

WOMEN & GIRLS' EQUALITY PANEL

DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

PANKHURST
TRUST

GM4WOMEN
2028

GMCA

GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY



A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS



It has been an honour during our first year to serve as co-chairs for the Greater Manchester Women and Girls Equality Panel. We recognise that globally and locally, in Greater Manchester, the lives of girls and women are impacted daily through violence, poverty, and discrimination, and our panel of incredible volunteers and community representatives ensure that these voices are integral to our discussions and decision making.

We recognised that we needed to represent all ages across the life course, and in preparation for this, we have enabled all Panel members to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service for safeguarding compliance to enable younger women to join the panel. This is important, as younger voices bring a lived experience of the realities of being a girl or young woman in Greater Manchester today and the joys and challenges this brings that can better inform our decision-making for the future. We are delighted to report that we recruited an under-18 member, and we will seek to advance this over the coming 12 months.

We have centred a trauma-informed approach in our work because we are all human, and the 'felt' experiences of oppression are as important as the quantitative metrics and case studies we use to inform our decisions. To support this, we have adopted the Prof. Laura Lundy Model of participation. Using this model enables us to consciously make space for intersectional voices and views and identify the relevant audience to listen. This supports the strategic and policy decision-makers to consider experiences and specific needs; and feed back to the Panel on the outcome and impact our collective voices have made to improve the lives of girls, young women, and women in Greater Manchester.

Gender mainstreaming as an approach to our work is a key feature of our future planning. We support the need to educate boys, young men, and men as allies in supporting tackling misogyny, alongside enabling girls, young women and women to raise their voices, access opportunities and participate in public and political life. This has been the case regarding the Women's Health Strategy, Transport for Greater Manchester's (TfGM) Local Transport Strategy, the Greater Than Violence Strategy and the Good Employment Charter, where we have infused a Gender Mainstreaming approach in our responses.

We are grateful to our Panel members for the time and energy they give, often in the context of adversity within their own lives.

**Emma Persand RGN QN (left)
and Sally Carr MBE (right)**

Panel Co-Chairs



INTRODUCTION TO THE PANEL

The Women and Girls' Equality Panel was established in December 2020 to address gender inequality in Greater Manchester. The role of the Panel is to advise, support and challenge political and system leaders, namely the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), to tackle prejudice and discrimination against women and girls.

The Panel works alongside GMCA and the wider Greater Manchester (GM) system to ensure that equality, and the unique needs and risks experienced by women and girls are actively considered in decision making to help make the city-region a better place for women and girls to live, work and study and do business.

The Panel is convened by the Pankhurst Trust (Incorporating Manchester Women's Aid), in partnership with GM4Women2028, a charity focused on promoting equality and diversity for the benefit of the community in Greater Manchester. The Panel meets every two months. It currently has four main priority areas: Work and Employment, ending Violence Against Women and Girls, Health, and Gender Mainstreaming.

The Panel is made up of a diverse group of individuals and organisations from a range of sectors and backgrounds who are committed to ensuring that the viewpoints of women and girls from a cross-section of society are represented. It also benefits from the support of an Allies' Network, who promote the Panel's work, share the Panel's mission, and stand in solidarity with women and girls.

This year has been a period of significant growth and development for our panel. We are delighted to welcome 18 new members, as well as appointing our new Co-Chairs Sally Carr MBE and Emma Persand RGN QN. Our diverse and dynamic team brings a wealth of experience and fresh perspectives to our mission. To find out more about the Panel and its members, please visit: Greater Manchester's W&GS' Equality Panel Information.

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



Image: left to right - Anabel Butler, Panel Facilitator, Emma Persand, Panel Co-Chair, Ella Radford, Business Support Officer

GM4WOMEN2028

The Panel continued to work with GM4Women2028 this last year. Panel members ran a listening workshop at the Dialogue, Deeds and Determination event held in Oldham to learn about local women's barriers to good health. This insight fed into the development of the GM Integrated Care Partnership Health Strategy.

The Panel gets many expressions of interest throughout the year and channels this towards GM4Women membership and participation in their five working groups on Employment, Safety, Participation, Education, and Culture & Active Lives.

Creating an ecosystem

GM4Women has become an umbrella organisation whose membership now stands at over 500, representing a broad range of activists including academics and activists, policy makers and community organisations, and charities and businesses. Their activities across the ten boroughs are helping to bring women's organisations and male allies together to challenge and tackle the persistent inequalities reflected across all thematic areas.

Data and Insight

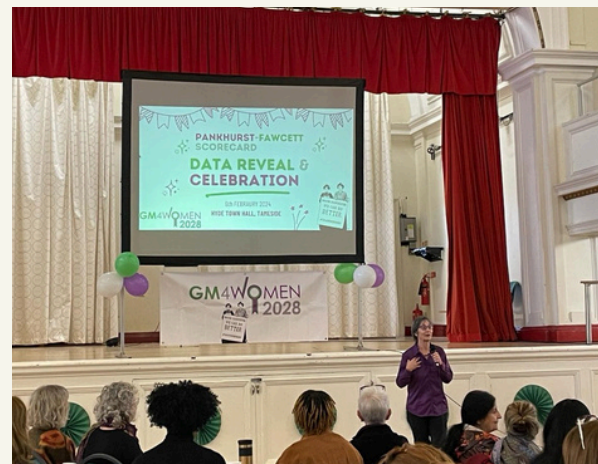
GM4Women2028 has a strong focus on data and produces an annual Pankhurst-Fawcett Scorecard which monitors the progress (or lack thereof) of ten metrics of gender equality across covering their five thematic groups. As a Panel we utilise this data to inform our own priorities and encourage policy makers to recognise and address problem areas where the least progress is being made.

Image: Helen Pankhurst speaking at a GM4Women event

GM4Women and the Panel have also begun to support primary research, for example, into the impact of the pandemic on women, including identifying further inequalities amongst women experiencing racial inequalities. Rosalind Shorrocks and Anna Sanders (University of Manchester) researched 'What Women Want' in the current socioeconomic landscape. The Panel has promoted these findings for consideration in meetings with key policy leads across GMCA. Some examples key findings are summarised below:

- A plurality of women in Greater Manchester do not feel their pay reflects their skill level, experience, and qualifications. Overall, 34% of women in Greater Manchester agreed that they were paid appropriately, while 46% disagreed.
- On the topic of public transport and active travel, a sizeable proportion of women (28%) said safety concerns were their primary barrier to walking more.

This study has been valuable to the Panel's advocacy for women and girls across Greater Manchester, and in showing that there is a gendered aspect to all areas of life which needs to be considered by policymakers.



STRATEGY DAY 2024

We held our first Strategy Day in February 2024 at the Alliance Manchester Business School to plan our work programme for 2024 and beyond. We welcomed our new Panel members, heard the latest gender equality data from GM4Women2028, and hosted representatives from the Violence Reduction Unit, TfGM, GMCA, the Good Employment Charter, GMP, and the GM Women's Health Strategy.

We also focused on inducting new Panel members, ensuring they understand our support mechanisms as a Facilitating Organisation, their role responsibilities, and the Panel's history, aims, and objectives. This in-person Strategy Day was pivotal in evaluating our ways of working, establishing priorities for 2024, and fostering a space for members to get to know each other better.

We had two Pankhurst Trust Manchester Women's Aid (PTMWA) volunteers support us on the day, here's what they had to say:

"Volunteering for the Panel has been a fulfilling journey, allowing me to engage with diverse perspectives and delve into the pressing issues affecting women in Manchester. Through constructive dialogue, we brainstormed actionable steps towards empowerment, touching upon various sectors, including my personal interest in healthcare. Interacting with passionate and knowledgeable women has been enriching, fostering personal growth and learning. Beyond the discussions, the experience has provided networking opportunities and a sense of community. I am eager to continue contributing to the Panel's mission and further fortify our organisation's impact."

Afia Javed
PTMWA
volunteer

Lucy Kelly
PTMWA
volunteer

"Volunteering at the Women and Girls' Equality panel was a very insightful and inspiring experience. Not only did we get to listen in on the talks, we were also encouraged and welcomed to participate in discussions and share our experiences/opinions which was very exciting. Though some of the statistics discussed were disheartening at times, the workshop didn't dwell on this and instead it focused on coming together and discussing what we can put in place in order to tackle the most pressing challenges women and girls face in Greater Manchester. It was very encouraging to be surrounded by such driven and determined women and it was a very enriching experience as a new volunteer."



Image: Workshopping VAWG campaign ideas.



Image: Group photo at the strategy day

INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

Communication and information sharing

We have improved our internal communication systems by utilising Basecamp to store minutes, research, and other documents which members can access for themselves at any time. We also use this platform to share with our Allies Network news and research, as well as upcoming events and opportunities in the equalities sphere in Greater Manchester and beyond.

We also now have Panel member bios on our website for our Panel members and we continue to post regularly on social media about Panel meetings and activities.

Strengthening internal governance

We have worked hard to strengthen our internal governance including by updating our Terms of Reference which now more accurately reflects our mission and purpose, by developing a Code of Conduct, providing DBS checks for members, and providing all new recruits with a formal induction process.

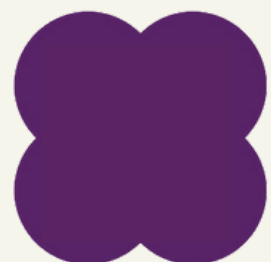
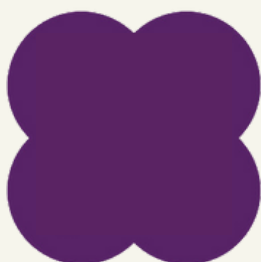
We have also written meeting guidelines with an emphasis on inclusivity, accessibility and maximising engagement. We hope to enable our members to contribute effectively, whilst taking into account that they are volunteering their valuable time and have other responsibilities to balance.

Training

One of our Co-Chairs is completing a Certificate Course on Gender Mainstreaming from Human Rights and Justice Group International. This will be a powerful asset for the Panel as we focus on bringing an intersectional gendered lens into policymaking in our city-region.

In April 2024 Panel members and facilitators attended a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop ran by Julian Boal of Escola de Teatro Popular (ETP), hosted by OddArts. Julian Boal emphasised the importance of shifting the traditional forum theatre storyline from 'good vs evil' to a focus on community organising and strategic alliances. As we strive to be more trauma informed, this type of approach enables a deeper understanding of the lived experience of women and girls and is a way to really value of voice and the felt experiences of women.

We are excited to have upcoming training on Neurodiversity delivered by Autism Uncovered this summer, and to continue to provide our members with valuable development opportunities that align with the Panel's work of empowering women and girls in all their diversity.



INFLUENCING POLICYMAKERS: THE PAST YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

In November 2023, we held our annual meeting with Andy Burnham where we reiterated our strong desire to be more deeply integrated into GMCA's decision-making processes and to support gender mainstreaming initiatives. We discussed our concerns with regards to childcare, women's health and employment, and women entrepreneurs. Significant outcomes from this meeting include stronger links with TfGM, the #IsThisOkay campaign, and securing support for a refresh of the Good Employment Charter. We also gained backing for a survey of female business owners to help determine what is preventing growth at crucial stages so that we can then implement focused change.

Health

Our Panel was actively involved in the development of the Greater Manchester's Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) Strategy, providing insight on the key concerns facing women's health from lived and professional experience. We provided written submissions, held a Panel meeting and organised a 'Barriers to Women's Health' outreach workshop to ensure a wide spread of women's voices were considered.

As a result of our engagement, the Strategy makes explicit mention of the unequal distribution of unpaid labour, the impact of women's health and employment, and the differentiated needs and barriers to good health of women and girls. We have since established a feedback-accountability loop with the GM Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) with regular meetings and updates to review how the concerns we raised are being addressed in the delivery of the Strategy.

An early win for the Strategy has been securing funding to develop Women's Health Hub services in GM.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Over the past year, the VAWG group has explored important topics such as: the DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, and so-called Honour-Based Abuse) risk assessment tool, and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's report findings on the family court's treatment of domestic abuse victims.

We have strengthened our relationship with GMP's lead on VAWG, the Gender Based Violence Board, GMCA's Victims & Vulnerability Principal, and the Deputy Mayor for Policing, Crime, Criminal Justice and Fire, recognising their important roles in ending VAWG.

Further positive developments have included:

- Providing feedback to GMCA on the #IsThisOkay campaign, and embedding ourselves in the development of the next phase.
- Inputting into GMCA's response to the National Public Consultation on the Police Code of Ethics.
- Panel members participating in the Baird Enquiry as representatives of women's organisations with experience of working with women who have experience of police custody
- Consistently calling for mandatory, sufficiently funded domestic abuse training for all officers, delivered by an external expert organisation with GMP resources.



Work & Employment

We would like to thank Panel members for their work on the Education, Skills and Employment working group. The Panel has taken forward several of the topics from the group into 2023/24 such as refreshing the Good Employment Charter and integrating Gender Mainstreaming into GMCA policy development.

Since its inception, the Panel has been working with the Good Employment Charter. This year we pushed for a gender and sex lens on employment, to consider the specific experiences of women and girls in the workplace such as the impact of childcare, menopause, and sexual health (amongst many other issues) and how employers can mitigate these experiences. The Panel simultaneously acknowledges the limitations of 'employment' and the importance of also advocating for self-employed women and women who undertake unpaid work, and that many women will carry out a combination of these different forms of work.

We also continue to work with the Greater Manchester Apprenticeship & Careers Service (GMACS) and Curriculum for Life to support the development of content around confidence levels for teenage girls and women in STEM, as well as digital skills for women and girls. We are keen to work together closely in the future to address these inequalities through a trauma informed lens.

Transport

In 2023, we continued to strengthen our relationships with key stakeholders in the transport sector. We contributed to the Greater Manchester (GM) Bus Strategy and TfGM's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Digital Campaign. We also held an engagement session with TfGM to provide input into Phase 1 of the Local Transport Plan update. During this session, our members identified areas where high-level language could be revised to better acknowledge the real dangers that women and girls face in public spaces. We emphasised the importance of public transport reliability for enhancing safety, particularly by minimising wait times at bus or tram stops, which can be critical in unfamiliar areas at night.

Doing strategic engagement better

A key focus for this year has been the need for more systematic consultation with not just the Women and Girls' Equality Panel but all the GMCA Equality Panels. We led the collective design of a framework for engagement which aims to ensure that intersectional perspectives are integrated from the initial stages of policy development. The framework requires speakers to outline the data they are using in designing their policies or projects, as well as a commitment to feeding back on how our input is being taken on board. We warmly thank the Youth Combined Authority for their practice and our use of the Lundy Model in this form, to ensure more meaningful inputs and participation in our meetings.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This year, our panel has actively engaged in numerous collaborative initiatives and advocacy efforts to enhance community well-being and support various causes. Our work included issuing a joint statement with the LGBTQ+ and Disabled People's Panels on central government's proposal to close 1000 ticket offices.

Our members also provided valuable case studies and contacts to the Disabled People's Panel to advocate for an improved benefits framework.

We collaborated with Manchester City Council to promote anonymous voting access for domestic abuse victims through training sessions and social media promotion for both the local and mayoral, and general elections.

In September, we formed part of the policy team for the innovative Right to the Streets' Legislative Theatre event, alongside Trafford Council, TfGM, and Greater Manchester Police. Addressing women's safety concerns on public transport raised at the event, we engaged in follow-up meetings with Andy Burnham and TfGM.

Looking ahead, our Panel members will be running 2 public workshops at GM4Women2028's public Dialogues, Deeds and Determination July event, focusing on capacity building for girls and young women in politics, advocacy, and campaigning, and moving from ideas into action.



Image: Public voting during Rights to the Streets Legislative Theatre event

LOOKING AHEAD

The GMCA Women and Girls' Equality Panel remains dedicated to reducing gender inequality in Greater Manchester through strategic initiatives, public engagement, policy advocacy, and collaborative efforts. Our work is driven by a commitment to real change and the pursuit of equality for all women and girls in the city-region and beyond. We are establishing stronger connections across the 10 boroughs and are being increasingly recognised as an important fountain of data and insight, funnelling experiences and voices from communities to policy makers.

In the next 12 months we will continue to develop our profile as a key stakeholder in GM decision making. A key focus will be firming up the framework for engagement across the equality panels to make participatory and evidence-based policy making the standard across GMCA. We will pilot this framework with Panel wide engagement on the GM Police and Crime Plan Refresh.

The Panel is also dedicated to furthering our collaboration with our fellow GMCA equality panels, ensuring that the intersectionality of women and girls' lives is embedded in our work, as well as voicing our solidarity with other marginalised communities. We are particularly keen to ensure that the work of the equality panels influences a more gender-conscious distribution of GMCA resources under the 2025 Single Settlement, and would welcome a strand to this investment that addresses multiple deprivation, and inequalities specifically.

As part of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Week in October 2024, we are organising an innovative forum theatre inspired event with employers, employees, trade unions, advocates, and policymakers focusing on practical solutions to improve the experiences of women and girls in the workplace.

Together, we will come up with actionable recommendations for the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.

We will continue to collaborate with GM4Women to advance gender equality in Manchester by 2028. This partnership includes building our Allies' Network, gathering data on women's needs, and participating in engagement workshops such as Dialogue, Deeds, and Determination events.

In November 2024, we will meet again with Andy Burnham to influence, advise, and challenge his manifesto commitments. We will use our position of influence to ensure that the implementation of the Greater Manchester Strategy Refresh provides further opportunities for advancing gender equality.

Going forward, the VAWG working group will continue to function as a 'critical friend' to GMP and will serve as an accountability function for the improved treatment of all victims and survivors, as well as promoting the implementation of the Baird inquiry's recommendations.

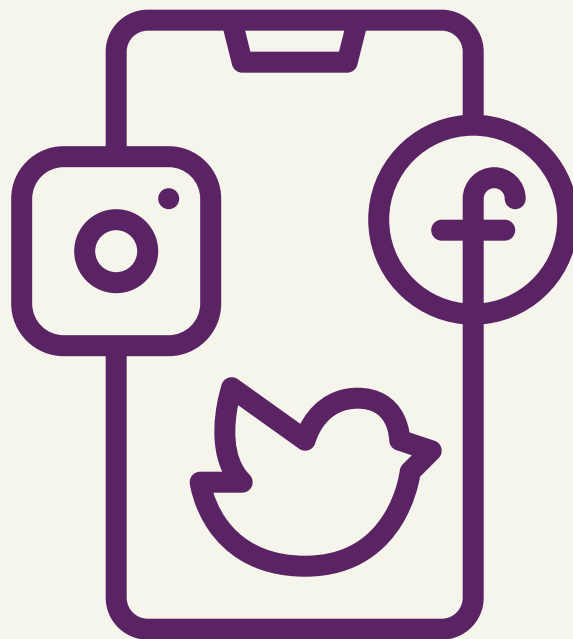
Using our members and their networks' expertise, we will be inputting into the combined authority's Gender Based Violence Strategy Delivery Plan 24-26 as it is implemented, ensuring that the voices of lived experience are embedded in the plan's priorities.

We will be advocating for sustained long term investment into the VAWG sector, which has been underfunded and undervalued for years, so that specialist organisations can continue to support victims and survivors, work with perpetrators, as well as conducting vital wider prevention work, campaigning, and training statutory services.

CONTACT US

Organisations or members of the public wishing to get involved in the Panel's work can join one of the GM4Women subgroups. The subgroups' themes include Education, Safety, Culture & Active Lives, Participation in Public Life or Employment. You can also join our Allies Network to get Panel and working groups updates, invitations to consultations and information about issues affecting women and girls in Manchester. Just email womenandgirls@pankhursttrust.org and ask to sign up to our Basecamp.

You can also keep up to date and get involved with the Women and Girl's Equality Panel on social media:



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