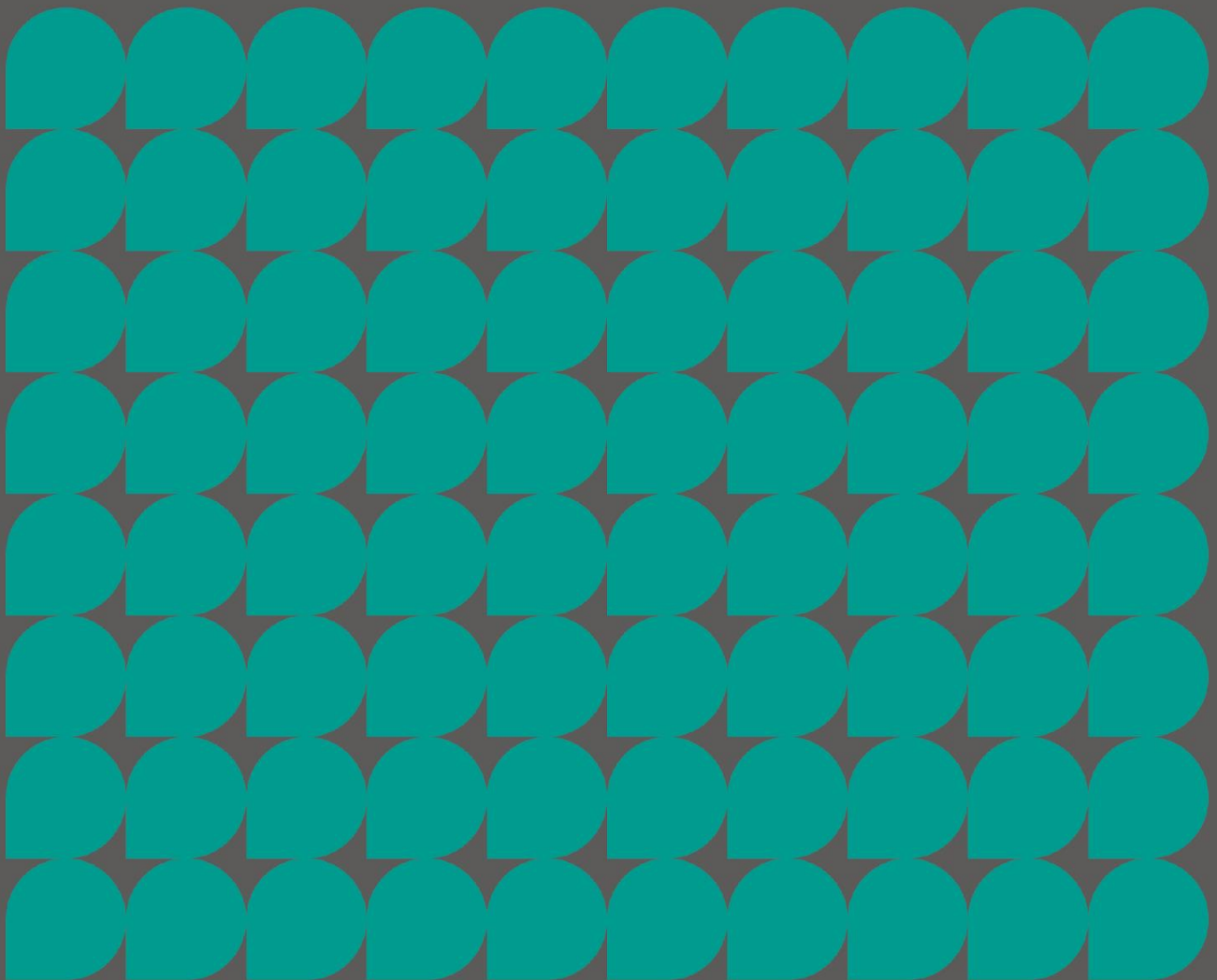


**YOUTH
COMBINED
AUTHORITY**

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

**Greater Manchester Youth
Combined Authority
Annual Report 2022-2023**



1. Background

The Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority (YCA) was formed in 2018. It is an integral part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Mayor of Greater Manchester's Office. It is one of the organisation's six equality panels (a full list of the six Equality Panels can be found at [GMCA's Equalities webpage](#).)

The purpose of the YCA is to:

- Advise the Mayor of Greater Manchester, the GMCA Portfolio Lead for Equalities, Inclusion, and Cohesion and the GMCA Portfolio Lead for Young People of the challenges and opportunities faced by young people.
- Proactively support the GMCA and its public, private, and voluntary sector partners to develop effective policy and practices for young people.
- Constructively challenge political and system leaders on progress to improve outcomes for all young people, including those that face discrimination and disadvantage because of their identity.

The current cohort (cohort 3) began their term in April 2022; The membership has grown to 52 young people representing 26 organisations from across Greater Manchester. Each organisation nominates two young people to be YCA members (with the option to nominate two deputies.)

The full membership meets on the second Thursday of each month between 6-8pm. In addition, thematic task and finish groups (known as working groups) take place and members also participate in 'development days' – which are opportunities for YCA members to meet outside of the monthly meetings – twice during the calendar year.

Youth Focus North West (YFNW) is the YCA's facilitating organisation, organising the group day-to-day. YFNW undertakes one-to-one meetings with YCA members twice a year and draws together a 'community of practice' up to three times a year for the staff supporting young people from their organisation.

1.1 April 2022- March 2023

In the run up to the first YCA meeting for Cohort 3, all organisations had a one-to-one meeting with YFNW staff to outline the role and responsibilities of being part of the group. Young people's needs were identified so that meetings and activities could be made as accessible as possible.

Since April 2022, the YCA has met in person on a monthly basis and had two Development Days in May and September. This has enabled young people to forge relationships with each other and to understand their role and responsibilities in relation to the YCA.

From April 2022- March 2023, members took part in 10 main meeting sessions, focusing on the themes outlined in the [vision document](#); more details of each session are outlined below.

Month	Theme
April	Induction, background of the YCA and roles and responsibilities, understanding the Vision
May	Development Day- St Thomas Centre
June	Autism in Schools
July	Leadership Group Elections
September	Health and Wellbeing - with a specific focus on Poverty and how communities across Greater Manchester are affected.- Elaine Morgan Strategy Principal in the Reform Team leading on Poverty and Cost-of-Living, NHS Focus on Health, Wellbeing and Poverty - David Boulger
September	Development Day - Anderton Centre
October	Q&A session with Andy Burnham and Councillor Mark Hunter.
November	Environment Sarah Mellor - Head of Sustainable Consumption and Production, Environment Team. Speakers Manchester Climate Change Youth Board
December	Health & Wellbeing Speakers included Dr Carol Ewing, Elsie Whittington of BeeWell and Jess Eastoe of GreaterSport. All speakers spoke to the group about

Month	Theme
	opportunities for their involvement in their areas of work, including sharing findings from BeeWell, and an opportunity for funding from Greatersport to encourage involvement in sports for mental health benefits.
January	Equity Equality & Inclusion Operation Black Vote to speak about active citizenship and the youth outreach element of OBV. We also spoke about the Police Race Action meeting that panel reps attended in November, and how we might start on our proposed actions.
February	Environment Speakers included Emma Greenwood, former YCA members, about the ways in which we can break down topics around the environment and climate change into manageable actions. The group also used the time to review their current themes, and refine them for the year ahead.
March	COVID recovery Participants discussed the topic of loneliness and mental health with Amy from the #BeeWell team, as well as some discussion questions on how mental health services can work better for young people

1.2 Task and Finish groups

During this year, members of the Youth Combined Authority have taken part in thematic Task and Finish groups.

Race Action Plan Task and Finish Group

6 Young people from the wider YCA membership attended the first Race Action Plan session in late 2022 led by Angela Herbert; the group were challenged to bring actions on behalf of the YCA two of which were taken forward..

- 1) Developing a new updated 'Know Your Rights' resource, exploring existing resources and adapting to create new, up to date information for other young people.
- 2) To use that information to create an audio-visual piece of work (either a video, song to be shared on Spotify & Youtube etc) that makes the information

memorable for other young people. It may feature well-known Greater Manchester personalities and/or young people. GMCA have committed £5,000 to the creation of this video.

Environmental Working Group (EWG)

The EWG is made up of young people from the wider YCA organisational membership. It had its first meeting in January 23 to identify key goals and tasks that the young people wanted to achieve. The group have taken part in a sustainable fashion workshop at Patagonia, Manchester, and have collaborated with the GMCAs Waste team to identify campaigns to influence. The group are also working with Manchester University to create a workshop on a range of hands-on activities for other young people and families to encourage greater curiosity in environmental themes for the forthcoming Green Gathering Event, as well as liaising with GMCA Environment team to plan deliver elements of the Green Summit in October.

1.3 Development days

The members have met twice for development days; one in May 2022 and the second in September 2022. These days were designed to enable young people to build relationships and develop life skills such as confidence and communication.

Within the next year (April 2023- March 2024), the group will take part in two more development days; to enhance their skills building and build stronger relationships within the group to aid in their future work.

2. Membership

78 individual members have attended one or more of the sessions from April 2022 - March 2023 (including main meetings, development days and external asks), with an aggregate attendance across all sessions of 311

The current members are aged between 12-23 years old.

38% of the current membership are from Asian, Black and other ethnically diverse communities. 36% of the cohort are White, and 26% have chosen not to share their ethnicity.

48% of current members identify as Female, 32% Male, 1% Gender Fluid, and the remainder have chosen not to say.

3. Leadership Group

The new membership elected their Leadership Group on 14th July 2022. The roles of Chair, Secretary, Communications, Inclusivity and External Relations were filled by young people from Cohort 3, democratically elected by using Single Transferable Voting.

In order to strengthen the existing leadership team, in April 2023 we hope to elect new members to the new roles of Deputy Chair and External Relations co-lead, and to refill the vacant Secretary role.

The Leadership Group have worked closely with external partners and stakeholders, helping to co-produce and co-chair YCA meetings, as well as meeting with external partners and exploring opportunities for the wider cohort to get involved in (see 5.2 for examples)

The Leadership Group has also played a key role in representing the views and opinions of the YCA at external meetings, sitting on Equality Boards, and attending external events. Most notably, the leadership team has started to reach out to work closer with other Equality panels (Older People's Panel, Faith and Belief Panel and Race Equality Panel at present) in order to reflect the views of young people in mutual issues.

4. Future Meeting Schedule

Meetings are scheduled on a monthly basis and have been linked to the four themes set out in the vision document. Each theme will be explored four times between April 2022 and March 2024,

In particular, members will work with colleagues from Transport for Greater Manchester on the launch of the Bee Network, including presenting their work at events such as the Big Active Conversation, working alongside other equality panels to represent youth voice on all panels, and attend events such as the Northern Powerhouse Education, Employment and Skills Summit 2023.

Month	Theme to be discussed during the month
April 2023	Health and Wellbeing / Leadership elections
May	Development Day - Team Building, leadership
June	Equity, Equality and Inclusion
July	The Environment
August	Development Day
September	COVID recovery - with a focus on Transport
October	Health and Wellbeing
November	Equity, Equality and Inclusion
December	The Environment + End of year celebration
January 2024	COVID recovery
February	Health and Wellbeing
March	Equity, Equality and Inclusion + End of term review and celebration

5. Journey for young people

All of the YCA members are supported throughout their journey with the YCA. Each young person has their own local Youth Worker to provide advice and guidance.

Members are also supported by a Youth Voice Lead and Youth Voice Worker from YFNW.

Young people evaluate their own skills and understanding of the YCA twice a year. At each session young people provide feedback about their experience and share ideas for improvement. Young people also evaluate their experiences using the Lundy model of participation every quarter.

In this year, young people have reported feeling safe to give their opinions in this space, as well as feeling that their opinions will be taken seriously and taken forward by external partners who have attended sessions.

There has been an increase of young people asking for feedback on where their opinions have gone after their contributions, which has prompted more follow ups from the Leadership Team to those who have attended to get this information and to ensure young people's voices are being actively used in ongoing work of external partners.

5.1 Examples So Far

Young people have given over 700 hours of voluntary time to the project (aggregate contact hours at all Sessions from April 2022- March 2023), showing ongoing engagement and commitment to the YCA.

Young people have grown in confidence since the start of their engagement with the YCA; this is seen via their ongoing engagement in attending meetings, their contributions at meetings and the consistent challenge and scrutiny they provide to the process.

Young people have rightly questioned which adults come to the YCA and ask for the YCA's input. They have implemented a process based on the [GM Children and Young People's Participation and Voice Framework](#) and Lundy Model. This process means that adults who wish to come into the YCA need to explain how doing so will enable young people to have the right conditions of space, voice, audience and influence to have their views heard and acted upon.

By introducing this step it has enabled the YCA Leadership Group to check the appropriateness of those seeking to consult with the wider membership, and to refine the focus of the group.

It is also important to reflect that for some young people the speed of change and the degree of direct influence to make change has been somewhat frustrating. It is an ongoing challenge to manage the expectations of what young people want with the structures and systems within which the YCA operates.

5.2 Wider engagement

Young people have represented the YCA at a variety of external events. In this year, young people have attended Notwestminster 2023, Manchester City Council Our Year celebrations and other events to represent the voices of YCA.

The YCA members have also been working on issues surrounding transport, stemming from their involvement with the National Youth Combined Authority, and recently presented national transport work for Transport for Greater Manchester internal inequalities steering group. They will continue on this topic in the next year, creating a report of their findings and advocating for change for young people to have better and more consistent access to transport.

The YCA Chair was also invited to present the youth combined authority model in front of Thailand government officials, which was a great opportunity to showcase the work of the YCA on an international platform.

6. Thanks and further information

We would like to offer a special thank you to all members of Cohort 3 along with their youth workers and services. Also, special thanks to Adrian and Ellie within the GMCA. For further information on the YCA visit the [YCA's webpage on the GMCA website](#). Or contact the Youth Combined Authority (Youth Focus North West) by emailing youth.gmca@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk