Bloom opens academy

■ Centre to take on 100 apprentices a year

■ Opportunities for budding estate agents

KEVIN FEDDEN

A FUNDED apprenticeships for estate and lettings agents are to become available each year at a new academy in Manchester.

The Bloom Apprenticeship Academy is to open in the city centre in early May.

It will employ 100 people up to 19 years old in four intakes each year. Two courses will be residential sales and two in residential lettings.

The opening follows the success of Bloom's operations in Birmingham and London and comes amid a push for young people to take up apprenticeships as an alternative to university.

Bloom said that the programme will last six months with experience offered at sponsoring employers, leading to the National Federation of Property Professionals Technical Award and a level three diploma.

Bloom is a government funded vocational training and accreditation organisation specialising in the estate and lettings agency sector.

Sponsors include Rightmove and skills taught on the programme include the psychology of selling, telephone manner, presentation, marketing and time management.

The minimum entry requirement is GCSE grade C or above in at least English and maths.

Prospective apprentices and employers interested in the venture are asked to contact Bloom via BloomBi.co.uk or 0715 103275.

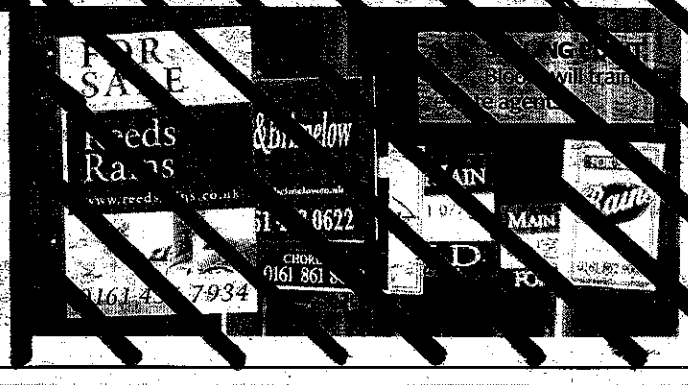
■ **DAMAR Training**, a specialist provider of apprentice recruitment and training, today outlined plans to triple annual revenues to more than £3m in the next three years after investing heavily in staff and premises.

The Stockport-based outfit has doubled staff numbers and the size of its offices and training space in the past three years, during which turnover has surged past £1m.

It works with employers across Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside and is on track to deliver apprenticeships and NVQ qualifications in business skills and customer service to more than 750 people.

Damar, led by managing director Jonathan Bourne, has apprentices with more than 140 organisations in and around Greater Manchester, ranging from law firms and accountancy practices to local authorities and the NHS.

Most work in fields such as administration, accounts, customer service and call centres.



▶ AIM firms' funding fears

LACK of liquidity and the ability to raise funds are the main concerns of AIM-listed firms in the north west, according to a report published today by banking and stockbroking operation XCAP Securities.

The research found that 85 per cent of the region's firms listed on AIM have found their experience as a public company to be positive.

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