worked well with regards to informing young people about Apprenticeships as an option and seeding ideas and aspirations.

Bringing the support to young people

5.4.11. The most successful approaches with regard to engagement involved bringing the support to the young person’s school or college rather than encouraging them to turn up at a careers fair or other external location. This is in part linked to the difficulties involved in getting schools to sign up to external events. Where external locations are targeted at individuals, for example through an Apprenticeship shop there is evidence to support this approach in increasing referrals and raising awareness of Apprenticeships.

‘Getting in’ to schools

5.4.12. Relationships with schools varied between areas and some Local Authorities reported greater difficulties than others in engaging with schools. One example of good practice was in Bury where their package of funded support was successful in engaging with previously disinterested schools. This offer to schools was considered to be successful because of the breadth of support it offered alongside of Apprenticeships together with the offer to
support to schools to help meet their Ofsted requirements with regards to careers advice.

5.4.13. There was evidence that the project was successful in ensuring that careers guidance professionals were aware of the range of opportunities and access routes into apprenticeships, and through positive action, ensured that parity of esteem was given to this career development route.

*Value of partnership working*

5.4.14. There was strong evidence that the Local Authorities benefited from employing a partnership based approach to delivery with collaboration on a number of the projects and the sharing of materials; for example information packs for schools. In a number of cases Local Authorities had been affected by significant staff cuts and shortages and welcomed the lead taken by others on a number of the projects.

*Sustainability of support*

5.4.15. Several of the local authorities had used the Apprenticeship Hub funding to resource a dedicated school/sixth form liaison post. For example, Trafford appointed a project worker to specifically work with schools and young people to deliver information sessions on apprenticeships and support young people in registering on NAS’s AV website. Although this was effective in the short term one consequence was that in the longer term there was a lack of capacity to carry on this work. The short term nature of this post also had issues for the evaluation as current Local Authority representatives did not have much knowledge of the project or of the work of this individual.

5.5. What are the core issues which should be tackled in the future?

5.5.1. Concerns over quality still need to be addressed. The 2012 Richard Review of Apprenticeships\(^{21}\) recommended redefining apprenticeships to ensure that they are ‘*high quality training with serious kudos and tangible value both to the apprentice and the employer*’. Recommendations included ensuring they are clearly targeted at those who are new to a job or in a role that requires sustained and substantial training with a separate work based programme supporting entry into employment replacing some level 2

Apprenticeships. The report also recognised the importance of safeguarded
time off the job for this training. Following on from this review the National
Apprenticeship Service (NAS) Quality Action Plan\textsuperscript{22} was updated in October
2013 and identifies the requirements for a high quality delivery model –
including a focus on equipping individuals with new skills and learning,
employment, a minimum of 12 months duration, and training meeting the

5.5.2. Despite these requirements there remain concerns over quality and whether
these standards are sufficient and there is a continuing need to \textit{increase the
number of higher quality Apprenticeships which offer good career
progression routes}. In some areas there was a perception that training
providers focus on engaging with employers that offer quick and easy wins
rather than those that offer higher quality Apprenticeships. The number of
Higher Level Apprenticeships remains low (2.2% of Apprenticeship starts in
GM in 2013/14). In some areas Careers Advisors highlighted high levels of
demand from young people for Apprenticeships that offers a route into
nursing and social work. Although these are currently not available the
nursing Apprenticeship is planned to be introduced as part of a trailblazer.

5.5.3. Through the Chamber GM has access to a range of employer networks that
would be ideal to \textit{promote the potential of Higher Apprenticeships}. These are likely to remain a minority of provision but can have a
transformative effect on the attitudes of young people and their parents. The
opportunities in the professions – paralegals, paraplanners, and
accountancy, IT and management consultancy Apprenticeships offer a very
attractive alternative route for young people which does not preclude Higher
Education – although the focus on professional exams post Apprenticeship
could be seen as a more cost-effective progression route.

5.5.4. There is a need to \textit{address issues over demand for apprenticeships from
employers} to ensure a spread of opportunities across a wider range of
sectors and at higher levels. Specific supply side issues identified by
stakeholders include:

- A shortage of Higher Level Apprenticeship opportunities. Apprenticeship
  Vacancy data for GM for the period from April 2013 to February 2013
  reveals just 77 opportunities available at level 4 (0.8% of the 9,880
  opportunities available).

\textsuperscript{22} \url{http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/~media/Documents/Statement-on-Apprenticeship-QualityV1.ashx}
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- A specific shortage of level 4 creative and digital training providers.
- The need for more delivery of technical certificates and functional skills on the employer’s site.
- Issues over the ratio of assessors to learners which due to cut backs beginning to impact on quality.
- The need to provide ongoing end-to-end support for employers to help stimulate the market.
- The imbalance between demand from young people and apprenticeship supply at the sectoral level.
- The need for an expansion in Apprenticeships which offer a route to a ‘good career’. For example there is an interest in Apprenticeships in nursing and social work.

5.5.5. Given that the IAG projects had to be undertaken at a time when schools and young people were focused on exams, the results look good. Registration on AV should be seen for what it is – one means to an end. The primary objective of the IAG to raise awareness and understanding, something that requires time and consistent messages. Providing accurate labour market information is probably a contradiction in terms – forecasting the situation 3-4 years out is always going to challenge systems. Currently, however, young people are making some important, potentially expensive, choices without being fully informed. The only source for this information at present is the employers themselves and future IAG actions need to start with putting employers in front of young people.