

WOMEN & GIRLS' EQUALITY PANEL

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

Annual Report 2021 / 22



"I am pleased to be part of a group of diverse women representing our communities and sectors on the Women and Girls Equality Panel. We have started to raise attention to the issue of gender inequality. We are committed to tackling these issues to support Women and Girls to get closer to having an equal place in our society. Through our ongoing commitment we can continue to dive deeper into areas of concern for Women & Girls in Greater Manchester and make a difference for the better."

Halyma Begum (Chair of the Women and Girls Equality Panel & Council Learning and Development Manager at Co-op).

For International Women's Day 2022 the panel participated in the 'break the bias' campaign and were photographed doing the signature pose. This campaign celebrated women's achievement and raised awareness against bias and inequality.

#breakthebias



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The Women and Girls' Equality Panel was established in December 2020 to address gender inequality in Greater Manchester. The panel adopts a fully inclusive approach where women and girls in their full diversity have equality of opportunity to start well, live well and age well in Greater Manchester.

The panel works towards establishing a clear vision for women and girls by building on previous works and current topics to understand the issues and inequalities affecting their lives.

The role of the panel is to constructively challenge political and system leaders to tackle prejudice and discrimination against women and girls.

The panel works alongside the Greater Manchester combined authority (GMCA) and the wider Greater Manchester (GM) system to ensure that equality is actively considered in decision making to help make the conurbation a better place to live, work, study and do business.

The panel is comprised of a diverse range of individuals, organisations and sectors who are committed to ensuring the viewpoints of women and girls from a cross-sector of society are represented.

To find out more about the panel and its members, please visit: greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

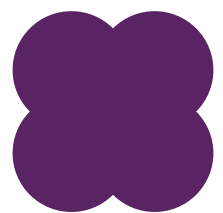
For the first year, the panel was chaired jointly by Brenda Warrington, then Portfolio Lead for Equalities and Ageing (and Chair of the Women & Girls Task and Finish group), and Pam Smith, then Chief Executive Portfolio Lead for Equalities and Ageing (also a member of the Task and Finish group).

The position of chair is reviewed annually, and we have now welcomed our new chair Halyma Begum (Council Learning and Development Manager at Co-op, and Trustee at Diversity Matter Northwest) to take us on the next stage of our journey.

Convened by the Pankhurst Trust, in partnership with GM4Women2028, the panel meets on a quarterly basis. It has established two working groups, and also benefits from the support of an allies network, comprised of Women and Girls

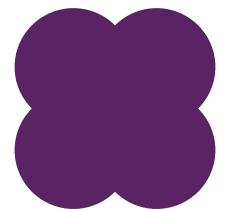
from across Greater Manchester who are willing to contribute their expertise and experiences to bring an end to gender inequality.

Over the course of the last year the panel has received presentations and talks around prevalent matters relating to women and girls, including from academics and GMCA officers who have covered a vast range of topics correlating to the focus of the panel.



Outcomes from these panel meetings include:

- At the start of last year panel members received a presentation from Professor Francesca Gains looking at gender inequality building over a lifecycle and reflecting on building back better. The panel also heard from the GMCA research team on the issues affecting women and girls from an education, skills, and employment perspective and key gendered issues exacerbated by the COVID pandemic.
- It was agreed that a working group would be set up to focus on education, skills and employment and consider these issues in more detail within specific parameters. The Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) refresh later in the year also provided an opportunity to fully embed a gendered lens, particularly within growth sectors.
- GMCA's Police & Crime Team, led by the Deputy Mayor for Policing, Crime, Criminal Justice and Fire presented panel members with an update on the development of a Greater Manchester Gender Based Abuse Strategy. The Violence Against Women and Girls working group played a valuable role in shaping and developing the strategy. Further, two panel members also now sit on the Gender Based Violence (GBV) Board, which oversees the implementation of the strategy, providing a link between the board and panel and ensuring the voice of women and girls is heard.



- The panel heard from a representative from the TUC who provided an overview of the benefits of flexible working, looking into this before the pandemic and the prospects of implementing this style of working in the future- considering the risks and opportunities it could bring. These issues were considered further by the ESE working group, which is exploring the impact of the pandemic and furlough on gendered employment.
- The panel was consulted on the GMP Strategy and Action Plan for Gender Based Abuse and was joined by two representatives from GMP leading on this strategy. They shared some of their work happening across Greater Manchester around violence and abuse against women and girls.
- Following from this meeting, the strategic lead at GMP for Violence Against Women and Girls was invited to join the VAWG working group to continue work around this strategy and to act as a link to GMP. Since then, an HMIC report, which looks at the performance of GMP and includes a focus on violence against women and girls, has been issued.
- Representatives from GMP had previously spoken to the panel in May about an operation GMP were keen to explore in relation to the night-time economy and the creation of safer spaces.
- GMP report that since meeting with the panel they have gained a 'critical friend' to influence and develop their delivery plans. In addition, they have become better connected to the panel's networks and communities and actively seek their input on policing in GM.

Two working groups meet every 4-6 weeks and focus on key areas of interest agreed by the panel. In our first year the groups have focussed on Employment, Skills and Education (**ESE**) and Violence Against Women and Girls (**VAWG**).

Key findings from the subgroups are routinely fed back into the main panel meetings. These groups evolve and change with the panel and take on new focuses as the panel progresses.

Findings from the ESE group

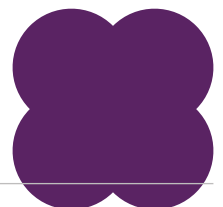
The ESE sub-group have focused on several key issues affecting women and girls. The group invited speakers, both academics and individuals of influence, to their meetings to encourage change in these areas.

Below are some key outcomes and ways in which these meetings influenced change.

- Engagement with the panel provided GMCA's Skills, Work and Research Teams with a useful opportunity to take stock of their work in this area and a challenge to ensure that it stays relevant and innovative.
- GMCA report that they are better connected to individuals and organisations whose insights and connections continue to inform and shape their work.

Looking into early education, the sub-group invited the School Readiness programme team to attend a meeting of the panel. Engagement with the panel provided the programme with additional insights and ideas that have subsequently helped to shape some of the programme's key deliverables. These include:

- Development of a VCSE micro grants programme to promote take up of the 2-year-old funded early education entitlement with Bangladeshi and Pakistani Communities.
- Workforce data analysis to support targeting of recruitment strategies to develop a more diverse workforce.
- Development of business support offer, delivered by the Growth Company, to provide tailored business support to the sector.
- The programme team will continue to reflect on the discussion with the panel to address the following with their Early Education leads group: provision of affordable, high-quality childcare, recruitment and retention challenges in the workforce and the financial resilience of the sector.

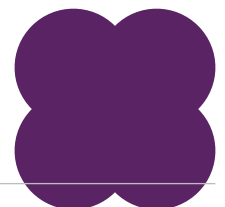


The ESE group also met with Greater Manchester's Good Employment Charter, aiming to ensure the Charter can be used to address inequalities and unfairness in relation to employment.

The Charter reported that their meeting with the panel was 'really valuable' and from this have developed a range of activities and resources, specifically:

- Delivered a series of resources for employers on how to support workers on menopause issues - specifically a [blog](#) by CIPD, a [Supporters Network Webinar](#) and an episode of [our podcast Good Employment 'Chatter'](#).
- Focused a lot of work on Hybrid and Flexible Working - particularly a [Supporters Network Webinar](#), a series of [Masterclasses](#) with Timewise and the production of [toolkits](#) to support the implementation of Flexible work policies - they are also working with '[Working Families](#)' to ensure resources can be shared with their employers. The Charter also arranged a consultation event so their supporters and members could collectively respond to the proposals set out by BEIS on flexible working. The Charter's response can be found [here](#).
- The Charter continues to challenge low pay and played a key role in developing the GM Real Living Wage City Region status and will continue to work with GM Poverty Action, the real Living Wage Foundation and the GMCA to ensure that traditionally low paid sectors are engaged in this work.
- Linking pay to secure work the Charter has evolved to recognise the central importance of sick pay to ensure secure working conditions.

The work of the sub-group has contributed towards a general shift in thinking across the GMCA and its partners in the wake of the Covid pandemic and in relation to topics such as child-care, early-education, flexible working, and employment.



“It’s been a very busy year on the Education, Skills and Employment working group. We have taken a deep dive into sectors like childcare and social care where women are over represented in the workforce and face low paid precarious work. We looked at constraints on women’s self-employment and entrepreneurship. We’ve been glad to take evidence from academics and GMCA officers on these issues and support for good employment across the region. These discussions have been enriched by the deep understanding of the panellists themselves through diverse lived experience in family, community, civic and paid work. Our findings are that for women and girls to live their best life in Greater Manchester there needs to be better targeted childcare and skills development, especially in tech and digital and more support for women’s self-employment. And most of all for mentoring and confidence building for women and girls to open up their choices about education and work.”

Professor Francesca Gains (University of Manchester) ESE group Co-Chair.



Findings from the VAWG group

The violence against women and girls' sub-group have focussed on a number of key issues impacting women and girls in Greater Manchester. The main topics covered include: safer streets, the significance of recording and responding to low-level crimes, and violence towards minoritized groups such as migrant woman.

In addition, the VAWG group have been responsive to wider issues such as the murder of Sarah Everard and the emerging mistrust in GMP.

Below are some notable outcomes:

- In 2021 the Home Office launched a Safer Streets fund that was focused on tackling violence against women and girls in public spaces. GMCA's police & crime team led the bid and wanted their application to this fund to be in direct response to issues women and girls had raised. They engaged with the VAWG group to help develop and influence this strategy.
- The group highlighted that street and public transport harassment was the most frequently raised issue and the Metrolink was a place where women and girls felt the most unsafe. The VAWG group helped develop a bid focussed on increasing safety across the tram network.
- Panel members offered their signatories to the bid and suggested interventions including a 'mass campaign' aimed at boys and men and training for staff.
- The VAWG groups involvement helped secure £550,000 to train 570 staff on how to deal with incidents, a mass reporting campaign aimed at women and girls (resulted in a 600% reporting increase), a poster campaign to tackle behaviours (featuring the slogan No means No) and a trusted people presence at key stops on the Oldham-Rochdale. As a result, incidents for women and girls have fallen by 25% on the targeted stops. Engagement with the group also helped develop ideas that can be rolled out to other places.

- The gender-based violence strategy was launched by GMCA in September 2021. The VAWG group were involved in shaping the strategy and hearing from key people involved in the launch.
- Influence and input on GMP's gender-based abuse strategy. GMP approached the wider panel to help inform and inspire their four main priorities. This work has continued specifically with the VAWG group.
- Coffee & Chat' session facilitated by inviting the wider women's sector including the allies network to provide further ideas, thoughts, and feedback on both respective strategies. This was attended by GMP and GMCA who took this opportunity to listen to voices of the community.
- Creation of a 16 days of activism social media campaign. The aims of the campaign were to highlight the work being done across GM all year round to tackle VAWG. We used a social media presence to amplify each other's voices alongside raising awareness of key issues relating to VAWG.

Increased lines of communication and the ability to shape strategies such as GMP's and GMCA's has allowed the VAWG group to have a meaningful impact and feel they have a way to represent voices of women from their own organisations.

“It is a real privilege to chair the VAWG working group. The group brings together committed, passionate and tenacious leaders and change makers representing diverse organisations and communities of women and girls across GM. Our collective energy and desire for impactful and lasting change centred on women and girls lived experience has enabled us to develop a robust action plan over the last year, during a time of heightened awareness of the range and prevalence of violence against women and girls in our society. There remains much work for us to do, and I very much look forward to working together to build momentum and deliver on our ambitions over the coming year.”

Annie Emery (CEO at Mash)



The importance of making an impact and being outcome focused has been an important lesson of the first year of the panel being in operation.

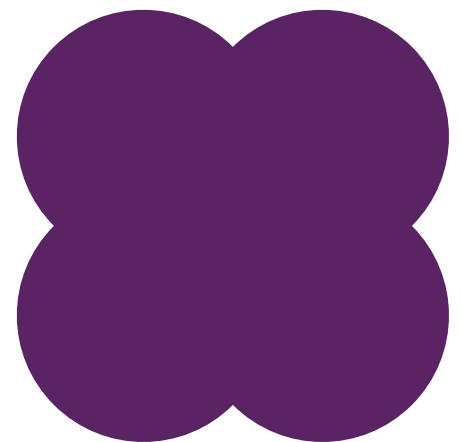
The panel have had a great first year establishing themselves, identifying key topics and forming sub-groups.

Reflecting on outcomes and outputs over the past year has given us the opportunity to take stock of our achievements, gain learning from previous meetings and identify our future focusses.

From this, we have learnt what is important to the panel members and how to engage the members further. We have been able to find what pace works best for the groups and how to steer them in the right direction and involve external sources in meetings.

We established that better communication with GMCA and the allies network is a necessity going forward and changed our strategy to include them more in the second year.

Having the opportunity to create real change has consistently come up as a priority for all members. Creating a structured focus moving forward and shifting our concentration towards outcomes will allow the panel to grow and build on existing foundations built in the first year.



In the coming months, our focus is to continue the momentum of the sub-groups and help to create impact and outcomes.

The first year was largely spent establishing the panel and the themes for its working groups. As we move into our second year, panel members will reflect on the discussions held and address any notable outcomes they want to see before agreeing their next areas of focus. We will also consider new ways for the panel to engage with the allies network and other Greater Manchester equality panels.

The VAWG group, following from the success of the coffee and chat session, plan to host on-going sessions focusing on one topic at a time, gathering input from across the sector and allowing for increased representation of voices and more opportunities to involve the allies in the work of the panel and the sub-groups.

The ESE group will look at aspirations and career success, moving forward with an eventual aim of looking more in depth at 're-skilling' post pandemic. Their hope is to assess the impact of the pandemic on women's employment by looking at the gendered differences in work across GM now that the furlough scheme has ended. This year will be the first time the panel will be able to look at, and compare figures, to the beginning of the pandemic.

As new facilitators of the panel, one of our goals is to strengthen the relationships with the panel members. We have completed one to one's with panel members and have listened to member's feedback on agenda items, the progression of the panel and wider objectives. This information has helped us form our future focus.

We will also seek to recruit new panel members after several existing panel members indicated that they could no longer commit to the panel. This is an opportunity to refresh the panel's membership. We will look to renew existing memberships in December 2022 after the initially agreed two-year period.

Moving forward and into the panel's second year, a large focus will be on creating outcomes and having a significant impact as a panel.

Topics of interest have been identified using previous panel meetings outputs and areas of need/interest identified when the panel was formed. These topics have been used to create a flexible forward plan. This will help guide the panel's work whilst also ensuring there is adequate flexibility to respond to issues as they arise. Future planning will allow us, as facilitators, to plan speakers in advance, ensuring policy leads and change-makers are at meetings when appropriate. This will allow the panel to create the change they want to see.

In addition to the above, the panel aims to add to work being done externally and within GMCA to add additional insight and influence on this. Creating a work plan, whilst also allowing the panel to move organically, will be critical in ensuring the panel is working towards tangible outcomes whilst creating change in areas of interest.

The panel also hopes to work collaboratively with other equality panels within the GMCA. Ideas of areas that will be covered, alongside a time frame will give the panel plenty of time to create these connections and create space for collaborative work. This also allows other panels plenty of time to factor this work into their own future focuses.

Topics which have already been identified include women and ageing, and representation of women facing racial inequalities. These issues bring opportunities to work together with the Race Equality Panel and the Older Peoples Panel. Working together to achieve shared aims gives even more power to the panel and prevents a duplication of work.

Moving forward, we will continue to measure the success of the panel, ensuring we are achieving our aims and that the panel is making a difference to the lives of women and girls in Greater Manchester.

Asking for feedback from speakers, as seen from the working groups, will give the panel ways to measure influence.

By hosting more smaller events, such as the VAWG coffee and chat, and working alongside other local groups and charities, we will continue to measure and reflect on the impact of the communities' voice, allowing for a more inclusive approach.

In addition, we will continue inviting policy leads where possible to panel meetings and ensure our focus is geared towards the change the panel hopes to see. The panel will continue working on and developing the GBV strategy and is continuing work with GMP to improve services for women and girls.

The facilitators will continue to monitor and keep a record of all panel activity, this will help measure impact and will inform the next annual report. Where possible, facilitators will create reports for the inequalities lead to feedback to GMCA, challenge working documents and create new standards and expectations for the government to take onboard which are more inclusive of the women and girls in Greater Manchester.

For any panel enquiries
please contact us by email:

womenandgirls@pankhursttrust.org

You can also keep up to date and get involved with the
Women and Girls' Equality Panel by following us on Twitter.



[@GM4Women2028](https://twitter.com/GM4Women2028)