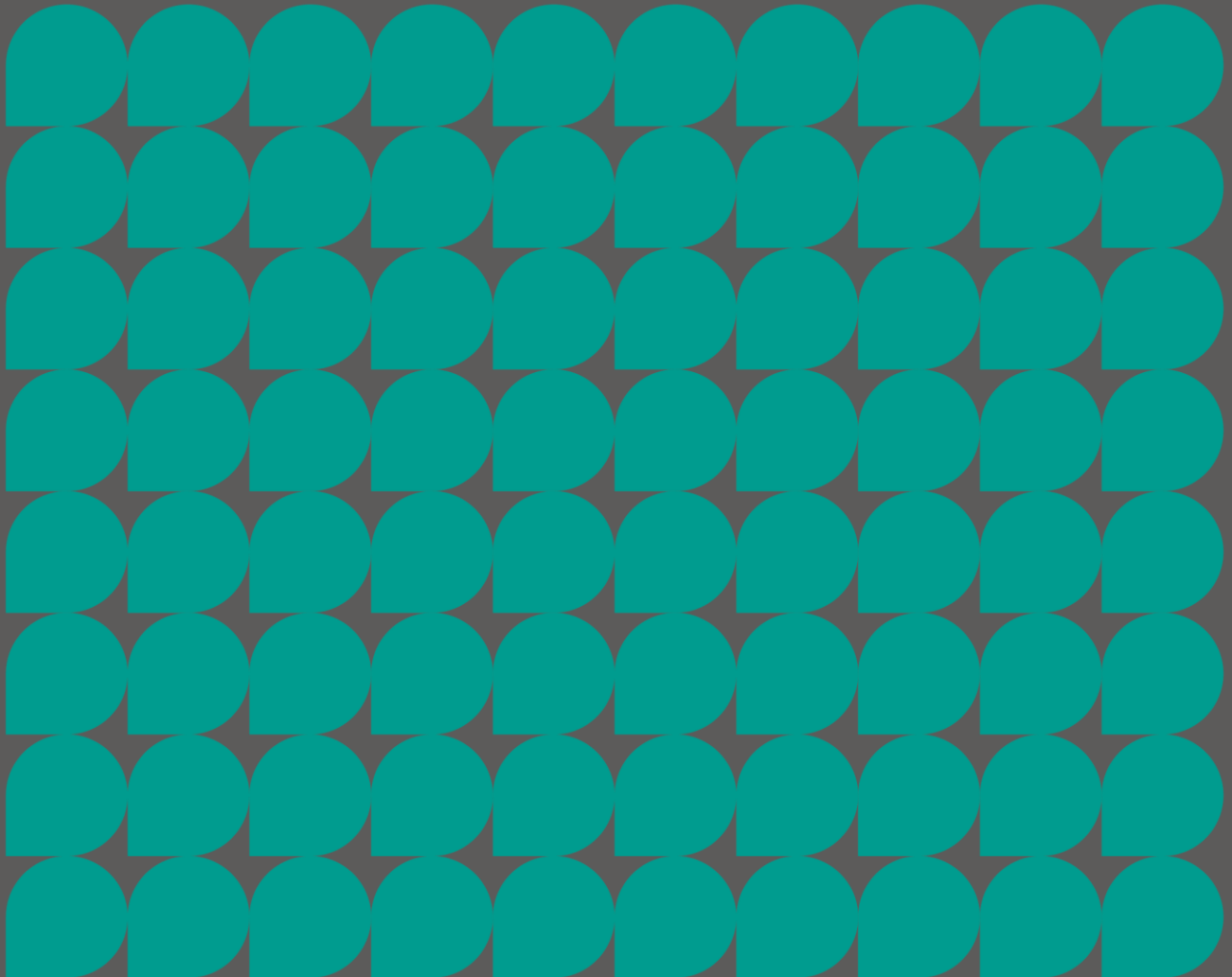




Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel Annual Report 2022 - 2023



Nothing About Us Without Us

Disabled People everywhere demanding their rights and inclusion in society

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1. About the Panel

The Panel is convened by the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) in partnership with GM Mayor Andy Burnham and the GM Combined Authority (GMCA). There are 15 Disabled People's Organisations (majority or wholly led and run by disabled people as distinct from charities) on the Panel drawn from across the city region, they are:

Breakthrough UK • Bury People First • Disability Stockport • Embrace Wigan & Leigh • GM Autism Consortium Advisory Committee • GMCDP (Convenor) • George House Trust • Manchester Deaf Centre • Manchester Disabled People's Access Group • Manchester Disabled People Against Cuts • Mental Health Independent Support Team • Manchester People First • People First Tameside • Rochdale And District Disability Action Group • Salford Disability Forum • Stand Up Sisters

In 2022-2023 we had three Co-Chairs: Michele Scattergood (Breakthrough UK), Chris Hamnett (Embrace Wigan & Leigh), Sarah Cross (Rochdale and District Disability Action Group – currently on temporary leave of absence). Michele Scattergood retired in April 2023 and we have two new acting co-chairs: Melvin Bradley (Mental Health Independent Support Team – based in Bolton) and Sara Crookdale (Disability Stockport) as well as Chris Hamnett.

The Panel Steering Group meets weekly and comprises: the three Co-chairs, GMCDP manager Nicola McDonagh, Panel Officers Jane Bevan and Rick Burgess, and Anne Lythgoe joins us from GMCA.

We pay each member organisation £800 per year to help cover their costs for the extra work they do plus we cover any access needs members have and providing information in accessible formats. The Co-chairs receive an additional £500 annually as a reflection of the extra work they do. This is how we operate ethically in line with the disabled people's movement principles and valuing disabled people's lived expertise and labour.

We also have a wider associate network of interested stakeholders, who do not attend meetings, with whom we share information.

The Panel and members operate from the perspective of the Social Model of Disability.

Thanks and further information

We would like to offer a special thank you to our outgoing co-chair Michele Scattergood, one of the founding members of the Panel, and a tireless advocate for the voice of disabled people in Greater Manchester. We are grateful for the continuing support from the Mayor, his office, GMCA and its officers. Special thanks to Anne, Shona, Rachel and Adrian at the GMCA.

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2. Annual Report Year 4 2022 - 2023

2.1 Greater Manchester Big Disability Survey – Cost of Living

‘No decisions should be made until [the survey report] has been fully absorbed at a Westminster and Whitehall level because this is the picture that needs to guide all of those decisions’. [there was] ‘nothing left to cut, actually, other than people’s hope, people’s support, and in the end risking people’s lives. It’s that severe.’

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester

The key piece of work for the Panel in 2022-2023 has been the Greater Manchester Big Disability Survey. The report was published in October 2022 and included multiple recommendations. We have timetabled our work for 2023-2024 to cover these issues and to work with our partners to address them.

The 2022 Survey was tabled as an agenda item at the October 22 Greater Manchester Combined Authority meeting.

Progress on thematic recommendations.

The Panel has been working with GMCA to bring together responses to the Survey recommendations and identify progress. The Survey recommendations focussed on several thematic areas and we have outlined below, the work the Panel has undertaken in 2022/23 in each thematic area.

Examples include:

2.2 Money, Benefits, and Energy Costs

- Our Survey was a driving force behind the establishment of the Mayor's energy working group. Some of the outcomes of the Group have been improving priority service registers, working with magistrates to ensure issuing of warrants takes into account disabled people's needs, sharing of data to benefit disabled residents,

suggestions of pooling suppliers' hardship funds, the Panel has been working with the British Gas Energy Trust on a possible debt and benefits advice project

- The Panel submitted its findings from the Survey to the inquiry of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Poverty into the (in)adequacy of the social security in the UK. Debbie Abrahams MP tabled an Early Day Motion on the GM Disability Survey in the House of Commons and signed by MPs in England, Wales and Scotland. The Panel submitted its Survey findings to the of UNCESCR (United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) civil society report for England and Wales and presented the findings at the national launch of the report. The report was coordinated by Just Fair who also used evidence from Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel in the two submissions so far in 2023:Human Rights at Work Response: JCHR and Consultation on benefit levels: Work and Pensions Committee.
- The survey findings have also been a key driver behind the work of the GM Cost of Living response Group, influencing several positive outcomes such as a shared agreement across the ten boroughs that warm spaces have to be accessible and encouraging localities to speak to community transport, GMCA is collating pre-payment meter data and analysing data related to disabled energy users thanks to our survey, and the GM Textline relay service was launched for support with the cost of living crisis and the service delivered by a Panel member, Breakthrough UK.

2.3 Housing and Neighbourhood

- The Panel facilitated the submission to Places for Everyone by Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) and Manchester Disabled Peoples Access Group (MDPAG).

- The Panel has supported the work of GMCDP Housing Working group and **Claddag** in relation to Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

2.4 Mental Health and Wellbeing

- In April 2022 we were asked to host the launch **The GM Mental Wellbeing and Disability Report** which the Panel produced in partnership with GM Integrated Care Partnership. This has led to a programme of **Inclusion Grants to support Deaf and Disabled People.** Further to recommendations from the Greater Manchester Mental Wellbeing & Disability report, we influenced the development of disability action rather than disability awareness training. The Panel has been assisting the GM Mental Health Partnership to improve the accessibility of its online resources

2.5 Health Services

- Panel Officers met with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to discuss how findings of our surveys match their Covid findings. They also said that they found data relating to learning disabled people and Covid-19 through our website
- Kings Fund used the Panel as example of good practice in their report on partnering for inclusion and in its report: **Towards a new partnership between disabled people and health and care services** using the Panel as an example under "When it works: disabled people leading change"
- The Panel presented its work at the Disability Rights UK Campaign Conference "Influencing Health and Care Systems" in July 2022

2.6 Problem Solving and Support.

- The Panel has met with the GM Resilience Forum who are running a pilot project focussed on understanding older people's experiences during times of emergency older adults but are looking to increase the

scope in the future for disabled people. We have advised forward planning in relation to fires (in high rises, moorland and accessible fire alarms), power cuts and accessible information, public health information in relation to Covid and flooding and accessible alerts

- The Panel are represented on the Digital Inclusion Action Network chaired by Andy Burnham, through this we have pursued digital enablement being provided in GM, which now covers 9 out of 10 boroughs, with talks ongoing for the tenth. We have co-produced a forthcoming GM publication collecting together all the help for disabled people to get online.

2.7 Strategic influence

In addition to recommendations in 2022 Survey on the thematic areas outlined above, we also made strategic recommendations relating to infrastructure, a rights-based approach and political representation and participation. We have described below progress made in these Strategic areas.

Although the GM Disabled People's Panel (GMDPP) has been established to improve the lives of disabled people in Greater Manchester, there are policy areas which have a substantial impact on the lives of disabled residents in Greater Manchester which can only be tackled at a national level. Through the GM Mayor's direct facilitation in 2020 following our first big GM Survey – Covid-19, we were able to restart regular meetings between DPO's throughout England and the Disability Unit and the Minister for Disabled People.

Since the establishment of the GM Disabled People's Panel we have been working to broaden the approach of the Greater Manchester system to equalities, especially in relation to intersectionality. We were a driving force behind the Independent Inequalities Commission (we influenced the recommendations of the Commission), the bringing together of the Panel

Facilitators, the establishment of the Panel Chairs' meetings and the Tackling Inequalities Board. We have lobbied for more resources of the equality infrastructure at GM level which has led to the creation of an Equalities Lead, the partnership working of Equalities Officers across GM and the mainstreaming of equality into the Greater Manchester Strategy and into research initiatives (such as the GM Residents' Survey).

2.8 Political Representation and Participation

The impact of the work of the Panel on voter ID and accessible elections was confirmed by the GM Elections Lead at the March 2023 Panel meeting. Our feedback has led to:

- A supplemented list of equipment in Greater Manchester to that produced by the Electoral Commission to make polling stations more accessible.
- a local accessible Greater Manchester video
- information about accessibility arrangements from all Greater Manchester Councils
- information on how to get more support on all polling cards in Greater Manchester.

Disabled People's lack of knowledge about voter ID was flagged up in the Survey. This led to an audit of the information published by the ten Greater Manchester councils which was shared with the Greater Manchester election's lead and subsequently with ten councils (Feb 2023). The audit criteria was then shared and used by other DPO's nationally.

We also communicated with the network of GM Equality Officers on accessible elections and particularly with Manchester City Council and shared Bradford City Council's good practice in increasing the numbers of disabled voters.

3. Conclusion

In Year 4 2022 - 2023 our work was dominated by the cost of living crisis and how we responded to this through our second Survey in Summer 2022. We have been pursuing actions in response to our Survey recommendations throughout the year and we will continue to pursue these in 2023 – 2024. In 2022-2023 we also improved the way we worked, becoming more inclusive through our Easy meetings.

We recognise that we still have gaps in representation in two of the Greater Manchester localities (Trafford and Oldham) and we are still working to encourage representation in these areas. To repeat what we said in last year's report: areas that have a Disabled People's Organisation in it, always results in better lives for disabled people there. We also have identified the need to continue to increase how we work intersectionally.

Without doubt the Panel provides a voice to disabled people in Greater Manchester and it amplifies that voice to influence policy at the highest level. The challenges disabled people face are not going away: years of austerity, followed by the pandemic and now the cost of living crisis highlight the need for this strong voice of lived experience to realise the ambition of the Disabled People's Panel of making Greater Manchester the best place to live in the country for disabled people.