

Skills and Employment

In December 2006 Greater Manchester was designated as a City Strategy Pathfinder. This brought the ten local authority areas, as well as skills, Jobcentre Plus and health colleagues together in partnership for the first time to design and deliver services to enable more people to move off benefit and into work. **The Commission for the New Economy** was the coordinating body for the City Strategy and has built up that employment and skills-related partnership working across Greater Manchester over the last three years.

In March 2010 **The Commission for the New Economy** Board was designated by Government as a statutory Employment and Skills Board (ESB). Greater Manchester was the first city region outside of London to be granted this status. **New Economy** has the role to define and develop this and will lead on the production of an Employment and Skills strategy. The Strategy will articulate GM's employment and skills priorities and, with our Section 4 status, will influence the Skills Funding Agency's spend.

In developing the Strategy we will need to engage and collaborate with a wide range of partners to understand workforce recruitment and skills needs in line with local and Greater Manchester economic priorities.

The strategy will set out our approach to supporting the development and delivery of the Better Life Chances, Higher Level Skills and Attracting and Retaining Talent priorities within the Greater Manchester Strategy by articulating how we will support:

- Young people to make the transition from education to employment
- Residents, particularly in our most deprived areas, move off benefits and into work
- Greater progression into Higher Education
- Businesses to increase their productivity by helping them recruit and develop a skilled workforce

Key areas of work currently being taken forward by the Skills and Employment Team include: -

Acting as the coordinating body for the GM Future Fobs Fund programme The Future Jobs Fund is a £1bn national initiative aimed at helping young people into employment by creating new jobs. It is part of the Government's 'Backing Young Britain' campaign that brings together businesses, public sector organisations and the voluntary sector to provide more opportunities for young people – creating 170,000 additional jobs across the country as part of the Young Person's Guarantee. Jobs are aimed primarily at 18-24 year olds who have been out of work for more than 6 months.

The ten AGMA Councils (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) have secured £52m of the Future Jobs Fund to create 8,000 new jobs across Greater Manchester. Jobs delivering 'community benefit' are being created in local authorities and a wide range of both public and voluntary / community sector partners, with more than 1500 people due to enter work by the end of April.

Joint work across the Health and Environment Commissions With more than 160,000 residents – around 1 in 10 working age people – out of work due to a health condition there is a clear shared priority across both **New Economy** and Health Commissions to improve the health of the population and support more of them to enter or remain in work. Building on the Dame Carol Black Working for a Healthier Tomorrow report, key strands of work currently being taken forward across both Commissions include

- Strengthening support services for employers and their employees in order to help those falling ill remain in work. This includes the appointment of a Regional Health, Work and Wellbeing Coordinator, a SME-focused Challenge Fund and a 'Fit for Work' Service
- Working with DWP and wider partners to develop a coherent and comprehensive offer to support long term Incapacity Benefit claimants into work. In taking this forward we are specifically working very closely with DWP in the development of the forthcoming Invest to Save pathfinder

There is also a substantial amount of work underway with the Environment Commission in order to maximise opportunities for local companies and individuals to create and access 'green jobs'. Greater Manchester has been designated the UK's first Low Carbon Economic Area (LCEA) for the Built Environment, which will

involve a five-year “retrofit” programme – to improve the insulation of thousands of homes and offices in Greater Manchester as well as the installation of small-scale renewable energy technologies and “smart meters”.

The Commission for the New Economy are leading on the employment and skills elements of this programme, particularly seeking to maximise all job opportunities for currently unemployed residents, support the high end skills development in the low carbon market, and create an expanded and fit-for-purpose low carbon training infrastructure.

The Greater Manchester Employer Coalition

The Greater Manchester Employer Coalition ([GMEC](#)) is a network of hundreds of local businesses who use their business leadership and job opportunities to improve the career prospects of local people, particularly those facing difficulties in finding, keeping and getting on in work.

[GMEC](#) runs a series of projects and initiatives supporting employers to engage with diverse communities and directly offer employment opportunities to those groups furthest from the labour market. Examples of their work include

- Diversity Alliance – provides a cross-sectoral forum for employers across the whole of Greater Manchester who are proactively working to diversify their organisations. The forum aims to explore the issues that matter most to employers by delivering developing good practice seminars; specialist workshops; and regular briefings and breaking news to keep you up to date on policy, developments and opportunities
- Project development support for employment initiatives aimed at those furthest from the labour market – including supporting Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) into work, and securing local employment opportunities in new capital developments.

Contact us on 0161 237 4255 or [email us here](#)