

## GMCA Audit Committee

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Subject: GMCA Ofsted Inspection Outcome – Apprenticeship Employer-Provider

Report of: Dave Russel, Chief Fire Officer

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### Purpose of Report

To update the Audit Committee on the outcomes from recent Ofsted Inspection of the Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship delivery at Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, as part of the GMCA.

### Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to:

1. Note and provide feedback on the Ofsted report which is attached at Appendix 1
2. Note the areas highlighted for improvement and the actions being taken to address these.

### Contact Officers

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### Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Equalities Impact – Para 4

Carbon & Sustainability Assessment – N/A

## **Risk Management**

Ofsted inspect the quality of apprenticeship training that is delivered by training providers to ensure it is high-quality and meets the needs of employers and apprentices. This helps to ensure apprentices learn, develop and make progress as they should.

Providers receiving an 'inadequate' grade for overall effectiveness will be removed from the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP). Their funding is stopped once any apprentices that remain with the provider complete their training.

## **Legal Considerations**

N/A

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

Ofsted Inspections helps providers to continuously improve and provides accountability for the public money used to fund apprenticeships.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

N/A

**Number of attachments to the report: Appendix 1**

# 1. Introduction/Background

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) started its contract as an Apprenticeship Employer Provider in May 2017. As a newly set-up publicly funded Employer-Provider, GMCA was the subject of an Ofsted monitoring visit in October 2019, which found that the organisation had made reasonable progress

- in meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision
- in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices
- in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place

This was followed by our first Ofsted inspection in July 2022. GMCA teaches standards-based apprenticeships through the employer levy. At the time of the inspection, 195 apprentices were studying operational firefighting at Level 3. GMCA subcontracts the English and Mathematics functional skills tuition to another training provider.

Apprentices complete a 16-week basic firefighting training programme at the fire and rescue training centres before they are posted to their watch at one of the 41 fire stations located across Greater Manchester.

As an employer-provider, the organisation is responsible for managing apprenticeship funding within the rules set, delivering training, supporting learners and maintaining quality. It is also required to be on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers which is maintained by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This allows registered organisations to receive government funding to train apprentices.

## 2. Ofsted Inspection

### 2.1 Methodology:

GMCA (GMFRS) received its first full Ofsted Inspection between 5 - 8 July 2022. It was one of the first Fire and Rescue Services to undergo a full Ofsted inspection. The inspection involved five of Her Majesty's Inspectors collating evidence and six Inspectors in attendance at the organisation that week. GMFRS is by far the largest provider in the sector to date.

Inspectors interviewed senior leaders, training managers and subject matter specialists. The interviews covered curriculum intent, implementation and impact as part of the Quality of Education judgement alongside Safeguarding, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development and Leadership and Management. These responses were then triangulated

with interviews and observations of apprentices, their line managers and trainers in conjunction with scrutiny of work. Observations by Inspectors took place at the Training and Development Centre (Cassidy Close), Bury Training & Safety Centre and at multiple Fire Stations.

## **2.2 Content:**

The Inspection addressed the following areas:

- What is it like to be a learner with this provider?
- What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?
- Safeguarding
- What does the provider need to do to improve?

## **2.3 Outcome:**

The overall outcome achieved by the service was Good. The specific outcomes were as follows:

- Quality of Education - **Good**
- Personal Development - **Outstanding**
- Behaviour & Attitude – **Outstanding**
- Leadership and Management – **Good**

The detailed report issued by Ofsted is attached at Appendix 1.

## **2.4 Areas for Improvement:**

The following were identified in the outcome report as needing improvement.

- Ensure trainers in the fire stations receive the training they need to improve and assure the quality of training for their apprentices.
- Ensure that workplace trainers routinely set challenging areas for development to help apprentices focus on their learning priorities and achieve their potential.
- Ensure trainers routinely provide apprentices with effective careers and progression guidance, so that all apprentices understand the possible alternative career options available to them

### 3. Improvement Activity

In preparation for the Ofsted visit the team undertook a self-assessment exercise and developed a Quality Improvement Plan. Following the inspection both those documents are being refreshed and updated, incorporating insights shared by the inspection team and the outcome report. Some actions are already underway to improve the provision and learner experience such as:

- Working with stakeholders to undertake self-assessment and update the Quality Improvement Plan
- assigning workplace tutors from the outset of the apprenticeship
- increased frequency of progress reviews
- explicit embedding of functional skills for all learners
- careers information forming part of the induction pack for all new apprentices.

The table below sets out the high-level plans for the coming months to achieve the improvements needed:

<b>Risks/Improvement highlighted</b>	<b>Actions to be taken</b>	<b>Planned Completion Date</b>
Refreshed Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan required.	Engagement with key stakeholders and review of Ofsted outcomes.	January 2023
Careers and progression advice to be provided to all apprentices from the outset.	Information to be highlighted as part of Induction Handbook and held within the e-Portfolio.	January 2023
Health Checks/Progress Reviews aren't sufficiently challenging.	Quality Assurance of activity to be undertaken and reported on.	October 2023

Health Checks/Progress Reviews aren't sufficiently challenging.	Relevant development activities to be put in place for workplace tutors.	February 2023
Lack of Quality Assurance of Training delivered on station.	Observation training to be delivered to Workplace Tutors and Training Reference Holders and a plan in place for more enhanced Quality Assurance.	March 2023

## 4. Summary

The current data shows that of all our apprentice starts, 33.75% fall within an under-represented group (defined as those who identify as female, LGBT+, racially diverse and/or have a learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problems). Providing an excellent apprenticeship experience ensures that we have a high rate of retention of our diverse entry level workforce and will see this transform our senior operational ranks in coming years.