

OLDER PEOPLE'S EQUALITY PANEL

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

Annual Report 2022-23

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1. Co-chair's Introduction

Over the last 12 months the Greater Manchester Older People's Equality Panel has established itself as a valuable partner in some of the work being done to transform how services work across Greater Manchester. The challenges faced by our residents over the last few years have highlighted the inequalities in our city-region and it is important that the decisions we make on how to improve life in Greater Manchester recognise this and aim to include many voices in creating change. We will continue to provide a crucial platform for the voices of older people and attempt to reflect the diverse lives, experiences, and needs of older people.

Thanks to the support of our panel facilitators at Macc, membership of the panel has recently more than doubled in size, including the appointment of a Co-Chair, as we seek to meet the challenge of a good representation of the many voices of older people in Greater Manchester.

We are keen to focus on the big issues older people are facing and will do this by collaborating with existing networks at neighbourhood, borough and GM level; listening and learning from people who feel at risk of being left behind and attempting to influence how change happens.

I am incredibly proud to be part of this process and hope that we can continue to make a difference in our city-region.

Jan Kitching (Co-chair)

2. Membership and objectives

The Panel is comprised of older people (aged 50 and over) and organisational representatives who have an interest in or focus on working with older people. The panel has membership from across Greater Manchester and aims to be a representative voice for older people in the city region.

The first phase of recruitment was successful in forming a panel with members representing each of the 10 boroughs.

In February 2023 the second phase of recruitment was completed with existing panel members involved in selecting 13 more members. The panel now has 21 members and is a mix of individuals and organisational representatives.

The current members are:

Jan Kitching (Stockport) Co-Chair	Alison Tilzey (Manchester)
Nakib Narat (Manchester) Co- Chair	Hazel Roy (Manchester)
Erica Woods (Salford)	Lucette Tucker (Bury)
Samantha Days (Manchester)	Damy Patel (Tameside)
Dorretta Maynard (Trafford)	Amy Muthra Shah (Manchester)
Elizabeth Lynskey (Rochdale)	Gita Conn (Manchester)
Steve Sherry (Bolton)	Joy Watson (Salford)
Jackie Corr (Manchester)	John Armstrong (Manchester)
Yuen Megson (Manchester)	Angela Cooper (Manchester)
Bernadette Ashcroft (Wigan/ Wigan & Leigh Carers Centre)	
Anna Hughes (Manchester/ George House Trust)	
Nichola Booth (Stockport/ Home Instead)	

The panel decided to elect two co-chairs. Jan Kitching and Nakib Narat currently act in these roles.

The Equality Panels have been established to advise, support and challenge Greater Manchester's political leaders and policy makers to tackle the discrimination and disadvantage that cause injustice and inequality in society, and champion Greater Manchester as an inclusive city-region.

The Older People's Equality Panel do this by working together with the GMCA and partners to:

- Ensure that Greater Manchester's political leaders and public bodies are more informed about how their decision making impacts older people in different communities or circumstances, allowing for more effective policy and services.
- Build positive relationships with communities and neighbourhood groups in each borough to identify strengths, listen to older people and share key messages.
- Make key contributions to the development of GM wide policies, programmes and services so that they can work successfully for older people within different communities.

Objectives:

- To identify and consider the diverse issues of concern to older people within Greater Manchester.
- To engage with Greater Manchester strategies, so that older people can influence policies that support the creation of age-friendly neighbourhoods.
- To provide the opportunity for older people to promote and share a positive perspective on ageing in Greater Manchester.

3. Addressing priorities

The panel had agreed on 3 prioritised issues which lie within or across the three themes for the Age Friendly Strategy:

- Impact of the cost of living crisis
- Care settings
- Digitalisation

Three subgroups were convened to work on these themes.

3.1 Care settings

There is a recognition that this theme was very wide ranging and it was difficult to prioritise on what was most important. The subgroup met with the GM Adult Social Care Transformation Team to assess what areas the panel could have influence on.

Subgroup members have been invited to join the following governance groups and will be in a position to influence decision making as the different strands of transformation are discussed and implemented.

Unpaid Carers, Enhanced living at home and Urgent and Emergency Care.

The panel also contributes in other forums such as the Greater Manchester Older People's Network (GMOPN) Health & Social Care Working Group.

The most common issue discussed in meetings, communities etc. was the access to a GP appointment. This has been an ongoing issue and the panel is working with GMOPN to ensure that attempts to improve the situation are appropriate and informed.

Transport and hospital appointments were difficult for many people, more so when supporting a vulnerable family member.

The panel was able to take part in several consultation and engagement events.

Several panel members attended the Greater Manchester Ageing Well Workshop in October 22. This was an opportunity to hear about plans and contribute to how those plans might be implemented.

The panel organised a focus group in November '22 as part of GM Integrated Care's Community and Engagement Programme. Panel members expressed concerns felt by older people, with regards to the roll out of the integrated care service. Combined with the GMOPN work of its Health & Social Care Working Group.

3.2 Digital participation

Digital Participation is a consistent theme across the panel and subsequent subgroups. Particularly since the increase in digitalisation since the Covid-19 pandemic. The greatest concern for older people is, that digital solutions are seen as a best fit without thorough consideration of the impact on people for whom they are not suitable or appropriate. The Greater Manchester Digital Inclusion Action Network (DIAN) leads targeted action to combat digital exclusions with a specific focus on supporting under 25s, over 75s and disabled people in Greater Manchester . The subgroup links with the DIAN through the GM Ageing Hub and GMOPN representative, Gill Stainthorpe.

The panel recognises that there is much to be gained from the advantages of digital solutions but stresses the need to ensure that those who are happy to participate are not alienated and those that are not participating are not left behind.

The panel recruited a test team for the software development company, Easology. Easology have made a financial contribution to the panel in recognition of the work undertaken. This team contributed to some of the co-production work on Easology's interface for Android, in preparation for an updated version. This software attempts to make using a tablet easier by streamlining and simplifying the screen and functions.

The team have recently started working with Easology on a similar process for the phone version.

The subgroup is currently leading a small team assessing older people's experience of council websites, the team recruited to assess a series of tasks for each website and how the same task might be completed non-digitally.

Outcomes will be fed back to the GM Ageing Hub and the Locality Leads for Ageing.

3.3 Impact of the cost of living crisis

The panel recognises that financial hardship and deprivation is the common thread though all the panels and any tackling inequality initiatives.

The subgroup attended the response to the cost of living crisis group, and was presented in February '23 with the Ageing Hub on pension top up. As well as some pointers on how older people used warm spaces.

The panel will be working closely with the Independent Age and Ageing Hub Financial Hardship Programme.

The subgroup will be contributing to the GM Residents Survey by collating qualitative data on older persons' experiences to complement the regular survey.

3.4 Other themes which need to be addressed

In several meetings panel members highlighted other concerns which needed to be prioritised at some point.

- The value of older people – It was felt that the term older people can be viewed as an uncomplicated term and can be used to mean vulnerable when convenient. Older people should be seen as diverse and the term should be qualified where necessary. Much work has been done to challenge this and promote the concept of “Valuable not Vulnerable” but it needs to be considered an ongoing issue.
- The age range of who was considered to be an older person was discussed. People who are 50 – 65 (or SPA) can have very different circumstances to people who are recently retired or 75+. The panel are working closely with the GM Ageing Hub to promote the Age Friendly strategy update and include the diverse range of experiences within each age range.
- Housing options – Different issues in different boroughs. Discussed issues for home owners as well as issues for people renting either privately or from a social landlord.

4. Collaborations

The panel has worked alongside the GMOPN, which brings together over 400 members to campaign for better outcomes for older residents. Four panel members are also members of the GMOPN steering group and report back to the panel as required. Similarly, there is a regular update from the panel to the steering group. This allows both bodies to work effectively together and avoid duplication.

We have worked with GM Ageing Hub in a range of ways, supporting the work being done to update the GM Age Friendly Strategy. All panel members representing a particular borough are encouraged to develop a good working relationship with the relevant locality lead for ageing. Jan Kitching is a representative for the panel on the Ageing in Place Pathfinder steering group.

Sam Days is the panel rep on the GM Equalities working group.

Elizabeth Lynskey is the panel representative on the older people and financial hardship steering group. The panel has been involved in a series of initiatives, studies and consultations with University of Manchester, Easology, GM Integrated Care, TfGM and Manchester's Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme. We are also building relationships with Age Action Alliance, Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman and Independent Age through a range of collaborations.

5. Challenges

The panel currently has 21 members, and each member needs to be supported to ensure that they can continue and feel confident to contribute to the panel. As well as being able to present as a panel member within their own networks. All of the panel members' work is voluntary and can sometimes prove difficult. Many panel members are already involved in other voluntary work, which is also time consuming. Some members juggle their time with paid work.

All of this can be a challenge and panel members are encouraged to speak to the facilitator about any issues of time commitment or any other difficulty.

Over the lifetime of the panel several members have had to withdraw due to a change in circumstances. This may require fresh recruitment if it leaves one borough without a representative.

Macc is currently developing a policy on participation and reward, how the work contributed by people involved in co-production work, focus groups, research studies and advisory panels can be valued in an appropriate way.

6. Support and Training

Macc is the facilitating organisation for the panel. John Mulvenna is the panel facilitator and is part of a team of 5 people.

All panel members are offered one to one support as required. This is an opportunity to discuss any issues or identify a training need.

Subgroup meetings are bi-monthly, though sometimes they can be more frequent.

Panel meetings are bi-monthly, the theme of the meeting is rotated to match the work of each subgroup unless there is a specific issue to be addressed.

7. Forward planning

7.1 Action plan 2023 – 2024

The panel will be meeting in July to agree an action plan for the next 12 months.

7.2 Continuing recruitment

The second phase of recruitment was completed recently with the panel now up to 21 members. The majority of members are individuals.

Nine boroughs are represented, with Oldham the only one which does not have at least one member. Work is currently being done to recruit to this position.

Three members are representing organisations – Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre, George House Trust and Home Instead.

The panel has agreed to continue to recruit to a maximum of 25 members with an emphasis on organisational representatives who can contribute in a specific way.

7.3 Engage at local levels – build new networks.

The panel will support GMOPN to link in with existing older people's networks and appropriate community group. Supported by Macc, the panel will continue to conduct outreach work and identify marginalised groups to engage with across the city region, to ensure their overall voice is representative, inclusive and include the perspectives of those who are marginalised.

Building good working relationships with community groups, GMCA partners, Locality Leads and local older people's networks is a key part of the panel's work. Panel members are supported to attend appropriate events and build on their existing networks.

7.4 Collaborating with other panels

The Panel will seek opportunities to work with the other GM equality panels. It is particularly interested in investigating the concern that older

people and younger people may be set against each other. Panel members met and discussed several issues including how intergenerational work can be fostered, specifically in education and training.

The Care Settings Subgroup has had discussions with the Disabled People's Panel about the impact of rising costs of social care and continue to liaise on this issue.

7.5 Events

The panel and the network are planning an event for the autumn. This event will bring together several different strands around planning for later life. The intention is to convene a mix of individuals, professionals and stakeholders to discuss how best to move away from a culture of crisis management.

8. Find out more

If you want to find out more or speak to someone about the panel on any issue, please contact John Mulvenna.

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