

Greater Manchester Race Equality Panel

Six Month Report July 2021

1. Introduction

Launched in December 2020, the Race Equality Panel brings together 24 inspiring people from across our diverse communities. The panel members have a huge amount of professional experience, across public, private and voluntary sectors, and personal experience campaigning for equality and against discrimination for many years

Panel members were appointed following an open recruitment process which attracted 163 applicants. Unsuccessful people have joined a Race Equality Network to remain informed, and there are plans to engage them in the work of the Panel in the coming months.

The enthusiasm is great, both from panel members wanting to get involved, and policymakers wanting to talk to the Panel. The Panel is not without its challenges; securing consensus across a diverse membership is difficult, as well as balancing the expectations of the community with the pace of change in public services. However, whilst the discussions with policymakers can be challenging, they are constructive, with panel members committed to supporting public services to make positive changes.

2. Aims, objectives and priorities

The aims and objectives are to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty)

- Public agencies tackle all forms of racism and discrimination within their organisation and the structure they contribute to.
- Public sector bodies are proactive in their approaches to meet their Public Sector Equality Duty

2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

- The Greater Manchester Strategy tackles inequality and increases equity for ethnic communities
- The diversity of the public service workforce, including volunteers and senior leadership, is increased.
- Positive role models, particularly in leadership positions, public services, civic society and with the business community are promoted

3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

- Greater Manchester's cultural heritage and history of community inclusion and social justice is championed

The priorities for the Panel were identified by residents through a series of listening exercises that took place in 2020.

- Discrimination in policing and criminal justice
- Employment and labour market inequalities, including ethnic diversity in leadership
- Health and wellbeing inequality
- Educational inequalities and achievement
- Financial inclusion and poverty
- Hate crime and preventing discrimination
- Housing and homelessness, including hidden homelessness

Furthermore, it is felt that all issues are the consequences of **structural racism** and this is a focus for the Panel throughout its work.

3. Activity

In its first six months the Panel has met with policymakers on a range of topics, providing insight into community experiences and suggesting new ways of working.

i) Crime and Policing

The Panel have met three times with the Deputy Mayor and the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police to explore race equality in policing. This looked at the challenging issues of stop and search, use of force, recruitment, and leadership. Whilst the impact of the Panel has been limited by a delay in production of the data, the Panel met with the new Chief Constable in June and hope to have a constructive relationship with GMP in the future.

Responding to concern raised within the community, the Panel have also reviewed plans to increase connection between police and schools within the Violence Reduction Strategy. A working group have met on three times with GMCA and GMP officers, to raise concern and seek reassurance that young people and families will be consulted before any action is taken, and that officers will receive appropriate training, and the scheme will be monitored and evaluated to ensure there is no negative impact on young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

A focus group of the Panel have contributed to the Gender-Based Abuse Strategy consultation, highlighting specific issues that affect women experiencing racial inequality. Their comments led to wording within the strategy altered to ensure clearer reference to minoritised groups, additional themes included such as the role of schools, and their concerns were responded to by the Deputy Mayor.

In addition, a working group of the panel met with GMP and GMCA officers to review the ethnicity findings within GM Crime and Community Safety Survey, providing significant feedback on the style of data presentation and the contents of the analysis.

ii) Health and wellbeing

Panel members have contributed to three policy areas:

- Homelessness Prevention
- Bereavement Services
- Assisted conception and fertility services

Moving forward, the Panel have recently established a Health and Wellbeing Inequality working group, and have met with the Executive Lead, Strategy & System Development, Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership, to understand the strategic context in relation to the Integrated Care System and the impact and recovery from the pandemic.

iii) Employment and leadership

Another area the Panel will focus on over the next six months is inequality in employment and leadership, with a new working group taking forward actions from a recent panel meeting looking at the Workforce Race Equality Strategy and Good Employment Charter

iv) Independent Inequalities Commission

The Commission was launched in October to explore the causes of inequality, through academic research and stakeholder engagement, and recommended policy solutions in March 2021.

The Race Equality Panel met twice with the Chair Professor Kate Pickett and Commission member Lord Simon Wooley, providing valuable insight into racial discrimination and inequality. It is positive that the final report recognises the need to tackle structural racism (unlike the Government Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities), and the role of residents in supporting and challenging decision-makers. Specific recommendations relating to the input of the Panel include strengthening the role of the Equality Panels and developing a Race Equality Strategy for GMCA.

v) An active Chair

The Chair, Elizabeth Cameron, has worked tirelessly, building relationships with other networks and promoting the work of the Panel, for example at Show Racism the Red Card North West Conference, GMCA Staff Network, Salford Council Equality Group and the Youth Combined Authority. Elizabeth has appeared on local radio and took part in one of the Mayor's weekly press conferences.

4. Forward Plan

The Panel aims to progress real change through its working groups on

- health and wellbeing,
- employment and leadership,
- crime and policing

In addition, the Panel will contribute to policy areas emerging from the Independent Inequalities Commission and refresh of the Greater Manchester Strategy, including a focus on educational inequality.

This activity will be strengthened by the commissioning of a facilitating organisation for the Panel, BHA for Equality, who will provide support with administration, project management, communication, and panel member development.