

Manchester youth employment charity BREAKOUT opens first programme as demand grows for better pathways into work

Tuesday 7 April, 2026

A new Manchester-based youth employment charity is gaining strong backing from employers, sector leaders and individuals with lived experience - just days after its official launch as it opens applications for its first programme supporting young people into work this April.

BREAKOUT, founded by social entrepreneur and multi award-winning youth employment leader Roman Dibden, launched on 26th March at Booking.com's Manchester office, bringing together employers, policymakers and community organisations around a shared mission: to fix what Dibden describes as a "broken" transition between education and employment.

The launch brought together leaders from across the corporate sector, youth and charity organisations, alongside representatives from Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport - signalling early momentum behind a more joined-up approach to youth employment.

Since the launch, the charity has seen a wave of public support, with attendees and partners sharing personal experiences of navigating the job market and calling for a more joined-up, human approach to supporting young people.

Henry Ngawoofah, a senior youth and charity leader with over 25 years' experience, said:

"The energy in the room was something else and to see such diverse representation across sectors was genuinely inspiring. The branding and messaging land brilliantly and the call to action is clear: this is a movement worth joining. I have no doubt BREAKOUT is here to stay and will be a real force for the system change this sector needs."

Others reflected on their own experiences entering the workforce, with one attendee sharing:

"You can be doing everything right and still not get the opportunity - sometimes it just takes someone giving you a chance."

The charity's core message: "YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT THE PROBLEM. THE SYSTEM IS." - has quickly resonated across the sector, at a time when nearly one million young people in the UK remain out of education, employment or training.

BREAKOUT has now opened referrals for its first cohort of young people aged 18 - 25 for Future Focus, a three-day in-person programme taking place 21 - 23 April in Manchester.

Delivered in partnership with [HIPPO](#) and hosted at [Booking.com](#), the programme combines practical employability support with direct employer engagement and ongoing mentoring - aiming not just to help young people get into work, but to stay and progress.

Over three days, participants will build confidence, develop key skills, gain insight into what employers are really looking for, and connect directly with businesses through hands-on sessions and networking.

Each participant will then be matched with an industry mentor and supported beyond the programme, with ongoing guidance and monthly check-ins.

Roman Dibden, Founder of BREAKOUT, said:

"Launching BREAKOUT was a huge moment - but I'll be honest, I didn't know what to expect.

Walking into a room full of people backing this idea was incredibly powerful, especially knowing how many young people are doing everything right and still getting nowhere.

My life could have gone very differently and for many young people, it does.

We've had people sharing their own stories of applying for job after job, facing rejection and struggling to find a way in. That tells us this isn't just an individual issue - it's systemic.

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Future Focus by BREAKOUT is about changing that. Not just helping young people get a job, but giving them the support, exposure and relationships that help them stay and progress.

We're building something that actually holds and this first cohort is just the beginning."

The launch event also reflected BREAKOUT's commitment to collective action, with Manchester-based business Sunrise Caribbean supporting the catering for the event - reinforcing the charity's approach of building solutions alongside the communities it serves.

Applications are now open for young people aged 18 - 25 across Greater Manchester who are looking for support with their next step. Spaces for the first cohort are limited.

More information and applications: <https://www.breakoutcharity.co.uk/young-people>

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