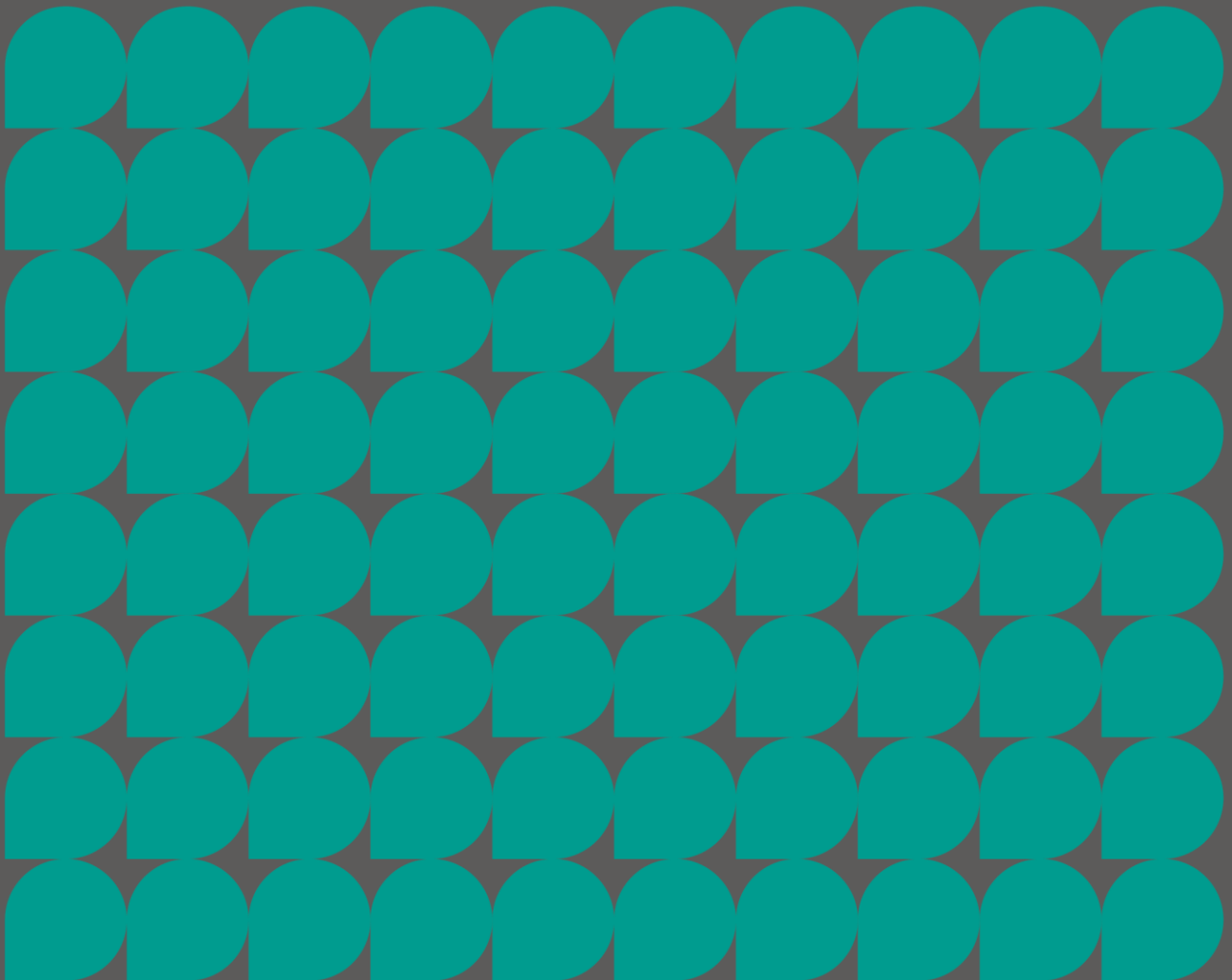


**LGBTQ+
EQUALITY
PANEL**

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

Greater Manchester LGBTQ+ Equality Panel Annual Report 2024-25



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1. Foreword

I turned 60 last year, which prompted me to look back (not a thing I do often).

Growing up queer, there were no role models. Living in a small village there were no obvious available sources of advice and information. At an all-boys school in the 1970s, sex education assumed we were all straight and cisgender.

I came to Manchester to university, not only to study but also to discover the possibilities of living a queer life. I never looked back. I campaigned against Section 28 whilst dancing the night away in queer clubs. Read queer books and

magazines bought at Grass Roots. Met people, organised, talked all night, made connections, learnt from others.

Life felt like it was (slowly) going in the right direction. Protection from discrimination. Equal marriage, equal access to adoption and healthcare, recognition that trans and non-binary people are who they say they are.

And yet here we are in 2025. In the midst of attacks on our autonomy, our access to healthcare, our protection from discrimination, our very right to define who we are.

I know this will burn out over time, though not without hurting members of our communities.

I also know that one of the key ways we create a better future together is by working with those who listen to us, want to work with us. That's why I joined the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel. Because together we can make a positive difference.

Martin Sherlock, GM LGBTQ+ Equality Panel Co-Lead 2025

2. About the Panel

2.1 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.

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

2.2 Membership

The panel is currently made up of ten LGBTQ+ volunteers from across Greater Manchester.

1. Martin Sherlock (he/him) - co-lead 2025/6
2. Karl Robson (he/him)
3. Danni Sharrocks (she/her)
4. Genna King (they/them)
5. Simon Jones (he/him)
6. James Edward Barnard (he/him)
7. Zekarias Maru Abera (he/him)
8. Matt Weekes (he/him)
9. Mellie-Luisi Crowley (they/them)
10. Natalie Walker-Craig (she/her)

Meetings are facilitated through LGBT Foundation by Finn Grice (he/they) and the work of the panel is overseen by Alex Matheson (she/her) and Tom Montrose-Moss (he/him).

3. Highlights of activity in 2024-5

3.1 Recruitment

During August – September 2024, the panel hosted two open days for potential new members to learn more about the panel and meet the current members. Following these, nine new members signed up to join the panel, representing a significant increase in membership. The panel plans to host similar events in Autumn 2025, and will continue annually, to ensure a consistent cohort of members.

3.2 Workstream refresh

The panel had previously been working on addressing hate crime, conversion therapy, and inclusion in public services. Following the publication of the Police and Crime Plan, GMCA's signing of the Conversion Therapy Pledge, and a national government commitment to a conversion therapy ban, members felt that these workstreams were no longer relevant. A new cohort of members provided an opportunity to conduct a priority setting exercise to determine the key issues of interest for 2025/6.

The panel chose housing, healthcare, and education as its key priorities, and subsequently met with representatives from GMCA's Housing and Homeless and Curriculum for Life/Manchester Baccalaureate teams, and Greater Manchester NHS Foundation Trust. These discussions covered the work and priorities of the respective teams, and areas wherein the Panel could contribute to greater understanding, new policy initiatives and refreshed focus.

Following these sessions, the panel are currently completing new workplans for the coming year and will have a named policy sponsor from their respective team to ensure work progresses in an accountable, and meaningful way.

3.3 Representing the panel

The Panel has been represented at a range of events this year, including:

- The **Police and Crime Plan Engagement Event**, during which, members had useful discussions with stakeholders about anti-LGBTQ+ hate crime, and how this can be tackled in the city region.
- Hosting a community stall at the **GM Live Well: Growing Community Power to Tackle Health and Wellbeing Inequalities** event, where attendees could learn more about the Panel and how they can benefit from consultation with panel members.
- **Good Employment Week**, during which panel members hosted a panel event on what good employment means for LGBTQ+ people, and how employers can adapt their provision to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ communities.
- The launch of the **Police and Crime Plan**, where the panel was asked to make a short statement on the impact of the plan for LGBTQ+ people in GM.

Opportunities to share the work of the panel and build new connections are incredibly valuable, and members would welcome further opportunities to attend similar events in the future.

3.4 Attendance at Manchester Pride

Following a hiatus in 2024, the panel is looking forward to attending Manchester Pride this year, with a stall on Community Lane. Members will use this space to advertise the work of the panel and recruit new members, as well as share the Hate Crime Survey, which will be closing on 31st August so that results can be collected and shared with the Safer Communities Team.

4. Planning for 2025-26

4.1 Workstreams

The panel are currently completing their workplans for 2025/6, identifying relevant stakeholders, and contacting policy teams to identify workgroup sponsors. It is planned that each workstream will begin with a resource map, identifying both resources and signposting for LGBTQ+ community members, but also data and insight relevant to key policy makers. These maps will act as a single point of truth for panel work going forward, help to identify key gaps, and, as they will be reviewed annually, they will allow policy makers to evidence where and how they have been able to progress change.

Workstream plans will be published on the panel's LinkedIn page and LGBT Foundation website once they have been finalised.

4.2 Training Plan

Panel members have completed a skills audit and training request survey, during which three core areas of interest were identified. These are:

- Anti-racism training
- Trans and non-binary awareness training
- Accessibility training

Over the next 12 months, the panel will be invited to attend training sessions on these topics of interest. These invites will also be shared with members across all Equality Panels, to promote a collaborative approach and shared learning.

4.3 Focus on Accessibility

The panel has reviewed its working practices, meeting agendas and documentation across all aspects of work, to ensure these are accessible to all panel members. This has included reformatting template documents to make them visually accessible, and adapting these into easy read formats where needed, as well as hosting pre-meetings with both invited speakers, and panel members, to ensure they have all the information they need to participate fully. The Panel will be producing guidelines for

all invited guests based on this learning, and existing documents from the Disabled People's Panel, and the Greater Manchester Equality Alliance, which will be shared with all panels to encourage collaboration on accessibility more widely.

4.4 Rolling Recruitment

Identifying the need for consistency and stability, the panel will look to re-recruit a new cohort of members in Autumn/Winter 2025. Recruitment will follow our successful 'open day' model as trialled in 2024.

5. Further Information

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 email us at: lgbtequalitypanel@lgbt.foundation

For more information about the GM LGBTQ+ Equality Panel, please follow this link: [LGBTQ+ Equality Panel – LGBT Foundation](#)