

**YOUTH
COMBINED
AUTHORITY**

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority Annual Report 2024-2025

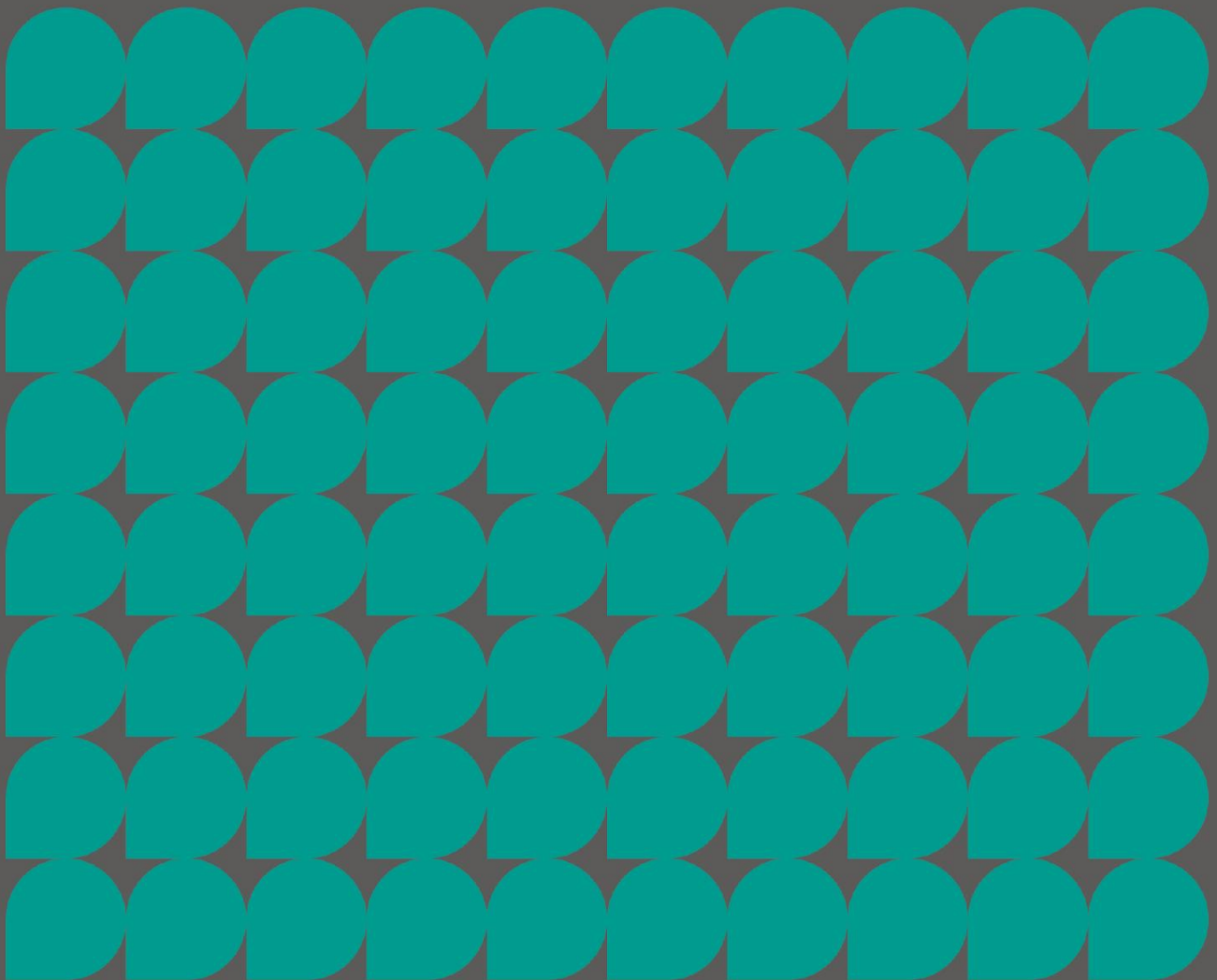


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Foreword

Written by Hannah Yue, co-chair of the GMYCA



In the past year, I, along with our leadership team and new cohort of members, have worked passionately on a range of important issues—from contributing to the Police and Crime Plan, to maintaining our long-standing relationship with Our Pass and MBacc.

One of the most memorable moments for me this year was our work on the Good Employment Charter. Many of us had faced challenges when seeking employment, but it was empowering to see how we channelled our energy and frustration into identifying priorities and developing real solutions to address unfairness in the system.

From facilitating workshops to hosting our monthly sessions, the panel continues to show how eager young people are to express their voices and raise issues that matter to their communities. I believe that the YCA is a powerful reflection of Greater Manchester's spirit—positive, inclusive, and driven by people's authentic voices. As co-chair, I am grateful that young people's perspectives are valued in our city, and I am honoured to lead the strategic direction of our panel. As we look to the year ahead, I'm excited to see how our panel will continue to challenge, influence, and shape our city region's future.

This report sets out the work of the Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority for the period of April 2024- March 2025.

Introduction to the panel

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 seven equality panels (a full list of the seven 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 term for Cohort four will run from April 2024 - March 2026; this report covers the April 2024 - March 2025 period. The membership has grown from previous cohorts to 58 young people representing 29 organisations from across Greater Manchester. Each organisation nominates two young people to be YCA members (with the option to nominate two deputies.)

Youth Focus North West (YFNW) is the YCA's facilitating organisation, organising the group day-to-day and supporting the GMYCA Leadership Team to plan, prepare and deliver group meetings. YFNW supports organisations to participate in YCA activities where needed, and draws together a 'community of practice' up to three times a year for the staff supporting young people from their organisation.

Meetings and Work Highlights:

From April 2024- March 2025, members took part in 9 main meeting sessions, focusing on the themes outlined in the [vision document](#) (The Environment / Education, Employment and Skills / Equity, Equality and Inclusion / Transport and Active Travel) as well as additional topics such as the [Police and Crime Plan](#) and [For Planet](#). April 2024 was the first session of the new term, where members reflected on their personal journeys through youth voice work, and their hopes for the term ahead.

In addition to main meetings, young people were invited to participate in two development days (one was subsequently cancelled due to venue issues). Development Days are designed to enable young people to build skills to thrive in their YCA role; Confidence building, forming and sharing opinions and debating were all covered in the May 2024 development day. Further development days will run in 2025 to continue skills building.

Work highlights

- The YCA engaged with Greater Manchester's [Good Employment Charter](#) team to arrange a session as part of Good Employment Week in October 24; the group discussed barriers for young people entering the workforce and what employers should do to support a younger workforce. This fed into an event attended by all equality panels at the end of Good Employment Week.
- The group engaged with the Safer and Stronger Communities team from GMCA on the development of the [Hate Crime Plan 2024-2028](#); Young people shared their input on the content of the strategy and their experiences, which the Violence Reduction Unit incorporated into the new strategy. Two YCA members also contributed to the launch event of the plan by speaking about the YCA's involvement and the importance of engaging with young people in this work.
- The YCA met with key decision makers including Mayor Andy Burnham, Deputy Mayor Kate Green and Cllr Mark Hunter (portfolio lead for children and young people) to hear about their work and discuss how the YCA can offer support to this.

- The YCA helped to develop the [youth civic leadership programme](#), ensuring that young people have clear pathways into leadership opportunities in their futures.

Task and Finish groups

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

MBacc Report group

In the last YCA membership, a group of YCA members worked alongside Sharon Weetman, GMCA, to create a report summarising the work of the YCA on the [Greater Manchester Baccalaureate](#) (MBacc), as requested by the Mayor when he met with the YCA in December 2023. This report was then shared with the Mayor and GMCA Skills, as well as being designed into a social media post to share. This work continued into the new term, YCA members presented their report at the MBacc Summit in July 2024 to Mayor Andy Burnham, school leaders and education decision makers.

Transport group

YCA members have continued to engage with Transport for Greater Manchester on the ongoing rollout of the Bee Network, participating in workshops to give feedback on the Bee Network app and its development, including ideas for bus tracking and live chats.

GM SEND forum

Members of the YCA were invited to contribute to work with the GM SEND Youth Voice Forum; young people attended a meeting in February 2025 to share their thoughts on topics such as transport and travel and educational transitions, with feedback shared back to the GM SEND Board in March 2025.

Development of members

Young people have given over 500 hours of voluntary time (aggregate contact hours at all Sessions from April 2024- March 2025), showing ongoing engagement and commitment to the YCA.

“Greater Manchester already presents a future for adults, but the work we’re doing, I’m hopeful the youth will see a future here too..” - **Feedback from a YCA representative, March 2025.**

Members have also had the opportunity to develop their social, emotional and personal skills, through our development days, external activities and events. Feedback given by young people at the end of their first YCA membership year showed, they had developed skills in public speaking, leadership and teamwork.

Young people have rightly questioned which adults come to the YCA to ask for their input. The YCA Leadership team 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, in line with the UNCRC Rights of the Child.

“I have learnt about how Greater Manchester is run and how to communicate with other like-minded young people. I have learnt that the YCA is always there for young people no matter their beliefs.” - **Feedback from a YCA representative, March 2025.**

Case Study; YCA and MBacc

The Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority worked with the GMCA team on the Greater Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc). The aim of this work was to engage young people in the development of the MBacc, ensuring that it was reflective of what young people need; this was achieved through attending the YCA over two sessions (November 2023 and January 2024) to share their input on the MBacc rollout.

Young people were invited to participate in a task and finish group, working alongside Sharon to develop a [report of young people's feedback](#) on the MBacc and three asks for the MBacc in the future. This report was presented by members of the task and finish group at the MBacc Summit held in June 2024, attended by school leaders and Mayor Andy Burnham.

“Our hope is that our ‘3 Asks’ will be taken further by the team behind the MBacc, and we hope that the MBacc team will continue to engage with the next cohort of the GMYCA to embed youth voice at the heart of the MBacc work going forward.” -

MBacc task group on the launch of their report

Future Planning

The current cohort will continue working together until March 2026.

Themes that the group will explore will be drawn from the vision document, as well as other pertinent topics identified by the members. The group will seek to work with external partners such as Our Pass, MBacc, Curriculum for Life, Bee Network and others to continue to work with the YCA on these important topic areas.

In addition, the group will work to strengthen relationships with existing structures, such as the Children's Board, to help elevate the work of the YCA. The group will also continue to engage with key decision makers such as the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Portfolio Lead for Children and Young People.

Thanks and further information

We would like to offer a special thank you to all our members who advocate for change, along with their youth workers and organisations who support them to do this. In particular, we wish to highlight the incredible work of the Leadership Team members, who work diligently behind the scenes to ensure youth voice is active and represented in all areas of policy in Greater Manchester.

Also, special thanks to Adrian and Ellie within the GMCA for their continued support to the delivery of this work.

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

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