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Increasing Apprenticeship opportunities for autistic young people

The Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network (GMLPN), in partnership with education provider NCFE, have launched a new project to **increase apprenticeship opportunities for autistic young people.**

Research on previous economic recessions indicates that disadvantaged groups, like autistic people, become even more marginalised and further away from the labour market. Further research, conducted by the National Autistic Society states that only 16% of autistic people are in full-time paid work, whilst 77% autistic unemployed people say that they want to work. Therefore, it is vital to provide extra employability support to increase opportunities for Autistic young people as we move through the post-Covid 19 recovery.

The project aims to:

- Equip autistic young people with the technical and employability skills to progress in to employment.
- Improve links between schools/colleges, training providers, referral agencies and employers to improve progression routes for autistic young people
- Prove an effective model and evidence base of the impact for learners and employers that can be replicated nationally. This model can then be used to make the case for the level of funding required to ensure an inclusive funding policy that enables progression for autistic learners.

Anne Gornall, Executive Director at GMLPN said:

“We’re really excited to be working with NCFE to support autistic young people in developing both technical and employability skills in order to progress on to Apprenticeships. We believe this project is particularly important in response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on disadvantaged young people.”

Andy Lovatt, Managing Director at Digital Advantage said:

“This is great news for the ASD community in Greater Manchester. Digital Advantage have been working closely with young people with ASD for some years now and recognise the often hidden talents they possess. Many young people with ASD have amazing abilities in technical and creative work. They have high levels of concentration, incredible eye for detail and can bring new perspectives to enduring business problems. The GMLPN initiative will help the increasing number of training organisations working to overcome barriers to apprenticeships and shift the mind-set of employers to create new opportunities for young people with ASD. The ASD unemployment rate is a national disgrace, hopefully this project will begin to shift attitudes and create more equal opportunities across the region.”

Dawn Baker, Director of Innovation and Investments at NCFE said:

“NCFE is proud to work with GMLPN on this project. We believe in the power of education and training to transform people’s lives so to be involved in increasing apprenticeship opportunities for autistic people is so important to us.”

If you are an organisation that works in the Greater Manchester area and would like to get involved or find out further information, please e-mail info@gmlpn.co.uk. If you work outside of the Greater Manchester area but would like to find out more, please express your interest at info@gmlpn.co.uk.

*Reference: National Autistic Society (<https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/news/government-must-tackle-the-autism-employment-gap>)

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Notes to editors:

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