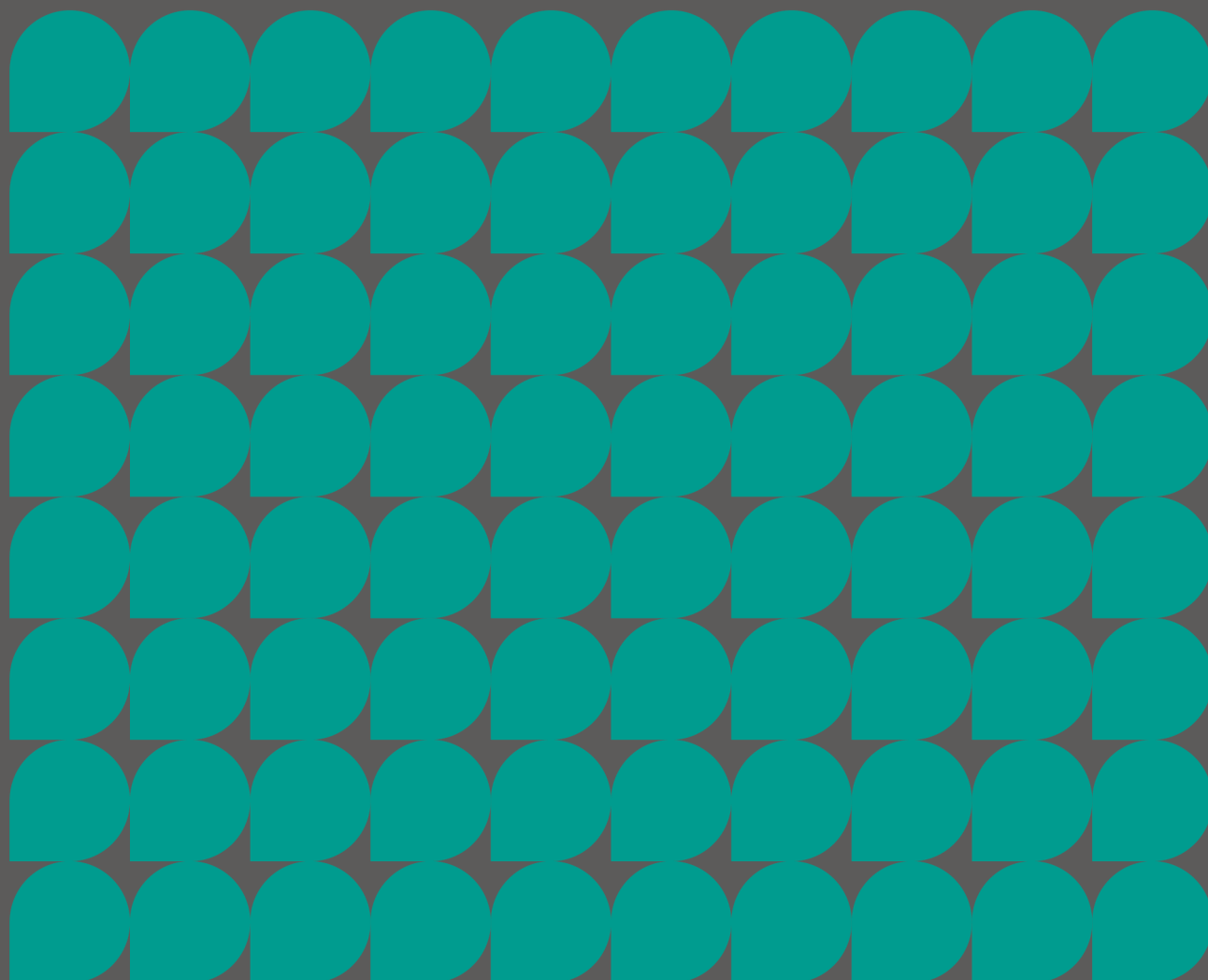


**RACE  
EQUALITY  
PANEL**

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY  
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

# Greater Manchester Race Equality Panel Annual Report 2024-2025



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## 1. Chair Team’s Foreword

It gives us immense pleasure again to introduce this year’s Greater Manchester Race Equality Panel Annual Report, following what has been both a very productive year for the panel, but has also been extremely challenging for our members and the communities they come from.

Over the last year we have experienced first-hand the Racist, Islamophobic and Anti-Semitic division that runs through some of our communities, testing our resolve and resilience as an inclusive society, one that welcomes diversity and sees the strengths and assets this brings to our city-region.

As a panel we are more determined than ever to stand together in unity with communities of all ethnicities and support public services to target their resources to the most disadvantaged and discriminated against, using data and insight to evidence decisions and collaborating with communities to shape delivery.

And whilst progress may be slow, change is happening, with the panel proactively supporting and challenging this change. Our panel meetings with senior politicians and policy leaders enable our voices to be heard by those with power and resources,

and the events we have put on have brought businesses, voluntary and faith organisations as well as public services together to focus on the issues that most impact racially diverse communities.

Whilst focused on four key themes; employment, policing, mental health, and housing, we recognise these are interlinked and intersect across the lived experiences of individuals and communities. In addition, the panel has engaged with a wide range of other organisations and policy areas, both local and national, including the Home Office Windrush Team and the Boaz Trust, and we would like to thank all those that have come to our meetings and engaged with the panel.

Finally, we would like to thank all our panel members for giving up their time to work alongside us. Their commitment to racial equity is fearless, and we will continue to do all we can to improve the lives of our communities.

Paula Watt, Race Equality Panel Co-Chair

Leala Yewdall, Race Equality Panel Co-Chair

Martina Witter, Race Equality Panel Vice Chair

## 2. About the Panel

### 2.1 Background and introduction

Greater Manchester's Race Equality Panel was established in December 2020, and is one of seven Equality Panels established by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to advise, support, and challenge Greater Manchester's political leaders and policymakers to tackle discrimination and disadvantage that cause injustice and inequality in society

Promoting race equality involves actively working to eliminate discrimination and prejudice based on race, whilst striving to ensure that people of all races have equal access to opportunities and resources. It involves advocating for policies that address systemic racism and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of society. Additionally, it involves working to combat biases, stereotypes, and creating a culture of respect, understanding, and acceptance for people of all racial backgrounds.

The aims and objectives of the Panel are to:

- 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty)**
  - Public agencies tackle all forms of racism and discrimination within their organisation and the structure they contribute to.
  - Public sector bodies are proactive in their approaches to meet their Public Sector Equality Duty
- 2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it**
  - The Greater Manchester Strategy tackles inequality and increases equity for ethnic communities.
  - The diversity of the public service workforce, including volunteers and senior leadership, is increased.
  - Positive role models, particularly in leadership positions, public services, civic society and with the business community are promoted.
- 3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.**
  - Greater Manchester's cultural heritage and history of community inclusion and social justice is championed.

## **2.2 Panel Membership**

The panel's membership aims to reflect the diversity of Greater Manchester, with a broad representation across age, ethnicity, disability, LGBTQ+ identities, and other characteristics, as well as geographic representation of the ten boroughs.

Our panel members bring substantial community and professional expertise spanning public, private, and voluntary sectors, along with extensive personal involvement in championing equality and combatting discrimination over many years. Panel members are there as individual residents, not representing an organisation, and are connected to their communities and feedback their challenges and opportunities to the panel.

Diversity makes us all stronger. Different voices, opinions, and experiences widens participation and discourages group think. The panel builds on these views to achieve a 'collective good,' rather than promoting the interests of one community over others.

Following a change in panel membership in December 2023, a further recruitment exercise was undertaken in late 2024, with the membership now standing at 32. Panel meetings provide an opportunity to directly engage with policymakers to drive change, openly discussing their concerns and aspirations in a safe, inclusive, and supportive space. While discussions with policymakers may be demanding, the panel members are resolute in their support for public services to initiate positive changes.

## **3. Summary of activities (2024/25)**

### **3.1 Good Employment**

In October 2024, as part of Greater Manchester's Good Employment Week, the Panel delivered a hugely successful conference on racial equity in the workplace. Building on the success of two previous employment workshops, over forty delegates from public, private and voluntary sector employers heard from key notes speakers, shared good practice, and built new relationships.

The conference identified key issues that diverse employees and employers face, which will inform the refresh of the Good Employment Charter. These include leadership at all levels of management, engagement of diverse staff in shaping policies and practice, proactively embedding an Anti-racist culture, and tracking career progression to identify organisational barriers and structural discrimination.

The Panel are keen to continue their positive relationship with the Good Employment Charter and ensure anti-racist approaches embedded as business as usual across the city-regions employers in all sectors.

### **3.2 Confidence and Trust in Policing**

From the Panel's inception policing and criminal justice have been a priority area for the panel, and in May 2024 the Mayor of Greater Manchester included in his Manifesto *We will continue to work with our Race Equality Panel to consider how we can lift levels of trust and confidence in policing.*

Throughout the year, the Panel have continued to positively engage with the office of the Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester and with Greater Manchester Police (GMP). The focus has been on the recruitment and retention of officers, cultural change within policing, and their community engagement to tackle behaviours and strengthen relationships.

The Panel are pleased that many of the negative issues experienced by diverse communities are recognised by GMP and welcomed the publication of their Achieving Race Equality report. The Panel were able to review the report its draft stage and make suggestions on how to improve its accessibility and impact, which were adopted. The panel were also pleased to see the prominent inclusion of equality objectives in the new Police and Crime Plan, and the Panel Co-Chair spoke at the launch of the strategy. The Panel are also represented on the Hate Crime Working Group and contributed to the refresh of the Hate Crime Action Plan.

In addition, panel members are actively involved with other policing bodies, sitting on GMP Independent Advisory Groups and Stop and Search Scrutiny Panels, supporting the development of local Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings, and advising on national policy development, for example on reducing knife crime in schools. The Panel Co-Chair also sits on the Independent Scrutiny Panel launched to monitor custody and arrests by GMP.

Looking forward, the Panel remain as committed as ever to supporting GMP and GMCA to take positive action, through their productive and constructive relationships with key officers and the Deputy Mayor.

### **3.3 Mental Health and Wellbeing**

A key role of the Panel is to support collaboration across the public and voluntary sectors, and over the last year the Panel have been engaging with stakeholders active in supporting the improvement of mental health awareness, prevention, and treatment.

The Greater Manchester Mental Health Strategy 2024-2029 outlines a comprehensive plan to enhance mental health services, support individuals with mental health conditions, and reduce mental health inequalities across the region. The Panel engaged with the Mental Health Team to understand their aims and objectives, building positive relationships and strategic links, with the Panel Vice-Chair co-opted on to the Mental Health Strategy Steering Group.

A key focus of the strategy is developing accessible, person-centred, culturally competent, and appropriate services. Within this in mind, the Panel reached out to community mental health providers, including African Caribbean Mental Health Service, Wai Yin, Fikawelie, Afrocats, Yarran and Diversity Matters to understand their opportunities and barriers. They then worked together to create a workshop that highlights the importance of community, cultural competency, and culturally appropriate services as part of Mental Health Awareness Week 2025.

The *Culture, Care and Connection – Reclaiming Mental Health Together* workshop was a great success, with a packed room of providers, commissioners and people with lived experiences, sharing what works, and what needs to happen, leading a series of recommendations for policy makers, and creating a network that can seize future opportunities for collaboration.

### **3.4 Housing and Homelessness**

With *Housing First* being a key priority for the Mayor of Greater Manchester, ensuring racial inequalities are being considered and tackled, the Panel have actively engaged policy makers on key emerging areas, including the Good Landlord Charter and implementation of Awaab's Law (relating to housing standards), meeting on a monthly basis with members of the GMCA and Greater Manchester Housing Partnership (GMHP).

In addition, panel members have been involved in the commissioning by GMCA and GMHP of a new piece of research to understand racial inequalities and discrimination within social and private rented housing. A provider has now been appointed, and they will be working closely with the group to ensure the research reaches into diverse communities, captures their experiences, and makes recommendations that will deliver long term change for tenants and landlords.

## 3.5 Other Activities

### i) Civic Leadership Programme

Tackling the lack of diversity in civic roles, such as councillor, magistrate, school governor and board member, is a significant challenge in Greater Manchester and a real barrier to tackling racial inequalities and discrimination. The Panel have been actively involved from the outset in the development and delivery of both the adult and youth elements of the Civic Leadership Programme. Now entering its third year, participants have both gone on to become panel members, as well as panel members entering the programme, to develop their skills and confidence. The Panel are represented on the Programme's new Steering Group and attend key dates in the programme including the launch and graduation.

### ii) Championing inclusion

Panel members attend a wide range of Greater Manchester events, promoting the work of the Panel and celebrating the city regions diversity. Examples include the civic launch of Black History Month, Africa Day, Windrush and International Women's Day. The Panel Co-Chairs also attend the Tackling Inequalities Board and meet with the Portfolio Leads, sharing progress and escalating barriers.

## 4. Priorities for next year (2025/26)

### 4.1 Greater Manchester Race Equity Framework

In 2023 GMCA endorsed a new Greater Manchester Race Equity Framework, setting out actions to strengthen

- clear and effective leadership in race equity,
- accountability to the communities served,
- commitment and resources from public, private, and voluntary services,
- transparent and agreed-upon performance measures, and the
- removal of employment barriers to fair recruitment from local communities and supportive workplace environments.



The framework was developed through stakeholder engagement workshops attended by panel members, and the Panel have reviewed progress. This has led to some emerging priorities for the Panel, who have now made the Framework a standing agenda item at their meetings. These include

- working with the GMCA Research Team to develop a Race Equity performance dashboard, which will enable the impact of the framework on outcomes for residents and communities to be measured and visible, and aligned with the refresh of the Greater Manchester Strategy to ensure accountability
- engaging with the Workforce Inclusion programme, which includes new People Inclusion Standards for the ten Greater Manchester Council's and GMCA group, and the Elevate Leadership programme that will support diverse staff into leadership positions.

In their engagement with policy makers, the Panel will be looking to see the framework embedded throughout the Greater Manchester Strategy, for example in Live Well and the Manchester Baccalaureate, as well as through the Panels ongoing work on employment, mental health, housing, and community safety.

Through our work, the Panel will continue to support and challenge policy and decision makers to take action to tackle the racial inequalities and discrimination faced by our communities.

## 5. Further information

For further information on the Panel please visit our website

<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/equalities/race-equality-panel/>

To see the Panels recent activity please visit our social media channels at

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/gm-race-equality-panel/> or

<https://www.facebook.com/gmracepanel/>

Or if you have any questions about the Panel please contact the panel facilitators by email at [race.equality@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:race.equality@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)