



# North West Report Launch: Post Event Briefing

June 2019



**Impetus** transforms the lives of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by ensuring they get the right support to succeed in school, in work and in life. We find, fund and build the most promising charities working with these young people, providing core funding and working shoulder-to-shoulder with their leaders to help them become stronger organisations. In partnership with other funders we help our charities expand and we work to influence policy and decision makers so that young people get the support they need.

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#YouthJobsGap

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# Introduction

Impetus and KPMG held a roundtable on 21 June in Manchester to launch Youth Jobs Gap Research Briefing 4: The Employment Gap in the North West.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham, together with business leaders, charities, academics, and local and regional policy-makers reviewed the report's findings, discussed potential solutions, and reflected on the challenges facing young people in transitioning from education to employment.

This paper both summarises these discussions and presents recommendations for action in the North West to stakeholders to work on together over the coming months.

## Context

Youth unemployment has halved since 2010. The news is full of positive headlines about record employment levels. So why are around 650,000 young people not in education, employment or in training (NEET) in the UK? What do we know about this group of young people?

Impetus wanted to get behind these headlines to find out how we can better support these young people to succeed in school, in work, and in life.

In partnership with the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) and the Centre for Vocational Education Research (CVER), for the first time, Impetus can shed light on some of these questions. We've been able to use government data to better understand what happens to disadvantaged young people when they leave school and start looking for a job. And for the first time, we've [established that there is an "Employment Gap"](#) between disadvantaged young people and their better-off peers.

Alongside establishing the Employment Gap in the North West, we're working with [our charity partners](#) in the region – Action Tutoring, Dallaglio RugbyWorks, Football Beyond Borders, IntoUniversity, Magic Breakfast, Place2Be, Power2, and The Tutor Trust to do something about it.

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# The Employment Gap in the North West

In our first report of the [Youth Jobs Gap series](#), *Youth Jobs Gap: Establishing the Employment Gap*, we found that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are twice as likely to not be in education, employment or training (NEET). And while this report painted a national picture of youth unemployment, our latest report, *Research Briefing 4: The Employment Gap in the North West*, honed in on the North West region of England, specifically.

The report presents findings at local authority area level, including the combined authority areas of Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region. We've found that although every locality in the North West has its own story – with its own strengths and weaknesses – disadvantaged young people in the North West are twice as likely to end up jobless. In some places in the North West, it's better to be better-off than have better qualifications. Disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs are still much less likely to go to university than their better-off peers. And those without good GCSEs in Manchester, are about twice as likely to start a higher education course as those from Wirral or Cumbria.

## Summary of key points

The report launch event featured a keynote speech from Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, who outlined three main issues that young people in the North West are facing: a lack of awareness of the labour market and available jobs, financial hindrances, and lack of social capital. The question posed was: How can we help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds overcome these challenges?

Many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds aren't aware of the opportunities that are available to them. In order to dig deeper to help them, the Mayor initiated a survey to understand how young people in Greater Manchester think and feel about relevant issues. In line with *Research Briefing 4: The Employment Gap in the North West*, this survey will help us understand the nature of the employment gap, why it exists, and how we can close it. A UCAS style system for apprenticeships will be introduced to help open the doors for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the North West region.

The Opportunity Pass will be launched this September, which will provide free bus travel for all 16–18 year olds in Greater Manchester. In addition, the Meet your Future scheme is a work shadowing scheme in the area to help disadvantaged young people in the North West build social capital.

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The discussion focused on the following key areas:

- Narrowing the skills gap should be at the heart of the North West's industrial strategy. Improving educational attainment and prioritising skills and education can help ensure that all young people – regardless of their background – have access to the kind of education, employment and training that enables them to reach their full potential.
- Education opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are often discussed as a social problem, but they're also economic. Economic and social issues go hand in hand, which is a strong part of the Mayor of Greater Manchester's agenda.
- The need to ensure that schools have enough funding and access to evidence-based interventions to ensure that disadvantaged young people are getting the qualifications and signposting they need.
- Non-financial barriers such as mental health and care issues as challenges in securing employment.
- Many employers are committed to helping disadvantaged young people succeed, but struggle to identify the young people who could most benefit and know how to best support them.

Overall, there has been good progress in Greater Manchester, but there was agreement around the need to build up a range of relevant policies to better support disadvantaged young people into employment. Impetus' Youth Jobs Gap series provides a good starting point to understand these.

## Calls to action

- The data should be used to inform overall strategic and funding decisions so that money is directed to where it can have the most impact. Specifically:
  - Use the data presented in the Youth Jobs Gap North West report to target interventions at the young people who need them most.
  - Use the data presented in the Youth Jobs Gap North West report to target interventions in the locations which need particular support.
  - Use the data presented in the Youth Jobs Gap North West report to target interventions in areas of underperformance, whether qualifications, access to apprenticeships, access to university or transition to work.
- Use the data to inform program design when designing interventions and services for young people – whether that is the voluntary sector, the combined authority, local government, schools or employers.

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- Identify mechanisms for better co-ordination between these different decision makers: they all want to the best for the young people in the North West but greater join up and communications between sectors, particularly at transition points, is needed.

## Get involved

Impetus is keen to continue to work with relevant people and organisations in the North West to take forward these recommendations. The Youth Jobs Gap series continues and will culminate in a national policy recommendations briefing in Spring 2020. Please contact our team to engage in this project and provide your input via [info@impetus.org.uk](mailto:info@impetus.org.uk) or via social media.

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All young people can  
succeed at school and work  
with the right support

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