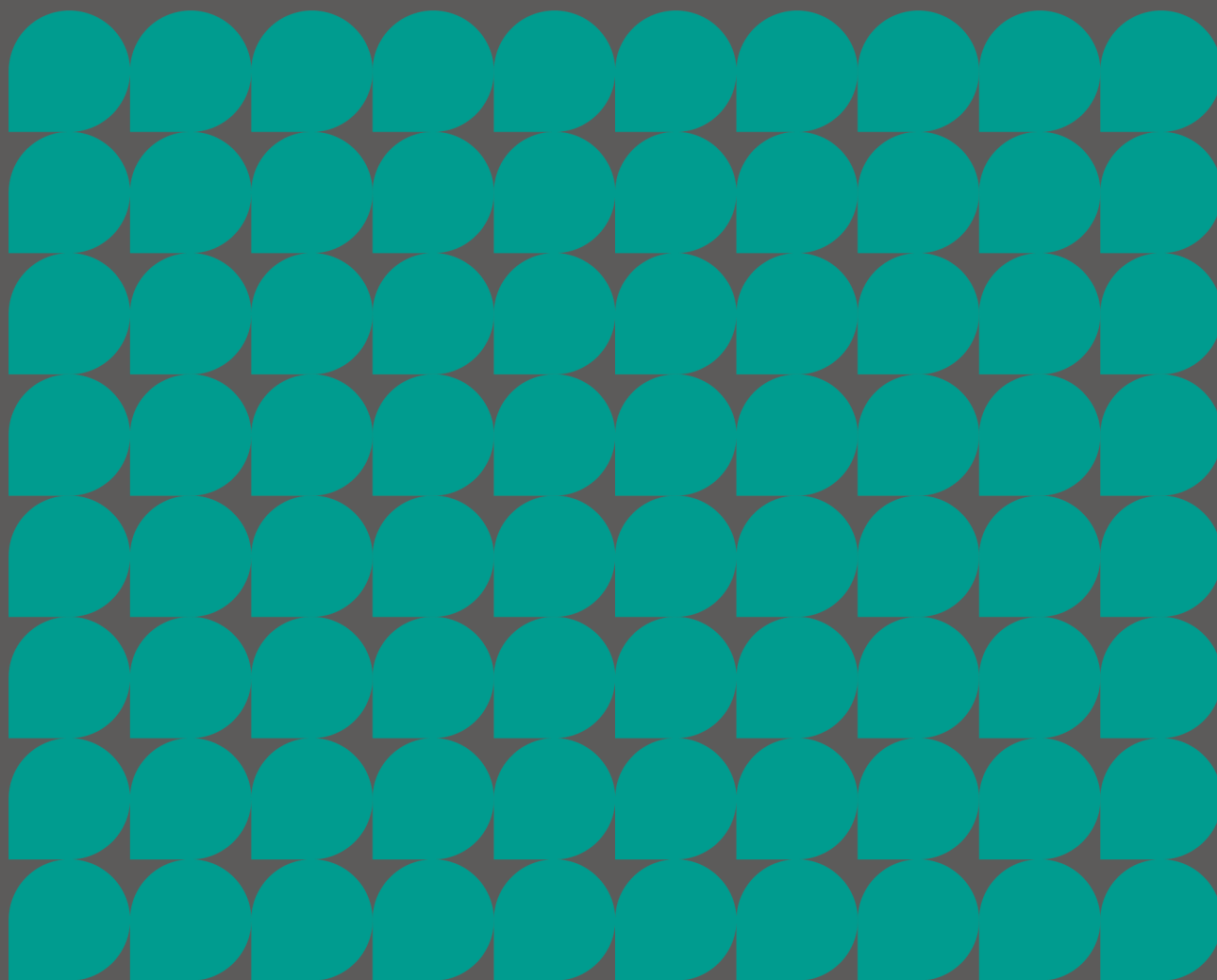


OLDER PEOPLES' EQUALITY PANEL

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

Greater Manchester Older People's Equality Panel Annual Report 2024-25



1.	Executive Summary	2
2.	Co-chairs' Foreword	3
3.	About the Panel	4
4.	Addressing priorities	5
4.1	Care settings	5
4.2	Digital participation	5
4.3	Financial hardship and its impact on older people.	6
4.4	Developing an "Our Pass" for Older People.....	7
4.5	A Commissioner for Older People and Ageing.....	7
4.6	Good Employment Week.....	7
4.7	Collaborating with Ageing Hub.....	8
4.8	Supporting research on Healthy Ageing.....	8
5.	Forward planning	8
6.	Further information	9

1. Executive Summary

The Older People's Equality Panel has been established for three years.

Over the last 12 months it has continued to focus on three priorities:

Digital participation for older people, care settings and how financial hardship impacts older people.

The panel worked closely with the Tackling Inequalities Board and Greater Manchester Ageing Hub to:

- input into meetings with the Greater Manchester Adult Social Care Transformation Team on Proactive Care and Enhanced Health at Home.
- organised an event as part of Good Employment Week 2025 and contributed to the revision of the Good Employment Charter.
- continued its relationship with Easology supporting the development of software designed to make it easier for older people to use a smartphone.
- in partnership with the Greater Manchester Older People's Network panel members worked with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) / Bee Network on apps and service development.
- contributed to the evidence gathered for the Work and Pensions Select Committee report on Pensioner Poverty and supported with the work to organise the Committee's follow-up visit to Manchester in April.

In April, the Mayor asked the panel to explore possible options for delivery of two manifesto pledges – the Our Pass offer for Older People and a Greater Manchester Commissioner for Older People and Ageing. The panel is working with Ageing Hub, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and TfGM to assess options and will report back in October.

2. Co-chairs' Foreword

The life challenges faced by our residents continue to highlight our city-region's inequalities. It is vital that our decisions improve Greater Manchester life for all. We aim to include many voices in creating a fairer place to grow older. Our Equality Panels continue to provide a robust framework to inform policy reform and lead on tackling these inequalities.

Over the last twelve months the Older People's Equality Panel have focused on the priorities identified by older people and collaborated with other panels to reflect the diverse lives, experiences, and needs of older people.

We have worked closely with Greater Manchester Digital and council digital inclusion teams to improve digital tools for older people and highlighted where barriers to participation reduce engagement. At the same time, we are happy to see the recognition that consideration of non-digital options is a part of the digital strategy and are keen to continue to work on ways to synchronise digital and offline in imaginative ways.

The positive response to improving the equity, diversity and inclusion aspects of the Good Employment Charter in October was one of the highlights for us. It highlighted how attempts to increase age inclusivity can create an all-age friendly workplace.

In April, we were delighted to welcome Andy Burnham to our panel meeting, the first time the Mayor of Greater Manchester has visited us. We look forward to meeting with the Mayor again in October to update on progress on a range of issues which can continue the work to make our city-region a great place for everyone to have the chance to grow older better.

Erica Woods and Nakib Narat, Older People's Equality Panel Co-Chairs

3. About the Panel

The Equality Panels have been established to advise, support and challenge Greater Manchester's political leaders and policy makers to tackle the discrimination and disadvantages that cause injustice and inequality in society, and champion Greater Manchester as an inclusive city-region.

The Older People's Equality Panel works together with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and partners to:

- Ensure that Greater Manchester's political leaders and public bodies are more informed about how their decision-making impacts older people in different communities or circumstances, allowing for more effective policy and services.
- Build positive relationships with communities and neighbourhood groups in each borough to identify strengths, listen to older people, and share key messages.
- Make key contributions to the development of Greater Manchester wide policies, programmes, and services so that they can work successfully for older people within different communities.

The Panel is facilitated by Macc. It is comprised of older people (aged 50 and over) and organisational representatives who have an interest in or focus on working with older people. The membership includes residents from across Greater Manchester and aims to be a representative voice for older people in the city region.

Membership currently stands at 12 members representing 8 of the 10 council areas and one organisational representative.

Nakib Narat and Erica Woods are the current co-chairs.

Full panel meetings are bi-monthly with panel members also attending subgroup meetings.

The panel works closely with Greater Manchester Older People's Network which has a membership of 500 people, a mix of individuals and organisations. Panel members attend network working groups and can take advantage of the access to a wider range of lived experience.

4. Addressing priorities

4.1 Care settings

There is a recognition that this theme is wide ranging and it difficult to prioritise. Provision and quality of care continues to be varied across the city region.

Input to the Adult Social Care Transformation process continues with the panel attending one of the governance groups: Enhanced Health at Home/ Proactive Care.

The panel has supported several initiatives and brings a lived experience lens to a meeting which can focus on service led perspective.

The panel have looked at a snapshot of how home care packages are delivered by different boroughs; how information is presented at the outset, the experience of care assessment and financial assessment, different levels of support and the experience of carers. The report is due to be completed in August.

4.2 Digital participation

The panel have continued working with Easology, a software development company and part of the Digital Taskforce. Easology have developed

software which improves the user experience of older people when using the Android operating system. They have worked with a group of panel members to gain better insight into how this streamlined interface suits older people who want to use a smartphone. In November they asked the group to test the software and identify any bugs or obvious barriers. The panel see this as an important example of how the private sector can involve co-production to learn from older people in a way which benefits everyone.

The panel is represented on Digital Inclusion Action Network and the Public Switched Telephone Network working group.

4.3 Financial hardship and its impact on older people.

The panel recognises that financial hardship and deprivation is the common thread running through all the panels and the focus of any tackling inequality initiatives.

In December the panel contributed to the Ageing Hub submission of evidence on pensioner poverty requested by the House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee.

This led to a follow up visit from the select committee which included a roundtable discussion attended by people with lived experience of pensioner poverty in addition to a more formal evidence submission session.

The panel continues to support the work of the Older People and Financial Hardship Steering Group which brings together a diverse range of professionals working across the ten boroughs.

4.4 Developing an “Our Pass” for Older People.

The panel will continue to work with GMCA and TfGM on producing a viable offer for older people which mirrors the “Our Pass” discount/freebie scheme linked to the 16–18-year-old free bus pass.

This was discussed at the panel’s April meeting and will be followed up with the Mayor at the October meeting. The panel and the Older People’s Network are having initial meetings with GMCA and TfGM to look at how to co-design an appropriate and viable offer.

4.5 A Commissioner for Older People and Ageing

The campaign to create a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing for England has seen some success and is still a national priority. The panel supports the creation of this role as it mirrors what is available to people in Wales and Northern Ireland.

A dedicated Commissioner could act as a vital bridge between local government and older communities, helping to raise and address specific issues more directly. The pros and cons of this issue were discussed with the Mayor at April’s panel meeting and the panel were asked to assess the benefits and negatives of such an appointment and report back to him in October 2025.

4.6 Good Employment Week

In October 2024, the panel collaborated with the Good Employment Charter team to host an event as part of Good Employment Week. The theme this year was for each equality panel to host panel specific event to provide outcomes which improve aspects of equity, diversity and inclusion within the Charter. The panel’s event looked at how age inclusivity in the workplace can be improved.

4.7 Collaborating with Ageing Hub

We have worked with Ageing Hub in a range of ways to support the delivery of the Greater Manchester Age Friendly Strategy and all the initiatives across the Greater Manchester ecosphere and beyond.

The Ageing in Place Pathfinder projects have provided excellent opportunities for the panel to learn more about the experiences of older people across Greater Manchester and to offer ongoing support for projects as they seek a sustainable future.

The panel will be linking with the Ageing Hub and the Live Well team support the roll out of Living Well in Later Life across the city region.

4.8 Supporting research on Healthy Ageing

We have a successful working relationship with the National Institute for Healthy Ageing (Policy Research Unit), primarily based at Manchester University and have collaborated in several workshops and studies.

In March the panel led on a collaboration between Manchester Public Health, NHS Greater Manchester and 10GM. Over two workshops hosted by the panel 25 Vaccination Champions were recruited and will promote NHS vaccination campaigns at community level.

5. Forward planning

In addition to the priorities listed above the panel will continue to influence and input as further priorities emerge. It will work closely with Ageing Hub and Older People's Network to explore a range of identified issues and how they will be addressed.

6. Further information

If you want to find out more or speak to someone about the panel on any issue, please contact John Mulvenna.

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