# Greater Manchester LGBTQ+ Equality Panel Annual Review 2022:

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 interests and voices of Greater Manchester’s (GM) diverse LGBTQ+ communities inform all aspects of planning for the future of Greater Manchester. The panel is made up of LGBTQ+ volunteers from across GM, all of whom represent the rich diversity of the city-regions LGBTQ+ community.

2022 represented a momentous year for the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel with its reestablishment under a new facilitating organisation, LGBT Foundation. Following the successful recruitment of a new cohort of Panel members, priorities for 2022 were focused on deciding the Panel’s foundational operations and aims. After much discussion, the Panel decided upon three primary core objectives:

* Places & Spaces: all parts of GM are accessible, safe and welcoming for all LGBTQ+ people and communities.
* Counting us in: all publicly funded services in GM 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 GM is LGBTQ+ inclusive, and, where appropriate, there are specific policies in place to support and protect LGBTQ+ people.

Throughout 2022, the Panel’s focus was placed on the Places & Spaces core objective which was divided into three workgroups:

* 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.
* Improve access to public spaces for all LGBTQ+ people by ensuring that leisure facilities, public toilets, etc are inclusive and accessible.
* Work with public bodies to increase sign-up to conversion therapy-free city region pledge.

Following the establishment of core objectives and workgroups, the panel was formally launched on International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism & Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). This launch was accompanied by the announcement of the Pledge to End Conversion Therapy which commits to making GM a conversion therapy-free city-region. Initial signatories included The Mayor and GM’s LGBTQ+ sector leaders, among others. Read more about [Greater Manchester’s Pledge to End Conversion Therapy](https://lgbt.foundation/gmpanel/pledge-to-end-conversion-therapy) .

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. The Panel’s stall presence across the weekend provided the thousands of Pride attendees with an invaluable opportunity to speak directly to Panel members. Conversations 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. Following the success of this event, the panel hopes to attend more of the Pride events taking place across GM in 2023, where they will be able to continue these vital conversations with the region’s LGBTQ+ communities.

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 enabled each of the place & Spaces workgroups to present to The Mayor. Several asks were made of Andy, and he committed his support and the GMCA’s resources to promoting LGBTQ+ equality across the region. Specifically, The Mayor encouraged direct engagement between panel members and GM Police (GMP) to improve hate crime monitoring and reporting. Andy also spoke on the importance of collaboration between all Equality panels in advising GM’s leaders on increasingly polarised debates, which often slow progress towards equality. The Mayor also reaffirmed his dedication to LGBTQ+ equality by committing to bring the Pledge to End Conversion Therapy to November’s GMCA meeting. The Mayor stood firm to his commitment and, in November, GMCA passed the pledge, the commitments made within it and 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 (https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/specialised-commissioning/gender-dysphoria-services/). 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. The NHS’s response to the consultation is yet to be released but the panel are prepared to act once more in defence of trans rights across GM and the UK more broadly.

2022 ended with the panel taking part in anti-racism training to help the group implement anti-racist practice in all their work over the coming year and beyond. 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.

After a successful first year, the panel and its members look forward to expanding their collective and individual impact over 2023, putting into action their policy suggestions and research findings. The Panel’s emerging priorities throughout the coming year include recruitment to ensure we are as representative of the communities we serve as possible, producing a communications strategy that promotes greater community engagement, implementing the commitments made in the End Conversion Therapy pledge and continuing conversations with the GMCA about how to better integrate the Panel and LGBTQ+ equality.

If you have any questions about the panel or would like to have a say in what the panel seeks to achieve in 2023, please share your thoughts through the [Greater Manchester LGBTQ+ Equality Panel - Outreach Form](https://form.jotform.com/222292197499368)

Or emails us at:

lgbtequalitypanel@lgbt.foundation

If you would like to become a member of the panel, please complete an application form found on the [LGBTQ+ EQUALITY PANEL page](https://lgbt.foundation/gmpanel). Please bear in mind that the current round of recruitment is targeted at communities currently underrepresented on the Panel, specifically QTIPoC and people from the GM boroughs of Rochdale, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan.