

Greater Manchester Adult Education Budget Annual Report

2019-2020





Foreword

We want Greater Manchester to be a place where people have the best start in life, where our residents can gain the skills and training they need so that they can get on and thrive. Greater Manchester has a clear aim to be a world-class city-region with a strong and inclusive economy where everyone can grow and prosper. With control of our own Adult Education Budget we now have a key tool that can help deliver these ambitions.

Since August 2019, when Greater Manchester gained control over the Adult Education Budget, we have had a greater say and power over the planning and delivery of adult education to ensure it meets the needs of local residents, employers and the economy. In the short-term, gaining control over the Adult Education Budget has meant we're better able to support our residents in gaining skills to further their careers, while in the long term it will allow us to develop a talent

pipeline for our growing economic sectors, such as manufacturing, digital, and clean growth. It will support the creation of clear routes into training, so that residents can upskill into the roles employers need for the economy.

In the first year of devolution, over 51,000 residents living in Greater Manchester accessed Adult Education Budget funding to further their learning and gain qualifications, to upskill and enhance their chances of gaining sustainable employment. Strong partnerships were built with our local authorities to ensure we equipped local people with the skills they needed for life, such as in digital and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) skills, as well as skills needed to take on jobs being created in growing sectors, such as Social Care. We invested in our local authorities so we could support them to break down the barriers their residents had to accessing Adult Learning, enabling them to improve their life-chances.



During COVID-19 we have innovated the use of the Adult Education Budget even more, ensuring that it responds to the new challenges brought on by the pandemic. Special programmes to train those who are unemployed or furloughed into key worker professions have been created, while extra skills support was given to those at risk of redundancy. This supports our goal to create the employment and skills opportunities that we need to Build Back Better.

It is now a fact of life that people will need to retrain as they go through their careers due to the growth of the digital economy, as well as the need for new skillsets to build a zero-carbon city-region. We want to utilise the Adult Education Budget to provide digital and green courses, so that people can continue to find job opportunities in the strongest parts of our economy, as well as the foundation sectors.

The first year of devolved control of the Adult Education Budget has given us a greater say over how we upskill people. It has also enabled us to respond to the pandemic, by supporting recently unemployed or furloughed people, taking us one step closer to becoming a

world class city-region with a strong and inclusive economy where everyone can grow and prosper. This is what devolution is all about, doing things differently and creating a skills system that works for all our people and businesses here in Greater Manchester. This is just the start but in the toughest of circumstances Greater Manchester has shown exactly why local decision making matters.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Burnham".

Andy Burnham
Mayor of Greater Manchester

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean Fielding".

Councillor Sean Fielding
Portfolio Lead for Digital,
Education, Skills, Work
and Apprenticeships

Introduction

1.1 Devolution of the AEB is a long-term journey of change that will deliver positive outcomes for more of the region's residents. For the first year of this journey, the main aims have been:

- To work much more closely with the provider base to develop improved analysis of learner journeys, with a focus on positive outcomes and progression, and understanding whether the activity improves an individual's employability and quality of life.
- Create a more place-based approach to the delivery of adult skills, recognising that for all of the ten local authorities, the supply and demand for skills is different, and that a 'blanket approach' to providing education and skills provision will not achieve the ambitions for increased productivity and better outcomes for residents.
- Work with partners, local authorities and internal colleagues in the Industry Skills and Labour Market Intelligence team to translate the employer need into provision, specifically in the growth and foundation economy sectors outlined in the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy.

- Gaining a better understanding of residents' barriers to accessing adult education and skills provision and working collaboratively with local authorities, stakeholders and skills providers to respond directly to local challenges and remove these barriers to learning.

1.2 Over time, and with systemic improvements across the whole education, work and skills landscape we envisage making a long-term shift in emphasis away from the traditional view that AEB focusses on 'second chance' essential skills, towards one that ensures residents and businesses can keep pace with changes in the labour market and in the global economy at all levels.

1.3 This longer-term shift in emphasis will be one of the key measures of success for Greater Manchester's devolved Adult Education Budget. Devolution allows the GMCA to **strengthen the strategic focus of education, work and skills provision** for adults – recognising the important proactive role that can be played by skills providers, not as passive recipients of skills funding but as key strategic planning and delivery partners at the heart of the communities, places and economies they serve.

Academic Year 2019/2020 - What has been achieved?

2.1 As stated, the plan for the first year of the devolved AEB was to develop close relationships with all providers, and establish strategic, place-based partnership networks to allow providers to be more involved in strategic discussions about the supply and demand for skills at a local level. This meant that they could then use this local information to respond to challenges and offer the right skills and training to meet local economic need.

2.2 In the first year over 51,000 Greater Manchester residents accessed over 114,000 devolved AEB funded courses, with over 93,000 of these completed during 2019/2020. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the percentage of residents and the courses accessed by district. Given the impact Covid-19 had on face-to-face learning this is a real achievement that so many residents continued to make a positive impact on their learning.

Table 1: GM AEB Residents & Course Enrolments by District, 2019/20 (R14 ILR Data)

District	% of total residents	% of total course enrolments
Manchester	28%	33%
Bolton	12%	11%
Oldham	12%	10%
Salford	9%	9%
Rochdale	9%	8%
Wigan	7%	7%
Tameside	7%	7%
Bury	6%	6%
Stockport	5%	5%
Trafford	4%	4%
Total	100%	100%

2.3 Ages of GM residents who enrolled on adult education courses ranged from 19-23 years old (15%) through to those over 50 years old (15%). The majority of residents were aged between 31-40 years old, accounting for 32% of all learners. AEB has been targeted to support those with no or low levels of skills – 52% of residents had no qualifications, or skills below Level 2 prior to enrolling on AEB courses. 91 per cent of courses enrolled on were for accredited skills, with over 26,000 enrolments on Level 2 courses in sectors including health, public services and care, retail and commercial enterprises and preparation for life and work.

This is a positive step towards ensuring residents can gain the skills they need to succeed and progress on to higher level skills. AEB also plays a crucial role in supporting residents who are in work and want to learn new skills to progress towards their career goals, with almost a third of all learners accessing AEB whilst in work.

2.4 Skills providers were expected to develop a place-based curriculum offer, responding to the strategic priorities identified by GMCA and local authorities. Local strategic partnership networks were set up to encourage providers to work more closely with local authorities and other stakeholders to respond directly to local need.

Example of local collaboration:

In Salford, AEB providers have joined the Salford IAG network which links over 100 organisations throughout Salford to support skills, wellbeing and employment opportunities for Salford residents, with prospects for cross-working and referrals. This has resulted in Salford residents studying on an AEB course receiving a full wrap-around service of local support if needed due to AEB providers having a greater awareness of the local services offered.

2.5 When the Covid-19 pandemic started, classroom and other face-to-face learning had to stop. In order to continue to support the provider base during this difficult and uncertain time, a number of initiatives were put in place to ensure providers could continue to deliver wherever possible.

These initiatives included:

- Moving delivery online wherever possible and ensuring providers utilised learner support funding to equip learners with the necessary IT equipment. Providers were encouraged to use their learner support funding to ensure learners could continue their training online; providing access to equipment to help them do this.
- Implementing an addendum to the funding and performance management rules which included allowing providers to deliver to residents who were furloughed and those at risk of redundancy due to the Pandemic.
- Developing a suite of programmes that responded directly to the skills challenges as a result of Covid-19. Additional funding was made available for providers who wished to respond to these challenges. These programmes were:

- **Supporting Safe Returns to Work:** supporting businesses to provide health and safety and risk assessment training to staff to enable safe returns to work. As part of this programme 169 employed residents accessed courses to enable to support their employer to make their workplaces Covid-19 safe.
- **Rise of the Keyworker – Skills Pathway Programme:** upskilling and reskilling unemployed residents to enable them to enter keyworker roles in critical sectors such as health and social care. 471 residents accessed courses in key sectors including construction, warehousing and logistics, health and social care and IT.
- **Short Retraining Programme:** intensive skills provision codesigned with employers to support residents to retrain quickly, with a particular focus on those residents at risk of redundancy to reduce the likelihood of them becoming unemployed as a result of the pandemic. 52 residents used this programme to reskill into sectors including early years education, construction, and health and social care.

Working alongside other capital funds the AEB team were able to make over £2m of capital funds available for 81 skills providers including the supply chain, to purchase kit and equipment to both assist with the delivery of online learning (for example purchasing laptops and tablets for learners) and to make their buildings Covid-19 secure (for example purchasing screens, signage and PPE for staff and learners).

£1.5m of AEB funding was invested in local authorities to support them to remove barriers to accessing adult learning. This was shared evenly across all Greater Manchester local authorities and split into three areas of activity: alleviating barriers to adult education, supporting digital inclusion and ESOL. An additional £500,000 from the Local Growth Fund (LGF) supported 10 digital kit and connectivity projects across the local authorities. Initial highlights include:

- Major collaboration between seven local authorities to launch the Greater Manchester ESOL advice service
- More than 2,000 pieces of digital kit and connectivity bought to support thousands of residents
- Working with up to 100 voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations to support the hardest to reach residents

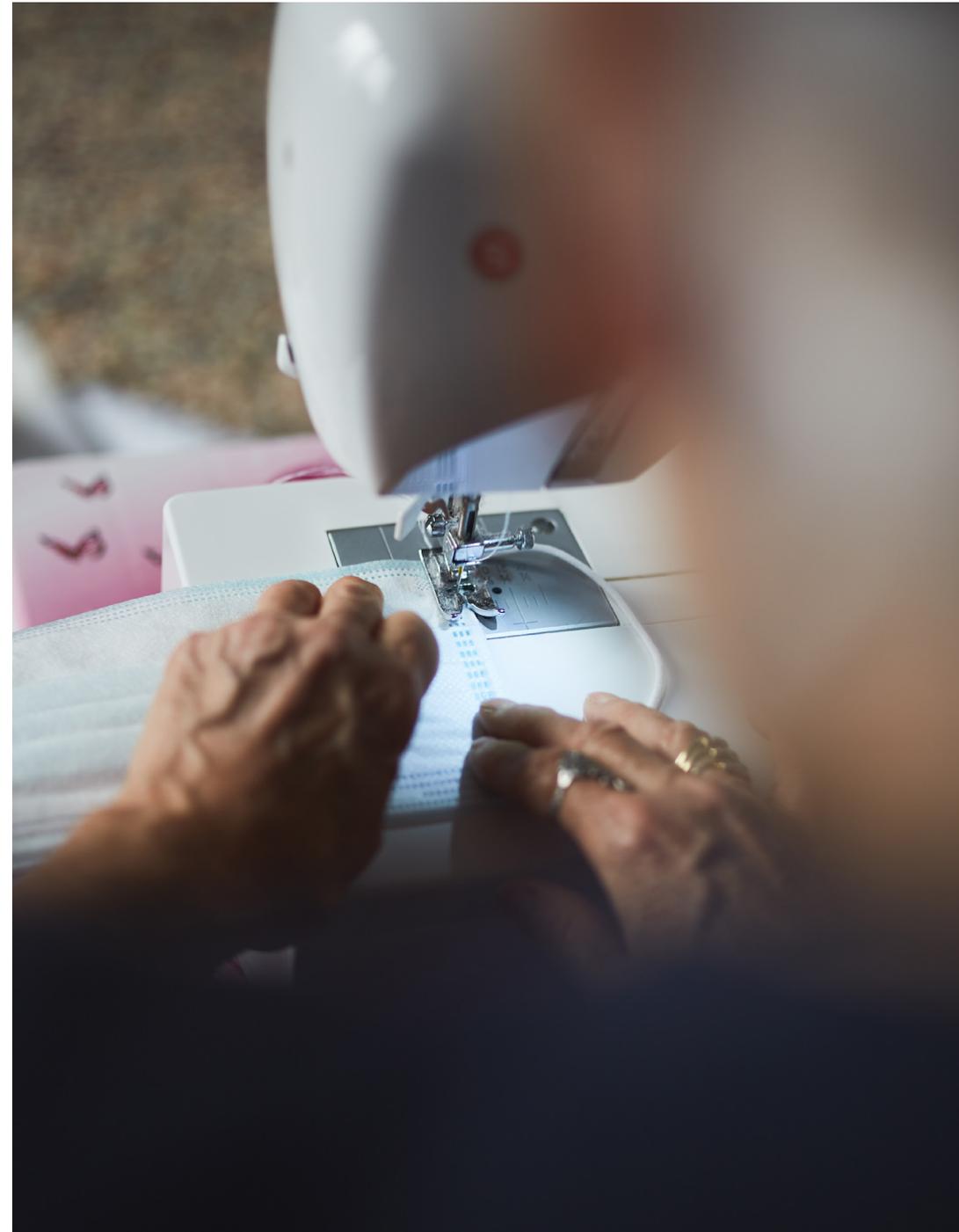


Case study one: WEA learners supporting NHS workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic

WEA are one of our contracted Adult Education Budget providers and utilised AEB funds to support volunteers at CDM UK with Enterprise and Textiles qualifications in order to become self-employed during the pandemic.

Learning enterprise and textile skills whilst making gowns and masks for the NHS at the start of the Pandemic, learners were given all the tools, including sewing kits, to become self-sufficient once the course was complete.

This was aimed at BAME women to be able to work and earn money around home commitments.

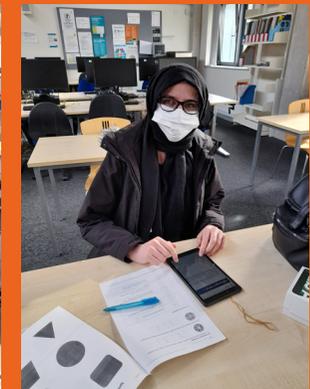


Case study two: AEB Capital Grants Programme – Oldham Lifelong Learning Digital Resource Loan Scheme

£50,000 funding given to Oldham Lifelong Learning was used to set up a Digital Resource Loan Scheme to support more than 350 learners to continue their studies from home. The scheme will provide tablets and internet access bundles to support adult learners who are struggling to access courses online.

Tabassum Noreen, an Oldham Lifelong Learning student, said of benefiting from the scheme: "I have been using my phone to attend the sessions and I have found this difficult to do my work. The tablet has really helped me to do my work for my English and Maths classes. I have used it to attend Zoom meetings with my tutor and learners and complete my online diary. I am so pleased that I was able to have a tablet."

Her tutor, David Bailey, also said: "Tabassum has really benefitted from accessing this tablet. She is getting more confident in using it to complete tasks and also access our online Learning Platform, Moodle, to update her diary with any progress or comments. Tabassum's confidence and her ability to develop her digital skills has grown and she will benefit from this over the next term."



Case study three: Examples of the Local Authority Grants being used for local projects:

Tameside: Co-developed and co-produced small, community programmes (between £1,000 to £5,000) to increase access to digital inclusion delivered by cultural/ VCSE organisations.

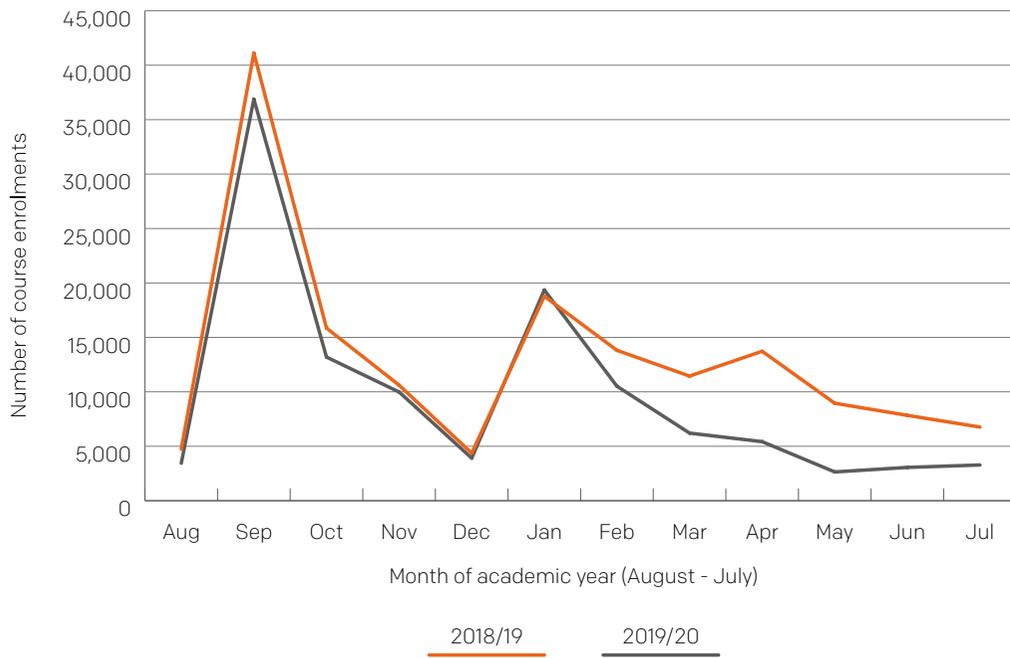
Wigan: Developed a tablet loaning scheme with connectivity that will form an essential part of Wigan's digital agenda, ensuring technology is available to engage with those offline and improve digital literacy.

Stockport: Worked with StartPoint to provide residents with access to key services to support addressing longer-term barriers to learning and employment; enabling improved access and support to key services.

ESOL Advice Service:

A Greater Manchester ESOL Advice Service was created as a result of a major collaboration project between seven local authorities (Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside & Trafford) coming together to better support ESOL provision in their area. As demand for ESOL provision across the region outstrips supply, the Advice Service will provide a coordinated and consistent approach to ESOL waiting lists and assessment experiences for residents. With a central waiting list being held for the local authorities rather than with individual providers and colleges, the service has exclusive access to ESOL course places to ensure equality of access for residents in the area.

Chart 1: Greater Manchester AEB starts by month



2.5 Covid-19 has impacted on the delivery of AEB, particularly with a decrease in residents enrolling on courses, in the run up to and during the final term of the academic year. Chart 1 compares the number of courses residents have started by month, with the previous year of adult education. The chart reflects that devolved delivery in 2019/2020 was for the majority of months very similar to the previous year and the fall in new starts on courses began from February 2020, as providers started to see Covid-19 have an impact.

2.6 AEB providers delivered 88 per cent of actual learning in 2019/2020, even though the Covid-19 pandemic caused all learning environments to close for the latter part of the academic year. This reflects the work and commitment from our provider base, to ensure the residents are supported and offered the learning they require.

Case study four: Lucy Low - Level 2 Award in Support Work in Schools and Colleges at The Training Brokers

Lucy Low studied Level 2 Award in Support Work in Schools and College at the Training Brokers, an AEB-funded training provider based in Salford. She said:

“Before I started the course I was working and had been signed off sick with stress. I had little confidence and self motivation, I felt stuck in a job that was making me very unhappy. The course has given me new direction, I feel like I’m on a path to a new me. It’s helped my self esteem and confidence enormously. By meeting new people and working as a team I can now see I have worth and am just as able to do this as anyone else. I have surprised myself at how far I’ve come in such a short space of time. I now have a clearer idea about where I can go with this course, and a career working in schools or early years. I have started a work placement to gain experience within the sector and have also looked at starting another course to help further my abilities.”





Case study five: Students at Greater Manchester Colleges

Isha Koroma studied a Certificate in Patisserie and Confectionery at The Manchester College and said: "I want to become a chef and the course has supported me to believe in myself and my abilities. It is a stepping stone to my career goal and it has helped me to develop my patience, as well as my artistry skills, and I have so much knowledge now about the industry."

Wigan father of five **Matt Hewlett** returned to learning to follow his lifelong ambition of becoming a paramedic. Matt, 34, worked as a bus driver while studying Maths and English GCSEs to qualify for a place on a university paramedic course. Having just missed out on achieving these GCSEs at school, Matt enjoyed his return to learning and said, "I am finding it easier to study now, as I have a clear goal in mind and feel much more motivated than I did at school."

Lucas Ewan studied for his UAL Extended Diploma in Creative Media Production Technology – Motion Design and Animation and as part of his studies worked on a live video brief for

Greater Manchester Combined Authority explaining their strategy surrounding Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM). Lucas has autism and is mostly nonverbal, so stepping outside his comfort zone to take on the project was a huge achievement. Nicola Wallworth, from GMCA said "the work Lucas has done so far has completely surpassed our expectations. The creativity and ability to visualise key messages from the narrative is truly impressive – what a wonderful skill to have."

Marzia Babakarkhail came to England from Afghanistan where she had been a Supreme Court Judge but was forced to flee after the Taliban targeted her for setting up a foundation educating girls. Aged 43, she arrived without being able to speak English and decided to enrol on an ESOL course of which she says, "suddenly I had hope: it changed my life". She has since completed courses up to Level 2 and remains actively involved in campaigning for gender rights and participation and is also now a constituency caseworker for a local MP.

Year two of the devolved Adult Education Budget

3. What we are continuing to do in 2020/2021

- Maintaining the flexibilities implemented in the first academic year, ensuring devolved funding is used in the best way for our residents.
- Utilising AEB as a vital element of a flexible and coordinated recovery package in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, focusing on supporting key workers and critical sectors and harnessing the potential of temporary volunteers.
- Redefining how AEB can drive change, ensuring residents can access local employment opportunities by developing a new GM Level 3 offer to open up opportunities for all adults
- Supporting priority cohorts of individuals through closer policy links across GMCA, building on the Greater Manchester model for unified public services and using funding flexibilities to tailor support, for example offenders in the community, vulnerable and marginalised women and workers in Greater Manchester's night-time economy.
- Maintaining the increased focus on place, working closely with local authorities to ensure that residents, businesses and community needs are being met, particularly within the context of Covid-19, with an emphasis on socially isolated residents and digital inclusion.
- Maintaining stability with skills providers and colleges.
- Creating clear lines of sight and training pathways into and within Greater Manchester's frontier and foundation sectors by ensuring AEB is complemented with the ESF Skills for Growth programme, and linkages are made to other Greater Manchester work and health activity.

