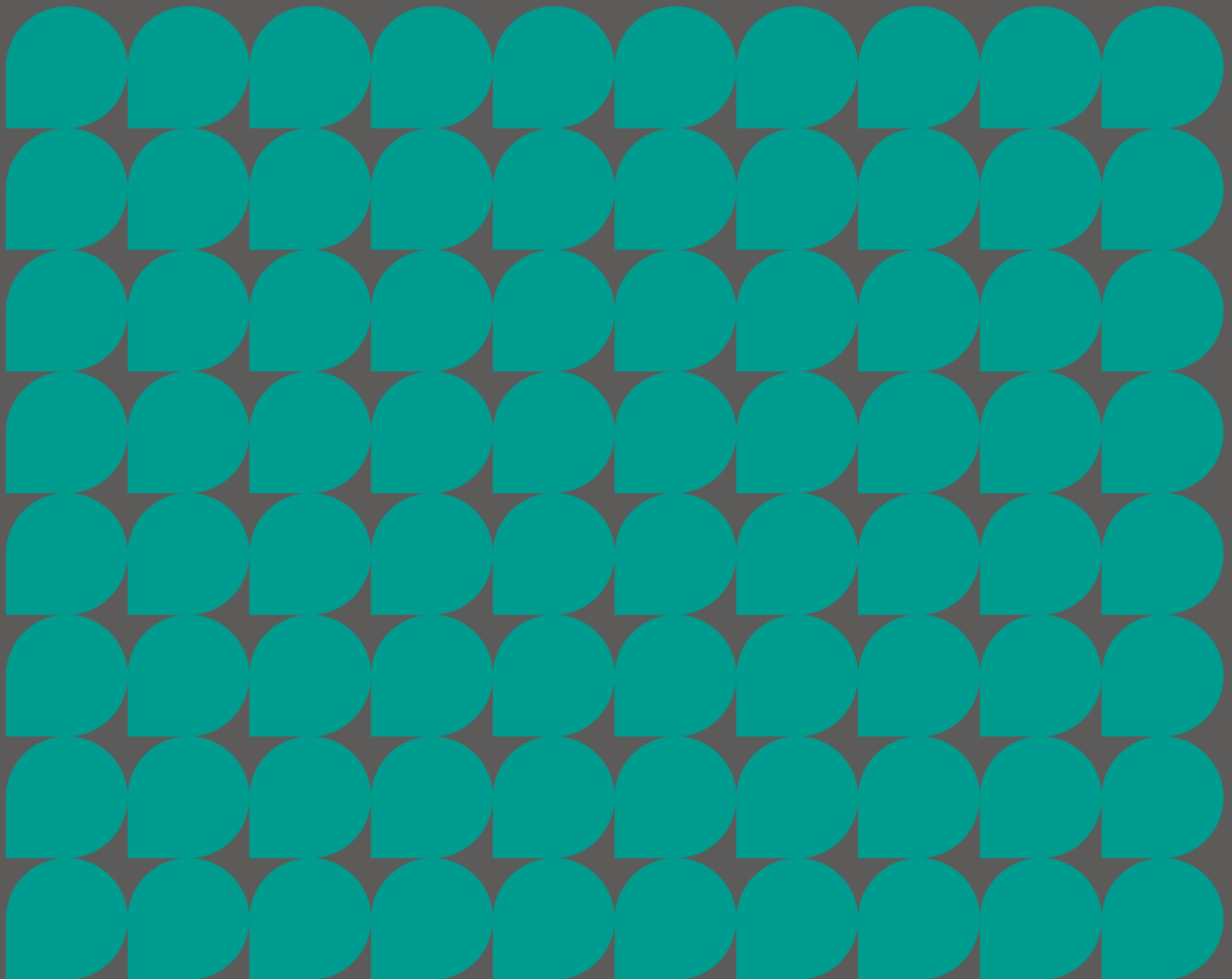


# LGBTQ+ EQUALITY PANEL

DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY  
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER

## Annual Report 2023 - 2024



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# 1. Foreword

The LGBTQ+ Equality Panel is keen to lead the way for the future of the community within our region and beyond. We are very proud to advise the GMCA on matters relating to the lives of the LGBTQ+ community and are committed to ensuring that we continue to make our contribution to local history and culture, enriching our wonderful city region.

The panel is proud of our intersectionality, and we are delighted to be forging strong and positive relationships with the other equality panels. We are also proud to be representatives of both Greater Manchester and the diversity of the amazing LGBTQ+ community, so that we can build a brighter future, together.

*Abi Giles (she/her) – Co-Lead (2023-) & Brian Boag (they/them) – Co-Lead (2022-).*

## 2. About the Panel

### 2.1. Introduction

The Greater Manchester LGBTQ+ Equality Panel is one of seven panels established by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to tackle inequality and injustice in the region. Its aim is to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people across the city region by championing LGBTQ+ inclusion and ensuring that the needs of our diverse LGBTQ+ communities are fully considered across Greater Manchester. The panel is made up of twenty-three diverse LGBTQ+ volunteers from across Greater Manchester.

LGBT Foundation is proud to be facilitating the GMCA LGBTQ+ Equality Panel, re-establishing it in January 2022 on the ethos of community ownership and co-production.

### 2.2. Core Objectives & Workgroups

Following the re-establishment of the Panel in January 2022 and informed by the results of community research carried out by LGBT Foundation, Panel members co-produced a work strategy to outline its priorities. These are:

#### Primary work areas:

- Places & Spaces: all parts of Greater Manchester are accessible, safe and welcoming for all LGBTQ+ people and communities.
- Counting us in: all publicly funded services in Greater Manchester consistently and appropriately record sexual orientation and trans status, and use this insight and other data to improve services for LGBTQ+ people.
- Inclusion as standard: all new and existing public policy in Greater Manchester is LGBTQ+ inclusive, and, where appropriate, there are specific policies in place to protect LGBTQ+ people.

The Panel's current focus is on three **workgroups**:

1. Work with police and other blue light services to ensure that our communities are appropriately served and improve recording of hate crime and domestic abuse.
2. Improve access to public spaces for all LGBTQ+ people by ensuring that leisure facilities, public toilets, etc are inclusive and accessible.
3. Work with public bodies to increase sign-up to conversion therapy-free city region pledge.

# 3. Summary of Activity

## 3.1. 2022

Following the establishment of core objectives and workgroups, the Panel formally launched on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022 to mark International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism & Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). This launch was accompanied by the announcement of the **Greater Manchester Pledge to End Conversion Therapy** which commits to making GM a conversion therapy-free city-region. Initial signatories included The Mayor of Greater Manchester, and GM's LGBTQ+ sector leaders, among others. In August, the Panel's attendance at Manchester Pride was an exciting opportunity to raise awareness of the group amongst the region's LGBTQ+ communities.

Conversations with Pride attendees were wide ranging but largely centred upon the Panel's actions and priorities as well as giving a platform for LGBTQ+ people to feedback their views on what should be done to achieve LGBTQ+ equality.

Autumn soon approached, bringing with it an exciting opportunity for the Panel to meet with The Mayor of GM, Andy Burnham. An evening of rich discussion ensued where The Mayor made a number of recommendations. For example, he encouraged direct engagement between Panel members and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to improve hate crime monitoring and reporting. Most notably, The Mayor committed to bringing the Pledge to End Conversion Therapy to November's GMCA meeting. During this GMCA meeting, the Board unanimously passed the Pledge and, importantly, adopted a trans-inclusive and consent loop-hole-free definition of conversion therapy.

Throughout November, the attention of the Panel was directed towards a public consultation on the proposed **interim service specification** for specialist gender dysphoria services for children and young people operated by NHS England. The Panel's response to this consultation demonstrated an excellent application of the group's collective lived and professional experience in support of protecting access to gender affirmative healthcare. If you would like to read the Panel's consultation response, please email **[lgbtequalitypanel@lgbt.foundation](mailto:lgbtequalitypanel@lgbt.foundation)**.

The year ended with the Panel taking part in anti-racism training to help the group implement anti-racist practice in all their work. In particular, they focused on recruiting

and retaining members from Queer, Trans and Intersex People of Colour (QTIPoC) communities through recognising the barriers which hinder engagement from these communities and implementing anti-racist practices that seek to reduce these barriers. Conversations surrounding how the Panel can commit to anti-racism will be on-going through 2023 and beyond.

### **3.2. 2023**

Much of late winter and spring was spent completing a comprehensive third round of recruitment, which resulted in nine new members joining the Panel. Thanks to this, the group is now more representative of GM's diverse LGBTQ+ communities than ever before. They are proud to share that they now have representatives from each of the ten GM boroughs. Such representation is central in ensuring that the Panel work with the best interests of all of GM's LGBTQ+ communities in mind.

In May, Panel members joined Manchester City Council and the GMCA to welcome the United Nations Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Victor Madrigal-Borloz, to Manchester. As part of his country visit to the UK, Victor discussed the livelihoods of LGBTQ+ people across GM with Panel members. Through this conversation, the important work being undertaken by the Panel was shared along with concerns about the increase in LGBTQ+ hate crime incidents and anti-trans rhetoric across GM and the UK more broadly. The Panel welcomed the Independent Expert's initial findings, which can be read [here](#).

In response to new requirements for proof of identity to be given in order to vote in May's 2023 local council elections, the Panel completed essential partnership with the GMCA's elections team to reduce the impact this new legislation will have on LGBTQ+ communities. Conversations were held to better Panel member's understanding the nuances of this new legislation before discussing what interventions could be made to reduce any impact this legislation may have on the ability and/or willingness of LGBTQ+ to vote. Following May's local elections, the Panel intend to continue their relationship with GMCA's elections team. Together, they hope to analyse LGBTQ+ voter turnout and plan interventions that will mitigate any negative impact of this new legislation on LGBTQ+ communities in future elections.

June brought another influential opportunity as the Panel was asked to represent the Mayor of GM at the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pride in Montpellier. This visit was not only an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the two cities but to share the work of the Panel with attendees and similar representatives from Kyiv, Paris, Barcelona, Heidelberg, Istanbul, and Sherbrooke. The Panel look forward to seeing how the relationships made here develop, and what opportunities arise from them.

## **4. Planning for the Year Ahead**

### **4.1. Community Engagement**

As a Panel re-established with the ethos of wide-reaching community engagement, the Panel will be dedicating several weekends of this summer to visiting Pride events across GM. These events promise to be an excellent opportunity for the Panel to spread awareness of their work throughout GM's LGBTQ+ communities and receive feedback on their newly drafted action plans.

The Panel will also be replicating the community engagement survey they conducted in early 2022 to refresh their understanding of the current difficulties facing GM's LGBTQ+ communities and collect feedback on the Panel's action plans and workgroup aspirations.

Alongside this multitude of community engagement work, the Panel will be working closely with LGBT Foundation's Communications Team to develop a more strategic and purposeful approach to the Panel's communications work. It's hoped that a comprehensive communications strategy will help to weave community engagement through all that the Panel do. Early outputs from this communications strategy will likely include more regular posting through LGBT Foundation's social media channels as well as better utilising the Panel's page on LGBT Foundation's website through sharing regular updates on the Panel's work, including a monthly blog.

### **4.2. Workgroups**

With the renewed impetus and expertise brought by the addition of the nine new Panel members, the workgroups are set for a productive and impactful year ahead.

Workgroup 1, whose remit is on ensuring that blue light services appropriately serve LGBTQ+ communities, continues to focus on working with GM Police (GMP). Their two

priorities are improving LGBTQ+ hate crime data, reporting and training within the force as well as developing a GM-wide LGBTQ+ hate crime campaign. As an outcome of this work, LGBTQ+ people will feel more confident in reporting hate crimes they experience whilst GMP will be better equipped to respond to these incidences sensitively and effectively.

Workgroup 2 will continue to focus on improving access to public spaces for all LGBTQ+ people. One area of focus will be on the inclusivity of Manchester's Gay Village, ensuring that this space is welcoming to all LGBTQ+ people through tackling questions around discrimination and accessibility. The group will seek to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ safety and belonging in public spaces throughout the city-region, ensuring that all LGBTQ+ people are able to move proudly and safely across the whole of GM. It is hoped that further analysis of the 2021 census data will help to support this work.

Workgroup 3 will be seeking to ensure that the commitments made in the pledge to end conversion therapy are put into practice across GM. An essential first step in this process will be confirming the legality of implementing a ban on conversion therapy practices within GM, work which is currently underway. Meanwhile, the workgroup will seek to build support for the pledge. This will be achieved through launching a campaign to increase signatures primarily from political and public body institutions. Workgroup 3 is also considering how they can support local political and social leaders to play an active role helping secure a national ban which is both trans-inclusive and loophole-free if and when a draft bill is presented to Parliament.

## 5. Further Information

If you have any questions about the Panel or would like to share your thoughts on what can be done to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Greater Manchester, please follow this link: <https://form.jotform.com/222292197499368>

Or emails us at: [lgbtequalitypanel@lgbt.foundation](mailto:lgbtequalitypanel@lgbt.foundation)

For more information on the GMCA and its relationship with the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel please follow this link: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do...>