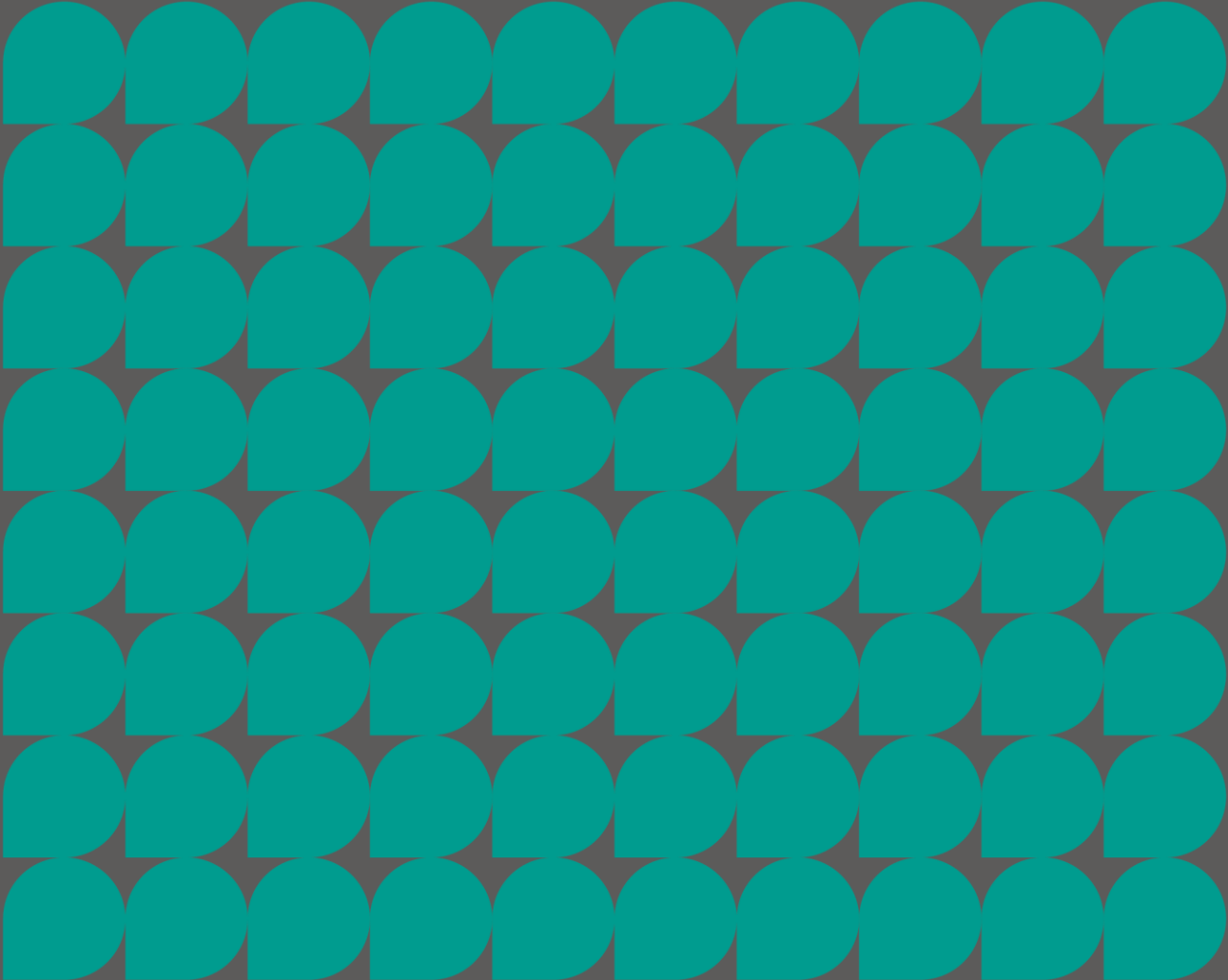


# LGBTQ+ EQUALITY PANEL

DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY  
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER

## Annual Report 2023/24

June 2024



# 1. Contents

\_Toc145407980

<b>1. Foreword</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. About the Panel</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Introduction	3
2.2 Membership	3
2.3 Core Objectives & Workgroups	3
<b>3. Highlights of Activity in 2023–4</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1 Intersectional Work and the Greater Manchester Pledge to End Conversion Therapy	4
3.2 Work with GMCA Policymakers	5
3.3 Sector Engagement Group	6
3.4 Pride Attendance	6
3.5 Laying Foundations	7
<b>4. Planning for 2024–5</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1 Workgroup Action Plans	7
4.2 Community Engagement	9
4.3 Recruitment	9
<b>5. Looking forward and further Information</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## 2. Foreword

As representatives of the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel, we are incredibly proud to support the GMCA to improve the inclusion and safety of LGBTQ+ residents and communities across Greater Manchester.

We look forward to expanding our reach throughout this year and into 2025, by engaging consistently with our communities and policy makers, and partnering closely with the other Equality Panels to foster beneficial changes.

The year ahead holds many exciting opportunities for Greater Manchester and our LGBTQ+ residents, and we hope the panel can be a tool for positive action as we enter what is sure to be an incredibly busy and productive period of change.

*Alex Townley (They/She) & Laura Thomas (She/Her)*  
*LGBTQ+ Equality Panel Co-Leads – 2024/5*

## 3. About the Panel

### 3.1 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.

LGBT Foundation is proud to be facilitating the GMCA LGBTQ+ Equality Panel, following its re-establishment in January 2022.

### 3.2 Membership

The Panel is currently made up of nine LGBTQ+ volunteers from across Greater Manchester.

- Alex Townley (they/she) — Co-Lead 2024–5
- Laura Thomas (she/her) — Co-Lead 2024–5
- Gáibhin McGranaghan (he/they)
- Jake Campbell (they/he)
- Karl Robson (he/him)
- Keisha Tomlinson (she/her)
- Majojo Kuss (he/him)
- Natalie Craig (she/her)
- Conor Nixon-Herd (they/them)

We will be increasing Panel membership throughout 2024 through an active recruitment period. More information on this is detailed below (see 4.3 Recruitment).

### 3.3 Core objectives and 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: working to ensure that all parts of Greater Manchester are accessible, safe and welcoming for LGBTQ+ people of all identities, backgrounds and communities.
- Counting us in: working to ensure that all publicly funded services in Greater Manchester consistently and appropriately record sexual orientation and trans status, and use this data to improve services for LGBTQ+ people, and evidence need.
- Inclusion as standard: working to ensure that 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 the first of these work areas, Places & Spaces.

To do this, the Panel is split into three **workgroups** with the following objectives:

**Workgroup 1:** End LGBTQ+ hate crime in GM, through assisting with the accurate collection of hate crime data across GM.

**Workgroup 2:** Make spaces safer for LGBTQ+ people in GM, through the formation of an LGBTQ+ inclusion accreditation scheme for GM services.

**Workgroup 3:** End LGBTQ+ conversion therapy in GM, by increasing the number of signatories of the Greater Manchester Pledge to End Conversion Therapy, improving awareness of the pledge and supporting its implementation.

## 4. Highlights of Activity in 2023/24

### 4.1 Intersectional Work and the Greater Manchester

#### Pledge to End Conversion Therapy

The Greater Manchester Pledge to End Conversion Therapy was launched by the Panel in 2022 and is signed by Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, on behalf of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Combined Authority, alongside other Greater Manchester leaders and policymakers. Workgroup 3 is

currently focused on increasing the number of signatories of the Pledge and improving awareness and implementation of the initiative.

In 2024, the Panel met with the Greater Manchester Faith and Belief Equality Panel to discuss signing the Pledge. After multiple productive meetings, the Faith and Belief Panel have redrafted the Pledge into a form that works for them and their communities. The Faith and Belief Panel can now share the Pledge amongst their communities to increase awareness of the dangers of conversion therapy and encourage community leaders to campaign against it.

Workgroup 3 recently met with the Women and Girls' Equality Panel to discuss the Pledge, with the intention that this Panel can similarly adapt the Pledge to meet their communities' needs. Workgroup 3 gave a presentation to Panel members about their work on the Pledge, its intended aims, and how it may be adapted to meet the needs of community members represented by the Women and Girls' Panel.

## **4.2 Work with GMCA policymakers**

In their meetings, the Panel has had useful conversations with Greater Manchester policymakers and leaders, including Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Kate Green, Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester and Bev Craig, Leader of Manchester City Council.

In its meeting with Andy Burnham in February, the Panel asked the Mayor about his commitment to tackling transphobia in Greater Manchester and ensuring LGBTQ+ spaces in GM are safeguarded. Members were grateful for the opportunity to discuss these issues directly with the Mayor, and following this, the Panel wrote to the Mayor's office to discuss these priorities further.

The Panel also suggested that the Mayor should include a specific pledge to support the Panel and LGBTQ+ rights in GM in his (then upcoming) manifesto. The Panel were pleased that this suggestion was taken up, with the following statement in Andy Burnham's re-election manifesto:

“We will support our LGBTQ+ Panel in their work to safeguard LGBTQ+ protected spaces and will continue to back the LGBT Foundation’s Extra Care Housing Scheme.”

The panel has found meeting with policymakers across GMCA to be productive and intends to expand its reach by speaking to significantly more policy makers in the coming year.

### **4.3 LGBTQ+ Sector Engagement Group**

The LGBTQ+ Sector Engagement group met in February for a day of activities and sessions aimed at building a comprehensive network of LGBTQ+ inclusion professionals across Greater Manchester. Session topics included Hate Crime and Safety, an LGBT Veterans Review and an introduction to the Equality Panels.

This event was well attended, with around 50 attendees across the day, and feedback indicated that those present found value and community in the space. Focus will be placed on re-building momentum for the Sector Engagement Group, as this is an incredibly valuable space for professionals in GM, and one that will undoubtedly support the work of the panel more broadly.

### **4.4 Pride Attendance**

In August 2023, panel members attended six local Prides across three Manchester boroughs (Manchester, Stockport and Bolton) alongside Manchester Pride, to discuss their work with LGBTQ+ residents, and gain insight from community members about the direction of the Panel, and what it should prioritise. In addition, two Panel members spoke on the Sackville Gardens stage during Sparkle Weekend.

These conversations were productive, and it was determined that more work can be done to advertise the Panel to GM residents. A communications plan has also been developed based on feedback from community members, to ensure that the Panel is effectively advertising its work. This will be implemented fully throughout the second half of 2024.

## 4.5 Laying Foundations

The LGBTQ+ Equality Panel has undergone a period of significant redevelopment since June 2023. The frequency of Panel and workgroup meetings have been reduced, to meet the needs of members, and allow more time for the progression of workplan related tasks. This reflects the fact that many Panel members work full time, have childcare or other caring commitments, and may have other accessibility needs (such as remote access or evening meetings) that impact their ability to fully contribute. Needs of Panel members in relation to accessibility reflect wider trends amongst LGBTQ+ communities in Greater Manchester; therefore, including these members as far as possible is essential to ensure the Panel is representative of the communities it aims to serve.

Members have been involved in drafting a new set of governance documents that better meet the needs of the Panel, and cover, in detail, processes to support productive meetings, assignment of tasks, use of communication channels and complaints, amongst other areas of need.

Panel members have focused on refining their workplans and structure during this time, to create a strategy for the delivery of upcoming work. These have been adapted to meet the new structure of the Panel and the accessibility needs of members.

## 5. Planning for 2024/5

### 5.1 Workgroup Action Plans

All three workgroups have established tangible goals to achieve their objectives.

#### **Workgroup 1 — End LGBTQ+ Hate Crime in GM**

Workgroup 1 aims to collect data about the number of hate crimes experienced by LGBTQ+ people in GM. They have produced a hate crime survey for community members to complete, which they will be sharing widely using LGBT Foundation and GMCA comms channels.



The aim of the survey is to provide another source of data that organisations and services across GMCA can use to study and reduce LGBTQ+ hate crime in GM, alongside increasing awareness of hate crime as an issue in Greater Manchester. At time of writing, the workgroup is ready to publish the survey, and will be advertising this throughout GM prides during summer 2024.

## **Workgroup 2 — Make Spaces Safer for LGBTQ+ People in GM**

Workgroup 2 will create and implement a safer spaces accreditation scheme across Greater Manchester for venues and organisations that allows them to demonstrate their LGBTQ+ inclusivity. It is hoped this scheme will ensure venues think further about how they can be safer and more inclusive for LGBTQ+ people and be examples of Greater Manchester's proactive approach to inclusivity.

Throughout 2024, Workgroup 2 is mapping out the details of this scheme and aim to have pilot venues and organisations ready for enrolment in late 2024/early 2025. Members will also meet with representatives from Transport for Greater Manchester to discuss how the scheme should be adapted for their use.

## **Workgroup 3 — End Conversion Therapy in GM**

In May 2022 the Panel announced the Greater Manchester Pledge to End Conversion Therapy which commits to making Greater Manchester a conversion-therapy-free city-region. Current signatories include Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester and Cllr. Bev Craig, Leader, Manchester City Council.

Workgroup 3 ensures that progress continues to be made by increasing sign-ups and adoption of the Pledge. They aim to have all Equality Panels and community leaders across GM signed onto it, and to champion the Pledge by increasing awareness and conversation around the prevalence of conversion therapy within Greater Manchester.

It is hoped that, in lieu of a nation ban, the Pledge will help to prevent conversion therapy in GM, and act as a best practice example for the city-region, creating pressure for a national ban.

## **5.2 Community Engagement**

Community engagement is a vital part of the panel's activities. Moving into the second half of 2024/5, communication and engagement will be embedded within the panel's work with renewed significance, with outputs planned across LGBT Foundation's and GMCA's websites, social media, and email distribution lists, with the overall goal of increasing awareness of the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel across a number of different areas and audiences, including policy makers, residents, other Equality Panels and VSCE sector organisations

## **5.3 Recruitment**

Retention of Panel members has been a significant issue since June 2023, with many members leaving or becoming inactive. This is partially reflective of the challenges listed above, but also speaks to the difficulty facing LGBTQ+ communities in engaging with GMCA policy work more broadly. Disability, inaccessibility and financial commitments all affect the ability of LGBTQ+ residents to fully engage with the Panel. This is additionally hampered by low Panel membership, as members must contribute more time, expertise and capacity than they would be expected to if Panel membership increased.

Alongside a renewed focus on comms output, the Panel will be entering a period of active recruitment during the second half of 2024. This will focus on increasing overall membership, while also ensuring diversity of lived experience and geographical representation. Several open recruitment days are planned to allow interested residents to engage with current Panel members, learn more about the functions of the Panel and how it works with GMCA as an advisory body. This approach will allow mass recruitment on a scale previously unattainable and meet the accessibility requirements of residents who may be unable to engage with a traditional interview format.

## 5. Looking forward and further information

While the Panel has faced challenges during the last year, a renewed focus on communications, re-focused engagement with policy makers and an active recruitment period will allow the Panel to go from strength to strength throughout the latter half of 2024 and 2025.

LGBT Foundation and the current LGBTQ+ Equality Panel members have worked hard to establish a solid foundation on which important outputs can be built, and we are confident that we will begin to see the benefits of this emphasis on internal restructuring throughout the coming year.

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: [Greater Manchester LGBTQ+ Equality Panel - Outreach Form](#)

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

For more information on the GMCA and its relationship with the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel please visit

<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/equalities/lgbtqplus-panel/>