

## Opportunities Hub

### What is the Opportunities Hub?

The Opportunities Hub, is a flexible, online portal bringing together information about existing opportunities and services available for young people. This is accessed via the *Greater Manchester Talent Match* website,

Opportunities support young people to make positive progress towards employment – this may be in any area of the Work Star<sup>1</sup>:

#### **Job-specific skills**

- this includes gaining necessary skills and experience for the desired career

#### **Aspiration and motivation**

- including activities that help identify job sector and career interests, as well as aiming to increase the beneficiaries' belief that the goal is achievable

#### **Job-search skills**

- activities that help equip beneficiaries with the skills needed to find a job or other opportunities

#### **Stability**

- including support designed to help overcome personal difficulties to gaining or sustaining employment, such as activities that tackle issues with drug or alcohol use or improve money management

#### **Basic skills**

- including opportunities that improve skills such as English, IT and numeracy to the level required for the desired area of work

#### **Social skills for work**

- activities that improve social skills to meet the expectations in a work or learning environment. This may include behaving appropriately, self-confidence, presentation and activities working in a team

#### **Challenges**

- including support to help overcome practical barriers to entering work or training such as childcare responsibilities, health issues or disability

The Opportunities Hub is managed by *Greater Manchester Talent Match* project staff at GMCVO.

Talent Coaches are **required** to contribute to the development of the Opportunities Hub as a resource for the programme. This includes using the Opportunities Hub to search for appropriate opportunities to meet the individual needs of their young people.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/work/>

Talent Coaches are required to support their young people to provide feedback, via the Opportunities Hub and to review **all opportunities and support activities** they have engaged with. In instances where beneficiaries participate in opportunities not listed on the Opportunities Hub, Talent Coaches **must** upload this information and report accordingly.

Commissioned organisations are also encouraged to list opportunities they provide for young people and opportunities they are aware of in their locality on the Opportunities Hub. This helps to develop the database of support services and opportunities available for young people across Greater Manchester and assists the project team in identifying any gaps in provision.

Similarly, if Talent Coaches are seeking opportunities that are not available on the Hub, they should contact Opportunities Hub staff for assistance. This information is recorded as it is another valuable way of establishing gaps in provision for young people across the region. This information is also presented to the *Greater Manchester Talent Match* Partnership and Big Lottery at regular intervals.

*Greater Manchester Talent Match* project staff based at GMCVO<sup>2</sup> work with employers to provide bespoke opportunities to fill the gaps where possible.

### **How is information from the Opportunities Hub used?**

Providing feedback on the accessibility, quality and relevance of each of the opportunities young people attend by means of a review allows beneficiaries to have a unique input into our learning process. *Greater Manchester Talent Match* project team staff use this information to inform the *Greater Manchester Talent Match* partnership, Host Organisations, learning providers, employers and other stakeholders to help improve and shape future provision.

### **Defining Opportunities**

An 'opportunity' is defined as 'an activity provided by a public, private or voluntary organisation or training/education provider, that is designed to support multiple young people to make positive progress towards employment – this may be in any area of the Work Star'.

Examples of opportunities may include:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/>

- Training courses (formal and informal) (including sessions designed to improve life skills e.g. money management etc.)
- Work placement
- Open days
- Volunteering
- 'World of Work' visits
- 'Meet the employer' sessions or events
- Work taster day
- Workshops (including activities designed to increase confidence, aspiration etc.)
- Work club, job fair or Talent Match events such as the Big Conversation
- Training, qualifications and work skills development

### **Defining Support Activities**

A 'support activity' is defined as 'personalised support provided by an external service, provider or worker that falls outside the Talent Coach role (and day to day support) that is designed to address a specific barrier encountered by a beneficiary and to help them to make positive progress towards employment – this may be in any area of the Work Star'.

A personalised support activity differs from an opportunity in that it provides a one to one, bespoke experience for the beneficiary where as an opportunity provides an experience (albeit different) for a group of participants.

Support Activities are currently defined as one of the following:

- 1-1 Benefits Advice
- 1-1 Housing Advice / Support
- 1-1 Counselling
- 1-1 Money Advice
- 1-1 Debt Management Advice
- 1-1 Health and Wellbeing Advice / Support
- 1-1 Substance Misuse Counselling / Support
- 1-1 Self-employment Advice / Support
- 1-1 Domestic Violence Advice / Support
- 1-1- Learning Disability Screening / Assessment (e.g. Dyslexia)
- 1-1 Childcare Advice / Support
- 1-1 Mental Health Advice / Support
- 1-1 Careers Advice / Support
- Foodbank Support\*
- Attendance at appointment / meeting / event\*\*

\*Please note that payments will only be paid once for each beneficiary this is submitted for.

\*\* Please note that this support activity will only be approved **if** the young person would not have attended the appointment /meeting / event without Talent Coach attendance **and** their being engaged in this activity; approval will be (at the discretion of GMCVO) based on the evidence provided by the beneficiary concerned in their review of the activity. Bonus payments for this activity will only be paid once for each type of activity for each beneficiary.

**A referral to external / bespoke support will not in itself be considered as a support activity.**

### **When should Opportunity and Support Activity reviews be submitted?**

Reviews of opportunities and support activities should be completed and submitted on the Opportunities Hub as soon as possible **after the activity has been completed** and before the young person reaches the next 6 monthly milestone.

The date used to monitor performance and to approve any bonus payments will be the date the review is submitted and not the date the activity took place.

**Please note that 'Phased' Opportunity/Support Activity payments will only be made if a total of two Opportunity and/or Support Activity reviews are submitted before the beneficiary's 6 monthly milestones.**

### **Guidance for completing and submitting Opportunity Reviews**

Talent Coaches support young people to review the opportunity they have attended and submit this information to the Opportunities Hub.

**To review an opportunity that is already listed on the Opportunities Hub**, the Talent Coach must be logged in and search for the opportunity to be reviewed. The 'write a review' link can be found at the bottom of the opportunity listing.

The link will open the review form, which includes questions to measure the level of impact of the opportunity has made on the young person. The review also includes space for the Talent Coach to provide some written feedback and rate the opportunity.

**To review an opportunity that is not listed on the Opportunities Hub** the opportunity will first need to be submitted using the 'Submit an Opportunity' form, which can be found in the 'Coaches Network'. Talent Coaches must select whether the opportunity is 'live' (still available for other young people to access or 'retrospective' (date has passed or is not available for other young people). **All** mandatory fields must be completed as fully as possible.

Once the details of the opportunity are submitted, Talent Coaches will be able to access the 'write a review' function; on completion they will receive an automated response email to notify them that the submission has been successful.

Please note that if you are reviewing a retrospective opportunity with more than one beneficiary you will need to contact a member of the Opportunities Hub team for assistance.

A hard copy of the review form is also available on the Opportunities Hub online Forum for those who wish to complete it with beneficiaries and submit the data at a later date.

### **Guidance for completing and submitting Support Activity Reviews**

To review a Support Activity, the 'Submit a Support Activity' form must be completed. This can also be found in the 'My Young People' section of the Coaches Network.

**Talent Coaches should complete all details required on the Support Activity form and assist beneficiaries to review and assess the impact of the activity on their progress.**

A hard copy of the Support Activity review form is available on the Opportunities Hub Online Forum for those who wish to complete it with beneficiaries and submit the data at a later date.

### **How to submit Live Opportunities**

Opportunities that are live and open for young people, other than the Commissioned Organisation's own beneficiaries to attend should be submitted using the 'Submit an Opportunity Form' that can be found in the 'Coaches Network' on the Opportunities Hub. The Opportunity may be provided by the Commissioned Organisation or an external provider and may be listed by either the Talent Coaches or Line Managers.

The opportunity should be submitted with at least three days' notice before the opportunity is due to take place to allow time for it to be listed online.

All mandatory fields must be completed as fully as possible. Talent Coaches will receive an email from Hub staff notifying them of the successful submission of their opportunity, which will also provide them with a link to it for their records.

Live opportunities will take priority over retrospective opportunities for approval. If Talent Coaches need to access a retrospective submission to review urgently they should contact a member of Opportunity Hub staff.

**Please note that should opportunities not contain enough information, the following process will be followed:**

- Talent Coaches / Line Managers will be contacted by email by a member Opportunities Hub staff requesting the information they require to make the opportunity live

- If information is not received within 72 hours of the opportunity taking place, it will not be approved as meeting the requirements for performance monitoring or bonus payments and you will be notified by email of this decision
- In addition to the above, if the opportunity expires during this time the opportunity will not be approved as meeting the requirements for performance monitoring or bonus payments.

For the purposes of bonus payments for submitting live opportunities, **only those that are submitted through the 'Submit an Opportunity Form' form at least three days before the opportunity is due to take place will be counted.** Opportunities that are submitted via email will not be included.

**The submission of opportunities that are already listed on the Opportunities Hub will not be eligible for the bonus outcome payment.**

In addition to the above, if an opportunity has already been submitted by another Talent Coach / Line Manager you will be notified of this by a member of Opportunities Hub staff and your submission will be deleted.

All queries regarding the Opportunities Hub, including the submission and review should be made to Opportunities Hub staff based at GMCVO.