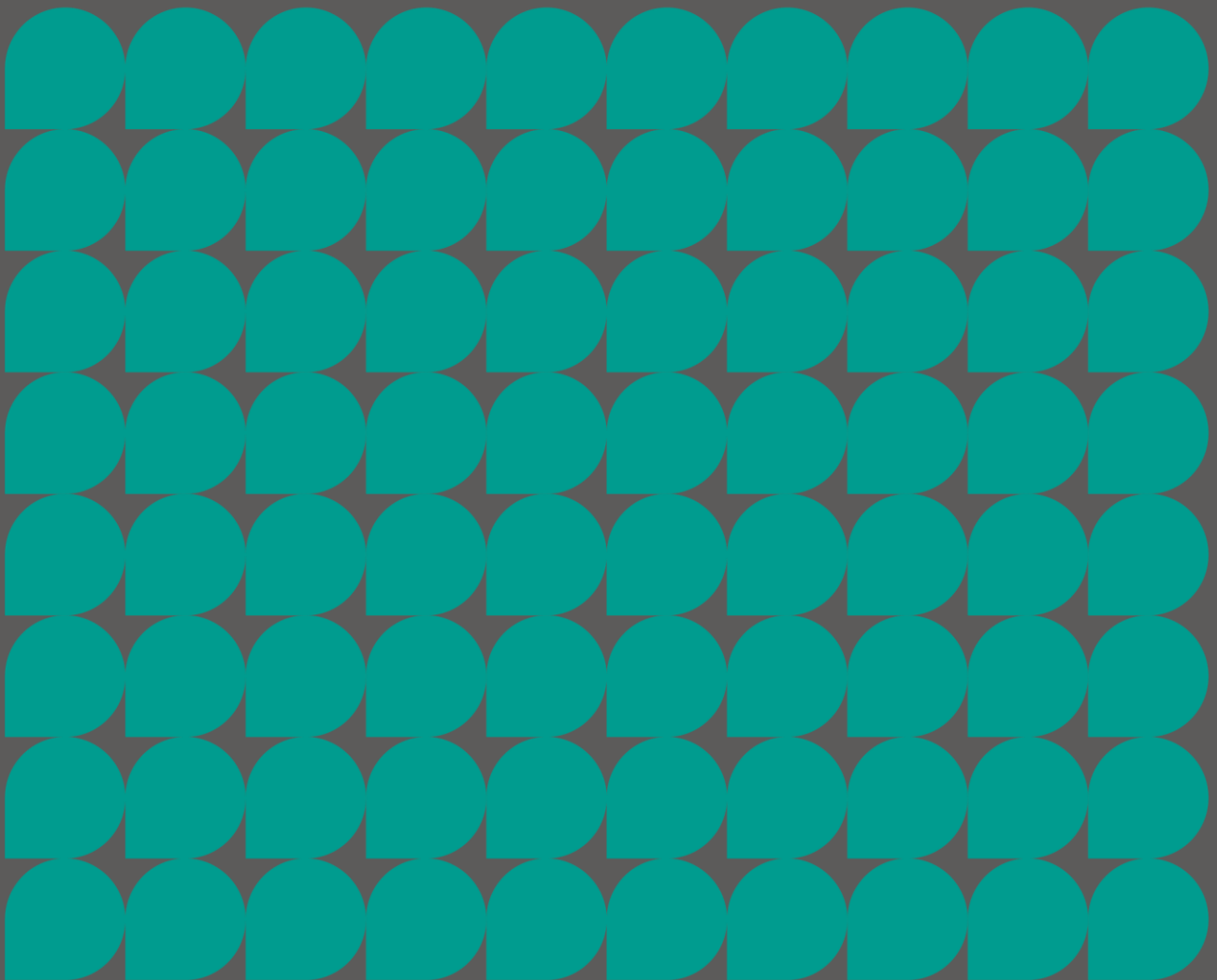


**YOUTH
COMBINED
AUTHORITY**

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

**Greater Manchester Youth
Combined Authority
Annual Report 2021-2022**



1. Background

The Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority (YCA) was formed in 2018 and is an integral part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Mayor of Greater Manchester's Office. It is one of the organisation's six equality panels (a full list and information on all of GMCA's equality panels are on [GMCA's Equalities webpage.](#))

The purpose of the YCA is to:

- Advise the Mayor of Greater Manchester, the GMCA Portfolio Lead for Equalities, Inclusion, and Cohesion and the GMCA Portfolio Lead for Young People of the challenges and opportunities faced by young people.
- Proactively support the GMCA and its public, private, and voluntary sector partners to develop effective policy and practices for young people.
- Constructively challenge political and system leaders on progress to improve outcomes for all young people, including those that face discrimination and disadvantage because of their identity.

The YCA was originally formed with a membership of 40 young people. Currently, it is in its third cohort, where membership has grown to 52 young people representing 26 organisations from across Greater Manchester. Each organisation nominates two young people to be YCA members (with the option to nominate two deputies.)

The full membership meets on the second Thursday of each month between 6-8pm. In addition, thematic task and finish groups (known as working groups) take place and members also participate in 'development days' – which are opportunities for YCA members to meet outside of the monthly meetings – twice during the calendar year.

Youth Focus North West (YFNW) are the YCA's facilitating organisation, organising the group day-to-day. YFNW undertakes one-to-one meetings with YCA members twice a year and draws together a 'community of practice' up to three times a year for the staff supporting young people from their organisation.

1.1 January-March 2022 – End of Cohort 2’s term

It is difficult to estimate the full impact of COVID on the YCA. The outgoing cohort was limited to online meetings until the end of its term in March 2022. With all digital engagement there are benefits and drawbacks; whilst it was helpful in reducing the amount of travel young people had to make, there were challenges in how much discussion and interpersonal relationships could be developed in the online space.

In March 2022 the outgoing YCA members (Cohort 2) launched the ['The Youth Combined Authority Plan 2022-2024 - Our vision for the future'](#). This Plan was developed by gathering data from wider consultations that took place across Greater Manchester since 2020.

YCA Members from Cohort 2 have passed this plan onto the new cohort as an opportunity to start work on tackling four themes during their two-year term.

The themes within the Plan are:

- Equity, equality, and inclusion
- Health and wellbeing
- The environment
- Covid recovery.

1.2 Recruitment for Cohort 3

Alongside the maintenance of the YCA and the development of the Plan, YFNW led the recruitment for the new YCA membership for Cohort 3. This saw an extensive, multiplatform promotion and marketing campaign, with the aim to reach a broader audience and range of potential member organisations. Through this process nearly three times as many applications were received than previous recruitment drives.

To ensure geographical coverage, all 10 local youth councils across Greater Manchester remain ongoing members of the YCA and do not have to reapply. There are now 16 further organisations, all based within the voluntary sector and representing communities of interest, as part of the YCA.

The names of each organisation and their respective themes and purposes are listed in the table below:

Organisation	Theme/Purpose
Be the Change Youth Project CIC	Anti-social behaviour and crime reduction
Blossom Foundation	Black African women and girls
Caribbean and African Health Network (CAHN)	Health inequality
Greater Manchester Army Cadet Force	Uniformed services
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS)	Uniformed services
Greater Manchester Youth Network (GMYN)	Care experience
Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire, and Merseyside (Wigan)	Employability, skills, climate, and green spaces
Hideout Youth Zone	Open access youth club
KYSO Project CIC	Performing arts
Manchester Youth Zone	Open access youth club
One Manchester	Social housing
Rochdale Connections Trust	Domestic abuse and mentoring
Spectrum Gaming	Autism
The Proud Trust	LGBTQIA+
Water Adventure Centre (WAC)	Outdoor education
Youth Leads UK	Social action and employability

For more information on the organisations in our current cohort, please visit the [YCA's webpage](#).

1.3 April-June 2022 – Start of Cohort 3's term

In the run up to the first YCA meeting for Cohort 3, all organisations had a one-to-one meeting with YFNW staff to outline the role and responsibilities of being part of the group. Young people's needs were identified so that meetings and activities could be made as accessible as possible.

Since April 2022, the new members have met in person at two full meetings in April and June and a 'development day' in May. This has enabled young people to forge relationships with each other and to understand their role and responsibilities whilst part of the YCA.

2. Membership

45 individual members have attended one or more of the three sessions so far.

The current members are aged between 12-22 years old.

32% of the current membership are from Asian, Black and other ethnically diverse communities. 20% of the cohort are White, and 48% have chosen not to share their ethnicity.

33% of current members identify as Female, 33% Male, 2% Gender Fluid, and the remainder have chosen not to say.

3. Leadership Group

The new membership will elect their Leadership Group on 14th July 2022. The roles of Chair, Secretary, Communications, Inclusivity and External Relations will be available. Young People will democratically elect the roles by using Single Transferable Voting.

The Leadership Group will work closely with external partners and stakeholders and will co-produce YCA meetings as well as chairing and leading activities at the group's monthly meetings.

The Leadership Group will also play a key role in representing the views and opinions of the YCA at external meetings, sit on Equality Boards, and attend external events.

4. Future Meeting Schedule

Meetings are scheduled on a monthly basis and have been linked to the four themes set out in the vision document. Each theme will be explored four times between April 2022 and March 2024.

Month	Theme to be discussed during the month
April	Visioning
May	Development Day - Team Building, leadership
June	Equity, Equality and Diversity - Autism in Schools
July	Leadership Elections and Environmental Working Group
August	Development Day (Moved to 3rd Sept)
September	Health and Wellbeing - How Poverty Impacts
October	Environment - The Clean Air Zone
November	Covid Recovery
December	Equity, Equality and Inclusion End of year celebration

5. Journey for young people

All of the new YCA members are supported throughout their journey with the YCA. Each young person has their own local Youth Worker to provide advice and guidance. Members are also supported by a Youth Voice Lead and Youth Voice Worker from YFNW.

On joining the YCA all the young people do a short 'temperature check' survey about their skills and understanding of the YCA. This will be monitored throughout their time on the YCA and will be one tool used to measure impact over the next two years. Impact will also be measured on an individual and collective basis through a mixed methodology using quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques.

By the time the next annual report is created we will be able to share the social value that the YCA adds to the young people involved and Greater Manchester.

5.1 Examples So Far

Although Cohort 3 is relatively early in the development and delivery, there has already been clear progress in how the current YCA membership has started to embark on a new way of working, where collaboration and scrutiny is the favoured practice rather than consultation and advice.

In line with the themes set out in the vision the YCA has chosen to collaborate with partners, whilst meeting with senior officers on each theme, to hold public bodies to account.

This way of working is a move from adult-initiated consultation to a more collaborative model. The hope is that this will eventually move further towards Youth-led participation. This is in line with the Lundy Model of Participation set to be adopted across Greater Manchester.

5.2 Neurodivergence and Education

At June's meeting the YCA selected the theme of Neurodivergence and Education through the Equity, Equality and Inclusion theme. Members of the YCA with lived

experience of neurodiversity created and presented a report based on their own and other young people's experiences of education.

The lead officer for SEND within the GMCA attended the meeting to hear the findings of the report, to share GMCA's Autism in Schools programme, and ask the group for advice and feedback on this approach.

As a result of the YCA examining this theme, a small Task and Finish group is being developed so that youth voice and authentic lived experiences can be incorporated into the Autism in Schools programme and the training that schools receive. The SEND lead for the GMCA is also coming back to the YCA in 6-9 months to provide feedback and an update on what has happened as a result of the YCA's input.

5.3 Wider engagement

Three young people from the new YCA membership represented the group at the Northern Powerhouse event in June, speaking to three metro Mayors (Andy, Steve and Tracy) about education, skills and employment. Finally, please watch for the new Environmental Working Group to feed into specific climate activity across GM and wider north west. This group will be directly feeding into a new Net Zero programme covering the North West.

6. Thanks and further information

We would like to offer a special thank you to all the outgoing members of Cohort 2 along with their youth workers and services. Also, special thanks to Adrian and Bob within the GMCA who help to keep things ticking behind the scenes.

For further information on the YCA visit the [YCA's webpage on the GMCA website.](#)

Or contact the Youth Combined Authority (Youth Focus North West) by emailing youth.gmca@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk