

Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority Annual report

Cohort 2

January 2020 - December 2021





Introduction

Background

The idea behind the Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority (GMYCA) emerged from young people in 2017.

Following this, the GMYCA was formalised by the Mayor of Greater Manchester (Andy Burnham) and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in 2018, supported by the ten Local Authorities in Greater Manchester.

The Youth Combined Authority held their first meeting in February 2018.

The aim of the Youth Combined Authority is to give young people in Greater Manchester the opportunity to have their voices heard and influence GMCA policy and decision making.

Its purpose is to:

- **Advise the Mayor and GMCA on key issues and concerns of young people, and provide solutions;**
- **Provide a critical voice and scrutinise the work of the Mayor and GMCA;**
- **Undertake specific pieces of work**

Organisations apply for seats based on a spread of geography and identity.

The term of office is two years, of which the current term for members will complete in December 2021 with plans to recruit a new cohort for 2022-24 well underway.

The current cohort has listened, grown, amplified and worked on complex projects. The GMYCA have created space to share concerns as well as offer advice on a variety of topics.

The GMYCA has worked with elected officials including the Mayor of Greater Manchester, and other key stakeholders such as Transport for Greater Manchester (Tf)GM alongside consultants like Hitch. (There is a full list of officials listed in Appendix 1).





Introduction

Youth Executive Summary

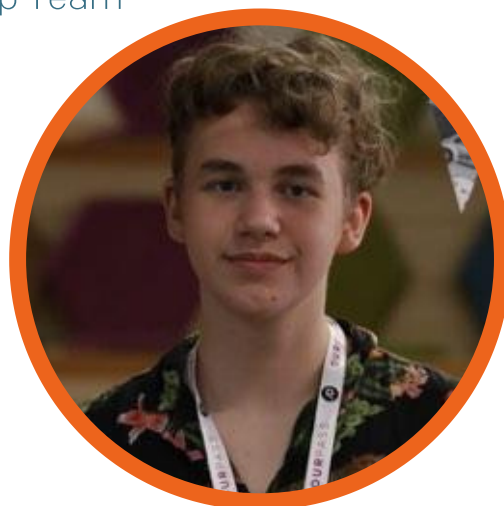
The GMYCA has been heavily involved in the creation of Our Pass and our involvement hasn't stopped there. Many of our members went on to become ambassadors to the scheme, continuing to meet frequently with the Our Pass team and contribute to its development. In addition, we have worked tirelessly on the GM Green Summit, the Clean Air Plan and some of our members were also involved in the Young Person's Guarantee.

The GMCA has brought forward 'loads of opportunities' for us to have our views heard about topics; including the intention to introduce Police School Engagement Officers in schools. This created a lot of debate both internally and externally and this is exactly the type of debate we hope to continue as we go forward.

The establishment of our Leadership Team has also been significant. I am one of five members who have been democratically elected by our peers into positions of leadership. Together, the five of us meet regularly to plan meetings and set direction. The Leadership Team has given us great power to steer the group ourselves so that we can truly represent young people. The idea was suggested to us by YFNW and the idea went to a vote. We voted for the roles, and in October those who wanted to stand were encouraged to make a short video. The GMYCA members voted in a first past the post voting system. The leadership team consists of a Chair, Secretary, Digital Inclusion Officer, Communications Officer and an Inclusivity Officer. The Leadership Team is a diverse group of young people, some of whom have disabilities, are from different Ethnic backgrounds and we all come from a variety of youth groups.

Tommy Kirkwood

Digital Inclusion Officer- GMYCA Leadership Team





Our journey as representatives

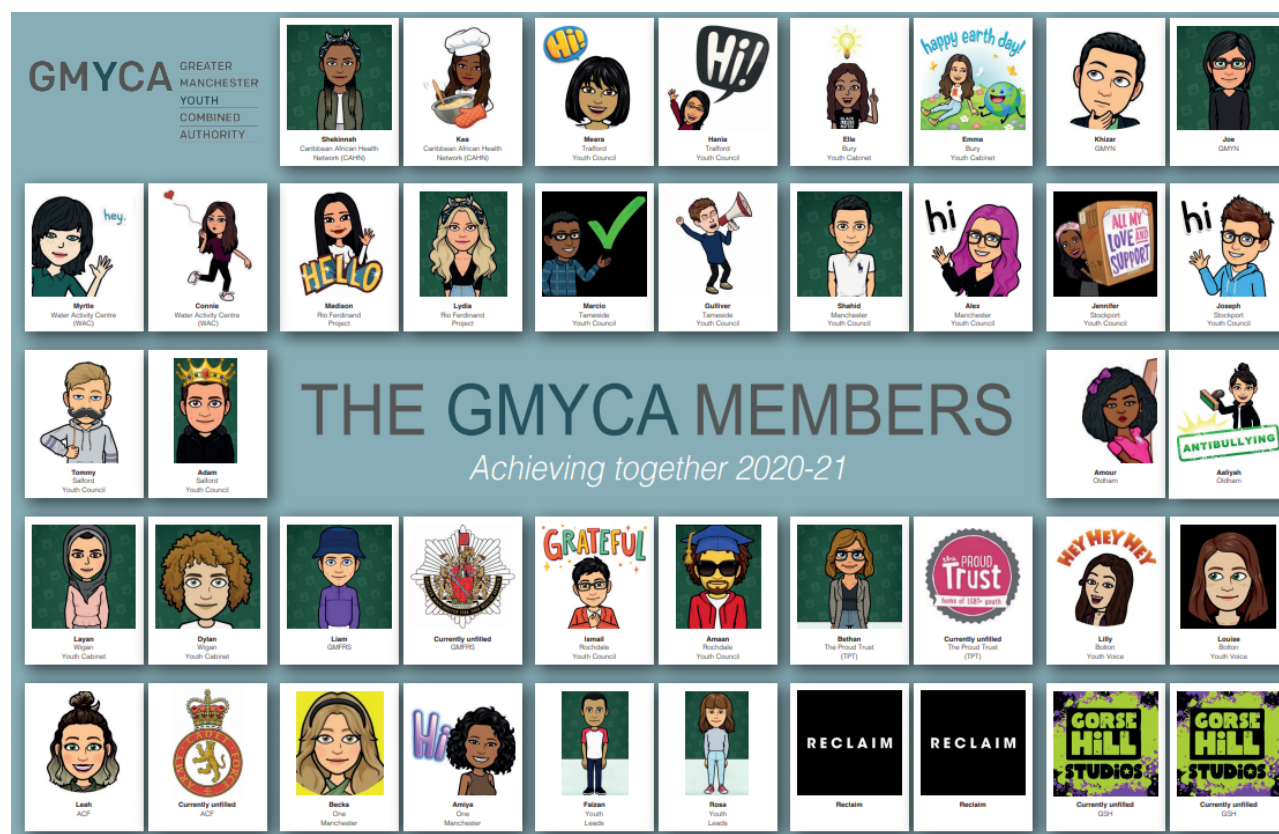
Written by Bethan Heatley, (Secretary, GMYCA Leadership Team) on behalf of the GMYCA.

Overview

The new membership intake has included organisations that weren't part of the original youth combined authority, such as Rio Ferdinand Foundation and Caribbean and African Health Network (CAHN).

The new organisations have helped the GMYCA in ensuring that young people from a variety of different backgrounds get involved.

We believe that we are reflective of Greater Manchester, and to show this we have created a poster to show our diversity:



Version 2 correct as at Dec 2020
Our difference is what makes us the GMYCA

youngfocus ^{NW}
improving the lives of young people

We are proud of the diversity represented within the GMYCA, although we are aware there are some gaps. We will look to fill these gaps and ensure the GMYCA welcomes as diverse a group of young people as possible in its next cohort.

To date we have held 21 main meetings, 16 environmental group meetings, 22 leadership meetings and 5 meetings with the mayor. (see Appendix 1 for a full breakdown)



Development Days

In order to help with the personal development of members, we hold a number of development days throughout the year. The first of five helped us to develop our skills in representation, team building and being critical thinkers. February's session was focused on stretching ourselves and coming out of our comfort zones. We spent the day at 'Challenge for Change' in Trafford taking part in team-building activities.



Adapting to digital

Since April 2020, we have moved all of our sessions online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this hasn't stopped us from growing as a team and continuing with the important role we have as youth representatives.

We've had lots of "adventures" with technology during the pandemic; we've tried new ways of working and we seem to have mastered Zoom! We feel that using breakout rooms and other tools has enabled us to create new ways of working and this will affect how we continue to work moving forward.

The YCA has provided me with endless opportunities to use my voice as a young person. This has boosted my confidence levels and built my ability to make meaningful connections with different groups of people in Greater Manchester. Becoming the Inclusivity Lead of the GMYCA has been an honour and an amazing learning experience; from leading icebreakers, engaging in discussions with the Mayor, to speaking with other youth organisations- it has truly taught me that I can be impactful and so can you! It only takes you to realise the power that your voice carries.



Shekinnah Wilberforce
Inclusivity Lead - GMYCA Leadership Team

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We have implemented a system whereby when guests attend our meetings they send us information about their topic in advance, we call this a 'one-page profile' and we think this has enabled us to be more prepared and knowledgeable before the session.

We have also challenged language, and how adults speak to young people. This includes senior decision-makers within the GMCA.

Examples of our work

The Green Summit

We formed an 'Environment Working Group' to work specifically on the environment, the young people were asked to come up with themes to help the summit be informed by young people. Due to the pandemic, the Green Summit had to be held online over 5 days. Young people were passionate about this work and quickly moved from in-person meetings to meeting online in a group and on a 1-2-1 level with YFNW to help bring the event together. The project changed dramatically as a result of COVID, which brought positives, allowing the young people to work remotely, but it was difficult at times to write and record sessions purely from home. Despite very tight timescales, we were able to meet outdoors briefly to record sessions and develop content that played a key part in the summit's schedule.

Knife Crime - Working with Hitch

We worked with Hitch, the design agency, to develop the "Violence isn't me" campaign. We met with Hitch to help shape the project and provided our views on wording, images and platforms that could be used to amplify its important message.

GMP School Engagement Officer Proposals

Greater Manchester Police's proposals to introduce dedicated officers in some schools in Greater Manchester has been an important and, at times, a controversial topic for the GMYCA this year. We have met with decision makers, as well as senior GMP and GMCA officers to challenge this policy and express our views. As a group, we felt the proposals would have benefitted from greater input from young people.

After around 15 meetings on the subject across the first half of 2021, we are pleased that our voices have been heard and further work is being done around the policy including information being provided to young people and a panel being set up to scrutinise the process.





Thank you

Thank you to everyone who had supported the GMYCA these last four years.

This platform has given young people a space in which we can have our voice heard and listened to.

I can't wait to see where we go and what we accomplish and I'm excited to have you follow us on our journey.

A special thank you to the 21 membership organisations and their youth workers who support young people to attend the meetings, even in the rain and dark nights.

Thank you to Nick Fairclough, Fiona Lyssejko and Claire Slade from the GMCA who support us to have a voice within a complex system.

Thank you to Youth Focus North West (YFNW) for facilitating the GMYCA and for always pushing young people to show their full potential.

And thank you to all the members who show their dedication in ensuring Greater Manchester empowers all young people to have a voice across our city-region.

Bethan Heatley

Secretary - GMYCA Leadership Team





Recommendations and final thought from Youth Focus North West (YFNW)

The GMYCA was the first established Youth Combined Authority in England and it continues to be the strongest, based on its structure, reach and impact.

Its evolution over the last four years is at a point where the members now feel comfortable to meaningfully challenge decision-makers in a mature and respectful way. The most significant showing of this is their stance on 'Police in Schools'.

As the GMYCA evolves, so does the wider picture of children and young people's voice across Greater Manchester, and it is important that the current journey of recognising, celebrating and collaboration continues.

The GMYCA is now looking at what young people say across Greater Manchester by pulling in evidence. Examples of this can include activities such as the Greater Manchester Mayoral Hustings.

YFNW has been the commissioned partner of the GMYCA since 2017. We have had the privilege of watching the GMYCA grow. However, none of this would be possible without the continued help and support from the ten Local Authority Youth Services and eleven wonderful voluntary sector youth providers that we work with. We have continued to develop relationships with services within the Youth Work sector, through quarterly gatherings and one-to-one meetings.

To further develop we recommend that:

- **Communications to promote the GYMCA and its work are enhanced;**
- **A new approach to membership is developed for the next cohort. Consider the age groups (11-14 yrs) and (18+), SEND, and widening out organisational membership;**
- **Continue with the Leadership Team roles and enable other young people to lead on themed areas;**
- **The GMYCA works on themes already identified by young people from across Greater Manchester: Health and Wellbeing, Covid Recovery, Equity and Equality, The Environment, and CYP Voice;**
- **That the GMYCA creates its own manifesto for change which runs concurrent to the Mayor's term of office**

Stuart Dunne

CEO, Youth Focus North West

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Improving the lives of young people



Appendix

Appendix 1: A breakdown of topics, number and officers who have attended the GMYCA meetings

Date	Topics discussed	Decision Maker / CA officer who attended	Attendance numbers
09/01/20	GMCA aims for the GMYCA and key issues	Mayor of Greater Manchester	31
23/01/20	Environment Working Group		
13/02/20	GM Ageing Hub and Interngeneration	Cllr David Jones GM Ageing Hub	23
15/02/20	Development Day - Comfort Stretch and Panic		21
27/02/20	Environment Working Group	Sarah Manda	
12/03/20	Leadership and leadership roles		24
26/03/20	Environment Working Group		
09/04/20	Covid-19 and young people	Mayor of Greater Manchester	23
26/04/20	Environment Working Group		
14/05/20	Knife crime strategy	Hitch	25
28/05/20	Environment Working Group		
11/06/20	Reflections on Covid-19 / Our pass	Mayor of Greater Manchester / Suzie Stubbs (Our Pass)	20
25/06/20	Environment Working Group		
09/07/20	Green Summit update from the EWG		17
18/07/20	Development Day - Critical thinking		21

Appendix

Appendix 1: Continued...

23/07/20	Environment Working Group		
10 - 14/08/20	Environment Working Group x5 days	Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) Plentiful Michelle Whitfield (GMCA)	
10/09/20	GM Green Summit /Election Process		22
08/10/20	Leadership Elections		26
10/10/20	Leadership Team meeting with the Mayor	Mayor of Greater Manchester	
12/11/20	GMACS and Curriculum for Life	Sophie Hope and Laura Stuart (GMCA)	26
12/11/20	Development Day - Being an active citizen	The Proud Trust	11
10/12/20	End of year quiz and reflection		27
14/01/21	Police in Schools Session 1	Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester Damian Dallimore (GMCA)	34
11/02/21	Greater Manchester Inequality Commission	Elizabeth Cameron, Chair Greater Manchester Race Equality Panel Saeed Atcha, Social Mobility Commissioner	29
25/02/21	Environment Working Group	Rosie Naylor (RHS)	
11/03/21	Gambling Consultation	Jo Evans (GMCA)	26
20/03/21	Development Day - Comfort Stretch and Panic		16
25/03/21	Environment Working Group	Rosie Naylor (RHS)	

Appendix

Appendix 1: Continued...

08/04/21	Police in Schools Session 2	Ben Ewart (GMP) Damian Dallimore (GMCA)	22
22/04/21	Environment Working Group	Rosie Naylor (RHS)	
12/05/21	Leadership Team meeting with the Mayor	Mayor of Greater Manchester	
13/05/21	Membership of the GMYCA	Stuart Dunne (YFNYW)	15
10/06/21	Homelessness	Rachel O'Connor (GMBOP)	21
24/06/21	Environment Working Group	Rosie Naylor David Wadsworth (RHS)	
08/07/20	Consultations across Greater Manchester	Stuart Dunne (YFNW)	
July	Development Day	TBC	
09/09/21	TBC	TBC	
14/10/21	TBC	TBC	
11/11/21	We Asked, You said, We Did	TBC	
09/12/21	Cohort celebration	TBC	

Breakdown

GMYCA

- January - June 2021
- 21 meetings
- Average 24 young people per session
- 2 hours per meeting
- 1008 hours of volunteering

Environment Working Group

- January - June 2021
- 16 meetings
- Average 15 young people per session
- 2 hours per meeting
- 480 hours of volunteering

Appendix

Breakdown continued...

Leadership meetings

- October - June 2021
- Average 5 young people per session
- 22 meetings
- 1 hour per meeting
- 110 hours of volunteering

Development day

January 2020 - June 2021

5 Training sessions

Meetings with the Mayor of Greater Manchester

- October - June 2021
- Average 5 young people per session
- 5 meetings
- 25 hours of volunteering