

Greater Manchester

Search and Apply Process for School and College Leavers

Briefing Note 1 for Skills Providers & Colleges



Introduction

The Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub has been at the forefront of a major initiative to embed the UCAS Search and Apply Process. This is an important step in supporting the Greater Manchester Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) Strategy by:

- Improving the breadth, depth and accessibility of information available to young people and parents.
- Enabling young people to see all that is on offer post 16.
- Positioning Apprenticeships alongside other progression opportunities.
- Developing a standardised approach for young people to make applications.
- Helping Local Authorities manage both RPA and tracking of young people's destinations at 16.

The contract to take this major initiative forward has been awarded to a **consortium led by Career Connect and their partners Positive Steps Oldham and Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network who will roll out the project over the next 16 months.**

Ambition

The project is an exciting and innovative GM response to the formal announcement made by Government in March 2015. It announced the establishment of a new post-16 courses database to help young people make informed decisions about their post-16 options. The course data contained in the database will be populated by post-16 providers, as part of new duties set out in their EFA funding agreements for 2015/16. This data will be made available to organisations wishing to present the data to young people, parents and schools in a more attractive and user-friendly way from September 2015.

In Greater Manchester, it has been agreed through the work of the Apprenticeship Hub that the UCAS Progress system will be used to present this data on local course information. It will in turn support providers to meet their new duty by providing regular and accurate course content directly to UCAS Progress, which in turn will populate the Government's central course database.

Improving Careers Education

The rationale for developing a search and apply process post-16 application process for young people in Greater Manchester is in direct response to concerns raised about the quality and effectiveness of careers guidance provision in schools and the limited access many young people have to appropriate and relevant information on Apprenticeships.

In their review of careers guidance provision in schools, published in September 2013, Ofsted reported that the quality of provision was generally considered to be poor, with only one in five schools delivering provision that ensured their pupils were in receipt of an appropriate and effective level of careers information, advice and guidance (IAG).

According to the report, very few schools promoted vocational training and Apprenticeships effectively, with the A-level route being considered as the “gold standard” for young people, by their parents and teachers.

In addition, mainstream platforms such as the national Apprenticeship website (www.apprenticeships.gov.uk) have tended to focus on live vacancies, as opposed to provision and opportunities that help to raise the awareness of Apprenticeships amongst young people and provide more relevant information on career choices and pathways.

New Contractual Requirements for post 16 providers

The Department for Education has now issued Operational Guidance setting out how all providers of education and training for 16-19 year olds should fulfil the expectation, set by the Secretary of State, that they make available data on the Government funded courses that they plan to offer by placing it on a national course database. This is to help young people make informed choices about their post-16 options. The Operational Guidance is located here: [Post-16 courses database: operational guide - Publications - GOV.UK](#)

For the new national database to be fully and accurately populated with up-to date course information, all post-16 providers funded by the EFA will be expected to submit their 16-19 course data to government between June and the 30 September 2015. This expectation will be set out in the [Advice: funding regulations for post-16 provision - Publications - GOV.UK](#)

In Greater Manchester we are strongly encouraging and will be supporting providers to upload their course information to the UCAS Search and Apply platform who will in turn populate the National Database. This will simultaneously:

- Increase the range and breadth of information available to young people, parents, their careers and schools.
- Enable providers to take advantage of the flexibility offered in the guidance whereby **in an area that has a working portal system giving information to young people on their post-16 courses, once providers have uploaded their data to the portal then UCAS will subsequently upload the data to the National Database on their behalf.**

As over 40 providers are already uploading their data onto the UCAS platform it makes real sense to take advantage of this flexibility.

The Delivery Partnership

All three of delivery partners are involved in wider City Deal apprenticeship activity that will ensure wider project synergy and alignment. All three partners are active members of the Search and Apply Steering Group. In addition, Career Connect has been working closely in schools to support adoption of the process in Salford.

The partners collectively will provide a central resource to support schools and providers to access and use the Search and Apply process effectively.

Career Connect

The delivery partnership is led by Career Connect who will lead on the management of the overall project and will lead on the expansion of Search and Apply. They currently deliver Connexions services in Salford where Search and Apply adoption is advanced; and have extensive experience of running major careers focused projects. In addition to managing the overall project they will lead on engagement with young people, schools and local authorities.

Positive Steps

They are currently the largest provider of IAG services in Greater Manchester and the lead organisation for two major CEIAG initiatives across the sub-region- the Greater Manchester Apprenticeship IAG and Greater Manchester Inspiring IAG projects. They will lead on the engagement of schools in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside

Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network (GMPLN): embracing all 10 further education colleges and over 80 independent and commercial training providers. GMPLN are currently engaged in delivering provider capacity building and work with schools on the IAG agenda and are the project managers for the Apprenticeship Ambassador Programme. **GMPLN will lead on the involvement of colleges and skill providers in the project.**

Immediate Next Steps

Over the next few weeks we will be communicating and engaging with schools, local authorities, colleges and training providers providing more detailed information and how we plan to support the implementation of this major initiative.

In May GMPLN will be working with our project partners and colleagues in both UCAS and Salford City Council (currently operate the portal under licence in GM) to:

- Produce information briefings setting out how providers can utilise the UCAS Search and Apply system to discharge the new EFA requirements contacting all organisations currently utilising the system and encouraging new providers to become involved.

- Communicating directly with those organisations who currently use the system to understand their working practices and also to ensure that they are fully briefed on any changes to the system.
- Develop and deliver a programme of training to support providers to upload their data and to enhance the quality of information held on the system

In May we will also be setting out in greater detail how we intend to support providers and how we will work with the Search and Apply steering group to develop quality standards for the uploading and presentation of the post 16 offer. This will include the practical aspects of how to upload content and information about courses, how to respond to applications and/or expressions of interest from prospective learners.

GMLPN

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Further Information

In the interim if you need further information please feel free to contact colleagues as below:

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