

An Evaluation of the TRANSFORM Project

Delivered as part of the

UK Community Renewal Fund

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation report is based on the results of a pilot project¹ which ran from November 2021 to June 2022 and is an accurate picture as at the end date of 30th June 2022. The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) was commissioned by InspirED Associates Ltd, the project deliverer, to undertake this evaluation for the pilot project. ETF commissioned Advanced Consultancy in Education (ACE) to design and deliver this evaluation report. This report is therefore authored by Romy Short of ACE, with the support of the TRANSFORM delivery team.

The pilot project was given the name TRANSFORM (acronym for Training and Skills for Manchester). It was aimed at providing local people from across Greater Manchester with local opportunities, by highlighting careers in, and giving participants the opportunity to experience, the Further Education (FE) sector. The project was funded by the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF), following a successful funding application by InspirED Associates Ltd², through Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) as a 'Lead Authority'. UKCRF is a £220 million fund to help places across the UK prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which will launch in 2022³.

GMCA is made up of 10 councils (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) who work together for the improvement of the city-region. Four of these areas were identified as 'priority areas' by UKCRF (Bolton, Manchester, Oldham and Rochdale), based on an index of economic resilience across the United Kingdom which measures productivity, household income, unemployment, skills and population density. The UKCRF funding contributes to the levelling up agenda by investing in people, places, businesses, and communities improving everyday life across the UK.

1.1 Overview of the TRANSFORM Project

The TRANSFORM project was structured as a programme targeting predominantly people who were economically inactive or long-term unemployed to explore working and teaching in Further Education and, where possible, to make the successful transition to work in the sector. If this transition was not appropriate, then participants would be supported to find alternative roles within the FE sector, and for a small number, outside of the FE sector. The process for prospective participants started with an initial information session covering the programme content, expected outcomes and an introduction to the diversity of the FE sector. Participants were selected after making an online application based on their eligibility for the support programme. Successful participants were offered employability support (including, in some instances, an employability qualification and the opportunity to undertake a two- or three-day placement with a Further Education provider, known as 'Taster Experience Days' (TEDs). After the placement or TED, participants who wanted to progress could undertake the L3 Award in Education and Training, providing them with an introduction to teaching. Towards the end of the programme participants

¹ Note that in this document reference to the 'TRANSFORM project' refers to the entire pilot project funded by UK government. The 'TRANSFORM programme' refers to the programme of support for participants designed and delivered by InspiredED Associates.

² [InspirED Associates](#)

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus-2021-22>

were supported to apply for vacancies relevant to them, receiving tailored practical support in job search, CV development, application completion, interview preparation and career mapping.

1.2 Post-Project Reflections

The success of the project can be defined by participants' responses to their experience, particularly the placements with FE providers, the value placed on the L3 Award in Education and Training, and the consistency of support given by the team delivering TRANSFORM to apply for employment in relevant roles. The majority of participants who responded to the final evaluation of TRANSFORM were positive about the part the placements had in helping them make the decision to progress into a role in the FE sector. The providers themselves confirmed this in their feedback stating that participants were highly motivated, interested and engaged. All those participants who took the L3 AET recognised the value of the qualification, not just as part of the programme, but as an investment in their future. Many saw it as the first step in the direction they wanted their career to progress. The members of the delivery team made a difference to the quality of delivery and outcomes for participants. This is not only reflected in the feedback that was received during and after the project (final participant surveys, provider case studies, the final evaluation survey, and in emails and comments received whilst on the programme) but is also seen in how the team adapted to changing circumstances. For example, the unexpected late start to the project was dealt with proactively and professionally and the steps taken to mitigate the impact of this on outcomes were successful.

Situations and circumstances that the delivery team had to deal with included, but were not limited to:

- the delay in funding, leading to a late start to the project;
- the impact of COVID-19;
- one large FE provider in a key locality not engaging with the project; and
- a number of other organisations funded by UKCRF in the priority areas trying to recruit the same demographic.

Some of these areas could not be identified as risks before the project started, but the way they were dealt with at the time significantly reduced the impact on the progress of the project over the short period it ran.

1.3 Outcomes, Impact and Scalability

Most of the targets set as part of the UKCRF funding application were exceeded by the delivery team. Of the project targets which were measured as UKCRF outcomes, a key one was exceeding the target to get 12 economically inactive or long-term unemployed people in employment, including self-employment, following support. The team actually secured this outcome for 14 participants and, in addition, a further five long-term unemployed or economically inactive people secured roles but did not have start dates by the time the project ended and are therefore not counted in the CRF outcomes. A further six short-term unemployed participants secured roles (again not counted as CRF outcomes), and an additional 22 participants were awaiting news on job applications, as of 30th June 2022.

The impact of this both on the people involved and the wider economy cannot be underestimated. More people in work, no matter how small the number not only increases the wealth and spending power of those involved but boosts the local economy as well. The reduction in unemployment

contributes to a reduction in government support costs and helps towards levelling up. The overall project spend of £1,929 per participant based on the 150 participants who received some form of intervention reinforces the fact that the TRANSFORM pilot gave value for money in all aspects. The sections in this report covering outcomes and feedback from participants and FE providers offers evidence that it could be rolled out in other areas.

1.4 Conclusions

The TRANSFORM project sought to enable local FE providers to diversify their workforce, drawing individuals from the local community, and supporting these individuals to realise their potential to utilise their skills and experience in the FE sector, supporting the workforce of the future. This virtuous circle provided a unique opportunity to address several key issues, with an innovative new approach that would help communities recover from the pandemic, building back stronger, more cohesive environments in which local people and businesses are able to flourish. The TRANSFORM project supported GMCA's local and long-term strategic priorities to drive growth and their ambitions towards levelling up, so that those in the region could benefit from improvements in their everyday lives.

It was a completely unique project, creating a potentially scalable solution that addressed national priorities through local delivery. The opportunity to pilot the TRANSFORM project has highlighted the benefits of this approach, by supporting individuals to upskill and reskill, to experience Further Education through supported placements, and to transition into roles in FE or the wider education sector.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The TRANSFORM project (**T**raini**n**g and **S**kills for **M**anchester), delivered by InspirEd Associates Ltd, sought to provide tailored support to help interested individuals across Greater Manchester make the transition into a career in Further Education (FE). The pilot project aimed to test whether the approach adopted by the delivery team would be successful and could be scaled. Recruitment was targeted at those who were unemployed, economically inactive or in ‘at risk’ employment situations⁴. It provided them with a range of tailored employment support, a short placement in the FE sector and, for those who wished to pursue a teaching career, TRANSFORM offered the opportunity to gain a Level 3 Award in Education and Training (L3AET). Individuals (participants) who progressed through the TRANSFORM programme were then supported to make the successful transition into a career in FE, including teaching, through identification of job opportunities and support with job applications. This took the form of help with identifying suitable roles, completing application forms, preparing for interview and any other appropriate support that was possible within the timeframe. However, if participants decided that a career in FE was not for them, they were also supported to look at alternative options, including progression on to additional education/training or looking at employment opportunities in other sectors. Therefore, TRANSFORM offered participants the opportunity to upskill and reskill and gain qualifications.

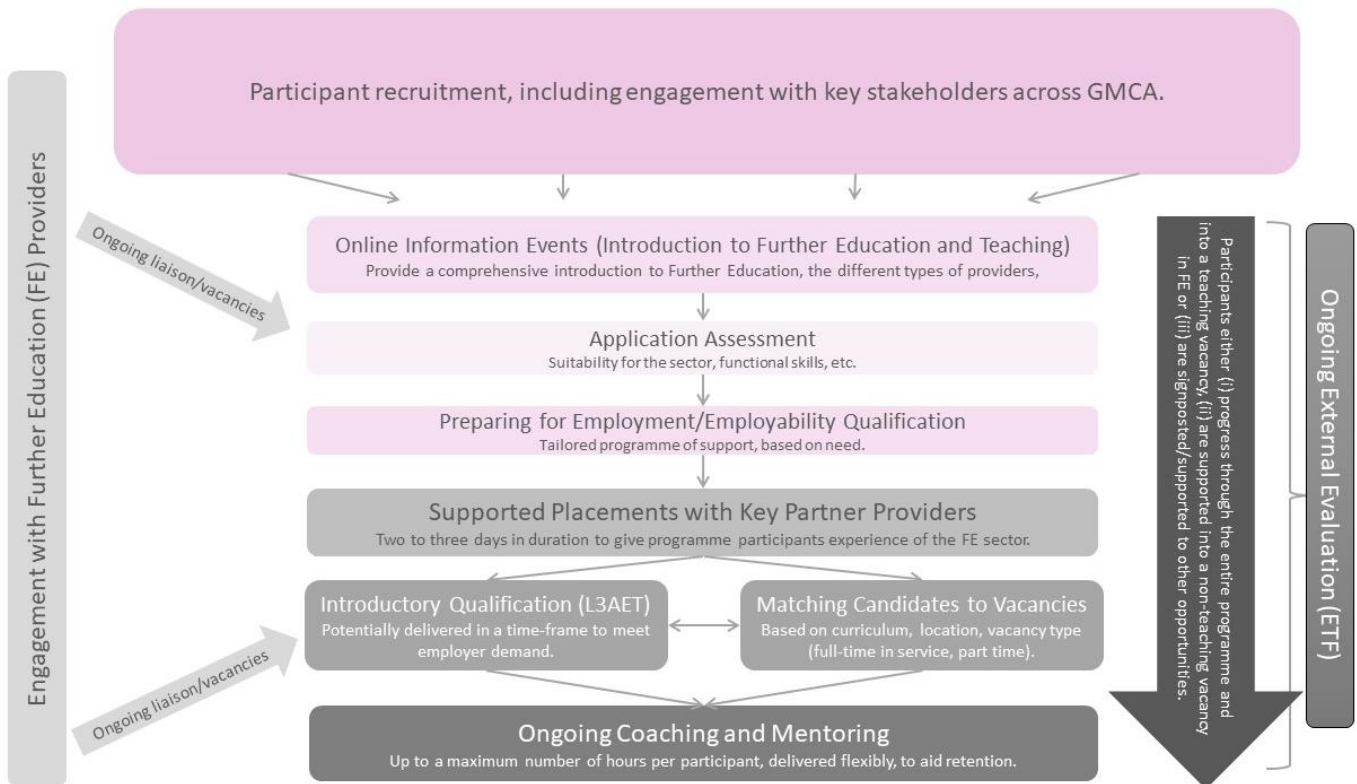


Fig 1: Overview of the TRANSFORM Project

2.1 Transform Programme Content

The TRANSFORM programme included the following activities:

⁴ For example, those at risk of redundancy, those on zero hours or part time contracts, and those underemployed below their skill level

- **Recruitment:** The delivery team made use of a wide range of channels to recruit participants, including online promotion, leaflet drops and information sessions at key locations. The team also liaised regularly with key personnel at organisations such as Jobcentre Plus, GMCA, Ingeus, Growth Company Employment and large employers and outplacement organisations, who could refer possible participants who would benefit from engaging with TRANSFORM.
- **Online Information Events:** These were designed to give potential applicants a comprehensive introduction to the Further Education (FE) sector and outline the purpose of the TRANSFORM programme, so that individuals could decide whether to proceed and continue engagement in the programme. As part of the introduction to the FE sector, participants were given information relating to the breadth of the curriculum in FE, the different employment opportunities available in FE, and the diversity of the student profile (age, starting points etc).
- **Employability Support/Qualification:** Dependant on the individual needs of participants, the programme sought to offer tailored support that would enhance employability prospects, particularly in the Further Education sector. The type of employability support ranged from individual coaching support to a career development course or a level 2 employability qualification. These were all delivered by the project team through a mix of delivery methods. In addition, some participants completed specific professional development modules that were relevant to the Further Education sector such as safeguarding, the PREVENT duty and Equality and Diversity. These modules were provided by Education and Training Foundation through FutureLearn.
- **Supported Placements:** Participants were given the opportunity to attend a two- or three-day supported placement referred to as Taster Experience Days (TEDs) with one of the following FE providers operating in the Greater Manchester area:
 - Bolton College;
 - Hopwood Hall College;
 - Oldham College;
 - Tameside College;
 - Manchester Adult Community Service;
 - Nacro;
 - System Group;
 - Healthy Me Healthy Communities; and
 - Mantra Learning.

The purpose of these supported placements was to: (i) further engage participants in developing life skills and employment-related behaviours; (ii) give them direct experience/exposure to the requirements of working in the FE sector; and (iii) show participants the potential breadth of roles that exist in a single FE provider and the different skill sets that are required for these roles.

- **Level 3 Award in Education and Training (L3AET):** Once participants had completed their supported placements, those who expressed an interest in seeking a student-facing support role (that could lead to a teaching role) or a teaching role in FE were then offered the opportunity to

complete a Level 3 Award in Education and Training. This is an ‘introductory, knowledge-based teaching qualification’ which has no minimum teaching practice requirement, meaning it can be undertaken by individuals who are not in a teaching role. However, there is a minimum requirement to take part in microteaching’ (FE Advice)⁵. This training therefore sought to provide participants with the basic skills and tools that they would require to apply for and enter teaching or learning support roles in the Further Education sector. It also provided them with a valuable addition to their CV to demonstrate their commitment to ongoing professional development and pursuing this type of career.

- **Matching Candidates to Vacancies:** Throughout the project, the delivery team liaised with local FE providers to promote TRANSFORM and encourage their involvement (e.g., local placements) and to understand their staff recruitment needs. Once participants had completed their placements, the delivery team offered them one-to-one support with job search, job applications and preparing for interviews. Where appropriate, the delivery team would seek to match candidates with job vacancies in local FE providers in the Greater Manchester area.
- **Ongoing Coaching and Mentoring:** Whilst the delivery team intended to provide a package of tailored support for participants that secured employment, particularly in the FE sector, in order to maximise retention, most of the participants who secured job roles in the FE sector did so in the latter weeks of the project. Instead, coaching and mentoring resource was focused on supporting participants with seeking and securing job roles in FE or elsewhere.

2.2 Outline of the TRANSFORM participant journey

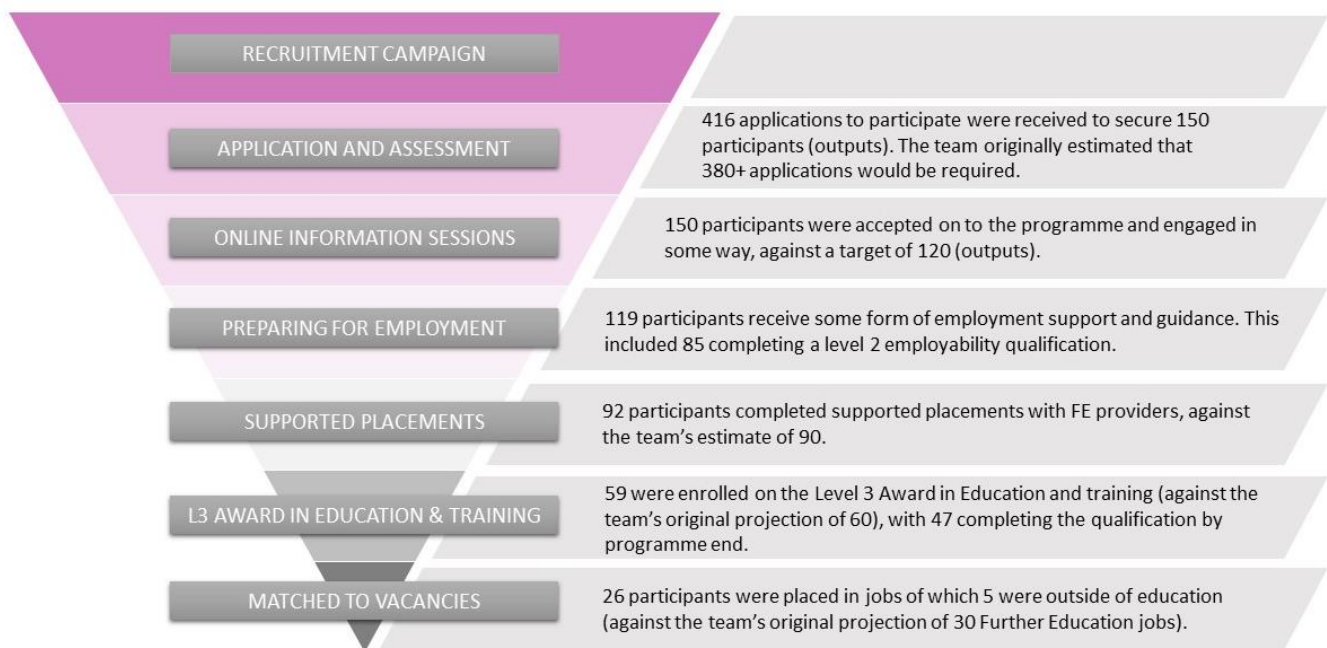


Fig 2: Overview of the TRANSFORM participant journey

Participants were not required to engage or complete all programme elements and were able to exit the programme at different stages, according to individual need. Figure 2 above provides an illustration of the possible participant journey that the delivery team developed. Information

⁵ <https://www.feAdvice.org.uk/i-want-work-fe-skills-sector/i-want-be-teacher-fe-skills/teaching-qualifications-fe-skills-sector/level3>

alongside individual stages of the participant journey illustrates the relationship between targets and achievements for the TRANSFORM project. Note that this information includes actuals against original projections, some of which are CRF outcomes and outputs, and of some of which are aspirational targets that the delivery team set out to achieve but these were outside of the scope of the CRF outcomes and outputs. The achievement of the CRF outcome targets is detailed in **Section 5**.

As well as assessing outcomes for individual stages of the programme this evaluation focuses on whether the overall project aims have been achieved.

3. APPROPRIATENESS OF INITIAL DESIGN

3.1 Project context

The UK Community renewal fund aims to support ‘people and places across the UK, focused on ... domestic priorities, growing local economies, and breathing new life into ... communities’ by providing £220 million of investment⁶. The fund has helped ‘support local areas to pilot imaginative new approaches and programmes that unleash their ‘potential’ and ‘instil pride’. The funding was available in all areas across the United Kingdom and invited innovative applications for pilot programmes that were considered to have the potential to be scaled. However, there were two key elements that applications needed to consider which were (i) investment priorities and (ii) priority areas.

Four investment priorities were identified, and applications needed to select which one or more of these they were applying under. The four investment priorities were:

- Investment in skills;
- Investment for local businesses;
- Investment in communities and place; and
- Supporting people into employment.

In addition, to ensure that the UK Community Renewal Fund reached the places most in need, UK Government identified 100 priority places based on an index of economic resilience across Great Britain. Priority places were identified for two main purposes:

- To prioritise applications that target the top 100 places where they also demonstrate a good contribution to strategic fit and delivery/effectiveness; and
- To provide capacity funding to help lead authorities in each of the 100 priority places to help them invite bids locally and appraise these bids.

Projects were weighted positively based on priority areas and investment areas. The TRANSFORM Project therefore identified investment in skills and supporting people into employment as the two investment priorities, and proposed delivery across Greater Manchester but with a greater focus on the four priority areas identified across the area, according to the following split:

RECRUITMENT BASED ON PRIORITY AREAS	Actual Outputs (Number accepted on to programme)	Target based on original application	Percentage Recruited	Number remaining on programme	Number remaining as %age of original output target
Bolton	26	21 (17%)	123.8%	21	100.0%
Oldham	21	17 (14%)	123.5%	12	70.6%
Manchester	61	52 (45%)	117.3%	49	94.2%
Rochdale	22	15 (12%)	146.7%	17	113.3%
Other	20	15 (12%)	133.3%	20	133.3%
TOTAL	150	120 (100%)	125.0%	119	99.2%

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus-2021-22>

The fund was introduced at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic was having an impact on the economy, particularly in certain sectors, with redundancies at one point during the pandemic reaching a higher level than the 2008/2009 economic downturn (Office for National Statistics). Furthermore, those not in work were struggling to find employment and the consequences of the pandemic were negatively affecting mental health⁷.

At the same time, recruitment to the Further Education (FE) sector, a key player in transforming the landscape of the Greater Manchester economy, was and remains challenging⁸ - particularly the recruitment of those to support delivery of apprenticeships, T Levels and other qualifications who can, in turn, inspire the next generation.

TRANSFORM therefore set out to address these issues, within the context of the UK Community Renewal Fund, whilst dovetailing with existing programmes and complementing and supporting existing initiatives, including upskilling, levelling up, and providing employability skills, alongside supporting people into employment.

Unfortunately, the design of the UK Community Renewal Fund itself and the delay in funding from UKCRF had an impact which included:

- The change in project timelines resulted in a project end date coinciding with the end of the academic year. This meant that project outcomes around people in education/training following support; and people in employment following support were harder to achieve in the period immediately following the project end - particularly given that the project was aimed at supporting people into job roles within the Further Education sector. As the FE and wider education sector largely closes for the summer holiday period, this has impacted on people being able to start any education or training programmes or job roles until the new academic year starts in September 2022. Whilst the option to extend all UKCRF projects beyond the June 2022 end date (potentially to the end of December 2022) was offered by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in late March of 2022, there was no additional funding to support this. Therefore, unfortunately, the extension was not possible for the TRANSFORM project, due to the way that it was structured and resourced and the team believed that the outcomes would still largely be achievable, even taking into account the delay and without any extension. However, they also acknowledged that, had the project started at the original proposed time, and/or, been delivered over a longer period, it would have been even more successful than it eventually transpired to be.
- The outcome target around progression into education was hindered the fact that some CRF beneficiaries were not eligible for courses funded through the Adult Education Budget (AEB). For example, British Overseas Nationals who had recently come to the UK were eligible to receive support through UKCRF projects but were not eligible to progress onto AEB-funded courses.
- A total of 225 of projects were awarded funding through UKCRF, and there were also instances of multiple projects being awarded in the same geographic areas – particularly those in priority areas, which carried additional weighting at the application stage. For example, eight projects were awarded across GMCA. Given that the fund was targeted at achieving a set number of pre-determined outcomes, a number of projects in the same area were in effect trying to achieve

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus-2021-22>

⁸ Greater Manchester Labour Insight Report, January 2022, Ingeus Employer Services Team.

similar outcomes and were therefore often targeting and seeking to engage the same beneficiaries.

- Participant churn was always expected to be high, due to the nature of these types of support programmes, and the delivery team therefore projected that they would need to target a high number of applicants in order to secure the required participants and achieve the desired outcomes. However, due to the additional requirement to recruit to the original proposed breakdown of priority areas, recruitment became more difficult as spaces available in these priority areas became filled, thereby limiting the areas that could be recruited from. In addition, in some cases, this led to an unintended consequence of conflicting with the overarching aims of the original application to support FE recruitment. For example, two applications were received from a geographic area which, in theory, no longer had TRANSFORM places available, due to the need to recruit certain percentages in certain areas. However, the backgrounds of the individuals in question were in construction and health and social care – expertise that the FE sector is desperate for. The decision was therefore taken to try to *over-recruit* in all areas, so that such individuals could participate.

Despite these challenges, the project has been successful in achieving what it set out to do, as detailed in **Sections 5 and 6**.

3.2 Appropriateness of initial design

The proposed TRANSFORM project set out to address the issues outlined above. It combined elements to secure positive outcomes for employability, particularly tackling recruitment and retention across Further Education. The project was designed based on the prior experience of the delivery team who drew on their knowledge and expertise to develop an approach that supported the Further Education sector with workforce development, whilst supporting economically inactive, unemployed, or underemployed and at-risk individuals gain employment, including transitioning into new careers in teaching or other roles in the education sector.

The programme design initially had six consecutive stages, as outlined in **Section 2**:

1. Online information sessions;
2. Application;
3. Preparing for employment;
4. Supported placements;
5. L3 AET; and
6. Matched to vacancies.

However, the delivery team quickly found that most individuals applied based on the information on the website, without having attended an online information session which meant that these stages were switched around and the information sessions were delivered to individuals as an induction session, once they were accepted on to TRANSFORM.

To ensure that participants could progress appropriately and at their own required pace, delivery had to become flexible to accommodate individual participant needs. The TRANSFORM team therefore responded to this need, delivering all elements of the support programme concurrently, with some elements delivered in multiple ways (such as online and face to face delivery). The

revised start time of the project (due to the delay of the funding award) also impacted this as some elements that were due to be delivered face to face at the outset had to be switched to online due to the Government's move to 'Plan B' COVID restrictions as a result of the Omicron virus. Conversely, though, some elements towards the end of the project that were planned to be delivered online were able to be switched to face-to-face to incorporate the tight timelines remaining and individual participant need. This flexible approach allowed participants to progress through their TRANSFORM journey at a pace that worked best for them individually.

In summary, the project was delivered broadly as intended, albeit with the minor adaptations outlined above and has been successful in delivering what was intended, achieving the desired outcomes (see **Sections 5 and 6**), within the original budget (see **Section 7**) and timelines. Feedback from participants and providers indicates that the programme was well thought out, well-structured and designed in order to achieve these positive outcomes. It can therefore be concluded that the original design was robust, appropriate and fit-for-purpose.

4. DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT

The award of funding was delayed which, in turn, delayed the project start by approximately two months, from the original date of August/September 2021 to November 2021. As a result, the following issues arose:

- Whilst the original timeframe incorporated the Christmas holiday period, there was plenty of time for project mobilisation and delivery prior to this, if it commenced as originally planned in August/September 2021. However, the revised timeframe, which started in early November 2021 and continued through to the end of June 2022, meant that, whilst mobilisation still had to be swift, there was a significant interruption to the project, in the form of the Christmas holiday period, at a critical stage of the project. Therefore, significant focus and resource was required to ensure high levels of communication, promotion and engagement of key stakeholders took place as swiftly as possible *prior* to Christmas.
- In addition, the new project timelines not only included the Christmas holiday period but also the Easter holiday period, effectively reducing the amount of delivery time quite significantly.
- Some of the staffing and resource that had been identified to deliver key elements of TRANSFORM, based on the original timelines, were no longer available, or did not have the same level of availability, as they had taken other work. Conversely, others had greater availability resulting in the project still being deliverable but with changes to the original staffing and resource model required.

4.1 Staffing structure

These issues resulted in a change to the project personnel structure but within the original budget, with the final revised structure as outlined below:

- A core delivery team comprising:
 - two Co-programme Leads;
 - an Employment Support Consultant; and
 - and two Administrators.
- A support team comprising:
 - a number of Employability and Level 3 Award in Education and Training (L3AET) Tutors;
 - an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) lead;
 - additional consultancy support around the recruitment and assessment of applicants; and
 - the Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network (GMLPN) team. The GMLPN team were extremely supportive of the project, mobilising at speed so that key messages could be pushed out to the provider network and employment opportunities and lessons learned could be effectively disseminated to relevant parties towards the end of the project.

This new personnel structure worked extremely well, with the two Co-programme Leads overseeing the different elements and able to step in to add support and expertise or assist across all elements

of TRANSFORM, as and where this was required.

The two administrators were to be young people identified and employed through the Kickstart Scheme. However, the process of finding two suitable people became protracted and was eventually unsuccessful, with the Kickstart Scheme ending before even one had been recruited. The two Co-programme Leads and other team members therefore had to pick up and deal with a significant amount of administrative work, creating workload problems early in the project. The budget was therefore rescoped to allow for additional project support but, by the time that this has been completed and an administration post advertised, it was a very short-term temporary position for which no applications were received. The existing team therefore had to do additional hours and an extra consultant was drafted in to provide further support.

4.2 Project Governance

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) oversaw delivery of the TRANSFORM project (as a 'Lead Authority') on behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The Co-programme Leads met with the GMCA team for an initiation meeting, followed by monthly meetings where the delivery team provided feedback to GMCA on progress against agreed outputs, outcomes and milestones, lessons learned, actual spend against budget and risks and mitigations. As the TRANSFORM project progressed well and was considered low risk, the reporting process was changed from May so that only the updated report was required to be submitted on a monthly basis, rather than also having a monthly meeting.

The project governance also included an Advisory Panel comprising key stakeholders including:

- Representatives of the FE workforce policy team at the Department for Education;
- A Senior Principal Skills Manager from Greater Manchester Combined Authority;
- A former College Principal and Local Enterprise Partnership Chair who is also Chair of an awarding organisation;
- A representative of Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network; and
- Representatives of the main partner colleges (Oldham College, Hopwood Hall College and Bolton College).

The Advisory Panel was convened to regularly review the design, including individual programme elements, and to provide guidance, feedback and suggestions aimed at enhancing the quality of delivery and impact.

The panel was scheduled to meet four times over the life of the project. This worked well, with good discussion and debate taking place during the two meetings that did take place. It was decided not to go ahead with the very first meeting, as this was too soon in the project delivery to be meaningful, and the last meeting, due to a large number of members giving their apologies. However, all panel members will be provided with a final update.

4.3 Project Delivery

The overall aim of the TRANSFORM project was to recruit individuals whose careers may have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, BREXIT or other factors, and upskill them and support them into roles in Further Education, where possible. The approach therefore had a dual purpose in supporting local people into employment and addressing the challenges around

recruitment and retention in the Further Education sector.

As noted in **Section 3** of this report, UK CRF projects had a focus on delivering in a number of investment and priority areas. Within GMCA, there were four identified priority areas being Manchester, Bolton, Oldham and Rochdale and the project impact indicators included beneficiaries who were long term unemployed (18+ months) and economically inactive.

The TRANSFORM project therefore had to meet targets around recruitment and activity in the priority areas, and recruitment and outcomes for beneficiaries from the identified demographic groups. This could at times create tensions between the project's ambition to support talented individuals transition into roles within FE, and the delivery of CRF outcome targets within priority area constraints. A relevant example of this was when TRANSFORM received applications from two individuals who were not from priority areas, at a time when the recruitment targets for those non-priority areas had already been exceeded. However, the applicants had experience and skills that were in high demand in FE teaching (construction and health and social care) and so the delivery team had to raise this as an issue with GMCA, who supported the request to allow the two individuals to participate in TRANSFORM.

These constraints became trickier to navigate as TRANSFORM progressed, with potential CRF outputs around priority areas and demographics being at odds with what the FE sector wants and needs. However, a decision was taken to try to *over-recruit* in all areas, to try to negate this potential conflict and final outcomes demonstrate that the TRANSFORM team did manage to balance the needs of both the CRF and their ambitions to support the FE sector with workforce development. However, the fact that such potential conflicts arose would indicate that this particular type of funding was not the correct mechanism for a future programme of this type because of these competing demands.

The delivery team adopted robust project management approaches including risk management, lessons learned and continuous quality improvement, which allowed them to quickly respond to context and need by flexing and adapting the programme. This approach was supported by transparent and regular communication with GMCA, as highlighted by the example above. Therefore, there were iterative improvements as the project progressed, including, but not limited to:

- Switching delivery to online as a result of 'Plan B' measures due to the COVID Omicron variant;
- Running all elements of the programme concurrently, rather than the staggered starts originally envisaged, in order to ensure that all participants could progress through at their own pace; and
- Trying to ensure that participants were not put on placement alone, as in these situations, they lose the value of having peers to reflect with, to network with and form relationships post-placement, which has happened in the vast majority of cases.

As a result of this robust approach, feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive about all elements of the programme. The Level 3 Award in Education and Training was ranked the highest by participants in terms of importance, as this qualification is recognised and valued by the FE sector and can be used as a stepping-stone to further teacher training such as the L4 Certificate or the L5 Diploma in Education and Training. The Taster Experience Days were ranked second in importance, with a general view that these would have been more beneficial if they could have been for a longer period of time, possibly five days rather than the two or three days available. This is a valid point, however, due to the short timescales for the project delivery, the TEDs had to be condensed to two to three days in order to accommodate all 90+ participants and allow them to

progress through the other elements of their TRANSFORM journey.

The overall project outcomes were therefore achieved *and* delivered to a high standard and held in high regard by the key stakeholders as evidenced by the case studies and survey responses for the participants/beneficiaries and the feedback and case studies from FE Providers (see **Sections 5 and 6** and **Appendix 1 and Appendix 2**).

5. PROGRESS AGAINST TARGETS

The TRANSFORM project sought to provide an innovative solution in response to the prevailing needs of the GM economy. It did this by addressing the impact that COVID-19 had on local economies, supporting unemployed, economically inactive, and other eligible residents to reskill and upskill in order to find sustainable employment, predominantly in the FE sector. This approach was intended to specifically support the FE sector, critical to delivery of the local and national plans for growth, and the levelling up agenda.

To achieve this ambition, TRANSFORM attracted and recruited local individuals who (mostly) had no prior knowledge or experience of the FE sector and supported them to make the transition into rewarding careers in the sector. For many participants this opened up an entirely new world of possibilities, with different potential career choices they would never have otherwise been aware of, as demonstrated in the words of one participant:

“Before I enrolled on the TRANSFORM programme, I had no clear direction in terms of career plans and my job prospects looked bleak as I had been a full-time mum for many years. Since completing the programme I can honestly say it has transformed my life and goals. Prior to this experience I didn’t have much knowledge of the FE sector and I imagined it to be similar to primary and secondary education. However, it’s very different and after completing the work placement within a FE college, it gave me a whole new outlook and perspective to teaching. I feel like I gained clarity and the tutors directed [and] helped me to put my existing skills to good use and find opportunities that were tailored to me. Now I’m very excited to pursue further courses which will help me land a career in FE. I can honestly say TRANSFORM has given me a whole new lease of life. I am immensely grateful to the tutors and all the staff who have helped me particularly Mel, Julia, Alan and Megan. Thank you all so much.”

Safiyah Seedat, TRANSFORM Participant

The target and actual outputs and outcomes are explained and explored in the following **Sections 5.1 and 5.2**). UK CRF grant funding outputs and outcomes were grouped as main indicators with subsets and applications for UKCRF were required to select from a set of pre-determined project impact indicators which included:

- Outputs - which required selection of those outputs (people, business or organisations) which would be targeted along with an explanation of the support that would be provided (if any) for those targeted.
- Outcomes – which required identification and selection of those outcomes that the project would deliver.

In the following tables, we provide information only on the UKCRF outputs and outcomes relevant to the TRANSFORM Project.

5.1 Outputs

The table below shows the UKCRF output targets and actual outputs achieved, with explanatory narrative below the table.

People	Status	Definition	Output Target	Actual achieved Outputs at 30 th June 2022
	Economically inactive	<p>Economically inactive individuals are those not in work and not actively seeking work (unlike unemployed individuals who are actively seeking work).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all economically inactive individuals claim benefits. • For those that do, this would include those claiming either “legacy” benefits or those within specific conditionality regimes in UC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The former here includes Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Income Support (IS). ○ The latter here includes claimants within the Preparation Requirement or Work Focused Interview Requirement conditionality regimes. 	100 applications to achieve 30 outputs	172 applications resulting in 72 outputs
	Unemployed	<p>As defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) unemployed persons are those:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without a job, have been actively seeking work in the past four weeks and are available to start in the next two weeks. • Out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks. <p>Not all unemployed persons claim unemployment-related benefits. This is due to either not being entitled to claim unemployment-related benefits or choosing not to do so. Here, unemployment-related benefits is defined as</p>	250 applications to achieve 80 outputs	209 applications, resulting in 67 outputs

		those in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or are in the Intensive Work Search Regime within Universal Credit (UC).		
	Employed	<p>People aged 16 and over who did one hour or more of paid work per week, or were temporarily away from work (e.g., because they were temporarily sick or on holiday). This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees (permanent and temporary workers, the latter including those on fixed period contracts, agency temping etc.). • Self-employed. • Family workers (unpaid). • People on government-supported training programmes, engaging in any form of work, work experience or work-related training. • Persons on maternity or paternity leave 	30 applications to achieve 10 outputs	33 applications, resulting in 11 outputs
Total number of 'People' Outputs			120	150
Businesses	Small	(50 or fewer employees, turnover of less than £10.2m)	5	13
	Medium	(250 or fewer employees, turnover of less than £36m)	10	9
	Large		25	11
Organisations	Public		20	16
	Private		80	19
	Voluntary		5	8

People

- **Economically inactive:** The initial TRANSFORM application for UKCRF indicated that 100 applications would be targeted from economically inactive individuals in order to secure at least 30 participants (covered above as 'outputs') from this category receiving some

sort of intervention. Applicants were not classed as participants (outputs) until they had received some form of intervention beyond the initial induction.

- **Unemployed:** The initial TRANSFORM application for UKCRF indicated that 250 applications would be targeted from unemployed individuals in order to secure at least 80 (outputs) from this category on the programme receiving some sort of intervention and applicants are not classed as participants (outputs) until they have received some form of intervention beyond the initial induction. Whilst the project did not recruit as many unemployed as originally forecast, they did recruit more economically inactive than originally forecast, meaning that the overall total was as forecast and the outcome targets relating to long-term unemployed and economically inactive were achieved.
- **Employed:** The initial TRANSFORM application for UKCRF indicated that 30 applications would be targeted from employed individuals in order to secure at least 10 participants (outputs) from this category on the programme receiving some sort of intervention; applicants were not classed as participants (outputs) until they had received some form of intervention beyond the initial induction.
- **Total:** The initial TRANSFORM application for UKCRF targeted 380 TOTAL applications in order to secure at least 120 participants (outputs) on the programme receiving some sort of intervention; applicants were not classed as participants (outputs) until they have received some form of intervention beyond the initial induction. At project end of 30th June 2022, 416 applications had been received to secure 150 participants (outputs).

Note that there was a slight anomaly in that the '*outputs*' for UK CRF grouped long-term and short-term unemployed together, whereas economically inactive was a separate category. However, many of the CRF '*outcomes*' grouped long-term unemployed and economically inactive together. Whilst the delivery team understood the reason for this, it introduced an additional challenge to recruitment, monitoring and reporting. In addition, the UK CRF definition of long-term unemployed was 18 months and over. This definition is not widely used or measured and it was therefore difficult to estimate the number of people that might fall into this category from across GMCA.

Businesses and Organisations

In InspirED Associates Ltd.'s original UKCRF application for funding for TRANSFORM, the intention was that businesses and organisations would benefit from the project in that businesses could refer applicants if they were restructuring and both businesses and FE providers would benefit from the upskilled participants that graduated from the programme of support.

Annex A of the original UK CRF application form asked about the groups that would be targeted. The team therefore included the businesses and organisations that they intended to *target communications at* and which would also be *indirect beneficiaries*. However, they did NOT include these businesses in the types of support that they intended to provide in that same annex (except for those FE providers that would receive direct financial support to provide the placements), as they were *not* intending to provide direct support to them. Neither did the team include any business/organisational related *outcomes* in their application.

However, post-funding award, there was an implication in the Annex A Indicator Guidance that the delivery team would directly support the number of businesses and organisations outlined in the original application form, with the intention of improving them or their offers or services. Whilst that was *not* the delivery team’s original intention, they actually did do this, to some extent, with a number of organisations having some quite significant interactions. So, for example, Right Management, the outplacement company, benefited from sessions for their advisers and their clients on moving into a career in the Education sector, including, of course, Further Education and the TRANSFORM project. These interactions are recorded as *outputs* as the team supported such businesses and organisations with the intention of improving them or their offers or services. However, the original target *output* numbers for businesses and organisations has not been achieved, as this was not what was intended when they were included in Annex A of the original application. If the outputs had been measured as the team had originally interpreted them, the output targets would have been achieved. Nevertheless, the project *outcomes* were not impacted.

5.2 Outcomes

Outcome measures focused on the number of participants who had completed elements of the support programme. The target outcome figures were set by the delivery team in their original application, according to the CRF pre-determined project impact indicators.

The table below shows the UKCRF outcome targets for TRANSFORM and actual outcomes achieved, forecast numbers where appropriate, and final actual and forecast outcome numbers. Explanatory narrative is provided below the table.

Outcome Indicator	Definition	Outcome Target	Actual Outcome achieved at 30 th June 2022	*Outcome Forecast	Final Forecasted Outcomes (actual and forecast)
People in education/training following support	<p>People who have received support to newly engage in education (lifelong learning, formal education) or training activities (off-the-job/in-the-job training, vocational training, etc.) immediately upon leaving the operation.</p> <p>Education or training is defined as a structured and agreed programme of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lifelong learning; • formal education; and 	25	17	7	24

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> educational and/or vocational training activities (this may include on the job and/or off the job vocational training or a combination of the approaches listed). <p>‘Mandatory’ training (e.g., job-search related / CV writing) and other non-vocational / non-educational support such as confidence building, life-skills and personal effectiveness support cannot be considered as ‘education’ or ‘vocational training’ (even though such activities may, of course, be useful and important support measures).</p>				
People gaining a qualification following support	<p>People who have received support to gain a qualification following that support.</p> <p>Qualifications should be recognised by Ofqual’s Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) https://www.gov.uk/find-a-regulated-qualification</p>	90	98		98
People engaged in job searching following support	<p>Economically inactive people who have received support to engage in job searching activities following that support.</p> <p>Economically inactive is defined on the next tab. Note economically inactive includes those in education or training.</p> <p>Engaged in job searching is to be understood as persons usually without work, available for work and actively seeking work i.e., unemployed as defined in Annex B of the Technical note for project applicants and deliverers.</p>	15	18		18
People in employment, including self-employment, following support	<p>Economically inactive people or people who have been unemployed for over 18 months who have received support to be in employment, including self-employment, for at least a 2 week of a four-week period following that support. This includes those moving into the “Working with requirements” or the “Working enough i.e., no working requirements” regimes on Universal Credit system.</p> <p>Economically inactive includes those in education or training.</p>	12	14	5	19

People engaged in life skills support following interventions	Economically inactive people or people who have been unemployed for over 18 months who have received support and who are newly engaged in life skills activities following that support. Life skills support is defined as additional support which improves confidence, resilience or motivation around the process of job searching and may include communication skills, presentation skills, activities which reduce social isolation or encourage appropriate employment related behaviours.	70	78		78
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Note: As set out in 3.9 of the UKCRF Further Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance, there was ‘acknowledgement that some outcomes will need to be forecast as they will continue to accrue after the completion of the evaluation’. Due to the start of the project being delayed, and as commented on previously, this impacted on the ability of some TRANSFORM participants to secure education outcomes, and education related jobs during (this) evaluation reporting timeframe. These two areas of outcomes have therefore been included as forecast figures. These are also commented on below. As can be seen from the detail above, the TRANSFORM initiative has been very successful and the following outcomes have been achieved:

- 98 people have gained qualifications, against a target of 90 (51 participants have gained a L2 qualification, 13 participants have gained a L3 qualification and 34 participants have gained both a L2 and a L3 qualification);
- 14 economically inactive or long-term unemployed participants are now in employment (against a target of 12). Eleven of these (79%) are in the education sector. In addition, a further five long-term unemployed or economically inactive people have secured roles but do not yet have start dates and so, given that they are education jobs, they are now not likely to start until September. They are therefore counted as forecast in the CRF outcomes above;
- 17 participants have progressed into education or training, against a target of 25. Five of these are for education courses that start in the new academic year (September). Of these, two are at L1, three are at L2, seven are at L3, three are at L5, one is at L7 and one is on-the-job vocational training. In addition, there are a further seven participants who have applied to join education programmes and are waiting to have their enrolment confirmed, and these are therefore counted in the forecast CRF outcomes above. This is as a direct result of the revised timings of the project;

- 78 economically inactive or long-term unemployed have engaged in life skills (against a target of 70); and
- 18 economically inactive people are now engaged in job search (against a target of 15).

All CRF outcomes therefore have been achieved, apart from 'people in education/training following support'. The actual total of people in education or training following support is currently at 17, against a target of 25. The total is expected to rise to 24 considering potential enrolments.

In addition to the UKCRF outcome targets, the TRANSFORM delivery team set themselves some additional, aspirational targets, which were focused on its ambition to raise the profile of the FE sector, and attract and recruit local individuals, who would otherwise never have considered a career in FE as an option. Whilst these may have contributed to the achievement of UKCRF outcome targets, they were not subject to UKCRF measurement or reporting and therefore not included in the figures above but achieved the following results:

- A further seven short-term unemployed people have secured roles, six of which are in the education sector and an additional 22 participants are awaiting news on job applications, with seventeen of these being roles in FE, four being roles in other education settings, and one for a role outside of education; and
- 92 participants completed Taster Experience Days (supported placements with FE providers), against a projection of 90.

6. IMPACT

The TRANSFORM project was developed to address the impact that factors such as COVID-19 and Brexit have had on the Greater Manchester economy, particularly targeting the four priority areas of Bolton, Oldham, Rochdale and Manchester, supporting unemployed and economically inactive residents to reskill and upskill in order to find sustainable employment. At the same time, the project sought to specifically support the FE sector, critical to delivery of the local and national plans for growth. Within this scope, it has achieved what it set out to, creating a range of positive impacts, including:

- 98 participants completed qualifications with 52 participants gaining a L2 employability qualification, 13 participants gaining the Level 3 Award in Education and Training and 33 participants gaining BOTH qualifications. This means that a total of 131 qualifications were awarded to participants through the seven-month project.
- 92 people completed the supported placements, engaging them in employment-related behaviours and increasing their confidence around workplace activity, giving them direct experience/exposure to the requirements of working in the FE sector and showing them the potential breadth of roles that exist in Further Education and the different skill sets that are required for these roles.
- 78 of those completing the employability qualification and/or completing the supported placements were long-term unemployed or economically inactive and therefore engaged in life skills that will enhance their career prospects now and in the future, further improving their confidence and increasing their employability. This will help lead to employment (if it has not already) and therefore, in the longer-term, improved economic and mental wellbeing. They are now benefiting from a new sense of direction and purpose, with the potential to apply their valuable transferable skills to a new career.
- Seventeen (17) people have gone on to further education or training and a further seven (7) are waiting to have their enrolment confirmed. Fourteen of the 24 are programmes to complete teaching-related qualifications.
- 18 economically inactive people are now engaged in job search activities, having begun this activity with the TRANSFORM delivery team and then consenting for their details to be shared with the National Careers Service so that they can continue receive support with job search activities beyond the life of their TRANSFORM journey. In addition, a further 28 TRANSFORM predominantly unemployed participants also requested support from the National Careers Service, meaning that a total of 46 participants have demonstrated their continuing engagement in, and commitment to finding sustainable employment, as a result of their participation in the TRANSFORM support programme.
- Fourteen (14) economically inactive or long-term unemployed participants are now in employment. Eleven of these (79%) are in the education sector. In addition, five long-term unemployed or economically inactive people have secured roles but do not yet have start dates or will start in September. A further six short-term unemployed people have secured roles, bringing the total number securing education roles to 22. Finally, an additional 22 participants are awaiting news on job applications, as of 30th June 2022. An unintended outcome of delivering the TRANSFORM Project has been that once participants become aware of the potential for them to transition into some form of teaching or teaching support role, some of them

also then become more open to opportunities across the wider education sector. This has resulted in a number of TRANSFORM Participants securing roles in education, in Higher Education (HE) and the schools sector.

- One participant's TRANSFORM journey was so impressive that he was shortlisted for the Manchester Adult Education and Skills Plan 'Return to Learning Award' 2022. David's journey began with him successfully completing a Level 2 employability award, following which he was offered a placement at Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES), where he spent three days at their Greenheys Centre in Moss Side. This experience was completely life changing for him, he was inspired and moved by the care and support learners at MAES received, by the quality of teaching, and how it was individualised to meet learners needs. The experience culminated in him deciding that he absolutely wanted to pursue a career in teaching in Further and Adult Education, and following the placement, he completed the L3AET with TRANSFORM and applied to volunteer with MAES, teaching a pre-entry English class and an Entry Level 2 mathematics class. He is now enrolled on the L5 Diploma in Education and Training. In just over four months, he has truly had a transformational experience, gaining confidence, and embarking on a learning journey, both in terms of qualifications and work experience, which will help him transition into an exciting new career in teaching.
- Nine FE providers across Greater Manchester have benefited from the opportunity to upskill the local community and at least ten FE providers have benefited from securing new employees or volunteers as a direct result of the TRANSFORM project. In addition, all FE providers across the region are now benefiting from a pipeline of suitably trained individuals, with a wide range of transferable skills, ready to enter employment in the sector.
- Local employers are also now benefiting from upskilled individuals who have participated in the support programme (and possibly entered further study as a result), entering the local labour market.
- This, in turn is benefiting the local economy, with upskilled individuals entering the local labour market or becoming employed, thereby reducing unemployment post-project.

Below is an overview of stakeholder feedback⁹ which not only substantiates this impact, but also provides evidence of the quality of the delivery of TRANSFORM. This takes the form of provider and participant case studies¹⁰ and data gained from participant questionnaires.

6.1 Provider case studies

Provider case studies are reproduced in full at **Appendix 1**. Three Provider case studies were completed with Hopwood Hall College, Oldham College, and Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES). The following key themes emerged about the key features of the TRANSFORM project and how it benefited the participants:

- **Developing a better understanding of what FE had to offer:** Providers commented on the fact that prior to their placement, participants were unaware of the wide range of employment opportunities in FE. They gained a much clearer understanding about the wide range of courses studied, the various aspects of the teaching role, safeguarding and student support; and how to apply for posts at specific colleges and in the sector generally. Providers noted that no negative feedback from participants was received concerning their experience with their placements.

⁹ Quotations included with permission

¹⁰ Appendix 1 and 2

- **Timing of the placements:** In some instances, providers commented that if the placements been scheduled earlier in the academic year, more staff and resources would have been available to manage them, and in some cases, it would be possible for participants to observe more teaching and learning. The original project dates would have enabled participants to complete placements during the autumn term but the change in timeframe meant it was not possible to commence placements then as originally intended. This was due to the fact that providers needed lead-in time to plan placement activity and identify resources to support the placements, and it was not possible for them to do this prior to the Christmas holiday period. That said, the providers organised and delivered a full and comprehensive programme which catered for the needs of the participants, with every attempt being made to create a bespoke experience for each of them according to their curriculum or job role and areas of interest. This can be verified by the comments made in the participant case studies.
- **The placement was key to enabling participants to decide whether to seek a career in FE:** The placement was extremely important in assisting participants with the decision-making process regarding a career in the FE Sector. Many participants secured employment in learning support type roles, with providers commenting on the quality of the participants, and their suitability for roles within their own organisation, or in the wider FE sector. Each case study identified that there were a significant number of participants who were suitable for posts in student support, learning support, skills development coaching, safeguarding, and other administrative roles. Providers indicated that many participants who secured roles in student support and administration could have the potential for progression into a teaching role in the future.

“I hope that your delegates enjoyed their experiences with the college?

I was certainly impressed with the quality and attitudes of the entire cohort.

We are delighted to have received application forms from two participants, and we hope to receive application for the other attendees. Please can you encourage the others to submit an application, even if it is just speculative?”

Martyn Hardy, HR Manager, Hopwood Hall College

- **FE providers had invested time and energy into designing immersive and enjoyable placements:** All providers had made efforts to provide an immersive experience about how they operated in order to provide a realistic view of what it was like to work in FE, and to showcase the types of roles that existed and may therefore become available. Providers felt they had on the whole got the balance right and the placements had worked very well. Some small adjustments were made to what was offered during the placements in response to feedback from TRANSFORM participants, but these were generally in order to allow participants to observe more teaching and learning, including where possible, in their area of interest/specialism. Providers and participants thought that extending the number of placement days would enrich the experience.
- **Placements were an enjoyable and effective recruitment strategy for FE providers:** Providers enjoyed hosting the placements, and all confirmed they would be willing to host further placements at some point in the future if the situation arose for them to do so, particularly as it added to the pool of talent from which they could recruit.

6.2 Participant case studies

Participant case studies are reproduced in full at **Appendix 2**. Six TRANSFORM participants contributed to the case studies. The case studies provide a very encouraging and exciting picture of how the different elements of the TRANSFORM Programme helped, supported and enthused these six individuals (to make, in many instances, life changing decisions about their career and their future). Participation in the TRANSFORM Programme was reported by all of the case study participants to be a transformative experience. Varsha Dubey, one of the case study participants described how the TRANSFORM Programme helped to turn her dreams into reality, and she is now an independent working woman because of the support, help, advice and qualifications she gained during her time on the support programme, which led to her securing her first ever job in the UK. The TRANSFORM Programme has quite literally changed her life. She also now has a great support network because of the people she met on TRANSFORM.

There are other similar examples of the transformative nature of this project amongst the other contributors to these case studies which demonstrate the success of the project.

There are several common themes in the participant case studies:

- **Discovery:** Participants learned about TRANSFORM from a variety of sources, including from their children's school newsletters, from online promotion, and in one instance, from a local training provider, with whom they subsequently secured a job as a trainee technical tutor. It is clear from the comments made in the case studies that once interest was aroused, participants' curiosity prompted further investigation, as demonstrated by Kate Heaton who commented that, after applying to join TRANSFORM and discussing her application and the options available with a member of the team (which she found a very encouraging and supportive experience), she was able to identify the range of business and entrepreneurial skills which she possessed that would provide a strong platform on which to base a teaching career, and realised that she had much to offer the sector.
- **Direction:** Participants weren't always aware of the skills that they had, or indeed the value of those skills, and how to exploit them in order to secure employment in the FE sector; all of which caused a lack of direction, and to some extent confusion amongst the participants. Additionally, they were also unaware that the skills that they possessed were in great demand, and they also did not appreciate the range of employment opportunities that exist within FE. What was common among these six case studies, is the collective wealth of experience and knowledge that participants had which was relevant and applicable to a range of roles, including teaching, in the FE sector. Only when participants had experienced the provider placement and completed the L3 Award in Education and Training did they feel that they fully understood where they could 'fit' in terms of a role within the FE sector.

Tricia, one of the case study participants, stated that she would not have had the opportunity to go into Tameside College, or apply and obtain her current role, if she had not been through the TRANSFORM programme. She reported particularly liking how the TRANSFORM support programme was structured, and she felt that this, along with the support and encouragement, had been incredibly motivational. She also felt that she had received excellent support, encouragement and advice throughout the programme which has helped her to review and pursue her career options and ambitions.

- **Achievement:** Without exception, all of the case study participants found the Taster Experience Days (supported placement) a revelatory experience. They valued the opportunity to spend time

in various departments, observing teaching and learning, listening to input from various members of the senior management team and other members of staff. Participants reported how the taster days gave them the opportunity to explore the numerous and various roles that were available within the organisations and importantly, the process that they needed to follow to obtain these various roles. It also helped them to crystallise their thinking about the jobs that they wished to apply for and made them realise what an exciting sector FE is in terms of career opportunities and job satisfaction. Kate Heaton, one of the case study participants, commented that there '*were inspirational and highly informative inputs from members of the senior management team on all aspects of the college's activities*'.

Lesson observations and the positive interactions between staff and students were also found to play a key role in helping participants realise that they themselves had something to offer learners. The L3 Award in Education and Training was particularly valued as it helped participants to understand what it takes to become a competent teacher. Case study participant John Kay reported feeling that his eyes were opened regarding the complexity of the teacher role and the extent to which staff tried everything in their power to stretch and encourage their learners to achieve. This experience confirmed for John that he had chosen the right path as it made him realise that he too could play a key part in helping learners to achieve their ambitions.

- **Outcomes:** All of the six case study contributors have achieved qualifications through TRANSFORM and have secured a role within the FE sector. These range from: a (trainee) Technical Tutor in Engineering; an Engagement Worker providing information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and careers support; a Learning Facilitator supporting ICT and maths groups; an Employment Partnership Co-ordinator supporting learners to prepare for their placements and working with local employers to encourage their participation in the placement programmes that form part of the T-Levels or with Apprenticeships; an Examinations Invigilator (who is also exploring a range of different roles within the College); and a maths and English Tutor. This demonstrates not only the start of a new career in Further Education but also potentially a 'stepping-stone' that may ultimately lead to other roles in the FE sector, for example teaching, or progressing into management positions.

All participants believe that they would not be in the position they now find themselves in, without the support of the TRANSFORM Programme. Kate commented that she was 'very grateful for the opportunity to have participated in the TRANSFORM Programme which she has enjoyed and very much benefitted from. It has been a really great and transformative experience, and she has been completely and fully supported by the TRANSFORM team every step of the way; she has also enjoyed working alongside other participants who have been pleasant and helpful'.

These case studies provide an extremely positive view of the TRANSFORM project and highlight the importance the Taster Experience Day placements played in helping participants to understand what the sector offers, and how they as an individual could play a part in this.

6.3 Participant questionnaire data analysis

119 participants were invited to complete the final evaluation survey and 53 responses were received (46%). Participant responses to a selection of prompts were favourable in relation to the project objectives, engagement with activities, organisation, management and outcomes. Please see **Appendix 3** for a full breakdown of responses.

Over 30% of respondents said they were attracted to TRANSFORM because it offered the chance

to progress into work in the FE sector. A slightly lesser proportion said they were attracted to the support programme because it offered them the opportunity to gain a qualification (20%) or access employment opportunities in their local area (20%). This shows that the main aim of the project, to teach in FE, was a key attraction for prospective participants.

The majority of respondents (85%) thought that the information/ induction sessions were either excellent or good/above average, whilst 89% of those that rated it felt that the quality of the Level 2 Introductory Award in Employability Skills was excellent or good/above average. No participant rated either element as below average or poor.

Of the total number of respondents who rated the FE modules (for example Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, PREVENT) 83% thought that the quality of the course was excellent or good/above average. Twenty participants provided no response to a quality assessment on this element, presumably as they did not complete any FE modules.

95% of the participants who rated the level 3 Award in Education and Training thought that the quality of the course, including delivery was excellent or good/above average. 5% rated it as average, whilst no participants rated it as below average or poor. Twelve participants responded to the survey but provided no response to a quality assessment on this element, so presumably did not complete the L3AET.

Whilst 62% of the respondents thought the quality of the placement with an FE provider was excellent, there wasn't a strong clustering of responses in line with other quality-based questions. Six respondents (12%) thought the quality of placements was average or below average. However, the 62% is reflected in one of the comments relating to what was most important: 'by visiting the FE setting, I have gained practical experience and sector knowledge, which then increased my interest in teaching'.

82% of the respondents thought that the quality of the job search was excellent or good/above average. This also reflects the main aim of the project, progression into employment and the dedication and commitment of the TRANSFORM team in providing the direction and opportunities.

When asked to identify the most important element of the TRANSFORM support programme, 20 (or 41% of those who responded to this question) said it was the L3 AET, whilst 12 (24%) opted for FE provider placement. This may show that participants value qualifications over experiences and qualifications are the key to progress into employment. This is reflected in one of the comments relating to what was most important: 'the Level 3 Award in Education and Training gave a good insight about the responsibilities of a teacher'.

Overall, the feedback and responses are a reflection of the quality of the TRANSFORM experience in providing a worthwhile opportunity for participants and helping for them to progress into employment in the FE sector. This is reflected in several of the general comments provided by respondents: 'It offered me just what I needed at the right time to help me secure the kind of employment I wanted', 'this programme has opened the door of opportunities for me by guiding me in the right direction', 'this is one of the best and most useful courses that I have done...', 'it also broadened my knowledge of the FE sector which will help me in my new job'.

7. VALUE FOR MONEY

The table below shows the TRANSFORM project's original budget, reforecast budget, and actual spend against the revised budget at the project end date 30th June 2022. In the final column, a '-' indicates an underspend, whereas the lack of '-' indicates an overspend. An explanation for these variances is provided in the narrative below the table.

Budget Category	Original Budget	Reforecast Budget	Actual	Variance
Staff Salaries	£120,884	£122,425	£112,511	- £9,914
Overheads	£18,133	£18,364	£16,877	- £1,487
Employment Support	£21,250	£19,825	£18,545	- £1,280
Partner Fees	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	
Website, promotion and online learning platform	£8,000	£8,269	£8,307	£38
IT Hardware and Software	£5,000	£2,147	£2,339	£192
Online Information Sessions	£3,750	£3,780	£2,970	- £810
Assessment of Applications	£12,375	£12,420	£10,530	- £1,890
Employability Courses	£27,070	£17,165	£18,573	£1,408
Placements	£31,950	£28,945	£28,702	- £243
L3 Award in Education and Training	£24,480	£24,480	£24,699	£219
Evaluation	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	0
Project Support	-	£15,000	£15,234	£234
TOTAL:	£302,892	£302,820	£289,287	- £13,533

7.1 Reprofileing TRANSFORM project budget

The budget was reforecast part way through the project, in March 2022, due to the following factors:

- IT, hardware and software costs were expected to be less than originally budgeted as the delivery team were largely using their existing IT equipment.
- Employability courses were switched to online delivery as a result of the Omicron COVID-19 variant which reduced delivery costs, and there were reduced employability tutor costs.
- Placements costs were somewhat reduced as providers did not require DBS checks to be carried out for participants attending the Taster Experience Days, and many participants did not claim reimbursement of travel expenses (which could be due to the fact that wherever possible, they were placed with a local provider).
- The anticipated underspend was moved to a new budget line for project support, to allow the delivery team to commission additional support, given that the two Kickstart Administrator roles never transpired (as commented on in other sections of this report).

There were some other minor changes to budget lines at this time, but these were due to minor fluctuations that would not have any overall impact on the overall budget costs and so have not been commented on.

7.2 Actual performance against budget

As can be seen from the above financial information, the actual spend against revised budgeted costs resulted in a £13,533 or 4.5% underspend (variance). Where fluctuations across the expenditure lines, were fairly minor these have not been commented on.

- **Overspend:** The main area of overspend was in relation to the employability courses with a variance of £1,408. This was due to the large number of participants who benefitted from achieving the L2 IAES qualification (85 against a target of 60).
- **Underspend:** There were some savings on the delivery of information sessions, the assessment of applications and the employment support consultancy, due to the realisation of efficiencies in delivery. However, the main underspend of £9,914 is in relation to the staff salaries and this is a direct result of InspirED Associates eligibility for Employment Allowance which allows certain employers to reduce their annual National Insurance liability by up to £5,000 in each tax year. This amount had not been factored into the budgeted figures, and therefore this expenditure line was reduced by £10,000, being £5,000 in each of the tax years the TRANSFORM project delivery spanned. As overheads were charged at 15% of salary costs, this reduction in salaries also resulted in a reduction in the overhead figure of £1,487.

It is worth noting that without the adjustment of these combined figures the variance would have been (£13,533 - £11,401) £2,132, or less than 1% of the project budget, making the actual budgeted amounts extremely accurate in overall terms.

7.3 Cost per participant

The overall project spend was £1,929 per participant, based on the 150 participants (outputs) who received some form of intervention. Considering the TRANSFORM outcomes, which included achievement of qualifications, improved life skills, actual job outcomes and future job opportunities, it is difficult to quantify the positive impact this project will have in the long term. However, we can assume that the local economy will benefit from these upskilled individuals entering the labour market, that individual participants will benefit from the positive impacts of being economically active, with improved well-being and self-esteem, improved mental health, and improved family and community relationships.

In addition, and importantly for the TRANSFORM project, local colleges and the wider FE provider network, will benefit from TRANSFORM participants who have been, or will be recruited into the sector, at a time when recruitment continues to be challenging.

8. LESSONS LEARNED

Monthly evaluation meetings took place between the TRANSFORM Co-programme Leads and the Education and Training Foundation's evaluation team. The focus of these meetings included a review of progress and performance against the TRANSFORM Project's CRF outputs and outcomes, along with discussion about the lessons learned.

What became apparent during these meetings and as the project progressed, is that TRANSFORM was being very well received, by both providers and participants, as can be evidenced by the extremely positive feedback and comments from both groups (refer to case studies **Appendices One and Two**).

The TRANSFORM project wished to explore the potential to firstly recruit, and secondly support individuals with the requisite skills and expertise to transition into roles in FE. The aim was to expose these individuals to the art of the possible, through a programme of tailored support, that incorporated an 'employability element', a structured, immersive short placement in an FE setting (TED), and the opportunity to achieve the L3 Award in Education and Training (L3AET), followed, where possible and time permitting, by intensive job search support.

The L3AET and the TED have without doubt, been held in very high regard by participants and providers and could be seen as the crux of the support programme. This is because these elements enabled participants to understand how FE operates and to clarify their career goals in this specific context whilst achieving a qualification that enhanced their knowledge and helped them move closer to the FE workplace.

The success of the TRANSFORM project has been possible by the hard work of the delivery team, the unwavering support of the FE providers, and it could be said, in spite of the UKCRF requirements that at times, created tensions between the aspirations and ambitions of TRANSFORM and the criteria and aims of this funding mechanism.

In addition, the changes to the project timelines, and the fact that this was a pilot, with a relatively short delivery time for a project of this nature, have both impacted to some extent on the final outcomes that were achieved, compared to what could have been achieved without some of these constraints. The forecast outcomes in **Section 5** demonstrate this.

The lessons learned therefore are largely in relation to the tensions outlined above, and these are explored below

8.1 Participant recruitment

Recruitment of participants remained a key area of focus for the majority of time that the project was in operation, in fact, recruitment of participants continued right up to early June. Consistent application of criteria was necessary to identify those participants who were long-term unemployed and economically inactive and from the defined geographical areas ensured that outcomes around these demographics were met.

However, identifying and gathering evidence of the eligibility, status and/or classification of prospective participants, and gathering evidence of outcomes, with only limited guidance, was somewhat onerous and placed an additional administrative burden on the team, especially as they did not manage to secure the two Kickstart administrators.

In addition, and as mentioned previously in this report, due to the requirement to recruit to the original proposed breakdown of priority areas, recruitment became more difficult as spaces available

in these priority areas become filled, thereby limiting the areas that could be recruited from. In some cases, this led to an unintended consequence of conflicting with the overarching aims of the original application to support FE recruitment. The decision was therefore taken to try to *over-recruit* in all areas, so that individuals who had valuable skills and expertise that were in high demand in FE could participate in TRANSFORM regardless of their location.

8.2 Timelines

Given the short nature of the TRANSFORM pilot project, the team made sure all stakeholders were aware of the need to move very quickly and operate with a sense of urgency to ensure delivery by the end of June so outcomes could be recorded and met on or before this date. However, despite constant reminders, responses have often been delayed. For example, an email sent to a partner, offering to present to their team about the programme was responded to after two months, with the presentation eventually taking place nearly three months after the initial contact. Considering that the project had a lifespan of less than 8 months, these delays had a significant impact.

The project was originally due to commence in late August/early September 2021 but was delayed and commenced in November 2021. The original timelines incorporated the Christmas period so only lost time during one holiday period. The revised timeframes mean that both Christmas and Easter holidays fall within the very short timeframe for delivery, effectively reducing the time available to deliver the project by one full month out of just under eight months available. This also impacted considerably on the potential for placements to take place after Easter, as providers are largely focused on getting students through exams and finishing work required for internal assessment. This meant that organising dates for placements was more challenging.

The change in timelines also impacted on a number of the original outcome targets, including:

- **Job outcomes:** As many participants submitted applications for roles in FE once they had progressed through their TRANSFORM journey, this resulted in applications largely being made late in the life of the support programme. Many participants are awaiting the outcome of applications for roles in FE, but these roles will not now commence until the start of the new academic year. Reporting outcomes were also affected by the fact that the HR/Recruitment processes in some FE Providers can be slow, particularly during certain busy periods. One participant even managed to secure a confirmed teaching role overseas, whilst waiting for any response at all to the three applications he had made to FE providers in Greater Manchester.
- **Education outcomes:** Many participants had made applications for various education programmes and were at different stages including waiting for assessment outcomes or waiting for confirmation of start date. Many programmes will not commence until the start of the new academic year. In addition, the eligibility of successful applicants for funding for education programmes made progression limited in some cases, particularly for non-British citizens.

This has had a knock-on effect on data collection as, beyond the project end, there could be no certainty as to participant outcomes. The solution has been to gather robust evidence in order to apply as accurate forecast outcomes as possible, as these outcomes will continue to accrue after the completion of this evaluation.

8.3 Key messages/communication

Communicating the message to prospective TRANSFORM participants was an absolute priority. Many participants who could enter a teaching role in FE are still under the impression that a degree and teaching qualification is a pre-requisite in the sector. The message that this is not the case was

very clear in all TRANSFORM materials, and in all key messages.

However, as progress was made with the TRANSFORM project, it became clear that the requirements in terms of the qualifications needed to teach at the colleges varied. The qualification requirements for some colleges appeared to be in conflict with the DfE guidance and conflicted somewhat with the TRANSFORM messaging.

This had a knock-on effect with participants, as they completed their TRANSFORM journey, they became enthused about the possibility of moving into a role in FE, and this was often re-enforced during their placement. Providers were very clear about how impressed they were with the groups placed with them, and they encouraged them to make applications for roles, sometimes even if this was speculative. This was extremely positive, however, the reality was that participants often applied for roles that they had little or no chance of securing, as they required a level of experience/qualifications that they did not possess, and/or, they were roles which were extremely competitive. This resulted in some participants becoming very disillusioned and deflated, quite quickly in some instances, and a number of these participants decided to look for, and secure, roles in other education settings, such as HE and schools. In any similar future programme, the messaging should possibly be around moving into a role in FE, as a stepping-stone to a teaching career, in order to manage the expectations of those that may not be able to progress directly into teaching.

8.4 Success and scalability

The success of the TRANSFORM project is evident from the feedback from partner providers who supported the placements, participants and those who attended the advisory panel meetings and has proved the concept as an effective recruitment strategy into Further Education, highlighting the potential for FE providers to identify and benefit from local talent. However, the project could have been even more successful in this aim if the project had been longer and the recruitment was not constrained by particular demographics and localities.

The delivery team's analysis is that the project is scalable. However, they suggest that a hub model would be most appropriate with small teams working across concentrated geographic areas, such as Greater Manchester, for the following reasons:

- They believe that the benefit of a small project team knowing and understanding each of the individual participants cannot be underestimated, as it allowed them to provide a truly tailored and personalised experience by sharing information between team members, matching participants to placements that would be most suitable to them and sharing job opportunities that would be most relevant to them.
- The project, in the context of UKCRF, strived to provide local opportunities for local people and therefore, as well as knowing the participants, building relationships with local FE providers and employers and truly understanding the local economic and FE landscape is also a significant benefit.

9. CONCLUSION

TRANSFORM was an innovative pilot proposal to test an approach that would support achievement of UKCRF outcomes and contribute to the levelling up agenda.

It aimed to raise the profile of Further Education as a career option with individuals who may never have otherwise considered it and the fact that 28 TRANSFORM participants have either secured or applied for roles in FE is testament to the success of the programme in this regard.

The achievement, within the project timescales and budget, of all but one of the five outcome targets (with the fifth being forecast to be 96% achieved by September), demonstrates that it has undoubtedly been successful within the context of the UK Community Renewal Fund. In addition, the feedback from participants and FE providers evidences that the programme was highly valued and seen as high quality.

“A very well organised programme, with exceptional, understanding, and very helpful staff members committed to ensuring everyone understands the aims of the course whilst maintaining an exceptional level of support. A 100% learning experience.”

Chris Maloney, TRANSFORM Participant

“Thank you for allowing Oldham College to participate in the TRANSFORM programme ... from our perspective the programme has been a rewarding and beneficial experience. We were able to show [participants] the possibilities ... that they would never have considered previously ... We are in continuous contact with all the participants, some of whom have already applied for positions at the college and propose new suitable roles as and when they arise. We have also proposed to reach out to other colleges in the region on their behalf, as an introduction, if they see suitable positions there.”

Lee Bowers, Recruitment Specialist, Oldham College

The TRANSFORM concept has therefore been proved, thanks to:

- the support of local FE providers;
- the hands-on, partnership approach of Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network (GMLPN);
- the commitment of the majority of TRANSFORM participants who were open to new opportunities and willing to sometimes step outside of their comfort zone, particularly those who had been out of employment for a significant period; and
- UK Community Renewal Funding, without which, this approach would not have been tested.

UKCRF sought innovative solutions, which could be implemented locally, whilst having the potential to be scaled. However, at times, the nature of the UKCRF requirements created tensions between the aspirations and ambitions of TRANSFORM and the criteria and aims of this funding mechanism. Whilst it is clear why a set range of outputs and outcomes were used, and the target outputs and outcomes were identified by the delivery team themselves at the funding proposal stage, the application of these to the TRANSFORM project paradoxically sometimes had the effect of stifling the innovation. This is touched on throughout this report, particularly with reference to recruitment according to priority area splits. However, a further example would be the way in which the outcomes targets drove the delivery team to prioritise places for long-term unemployed individuals who may

have less attractive skills for the FE sector over short-term unemployed individuals with highly attractive skill sets.

That said, the positive outcomes achieved highlight what can be accomplished and, given greater timescales for delivery, those set outputs and outcomes would be less constraining. The TRANSFORM approach could be adapted based on the lessons learned from this experience and made even more successful in future. The delivery team are confident that the project could be scaled through a hub model, with small teams working across concentrated geographic areas, allowing local knowledge and relationships to be harnessed.

In summary, TRANSFORM was a completely unique project, creating a potentially scalable solution that addressed national priorities through local delivery. The opportunity to pilot the TRANSFORM project has highlighted the benefits of this approach, by supporting individuals to upskill and reskill, to experience Further Education through supported placements, and to transition into roles in FE or the wider education sector. This would not have been possible without UK Community Renewal Funding.

APPENDIX 1 - TRANSFORM FE PROVIDER CASE STUDY SUMMARIES

Hopwood Hall College

Placement overview

The content during the two-day placement was comprehensive, and maximised the benefit gained from using both the Rochdale Campus (Day 1), and the Middleton Campus (Day 2). The programme was led by the Human Resources and Quality teams, and consisted of; tours of both campuses, including input on the wide variety of courses on offer and the role of the teacher; lesson observations across both sites which were tailored to the needs of the participants (where possible); input from safeguarding, pastoral care, and student support staff (including PACE- Progress Tutorial Programme); input on digital and blended learning; advice and guidance from Human Resources and Staff Recruitment on the potential job opportunities (teaching and non-teaching roles), and how to apply; and a final review session at the end of both days, in order to take feedback and reflect on each of the two days experience.

The aim and was to provide an immersive experience about how the college operated and offer a realistic view of what it was like to work in a college, and the jobs that might become available; the outcome being that a number of participants might apply for posts that were or might become available in the near future. In order to assist in achieving these outcomes, information was provided about how to apply for jobs at Hopwood Hall, and all participants left their details in order that contact could be made by the college regarding future vacancies.

There were 3 groups placed at Hopwood Hall of varying sizes, in total accounting for nineteen (19) placements.

Participants attendance was excellent. attending every session punctually and participating fully in all of the activities that formed part of the placement.

Placement Feedback

Feedback was collected verbally at the conclusion of both days of the programme during the debrief, with lots of positive comments. The participants indicating that they had benefitted enormously from attending the placement and had felt welcomed by the college. In particular they had a much clearer understanding about the role of further education including the range of courses; the jobs that were available; the various aspects of the teaching role, safeguarding and student support; and how to apply for posts at the college and in the sector generally.

E mails were also received by the college from several participants echoing the comments above, whilst expressing interest in working at Hopwood Hall College in a number of different roles, which further demonstrated the benefits that had accrued from attending the placement.

There was no negative feedback, and participants were sorry that the programme had ended as they would have liked to have spent more time on placement in order to pursue further areas of specific interest.

One participant that had never previously worked in education (his career to date has been in financial services), said 'I had really never considered a teaching career and this placement has really opened my eyes to a possible new opportunity where I can use my existing skills to the benefit of others whether in a teaching or student support role'.

The feedback suggested that the balance of the programme was appropriate in meeting the needs of the participants and achieving the aims and outcomes of the programme. That said, the classroom observations were modified in order to ensure that members of each cohort's specific needs were met as far as possible.

Employment Opportunities

Across the three cohorts many of the participants had skills that could be deployed in a teaching role either at the college or more broadly within the sector. This included teaching employability skills, mathematics, business, finance, and health and social care amongst others and it really was a case of them applying for the appropriate jobs. For those that successfully applied they would be helped to achieve the necessary teaching qualifications as part of their staff development.

The following comments were emailed to the TRANSFORM delivery team after the second group of TRANSFORM participants had completed their placement at Hopwood Hall College:

"I hope that your delegates enjoyed their experiences with the college?

I was certainly impressed with the quality and attitudes of the entire cohort.

We are delighted to have received application forms from two participants, and we hope to receive application for the other attendees. Please can you encourage the others to submit an application, even if it is just speculative?"

Martyn Hardy, HR Manager

As above, there were a significant number of participants that were suitable for (and have ultimately applied for) posts in student support, learning support, skills development coaching, safeguarding, and other administrative roles, with the potential for progression into a more student facing, teaching role in the future. They were encouraged to look out for future job opportunities on the website as a number of posts were about to become available.

To date there have been at least eight applications for teaching and support roles, some of which are still pending, however there have not been any appointments made from the cohorts that did their placement at the college. This is possibly down to the fact that although they have 'really great skills', they have been applying for jobs that are very competitive and which have attracted a large number of applicants. Some of the participants have 'not sold themselves' as well as they might have done and adopted a 'scattergun' approach to applications which has not helped.

That being said some of the participants have found employment in other parts of the sector (including other colleges) in teaching and student support roles therefore this has been a very positive and helpful placement on a broader scale.

Making the Right Decision

All of the participants found the experience incredibly important in defining whether they could/should work in the FE sector. Lots of effort went into creating a placement programme that provided as many activities and as much content as possible and captured the reality of working at Hopwood Hall College. Participants were able to assess their interests in, and their ability to perform a wide range of roles, including teaching, learner support, and safeguarding et al. It has provided the opportunity to identify whether working in the sector is right for them, which was the overwhelming view, (and in particular working at Hopwood Hall), and in a very few cases to decide that working in the sector is not for them after all (although no one articulated this view).

Future Placements

Whilst acknowledging that creating such a programme required a lot of work and planning during a very busy time of the year, in order to make it appropriate and worthwhile for the participants, Hopwood Hall would be keen to be involved in offering placements on a future TRANSFORM or similar programme that gave an insight into the various roles in FE.

No major changes were envisaged, and it was felt that the programme contained all the right ingredients and was representative of the activities that took place in the further education sector generally. It also provided, importantly, a focus on, and conduit for potential recruitment, a fact that is re-enforced by the strong input by the HR and Recruitment team as part of the programme where the application process and the benefits of working in the college are discussed at length.

Very little needs to be changed as the interaction between the TRANSFORM team and the college has worked well, and the placement has been very successful, however information as early as possible about participants areas of interest and past experience would be helpful in continuing to shape the programme in a bespoke manner (although it was acknowledged that this is not always possible).

Participants on the support programme that apply for jobs at Hopwood Hall could be helped by the college in terms of completing applications and delivering a micro teach, in order to enhance their chances of a successful recruitment outcome. This would require co-ordination with the TRANSFORM delivery team and might require a joint approach in organising these activities.

Organising a recruitment open event where all participants on the TRANSFORM support programme could attend (irrespective of where they did their placement) at Hopwood Hall College would also help participants into employment by enabling them to meet the relevant members of staff and explore job opportunities college wide.

Case Study transcript taken from an interview on Thursday 26th May 2022.

Oldham College

Placement overview

The content during the three-day placement was comprehensive, and consisted of: a welcome by the Principal; tour of the campus and the purpose designed buildings; input on a day in the life of a tutor and the role of the teacher; shadowing and lesson observation across each of the three days which were tailored to the needs of the participants (where possible); and input about safeguarding, pastoral care staff, and other aspects of college life including Student Engagement, Additional Learning Support, Careers, Human Resources, and Marketing. Each day contained a review session in order to take feedback and allow participants time to reflect on the days experience, complete their reflective journal, and discuss the plans that were in place for the following day.

The aim of the placement was to play a part in helping participants to gain an understanding of the Further Education (FE) sector, irrespective of which college or provider they may ultimately work in, although of paramount importance was the potential to attract potential new members of staff with the appropriate skills, to Oldham College. In order to assist in achieving these outcomes, information was provided about how to apply for jobs at Oldham College (teaching and support roles), and the jobs that might become available. On the final day, one to one discussions took place with the participants regarding their career ambitions, their skills, and the identification of potential job opportunities at the college that might meet their career needs.

In addition, TRANSFORM supported the Oldham College open evening for the Teaching Scholarship/Teaching for Distinction Programme in Health and Social Care which approximately ten (10) participants from TRANSFORM attended. A number of these attendees applied for the Scholarship which offered a full-time teaching role along with staff development opportunities to acquire a level 5 Dip Ed, a Level 4 IQA qualification, and a Level 3 Assessing Qualification. Outcomes are awaited.

There were 3 groups placed at Oldham College of varying sizes, in total accounting for 18 placements.

Participant attendance was excellent. attending every session punctually and participating fully in all of the activities that formed part of the placement.

Placement Feedback

Feedback was collected verbally at the conclusion of the programme during the debrief. There were with lots of positive comments. The participants indicating that there had been great benefit from attending the placement including:

- The placement had changed in a positive way their (participants') understanding and pre-conceptions of a further education college and what it does in terms of courses, types of learners, range of jobs, structure of the organisation and the number of employees, amongst other things;
- The placement had helped them to identify possible jobs and career prospects as a result of meeting a wide range of staff and visiting different departments;
- During the lesson observations and shadowing they had the opportunity to observe different teaching methods/styles and see how staff dealt with a number of classroom situations; they also noted the important roles played by student support staff; and
- They had a better understanding about how to apply for posts at the college, particularly as a consequence of the one-to-one tutorial with the Head of Human Resources on the final day.

There was no negative feedback, and participants expressed great satisfaction with the content and the arrangements of the placement programme. The only slight regret for the final cohort was the fact that we were moving into the exam season and that slightly restricted the number of classes available for observation.

Feedback from learners included:

"I was inspired by how the teacher adapted [the lesson] to each individual's needs and made the lessons interesting and engaging, I saw the passion he had for his job."

TRANSFORM Participant

"I liked the ending of one of the lessons where students wrote on the board one thing they learned" [The student engagement officer] was connected to everybody it was amazing to see."

TRANSFORM Participant

There was also excellent feedback from the tutors who had enjoyed the time that the participants had spent with them observing their classes.

There were no dynamic and structural changes to the structure or content of the programme as all of the feedback suggested that the balance of the programme was appropriate in meeting the needs of the participants and achieving the aims and outcomes of the programme. Classroom observations were modified in order to ensure that members of each cohort's specific needs were met as far as possible, and latterly modification took place as a consequence of examinations taking place, and issues relating to COVID in one department. ESOL, Business Studies, Hair and Beauty, and Digital and Creative still remained available at the conclusion of the placements

Employment Opportunities

Across the three cohorts many of the participants had skills that could be deployed in a teaching role either at the college or more broadly within the sector locally. This included teaching science, mathematics, business, finance, and literacy amongst others. In addition (as indicated above) participants also applied to join the Oldham College Scholarship/Teaching for Distinction Programme in Health and Social Care. Participants were encouraged to apply for teaching posts at every opportunity.

There were also a significant number of participants that were suitable for (and have ultimately applied for) posts in additional learning support, SEND, safeguarding, and other administrative roles, for which some of the participants applied. They were also encouraged to keep in touch with the college regarding future job opportunities that might become available.

To date there have been at several applications for teaching and support roles and for entry to the Scholarship/Teaching for Distinction Programme in Health and Social Care, some of which are still pending and awaiting outcomes. Some of the participants on the Oldham programme have secured jobs in other further education colleges in the Greater Manchester area.

Two participants have offered to volunteer in the ESOL department.

Making the Right Decision

The placement was extremely important in assisting participants with the decision-making process regarding a career in the FE Sector. It also helped the college to identify potential employees in an informal setting and ensure that they recruited staff that shared their culture and ethos which helps with staff retention. It also provided an opportunity to acquaint participants with the difference between working in a college and working in business and industry (which most of them had previous experience), and therefore they were able to make informed decisions about a potential career with Oldham College.

Future Placements

This was a resounding yes, it has been hard work and rewarding, and would be beneficial for the college in the long run:

“Thank you for allowing Oldham College to participate in the TRANSFORM programme ... from our perspective the programme has been a rewarding and beneficial experience. We were able to show [participants] the possibilities ... that they would never have considered previously ... We are in continuous contact with all the participants, some of whom have already applied for positions at the college and propose new suitable roles as and when they arise. We have also proposed to reach out to other colleges in the region on their behalf, as an introduction, if they see suitable positions there.”

Lee Bowers, Recruitment Specialist, Oldham College

The placement offer would be increased to four or five days, which would allow the participants to get even more involved in college life, and in particular attend more lesson observations which would enhance the opportunity for further discussion and reflection (particularly with the tutors). There is a lot to assimilate in a very short space of time, therefore the additional two days would allow participants to get an even greater flavour of all aspects of college life, and in particular spending even more time in their area of interest e.g., SEND, ESOL etc.

- It would be helpful if participants sent in advance, or came with, an up-to-date CV which would make it easier to give advice, and more efficient in terms of planning the parts of the college where they should be placed for their classroom observations.
- The placement should be scheduled to take place earlier in the year and outside of the exam season in order to ensure that all parts of the college, and all members of staff are available and able to make a contribution to the participant experience.
- A longer placement would help Oldham College to spend more time with participants on the programme refining their job applications and ensuring that they had time to reflect on whether a particular job is right for them. This would require co-ordination with the TRANSFORM delivery team, but it would enhance the prospects of participants commencing a career in the sector.

Case Study transcript taken from an interview on Thursday 26th May 2022.

Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES)

Placement overview

Primarily the content during the 2 or 3 day placement was comprehensive and provided a welcome and an induction highlighting the ethos of MAES and its structure; a session on a typical working day with an introduction to basic skills; classroom observations providing a mixture of ESOL, maths, I.T., and English with an emphasis on matching participants requirements and interests where possible; a micro teach; and ultimately a review and debrief. A few modifications took place following feedback and reflections after the first cohort, however the essence of the programme remained unchanged.

There were three groups placed at MAES of varying sizes, in total accounting for seventeen Placements.

All participants attended every session punctually, with good levels of interest and enthusiasm, and good participation in activities.

Placement Feedback

Feedback was collected verbally at the conclusion of the programme, during the debrief session with reflections and feedback. The overall theme of the feedback was very positive, with participants indicating that; they had enjoyed the placement; benefitted from spending time at MAES; learned a lot about further and adult education including the range of courses available; and the different types of jobs that were available; and identified various aspects of the teaching role and the learners that they work with, in a relatively short space of time.

A few participants suggested that they would have liked to have spent a longer period of time on placement so that they could reflect more fully on everything that they had seen, and perhaps visited one or two more lesson observations, but generally everyone was happy with the outcomes.

Some of the teaching staff commented that they had enjoyed having the participants in their lessons and were more than happy to answer any questions that were posed to them at the conclusion of the class.

One participant that had previously taught in a school, and had such a bad experience with learners that he was disinclined to teach again, stated that 'this placement has been a great experience and made me realise that learners in Further & Adult Education are very different and that I might consider returning to teaching in the FE sector, instead of looking for a non-teaching role'.

After the debrief of the first cohort, when it was suggested that more observations would be beneficial, the programme was modified in order to meet this requirement, and as a consequence it was felt by subsequent cohorts that it had enhanced the placement experience. This required additional compliance by a number of the teaching staff, but this was managed appropriately by the member of staff from MAES that organised and co-ordinated the placement.

Employment Opportunities

The placement co-ordinator at MAES was of the view that the final group in particular, and some of the previous two groups, had much to offer the sector across a range of posts including both teaching and support roles. Importantly she felt that they were 'a good fit' for the ethos and culture of MAES and that they should be aware of the potential job opportunities that will be advertised in the near future. Previous cohort members have undertaken volunteering roles at MAES, and a number of others have expressed an interest in so doing, which will be arranged where possible.

As above, there were a significant number of participants that were suitable for student support, safeguarding, and administrative roles, with the potential for progression into a more student facing, teaching role in the future. They were similarly encouraged to look out for future job opportunities on the website or consider volunteering as a means of demonstrating their suitability for a permanent role should one materialise.

None of the participants have been offered a permanent post but there is one participant now successfully volunteering and making a positive contribution to the organisation.

The placement co-ordinator provided her contact details to all participants in order to assist with the application process for any jobs (full or part time) that might become available in the near future.

The following was sent in an email following placements at MAES;

“This cohort is fantastic - an amazing group of people with so many skills to offer!”

Shelley Wilkinson, Manchester Adult Education Service

Making the Right Decision

For a number of participants, the experience has been quite revelatory, and as previously outlined the range of programmes, types of learners, and the variety of jobs that are within the grasp of a number of the participants has been eye opening, giving them confidence to consider a role in F&AE. It has provided the opportunity to identify the roles that are right for them, and in a few cases perhaps to decide that working in the sector is not for them after all.

MAES have provided a programme that has shown a ‘real life’ experience of working in the sector. It has demonstrated the reality, nothing was hidden, and demonstrated that teachers do much more than teach in the classroom, and that they are engaged in aspects of student support and pastoral care, important administrative tasks etc., which has illustrated an extremely realistic view of what is expected from staff that work in F&AE. Consequently, it has significantly assisted the decision-making process.

One of the volunteers said, ‘I would never have thought about working in the FE sector, and certainly hadn’t realised that there were such a wide range of roles; and now I have also had the opportunity to work as a volunteer I cannot wait to begin a new career in teaching’.

Future Placements

MAES would be keen to be involved in offering placements on a future TRANSFORM or similar programme that gave an insight into the various roles in FE.

Although the current placement offer is working well, a few structural changes would be made, with additional content. This, for example, would include the use of a crib sheet (to be used alongside the reflective account document that is issued by the TRANSFORM team) which would be completed by the participants following visits to classrooms and teaching observations in order to collect evidence for future use. Given that a number of participants would have liked a longer placement, this is another area of potential adjustment, but much would depend on the availability of teaching sessions, and the time of the year, as exams start to predominate from Easter onwards.

Formation of a WhatsApp group for use during, and after, the placement would also enhance the benefits gained from the placement and perhaps lead to more job opportunities going forward.

- Earlier provision of participant detail in terms of numbers and their areas of interest and past experience would be helpful in shaping the programme in a bespoke manner. It was appreciated

that this can be difficult if people drop out of the programme at the last minute and substitutions have to be made.

- Participants arriving on the programme could bring with them an outline CV (especially if they have recently completed an Employability programme) in order that they might be alerted to any potential job vacancies in their area of interest and expertise. This would enhance the matching process.

A final footnote: 'This has been a positive experience all round for the provider (that is now aware of an untapped pool of talent'), and participants that have a greater understanding of the sector and the exciting career opportunities which awaits them'

Case Study transcript taken from an interview on 31st May 2022.

APPENDIX 2 - TRANSFORM CASE STUDY PARTICIPANT SUMMARIES

Kate Heaton

Kate has a MSc Post Graduate Certificate in Housing Practice, and a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Hospitality Business Management. Her employment experience includes Support Project Manager, and Supported Housing Officer at a Housing Association in Manchester; and from 2013 Kate established and managed 'Our Kid' which is an award-winning business in South Manchester that brought together elements of children's retail, a café, and creative space. She has experience in delivering training, and structured individual development support, as part of her social housing and entrepreneurial roles.

Original expectations of TRANSFORM

Kate wasn't sure what to expect from the TRANSFORM programme, which she had been alerted to by a flyer in the newsletter from the school that her children attended. She also knew someone else that had applied for, and joined the programme, which further encouraged her to put in an application. The timing of this opportunity was good as Kate was considering her options for alternatives to continuing in her role at 'Our Kid' but she had not really considered teaching in Further Education as a viable option and career choice. She felt that she did not have the experience or confidence to work in Further Education (and to some extent had been put off teaching by her experience of tutoring her children during lock-down!). However, after applying to join the TRANSFORM Programme and discussing her application and the options available with a member of the team, which she found a very encouraging and supportive experience, she was able to identify the range of business and entrepreneurial skills which she possessed that would provide a strong platform on which to base a teaching career, and realised that she had much to offer the sector.

TRANSFORM Taster Experience Days (TEDs)

Kate completed her TED placement at Bolton College which was invaluable in helping her to understand the structure of the college and the diversity of programmes, learners, and job roles within the organisation; her only previous experience of a Further Education college was as a student studying A Levels and a BTEC National Diploma in Business Studies.

There were inspirational and highly informative inputs from members of the senior management team, (including the Principal, who provided examples of staff joining the college and having highly successful careers), on all aspects of the college's activities. Kate also spent half a day in the Construction department with the senior member of staff responsible for that curriculum area, meeting a number of other staff who worked with the learners on a wide range of courses. This helped her to get a better understanding of the diverse range and levels of courses offered, the different ages and levels of skills of the learners, and of course the workload involved in a teaching role. What particularly caught her attention was that the teaching staff shared the same aspirations as the senior managers, and that they were similarly helpful and inspirational too. Kate also obtained a better understanding of the new T levels, which will become increasingly important over the next few years across a number of curriculum areas (an insight that would prove particularly valuable when she subsequently applied for a job at Manchester College)

She enjoyed the placement at Bolton College which really brought to life all aspects of working in an FE setting, and it was an enthusing and beneficial experience that confirmed to Kate that applying

for a teaching, or similar role, was something that she wished to pursue. Kate felt that she really liked the ethos and values of Bolton College, which would be an excellent place to work. All of the activities undertaken on the placement were relevant and of great benefit, bringing all elements of the college activities to life, and increased her enthusiasm for a career in the FE Sector.

Qualifications

Prior to the placement Kate completed the Safeguarding, and Becoming a Teacher in Further Education programmes, the latter being particularly helpful when attending the TED at Bolton College as it provided her with a better understanding of what the staff were talking about and gave her a greater level of confidence whilst attending the placement.

Kate has also completed the Level 3 Award in Education and Training, which she considers important as a basis for securing a teaching post in the future and/ or studying for a level 4 or level 5 teaching qualification. She also feels that it has helped her to secure her new post at the Manchester College Group as an Employment Partnership Co-ordinator.

Employment Opportunities

The TRANSFORM Programme played a major role in helping Kate to successfully secure her new job at The Manchester College as an Employment Partnership Co-ordinator, which is not only the start of a new career in Further Education but also a 'stepping-stone' that may ultimately lead to her pursuing other roles in the FE sector, for example teaching, or in the 'business side' of the college activities.

The post that Kate has recently secured, is a new post, a number of which are being created by most colleges, to a significant extent as a result of the requirements of the T Levels and Apprenticeship programmes. The role will require Kate to prepare the learners for their placements, and work with local employers in order to encourage their participation in the placement programmes, amongst other things; and she is definite that without TRANSFORM she would never have applied for that role. It is a fixed term contract for a year, which she feels directly resulted from her participation in the TRANSFORM Programme, and which will provide her with the opportunity to consider the next steps of her career in Further Education as outlined above with a high degree of confidence. The Level 3 AET Qualification, the TED at Bolton College, and the support from the TRANSFORM team have all been major determining factors in obtaining employment in the FE Sector.

Additional Information

Kate is very grateful for the opportunity to have participated in the TRANSFORM Programme which she has enjoyed and very much benefitted from. It has been a really great and transformative experience, and she has been completely and fully supported by the TRANSFORM team every step of the way; she has also enjoyed working alongside other participants who have been pleasant and helpful.

Varsha Dubey

Varsha originally hails from India where she gained a PhD in Computer Science, a PGDHRM (Post graduate diploma in human resource management), an MCA (Masters in Computer Applications) and a Bachelors of Computer Science. Following this, Varsha also taught maths and ICT for five years in a school setting in India.

Original expectations of TRANSFORM

Varsha wanted to continue her teaching career, and she was aware of the Trafford College, which was close to where she lived, however, she had no real understanding of Further Education prior to joining the TRANSFORM Programme. Varsha had spent the last few years as a full-time parent, but she felt that she was now ready to re-join the workforce, so had started to investigate what she would need to do to become a teacher in the UK. Whilst she was researching what the different options and pathways were, she discovered the TRANSFORM Programme, and followed the link to the website and completed the application form.

TRANSFORM Taster Experience Days (TEDs)

Varsha completed a Level 2 Employability qualification with the TRANSFORM Programme and also completed a three-day TED placement at Hopwood Hall College in Rochdale. Varsha was very excited to finally get inside an FE college as she had driven past one so often. After an introduction to the Further Education sector, and to the College, Varsha had the opportunity to see teaching and learning taking place in the college. Varsha felt that the placement was extremely helpful to her in understanding how FE works in England, including the values and culture of the sector and, in particular, of Hopwood Hall College. Varsha had the opportunity to observe a number of maths and ICT classes, and she was able to see the different types of interactions and learner support, along with the wide range of teaching and learning activities she observed across the various curriculum areas and levels of study. Varsha also spent some time with student support staff, teachers, and the principal of the College, and they were all very encouraging and positive. These encounters cemented Varsha's ambition to become a teacher in Further Education. The most enjoyable thing for her was that her dream had come true. She was pleased that she had been given the opportunity to visit the College, to observe the high levels of support that is available for the learners, and the commitment of the teaching and support staff. All the staff Varsha had interacted with at Hopwood Hall had been incredibly supportive, encouraging and willing to answer any questions that the TRANSFORM Programme participants asked. The support of the TRANSFORM delivery team was also wonderful.

Qualifications and Employment

Varsha enjoyed the employability qualification as she had the opportunity to study for this accessing high quality materials. She received good advice about how to use professional networking sites and social media; there was also excellent preparation for developing job applications; and invaluable preparation for, and participation in, interviews. The TRANSFORM delivery team was very helpful and responsive.

Varsha went on to complete the Level 3 Award in Education and Training (L3AET) with the TRANSFORM Programme. This has helped Varsha to understand the key aspects of the role of the teacher e.g., safeguarding, inclusion and the wider responsibilities around supporting learners and meeting their individual needs. The materials were very good, explanations were clear and lots of additional information and context was provided which has prepared Varsha extremely well for her new role as Learning Facilitator in the Inclusion department at Trafford College. Varsha supports

ICT and maths groups and is currently undergoing her induction training at the College. She is grateful that she can link the knowledge gained on the course with the College specific policies and practices which she is now learning about. She loves the job she that she is now doing and hopes in time to progress to a teaching role. She has already shared these ambitions with staff at the College who are very supportive.

Additional Information

Varsha believes that the TRANSFORM Programme helped to turn her dreams into reality, and she is now an independent working woman because of the support, help, advice and qualifications she gained during her time on the programme, which led to her securing her first ever job in the UK. The TRANSFORM Programme has quite literally changed her life. She also now has a great support network because of the people she met on TRANSFORM.

John Kay

John was born in Rochdale but has spent much of his life in South Africa, where he worked for many years as an Engineer. John's experience during this time included working as a Dual Fuel Smart Meter Field Technician, a Senior Mobile Technician, a Transformer Oil Regeneration Field Technician, along with experience and responsibility for Health and Safety.

Original expectations of TRANSFORM

Due to physical limitations John was unable to continue working in his particular industry, but he felt that he still had a lot to contribute and was therefore interested in exploring how he could continue to actively contribute as a teacher, sharing his knowledge and skills with learners. John had tried to get onto a Level 3 Award in Education and Training (L3AET) course at Hopwood Hall College, but the programme had been oversubscribed and consequently he did not manage to secure a place. Subsequently a contact at Rochdale Training informed him about the TRANSFORM Programme, following which John made contact with the TRANSFORM team and submitted an application to join the programme.

TRANSFORM Taster Experience Days (TEDs)

John undertook a placement at Hopwood Hall College in Rochdale where he found the staff and learners to be very welcoming. He really enjoyed observing how the staff interacted with the learners, and he felt it was something that he wanted to be part of. The placement began with a presentation about the wider FE sector, and detailed information about Hopwood Hall College, including the structure, and their approach to working with and supporting their learners. It was clear from this information, that the College put learners at the heart of all they do, making adjustments where necessary, and ensuring that students are supported so that they can reach their full potential and achieve their goals. John went to an all-female life skills group, where he witnessed what he described as 'amazing teaching' where each learner felt valued and inspired, whilst they were being supported in their preparation for transition into work. John also observed various levels of catering cohorts, where again he was very impressed by the teaching and support that these learners received, including one deaf learner who had a sign language interpreter which meant that she was able to fully engage with the lesson. John felt that 'his eyes were opened' regarding the complexity of the teacher role and the extent to which staff tried everything in their power to stretch and encourage their learners to achieve.

These experiences confirmed for John that he had chosen the right path, as it made him realise that he too could play a key part in helping learners to achieve their ambitions, just like the teachers he had observed had supported their learners and helped them to realise their potential and achieve positive outcomes. Consequently, he also felt enthused to do what he could to help learners, as he understood that by meeting individual learner needs, you are more likely to ensure that they achieve their true potential. As John said, 'it's an enormous challenge'.

Qualifications and Employment

John completed and passed the Level 3 AET qualification, and he is now delivering to learners in his recently acquired role as a Trainee Technical Tutor in Engineering at Rochdale Training. John is now able to relate to the principles and insights provided by the Level 3 AET programme and observe them being applied by experienced (teaching) professionals in his workplace; he is also now able to use the strategies and the learning from the programme in his own role. The learners are very challenging, but thanks to the TRANSFORM Programme and the L3 AET course, John has a vision for the future and what he can become, and he feels confident that he will continue his

journey in Further Education. He has now committed to dedicating his time to continuing to learn both from the experience he is gaining in his teaching role at Rochdale Training, and through accessing more formal learning, so that he can progress and maximise his full potential, whilst helping learners to achieve theirs too.

Additional Information

John is very thankful to have had the opportunities that helped him to secure his current role. He is grateful to Bill Sandilands and Rachel at Rochdale Training, who saw the potential in him, and encouraged him to join the TRANSFORM Programme.

He appreciates all of the support from the TRANSFORM delivery team and is so glad that he did persevere!

He never thought he would become a teacher, as he believed he would end his career working as a Senior Engineer, but he is relishing his new role and excited about all of the possibilities that lie ahead.

Alexis Smith

Alexis had, some time ago, explored the possibility of teaching in a school, and had begun studying on a programme that would help progression into a school teaching role; but quickly discovered that it wasn't the right choice. More recently, Alexis had volunteered with Citizens Advice, and conducted interviews with individuals, to gather information as part of a social research project. Alexis felt, at this point, a career change was needed and consequently completed a number of online courses to support the achievement of this. Alexis had also completed some research into the wider education sector and as a result found the TRANSFORM Programme, and so applied to join the programme and was accepted.

Alexis felt that this was perfect timing, having not worked for approximately two years and so was keen to explore the option to move into the Further Education Sector, particularly given the diverse range of potential roles that the TRANSFORM Programme highlighted.

Original expectations of TRANSFORM

TRANSFORM was an ideal opportunity for Alexis to explore in some depth whether the FE sector might be the right choice, without needing to commit to a lengthy process or a prolonged programme. Alexis believes that the TRANSFORM Programme was structured in such a way that made it accessible, achievable, and informative, feeling that more programmes should be run in this manner. Alexis was unsure about transitioning into a teaching role, given past experience when exploring this option, but did feel that a support role might be possible.

TRANSFORM Taster Experience Days (TEDs)

Alexis completed the TED placement at Hopwood Hall College, attending both the Rochdale and the Middleton sites. Various members of college staff provided input showcasing their particular area of expertise, delivering presentations and responding to any questions from the TRANSFORM participants who were on placement (there were five other participants on placement with Alexis). The information provided during these sessions offered a detailed and comprehensive overview of the College; including how it was structured, its mission and vision, and also covered the diverse range of roles that exist within the College. There were tours of both sites, and Alexis had the opportunity to observe vocational and academic classes, including English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL). Alexis was able to spend time speaking to staff and students and ask them questions about their experiences of working and studying at the college. Alexis particularly connected with a presentation at Rochdale College which described how many support staff were employed in a range of roles and the fact that they were currently recruiting. The person delivering the talk was very encouraging and suggested that there were a range of skills needed, many of which Alexis possessed.

Qualifications and Employment

Alexis had a particular interest in working with individuals to support them with advice around career choices and was therefore interested in the potential opportunity to move into Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) roles. Whilst on placement, Alexis spoke to a member of staff about this area, and they suggested contact with an organisation called Career Connect who are a charity headquartered in Liverpool, that specialise in this type of work.

On completion of the placement, Alexis did make immediate contact with Careers Connect, and was invited to apply for a role working with NEET young people as an Engagement Worker. Alexis applied for this role, was shortlisted for interview, and was offered the job, which was a great outcome.

Prior to the successful appointment to this new role, Alexis had completed the Level 2 Employability qualification with TRANSFORM; and believes that the support received whilst on this course, coupled with the focus on preparing for an interview that culminated in having a 'mock' interview, was pivotal to success in securing the role with Career Connect.

As a backup, Alexis also applied for an Apprenticeship at Hopwood Hall, delivering careers advice and supporting work placements. As a result of that application, the College contacted Alexis with the potential for work on a new outreach programme they will be delivering, providing advice, guidance and career support.

Alexis therefore has quite a lot of choice, with various options on the table, and this is as a direct result of engagement with the TRANSFORM Programme. The difficulty is now making the right choice, which is a fantastic position to be in considering where Alexis was at the start of the TRANSFORM journey.

Additional Information

Alexis wished that the TED placement could have been for longer, as it exposed participants to so much thought-provoking information through the input from staff, and the observation of teaching and learning, that this had in turn left Alexis with a high level of interest in FE, and quite a lot of questions. Alexis has subsequently had ongoing dialogue with staff at the College who have been fantastic in responding about a range of topics.

David Appleby

David had previously worked in conveyancing as a legal assistant, and also as a legal advisor in the firm's new business department. Whilst David did not have any real ambition in relation to these posts, he did enjoy the variety of work that he was involved in. He left these posts over two years ago to become a full-time parent, and during this period also began to study maths with the Open University. David had no concrete plans about the direction his career may take in the future, although he did have an interest in teaching as many members of his family had been teachers. He had considered completing the (Open University) maths degree at some point and then studying for a PGCE.

He had, however, never pursued this direction of travel, as he had not had a particularly good experience during his time at school, and this resulted in a lack of engagement and achievement; with the consequence that he did not have the required standard of examinations/entry requirements to become a teacher.

Original expectations of TRANSFORM

David read the information about the TRANSFORM Programme in his children's school newsletter, and it aroused his curiosity as he had never thought about Further Education (FE) as an option. He had limited knowledge of the FE sector and did not really appreciate how diverse the FE sector was, both in terms of the learners, and the programmes, and the job opportunities on offer. He therefore had no real idea of what to expect. David did try to access some information about FE, but this hadn't been particularly useful, however, he decided to give it a go (the TRANSFORM Programme) with no preconceptions, given it could be a route into teaching.

TRANSFORM Taster Experience Days (TEDs)

After an introduction to the TRANSFORM Programme, David spent three consecutive days on placement at the Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES), in their Greenheys Adult Learning Centre in Moss Side, Manchester. The three days began with an overview of the organisation, and an introduction to Further and Adult Education, followed by time spent in the classroom observing teaching practice. There was also the opportunity for each TRANSFORM Programme participant to prepare and deliver a microteach to the placement group on their chosen topic and receive feedback from a tutor and peers.

David found the staff at MAES to be welcoming, supportive and approachable, and he described the feeling that they were 'invested in helping him to succeed'.

During the placement, David was profoundly affected by a particular group of students in an English class. He felt moved by the fact that the support they received during their time at MAES had such a significant, positive impact on their lives. He had the opportunity to hear and see the problems that arise when an individual cannot read or cannot write their own name. David also recognised that these learners had not had the educational advantages that his own children were having, and this also had a very profound impact on him. Through this experience, David felt his 'eyes were opened' in terms of how he could actually make a real difference to other people's lives, which was revelatory. David can absolutely pinpoint the moment to being in that particular class, with that group of learners, as the turning point when he decided that he would make teaching in FE his career goal.

David found the whole placement experience enjoyable, there was nothing that he felt could have been improved.

David believes that the experience of being on placement with MAES really helped motivate him to become a teacher; and that he almost certainly would not have felt the same level of motivation without that (placement) experience.

Qualifications and Employment

David felt the Employability qualification he completed on the TRANSFORM Programme had helped him to brush up on skills he had not used for some time.

The Level 3 Award in Education and Training has provided a framework on which to base his practice. He would have preferred to study face to face in a classroom but felt that the tutor had made the online experience as good as it could have been. There was plenty of support and opportunity to ask questions and obtain tutorial support if required.

David is currently volunteering as a support worker in an English and a maths group at MAES at their Greenheys centre. This is a direct result of his involvement in the TRANSFORM Programme, as Shelley Wilkinson (who led the TRANSFORM placements for MAES) supported his application and encouraged him to become a volunteer.

David is receiving ongoing support from the TRANSFORM delivery team to identify and apply for relevant roles in FE, and the day before he participated in this case study, he submitted an application for the role of an English tutor at MAES, the outcome of which is awaited.

Additional Information

David was grateful for the support of the entire TRANSFORM team throughout the programme.

He was nominated and shortlisted for the Manchester Adult Education and Skills Plan Award 2022 under the category of Return to Learning Award.

David has also enrolled on the L5 Diploma in Education and Training.

Tricia Tyler

Previously Tricia had worked in a variety of roles in the Further Education (FE) sector, the last role she had was as an assessor in Health and Social Care. Tricia has a Level 3 TAQA qualification, CTTLS and DTTLs (L4 Certificate and L5 Diploma in Education and Training). She had taken voluntary redundancy towards the end of the COVID-19 lockdowns and had started to think of a future which involved less travelling, and which provided higher degree of job satisfaction. During interactions with her Job Centre Plus adviser she was signposted to the TRANSFORM Programme. As a result of conversations Tricia had with members of the TRANSFORM delivery team, she was able to refine her goals, and decided that what she wanted to do during the rest of her time in the working environment, was something that she personally found stimulating, rewarding, and valuable. It was also important for her to be financially independent.

Original expectations of TRANSFORM

Tricia was clear that she wanted to teach, but also had an interest in the possibility of setting up her own business. Tricia felt that the TRANSFORM Programme would help her to make the right choices and would provide her with opportunities to reconnect with the sector, helping her to make informed decisions about future roles that she might pursue.

TRANSFORM Taster Experience Days (TEDs)

Tricia's placement was at Tameside College, where she spent time with a group of five other TRANSFORM participants. Tricia thoroughly enjoyed her time with the College, where she listened to several presentations delivered by senior members of staff, all of which gave quite a detailed overview of how the college functioned. The TRANSFORM participants were also provided with a tour of the College, so they had the opportunity to visit different departments, and to observe teaching and learning in practice across a variety of curriculum areas. Tricia managed to speak to a lot of different members of staff whilst on placement, and she felt very encouraged by the values and culture of the College, and the aspirations that staff had, and the support that they provided for all of their learners. Tricia was particularly impressed by the wide range of support services available to learners, including the pastoral care and safeguarding that was provided, and she really enjoyed hearing about their approach to inclusion and to meeting individual learner needs. The College provided a lovely lunch each day, and it was just a fantastic opportunity to meet and speak to a great group of people who Tricia felt shared her ambitions and values.

At the end of the placement, she was informed that there was an immediate need for invigilators at Tameside. Tricia responded by contacting the College, and within a couple of weeks of the placement, she was back there working as an invigilator. She is really enjoying her time at Tameside College and feels that she is adding value and is already part of the community.

Qualifications and Employment

Tricia completed the Level 2 Introductory Award in Employability Skills course as part of the TRANSFORM Programme. She felt the support that she received, and the focus of the qualification, was extremely important in helping her to clarify the direction that she wanted to go. Whilst she is currently acting as an invigilator and thoroughly enjoying this role, she is also exploring a range of different job options within the College.

Additional Information

Tricia believes that she would not have had the opportunity to go into Tameside College, or apply for, and obtain her current role if she had not been engaged in the TRANSFORM Programme. She

particularly liked how the TRANSFORM Programme was structured, and she felt that this, along with the support and encouragement, had been incredibly motivational. She felt that she had received excellent support, encouragement and advice throughout the programme which has helped her to review and pursue her career options and ambitions.

APPENDIX 3 - TRANSFORM PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS

What attracted you most to TRANSFORM?	TOTAL	%	Without Non-response (%)
The level of support on offer	7	13	14
The potential of a local job opportunity	10	19	20
Working in the Further Education sector	16	30	31
I wanted to teach	8	15	16
Gaining a qualification	10	19	20
Other (A combination of everything)	1	2	2
Blank	1	2	

Quality - Initial Information Session	TOTAL	%	Without Non-response (%)
Excellent	31	58	63
Good/above average	11	21	22
Average	7	13	14
Below average	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0
No response	4	8	

Quality - Level 2 Introductory Award in Employability Skills	TOTAL	%	Without Non-response (%)
Excellent	27	51	63
Good/above average	11	21	26
Average	5	9	12
Below average	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0
No response	10	19	

Quality - FE Modules (such as Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, PREVENT)	TOTAL	%	Without Non-response (%)
Excellent	15	28	48
Good/above average	11	21	35
Average	5	9	16
Below average	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0
No response	22	42	

Quality - Placement in a Further Education provider	TOTAL	%	Without Non-response (%)
Excellent	33	62	73
Good/above average	6	11	13
Average	5	9	11
Below average	1	2	2
Poor	0	0	0
No response	8	15	

Quality - Level 3 Award in Education and Training	TOTAL	%	Without Non-response (%)
Excellent	29	55	71
Good/above average	10	19	24
Average	2	4	5
Below average	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0
No response	12	23	

Quality - Job Search	TOTAL	%	Without Non-response (%)
Excellent	20	38	53
Good/above average	11	21	29
Average	7	13	18
Below average	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0
No response	15	28	

What element did you feel was most important?	
Initial information session	2
Level 2 Introductory Award in Employability Skills	7
FE Modules (such as Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, PREVENT)	2
Placement in a Further Education provider	12
Level 3 Award in Education and Training	20
Job Search	6

Quotes about what was most important

- “I was really attracted to the programme as someone I knew had started near the beginning of the project and said she'd received amazing, tailored support and advice towards getting her CV organised, work experience and help finding a job. I was excited by the opportunity of being helped with my confidence getting back into work and finding a job.”

- “It helped me improve my job applications and job interviews which led to me being offered a job.”
- “Level 3 Award in Education and Training gave a good insight about the responsibilities of a teacher. The Micro teach session at the end of the module was very helpful to plan and teach a group.”
- “The Level 2 Award helped me to improve my CV, gave me guidance on writing cover letters, personal statements and how to prepare for job interviews. It helped to boost my confidence in applying for jobs and showed me the areas that I had been making mistakes in previous applications.”
- “I wanted to gain a teaching award so this was the most important element for me. However, the Transform Programme as a whole was exceptional and each aspect played an important role in building up to the Award.”
- “The hands-on practical experience helped to connect the theory with the vocation and environment of FE.”
- “By visiting the FE setting, I have gained practical experience and sector knowledge, which then increased my interest in the teaching sector.”

General quotes and recommendations for improvements

- “Participants to keep getting support until they get a job.”
- “It offered me just what I needed at the right time to help me secure the kind of employment I wanted. One of the staff at Hopwood Hall College suggested I contact the employer which led to me being offered the job. It also broadened my knowledge of the FE sector which will help me in my new job. I feel strongly that the programme should be better publicised as I only found out about it by accident. I have spoken to several Careers Advisors this year and none gave me any information about the programme. Maybe the positive experience of programme participants such as myself could be publicised in some way. I am more than happy for my experiences and identity to be used in this way.”
- “I have been very impressed with the quality of the course overall. Feedback has been very good and on time. The transform team have been very knowledgeable and approachable. All my questions have been answered succinctly and I have always been made to feel at home. Well done to you all. Spot On!!”
- “This programme has opened the door of opportunities for me by guiding me in the right direction. I am grateful to Julia and the whole Transform Team for their support and encouragement.”
- “This is one of the best and most useful courses that I have done. The knowledge that I have gained during this course will enable me to approach even the most difficult of situations from a more positive and understanding perspective. Thank you to all staff who supported and guided during the course.”
- “I found the Transform Programme to be excellent. The entire process and in particular, the teaching and its delivery online, was exceptional and an example of how effective the online delivery of teaching can be when in capable hands. I am proud to have taken part in the programme, I have recommended it to others and if possible, I would wish to gain further

qualifications through programmes run by Inspired Associates Ltd. The Transform Programme has been a success for me and I hope to find a position in education shortly.”

- “I think that the transform programme has been delivered excellently. I really enjoyed the placement, in particular the first day, as I got a really good understanding of the FE sector and how the college was ran. I must give credit to Tameside college also for how welcoming they were. The employability module was informative and I feel it will be useful when applying for work. The course has been delivered so well by Mel and Julia. Despite being intensive, I have been able to submit a good standard of work, due to their teachings and support. I would most definitely take part in any other relevant programmes ran by the team in the future.”
- “The course providers were very knowledgeable about their tasks and were very helpful in conducting the course. If the placement days are increased that would be much more beneficial for the participants as it will give them more understanding of the daily activities in the FE sector.”
- “Fantastic experience, very supportive team, I recommend it to everyone!”

Thank you

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UK Government