

Greater Manchester Older People's Equality Panel

A new Greater Manchester Equality Panel for older people is being set up at the request of the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham. The panel is one of seven equality panels established and funded by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Facilitating organisation Macc are now looking to recruit the first members for the new panel, beginning with one older person (age 50 plus) from each local council area (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan).

Role of the panel

The Greater Manchester Equality Panels have been established to advise, support and challenge Greater Manchester's political leaders and policy makers to tackle the discrimination and disadvantage that cause injustice and inequality in society, and champion Greater Manchester as an inclusive city-region. They do this by working together with the GMCA and partners to:

- Provide insight into Greater Manchester's diverse communities, enabling political leaders and public bodies to listen and engage in a more targeted and effective way
- Communicate key messages to our communities as trusted sources
- Codesign policies, programmes and strategies to ensure they work effectively for communities.
- Support an asset-based approach, highlighting new opportunities (and challenges) for positive collaboration that build on the resources and strengths within our communities.

The panel will work closely with officers from the Greater Manchester Ageing Hub at GMCA which works to improve the lives of older people through creating an age-friendly city region.

The Panel acts in an advisory role and reports directly to the Portfolio Lead for Equality, Inclusion and Cohesion.

The Panel escalates concerns and issues to the Portfolio Lead, including in relation to the support of public services and commitment to change.

The Panel does not have any decision-making authority within the constitution of the GMCA.

The Panel prepares and maintains a work programme, and reports progress, issues and key findings annually to the Portfolio Lead and GMCA.

The Panel will collaborate with other panels where appropriate.

The seven panels are: Disabled People's Panel, Race Equality Panel, Women and Girls' Panel, Youth Combined Authority, LGBTQ+ Panel, Faith and Belief Panel and Older People's Panel.

Membership

Membership of the panel is open to all residents aged 50 and over living in Greater Manchester. Initially, we are looking to recruit at least one representative for each of the ten local council areas. The first meeting of the panel will identify gaps in terms of diversity and discuss what additional representation is needed. This could lead to organisations being asked to put forward a representative for the panel (e.g. carers, LGBT, specific ethnic minorities).

The initial membership will be for 12 months. Full terms of reference of the panel are to be developed with panel members and GMCA.

Support for panel members

John Mulvenna, GM Older People's Equality Panel Development Officer at Macc, will support the panel in all aspects of its work including organising meetings and taking minutes. Training for members will be offered including in digital skills, presentation skills and facilitation skills.

There is no payment offered for panel of the membership but reasonable travel costs and other out of pocket expenses will be covered.

The panel will run alongside the existing Greater Manchester Older People's Network, a campaigning group which has worked with GMCA over the past six years. The Network will continue to focus on campaigns, research and providing activities/ workshops to maintain a clear picture of the diverse experiences of older people in Greater Manchester. The work of the Network will provide evidence and information to support the work of the panel.

Meetings

It is initially proposed that the panel meets face to face every two months for two hours. Meetings will take place on a weekday between 11.30 am and 4 pm. We intend to offer the opportunity to join the meetings online for those not able to attend in person.

Once the members representing the ten local council areas have been recruited, they will be consulted on the timing, format and location of the meetings. Accessibility requirements will also be addressed at this time.

Recruitment

Initially there will be 10 members, one representative for each borough. The next stage of recruitment will be led by the panel, identifying any gaps and targeting subsequent recruitment to fill the gaps up to a maximum of 20.

The panel will periodically review representation and expects to continue recruiting members as the membership of the panel changes.

The panel will work closely with the GMOPN or a local Older People's Network. It is hoped that recruitment to these networks can be boosted and individuals who are not selected for the panel will still be able to make a valuable contribution.

Contact information

If you are interested in joining the panel or want to find out more you can contact John Mulvenna:

Phone: 07502 233 182

Email: GMOPN@macc.org.uk

Why get involved

Elizabeth Lynskey of the GMOPN steering group describes some of the work she has been involved in and explains how she has benefitted from being involved:

For me, one of the main benefits of being a member of the Greater Manchester Older People's Network is that older people have the opportunity to get their voice heard. Since being in the network, I feel like I am being listened to and that I have the ability and the power to go to the people who make decisions and to question them. The network is increasingly being recognised as the voice for older people in Greater Manchester, with various organisations and institutions consulting us. Recently, I was one of the members invited to London to participate in the House of Lord's committee on intergenerational fairness and provision which was a fantastic way of raising our profile nationally. The University of Manchester also frequently consults with us for research projects.

The network has provided me with opportunities to attend training sessions such as public speaking training, and campaigning and influencing training. These sessions as well as just attending the Action Group regularly have greatly improved my confidence and encouraged me to speak up about the issues that affect me and others in my borough. I feel as though I am not just getting my own voice heard but also representing the voices of others in my borough of Rochdale on the Greater Manchester platform. We as older people are experts by experience and should have a say in things that affect us.