



**THE GREATER  
MANCHESTER OLDER  
PEOPLE'S NETWORK**

**DEVELOPMENT  
SURVEY REPORT**

NOVEMBER 2019  
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# CONTENTS

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**PAGE 2 - 3**

INTRODUCTION

---

**PAGE 4 - 5**

ABOUT THE SURVEY

---

**PAGE 6 - 7**

ANALYSIS PART ONE

---

**PAGE 8 - 13**

ANALYSIS PART TWO

---

**PAGE 14 - 21**

ANALYSIS PART THREE

---

**PAGE 22**

CONCLUSION



# ABOUT US

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The Greater Manchester Older People's Network is a voice for older people in our city region. We aim to make sure that older people can express their opinions and get their voices heard. We look to inform and influence strategy and policy that affects older people and make sure that older people have a say in decision-making. We want an age-friendly Greater Manchester that continues to listen to its older citizens and is the best place for older people that it can be.

We are a part of Ambition for Ageing, which is a £10.2 million Greater Manchester (GM) level programme aimed at creating more age friendly places and empowering people to live fulfilling lives as they age. It is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund's Ageing Better programme, which aims to reduce social isolation of older people.

As the Ambition for Ageing programme is due to complete in March 2020, the GMOPN is starting to explore future options for its sustainability. We want to ensure that our future direction and activities continue to reflect the priorities of our current members and the wider older population of Greater Manchester. We therefore conducted a survey to enable us to find out priorities for older people in Greater Manchester and to help guide our future



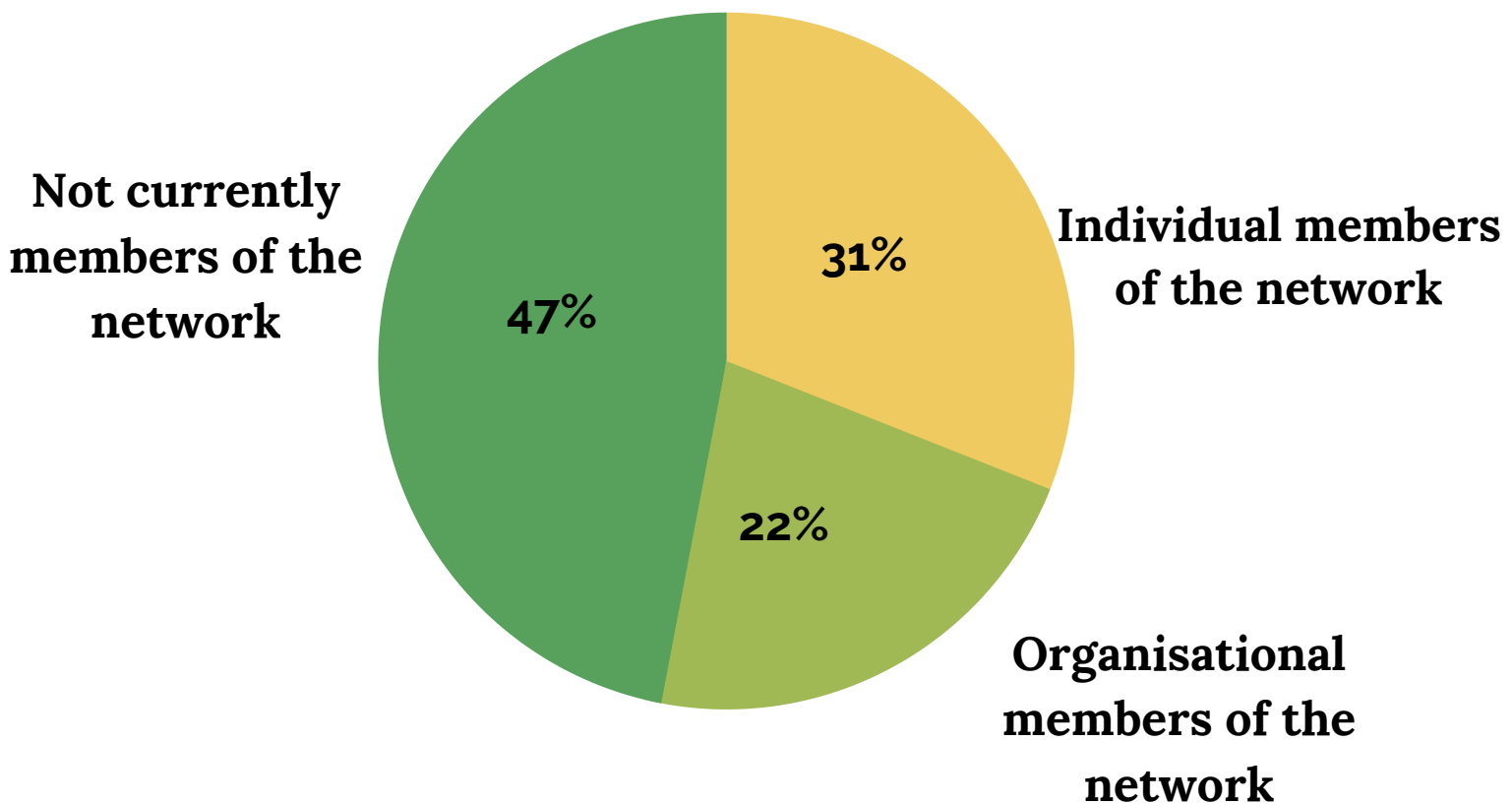
development. The survey is one step in the process of developing our future strategy and the findings will be used in conjunction with other feedback and insight we will gather from a range of stakeholders. We want to scope the regional and national picture around older people's voice to help guide us going forward. This report is based on the findings of our survey and is intended to be a starting point from which future discussions can begin.



# THE SURVEY

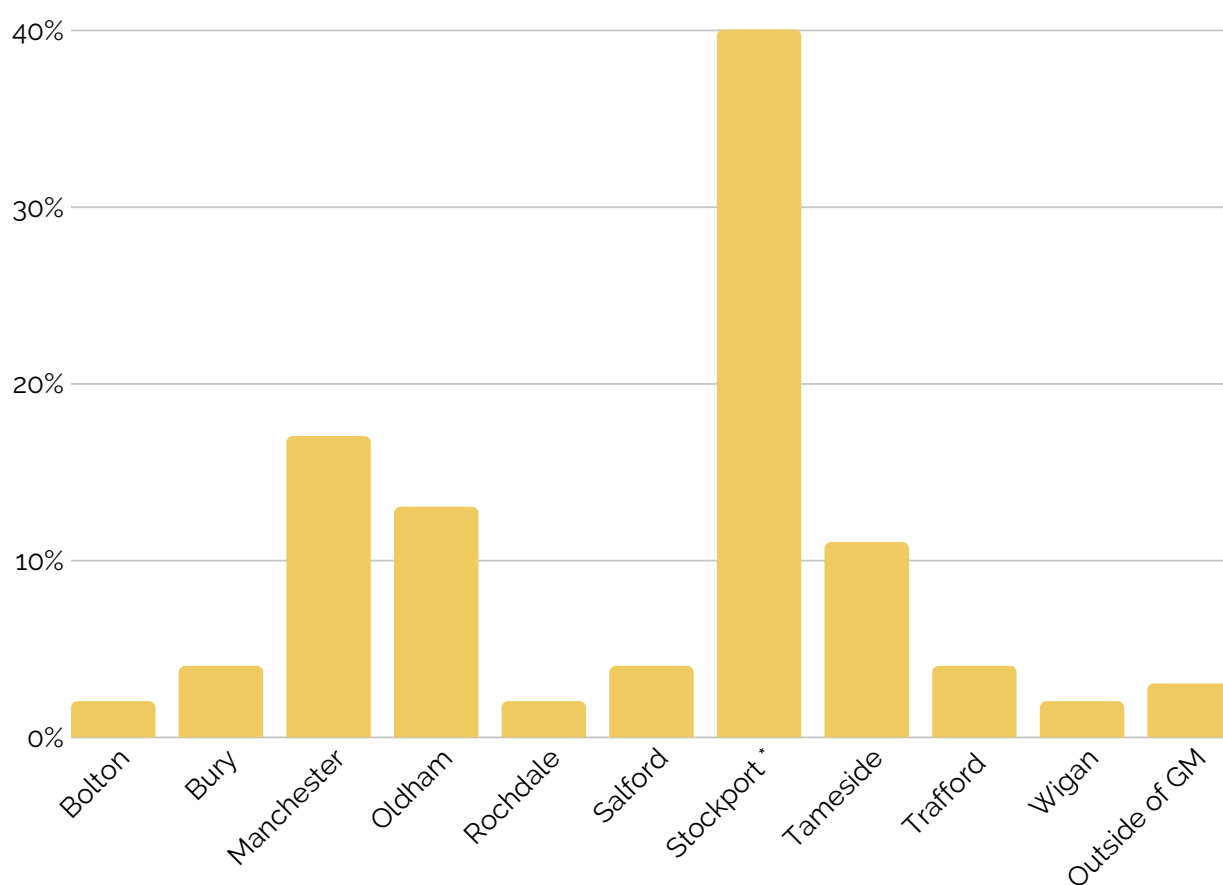
The survey was open to everyone to complete, whether member or non-member and was open from the end of August 2019 until the 4th of October 2019.

**197 people responded  
in total**



# WHO RESPONDED?

The survey was circulated widely, through the GMOPN monthly newsletter, as a direct-mail out to our members, through the Macc e-bulletin, via our twitter account, the Ambition for Ageing twitter account and through the Ambition for Ageing newsletter.



\*The strong response from Stockport can be attributed to the fact that one of our Action Group members from Stockport and the Stockport Age-Friendly Local Lead shared the survey extensively through their local networks.



# PERCEPTION OF THE GMOPN

In order to find out what the current perception of the network is, respondents were asked 'What do you think the network does at the moment? Please select all that apply' and presented with a list of options. The results of this question can be seen below.

## Q. What do you think the network does at the moment?

Provide information about services and opportunities available to older people	68%
Campaign on issues relating to older people	64%
Represent older people living in Greater Manchester	63%
Provide the opportunity for older people to get their voices heard	56%
Produce reports based on the insights of older people	54%
Provide opportunities for older people to socialize	43%
Offer participation opportunities	42%
Offer training for older people	32%
Run local social events for older people in all 10 boroughs of GM	30%
Offer befriending services for older people	20%
Manage older people's services	15%
Other (please specify)	Responses 10%

**\*Percentages add up to more than 100% as participants were able to select multiple responses.**



The response selected by the highest proportion of respondents (68%) was 'provide information about services and opportunities available to older people' suggesting that people perceive the network as a source of information. Similarly a high proportion of respondents (64%) said that they thought the network campaigns on issues relating to older people and represents older people living in Greater Manchester. This is really positive and indicates that generally people are aware of what the network does. However, the data also suggests that some further work is needed in order to ensure that the work of the network is communicated more clearly. For example, the response 'offer training for older people' was only selected by 32% of respondents despite it being an activity that we offer to our individual members. This indicates that not everyone is clear about the range of opportunities that we offer.

Some activities not offered by the GMOPN were included in the list of options - 'offer befriending services for older people', 'run local social events for older people in all 10 boroughs of GM' and 'manage older people's services'. Some respondents did select these three incorrect options, however it is positive that these were the 3 responses selected by the lowest proportion of respondents.

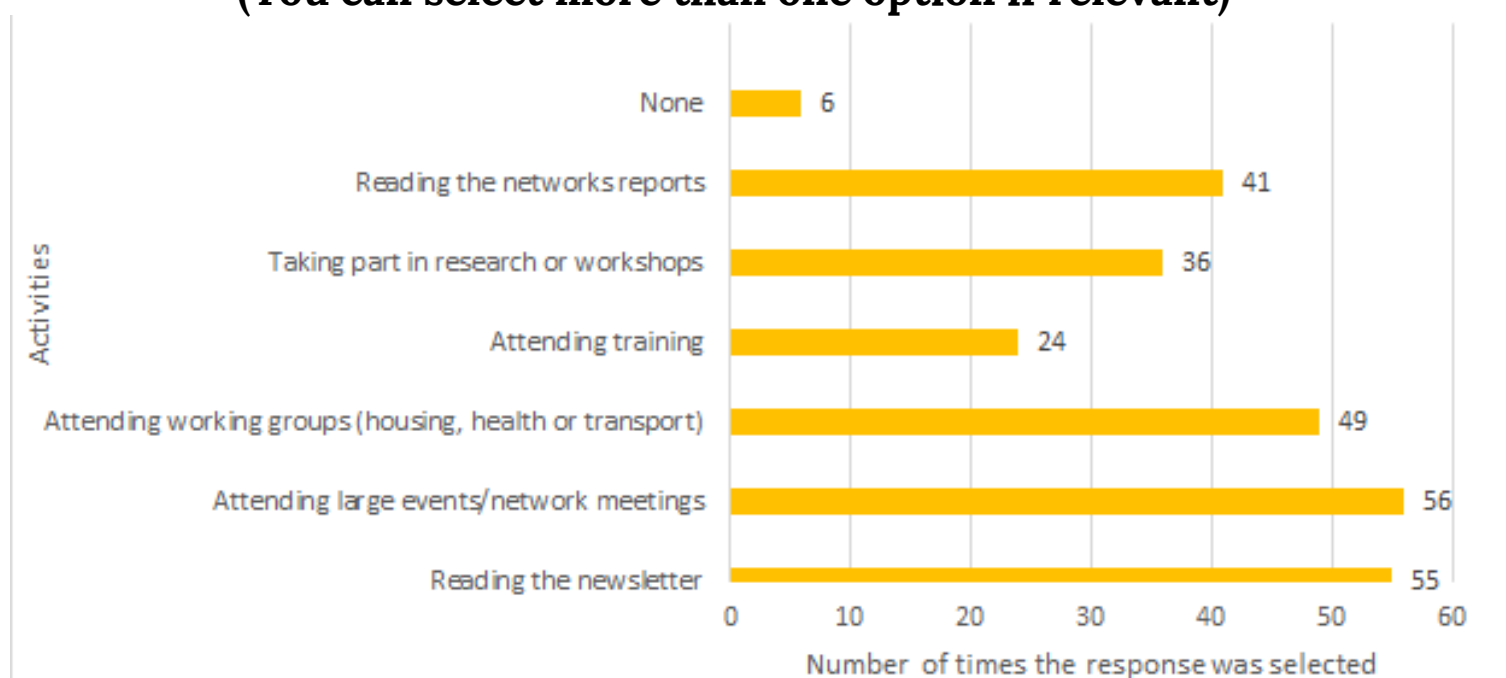




## WHICH ACTIVITIES ARE VALUED?

In order to help shape the future development of the network and to ascertain what types of activities the network should continue to offer, respondents were asked the question 'What activity do you value the most that the network currently offers? (You can select more than one option if relevant). Overall, 192 people responded to this question and the number of times each response was selected can be seen below.

### Q. Which activity do you value the most that the network offers (You can select more than one option if relevant)



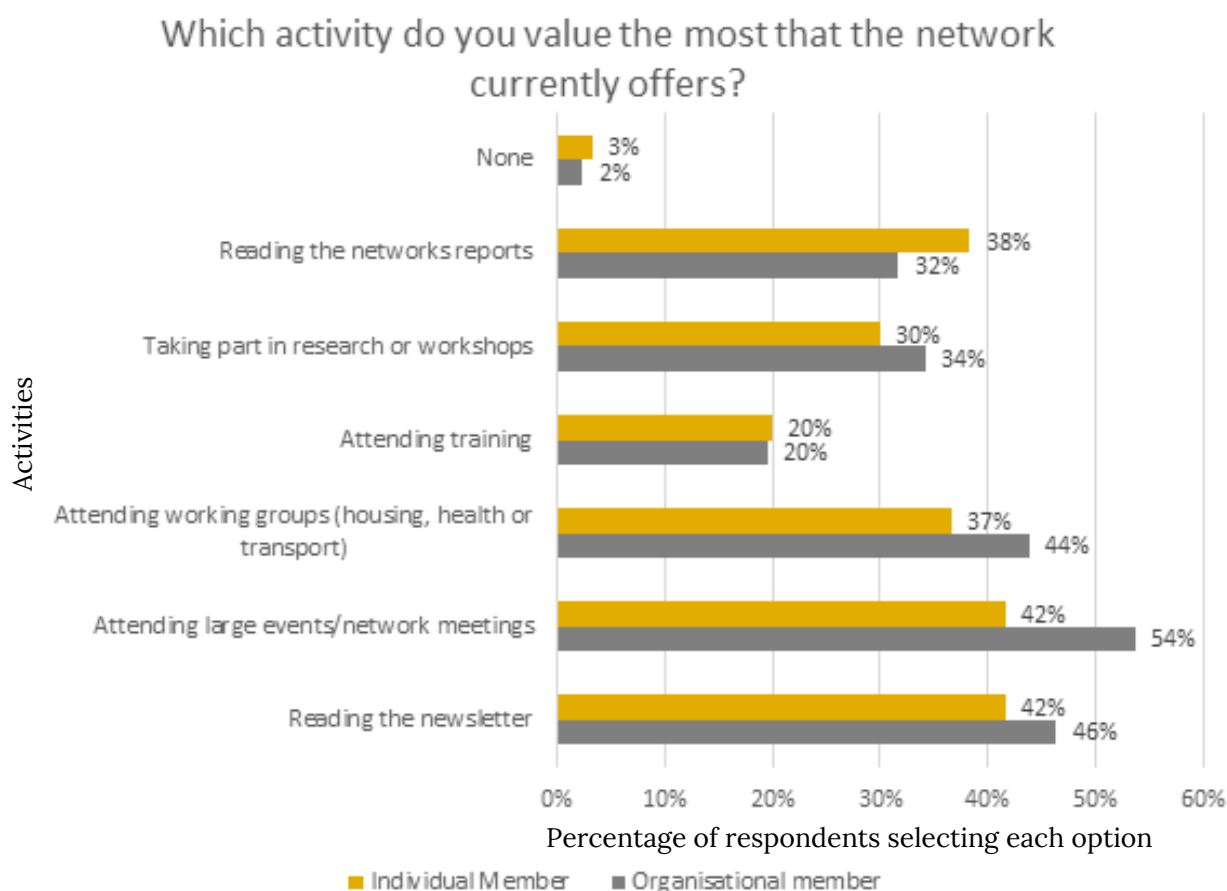
Attending large events/network events was selected as one of the most valued activities by the highest proportion of respondents. Reading the newsletter was also selected as a valued activity by a high proportion of respondents. Attending working groups was also an activity that a high proportion of respondents reported valuing, with this response being selected 49 times.

On the other hand, attending training was the activity selected by the lowest proportion of respondents with only 13% of respondents selecting this option. This may appear to suggest that less people value this activity compared to the other activities on offer. However, it needs to be acknowledged that training is the activity we offer that is accessed by the fewest network members and is often particularly aimed at those who wish to take a more leading role within the network. We would therefore expect this figure to be lower than for some of our other activities. It is also possible that some respondents may have selected "taking part in research or workshops", on the understanding that sessions that we would define as "training" were included within this category.



# WHICH ACTIVITIES ARE VALUED?

Further analysis of these results was carried out in order to determine if certain activities are valued more by individual members than organisational members and vice versa. The results can be seen on the graph below.



**\*Percentages add up to more than 100% as participants were able to select multiple responses.**



There are some differences between the activities individual members value compared to organisational members. For example, whilst a high proportion of individual members (42%) value attending large events/network meetings, more organisational members (54%) report valuing this activity. Attending large events was in fact the activity selected by the highest proportion of organisational members, suggesting this is the activity that organisational members value the most. The two activities selected by the highest proportion of individual members was attending large events/network meetings and reading the newsletter, suggesting that these are the activities most valued by individual members. Perhaps surprisingly, a higher proportion of individual members (38%) reported valuing reading the networks reports than organisational members (32%).

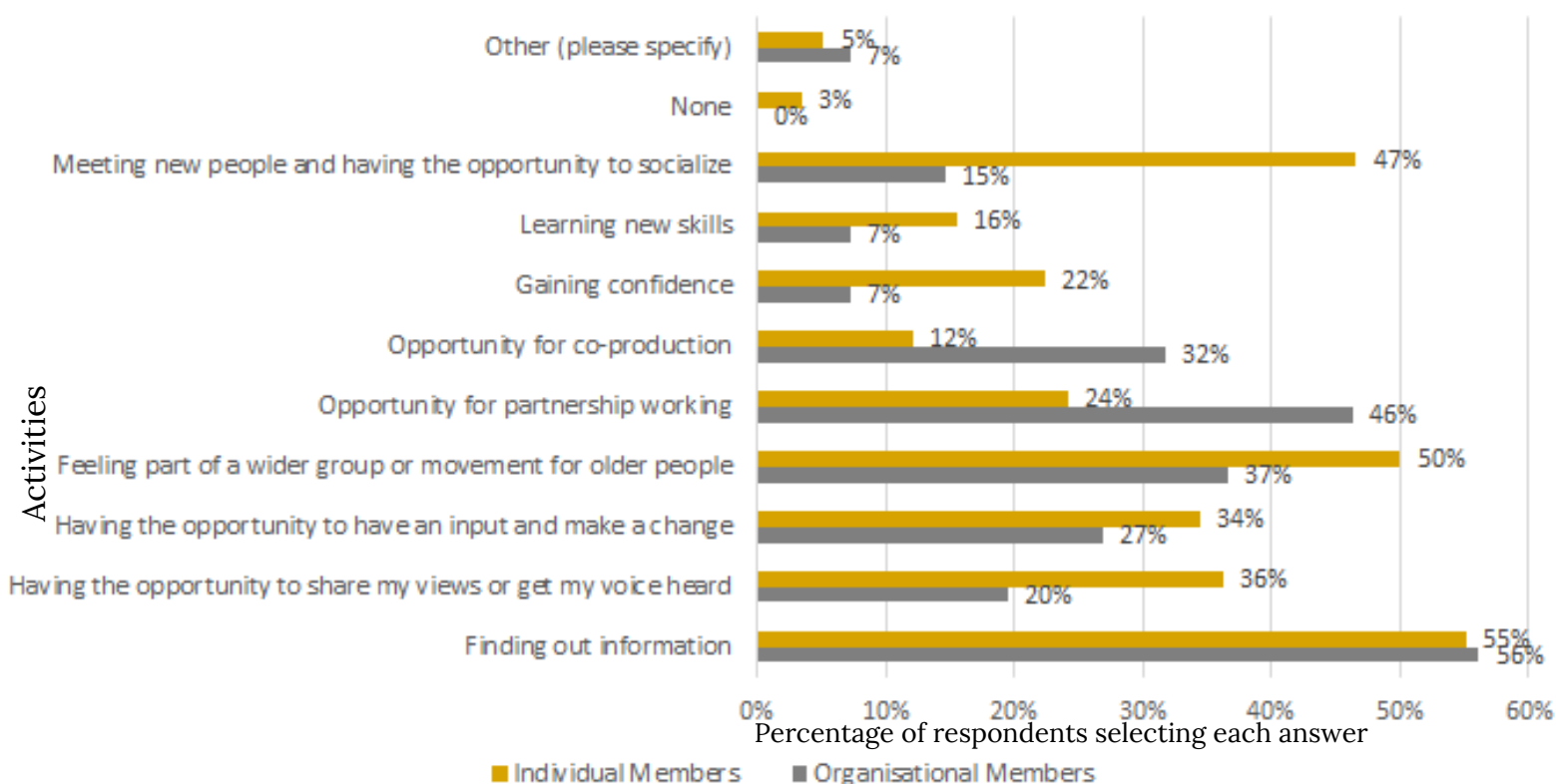
Training emerged again as the activity least valued by both types of members, but as discussed this, could be due to the fact that this is the least frequently accessed activity offered.

It should also be noted that sometimes members are unclear as to whether they are individual members or organisational members. For example, many individuals over the age of 50 also consider themselves to represent particular groups or organisations. For the purpose of this survey we have tried to clarify this by including the explanation, "we consider an organisational member to be someone who is representing an organisation as part of their paid role" when asking people to select their membership type. However, it is possible that some members are still unclear which could affect the data.



# BENEFITS OF BEING A MEMBER OF THE NETWORK

Respondents were then asked about what they perceive to be the greatest personal benefit of being a member of the network. The results can be seen below, broken down in to both organisational and individual members.



**\*Percentages add up to more than 100% as participants were able to select multiple responses.**

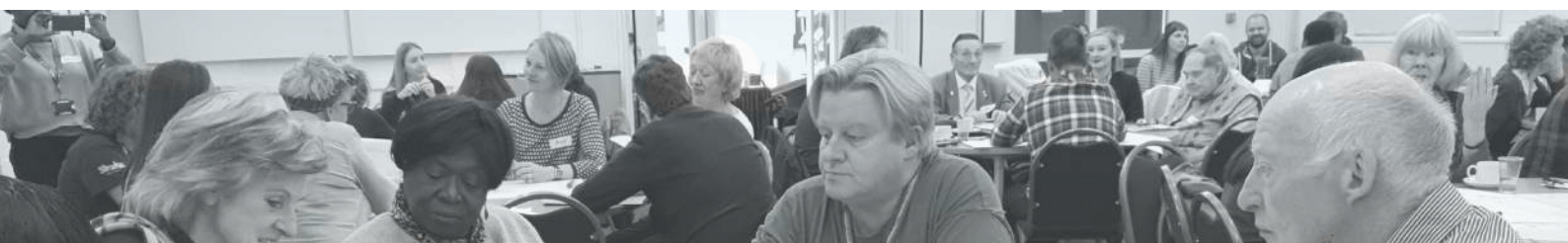


Finding out information was the option selected by the highest proportion of both individual and organisational members, with over 50% of respondents selecting this as one of their options. The option selected by the lowest proportion of respondents overall, was learning new skills. This is in line with the results earlier that indicated that training was the least valued activity that the network offers.

There are some clear differences between the responses that individual members selected compared to organisational members. Some of the options selected more frequently by individual members were to be expected. For example, it was to be expected that a higher proportion of individual members compared to organisational members would find meeting new people and gaining confidence is a benefit for them of being a member of the network.

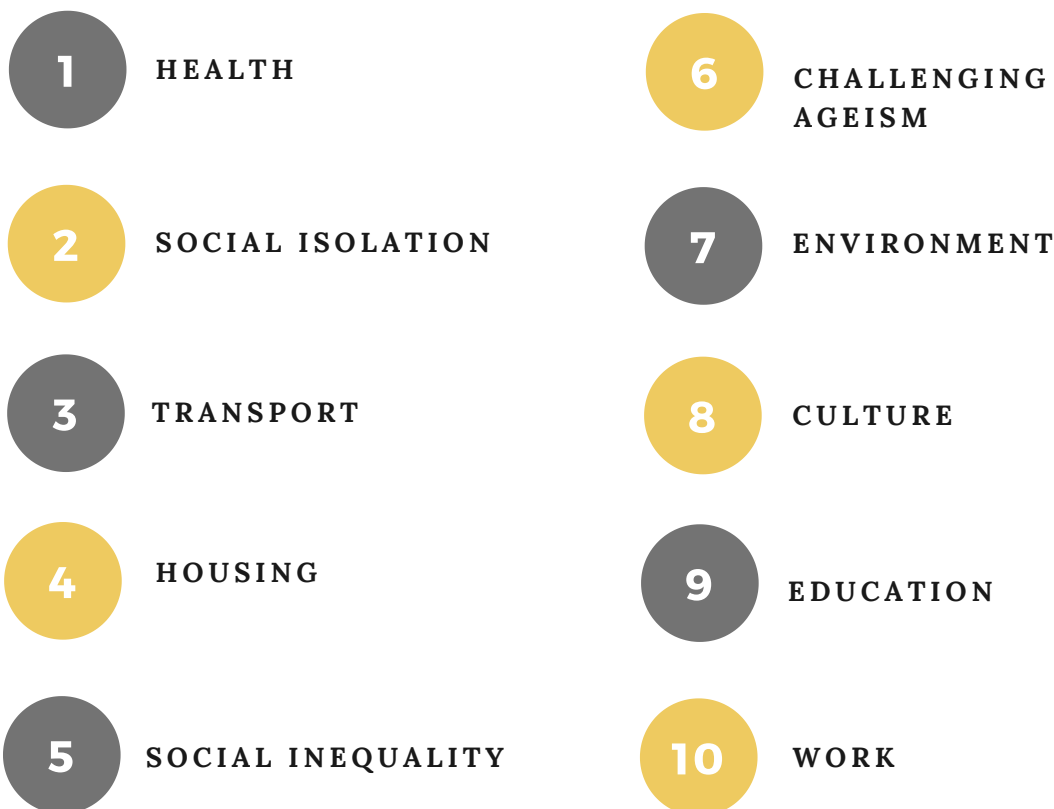
It was also to be expected that a higher proportion of organisational members would select 'partnership working' compared to individual members. However a high proportion of individual members selected 'meeting new people and having the opportunity to socialise' and arguably these 2 options are just different ways of expressing a very similar benefit.

It is also highly positive that less than 3% of members who responded selected the 'none' option suggesting that 97% of people that responded to the survey believe that there are benefits to being a member of the network.



# PRIORITY ISSUES FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN GM

Respondents were asked to rank the following issues that affect older people in order of priority. The results can be seen here, with 1 being the highest priority and 10 being the lowest priority.



These results indicate that the work of the network is very tune with the wishes of its members and wider older population in Greater Manchester. For example, Health, Transport and Housing are all issues that the network has previously identified as being of high priority and we have developed working groups that focus on these areas.

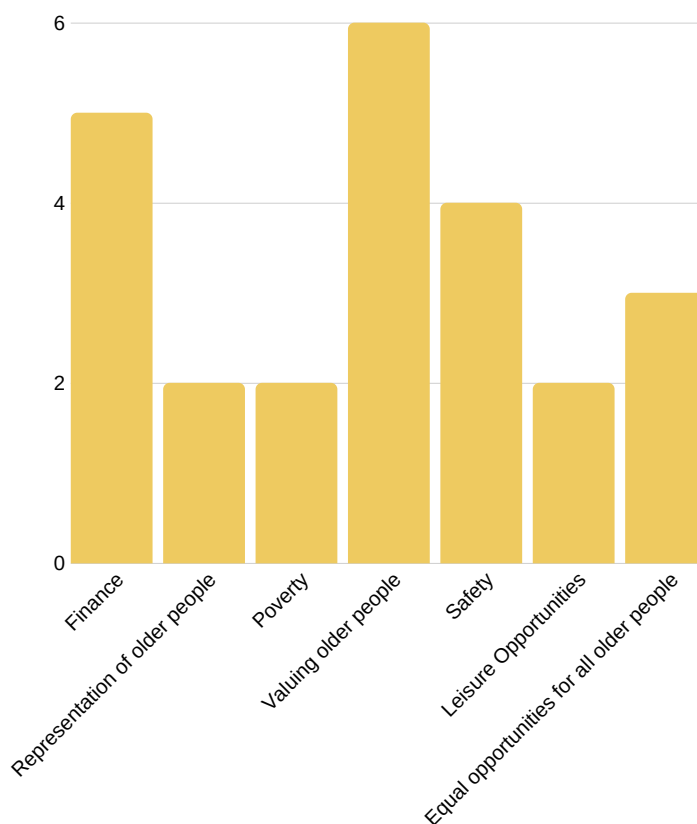


Respondents were then asked if there are any further priority issues for older people in Greater Manchester. Some different themes emerged that do not align with the options we provided in the initial question such as: valuing older people, finance, safety, equal opportunities for older people, poverty, leisure activities and representation of older people. The number of times each theme was mentioned can be seen here. The fact that multiple people gave similar responses is particularly interesting as no prompts were given.

As shown on the graph below, 'valuing older people' emerged quite strongly as a topic that people felt should be a priority issue for older people in Greater Manchester. Some comments relating to this include:

**"Being made to feel valued as people who are able to impart their experience and life-skills to inspire hope for change and positive outcomes."**

**"Recognizing the contribution that older people make in Greater Manchester and in society as a whole (i.e. volunteering)"**





## WHAT THE NETWORK SHOULD DO IN THE FUTURE

Respondents were then asked to rank in order of priority the following activities that the network currently does, in order to help determine which areas of work we should focus on in the future. The results can be seen below, with number 1 being the highest priority and 9 being the lowest.

- 1 Represent the voices of older people living in Greater Manchester
- 2 Provide information about services available to older people
- 3 Campaign on issues relating to older people
- 4 Provide the opportunity for older people to get their voices heard
- 5 Provide opportunities for older people to socialize
- 6 Offer participation opportunities
- 7 Produce reports based on the insights of older people
- 8 Act as an older 'experts by experience' equalities reference group
- 9 Offer training for older people



## WHAT THE NETWORK SHOULD DO IN THE FUTURE

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As shown, 'represent the voices of older people living in Greater Manchester' emerged as the top priority for respondents. This was followed by 'provide information about services available to older people' and then 'campaign on issues relating to older people'. Whilst these are all things that the Greater Manchester Older People's Network already does, they are in fact quite different types of activity.

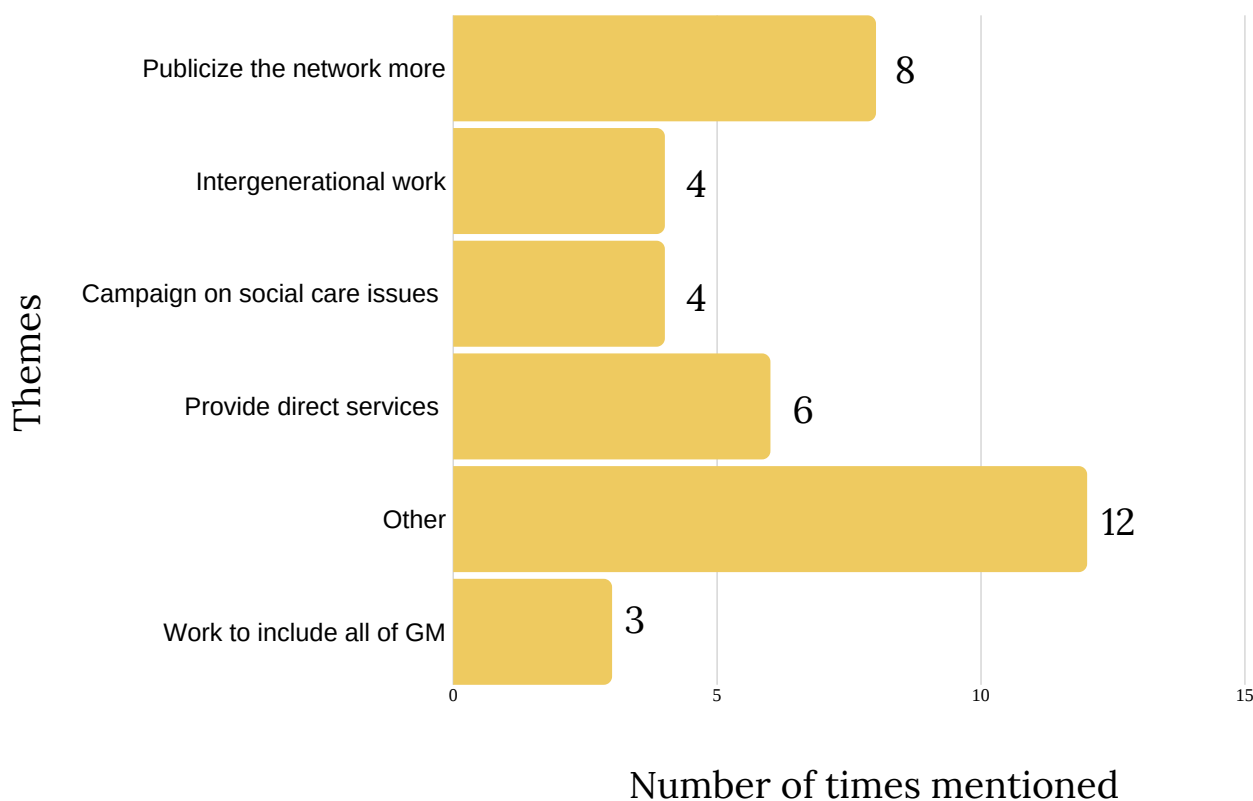
Responses such as 'offer participation opportunities' and 'offer training for older people' came lower down the list in terms of priority, however arguably these are activities that are needed to continue in order to be able to fulfill some of the higher up priorities. For example, for the network to be able to represent the voices of older people living in Greater Manchester', members would have to be offered participation opportunities to be able to share their views in the first place.

In addition, the response 'act as an experts by experience equalities reference group' came almost bottom of the list in terms of priority, however it could be argued that could that this was due to a lack of clarity in the wording of the survey. This could therefore mean that this option was ranked as a low priority not because respondents think it is unimportant, but instead because they don't know what it is.



## WHAT ELSE THE NETWORK SHOULD DO IN THE FUTURE

Respondents were then asked 'further to the options above, is there anything else that you think the Greater Manchester Older People's Network should do in the future'. The responses that emerged here varied greatly from respondents suggesting that we change the name of the network, to suggesting that we should provide free classes for older people. The responses have been categorized into themes and these can be seen below.



A high number of respondents said that the GMOPN should publicize itself more in the future. It's interesting that 8 different respondents mentioned this, given that it was an open-ended question. Making sure that the network is known is therefore something that should be focused on in the future.

6 different respondents gave answers relating to the network providing direct services in the future. Examples of these responses are 'Shopping - help with assisting the elderly to get them out to do their weekly shop without having to use public transport or taxi facilities' and 'I think you should provide education and classes free to older people - eg art sewing writing - it's a way of older people socialising [sic] keeping minds active.' Although delivering direct services like this isn't something that the network currently does, the fact that 6 different respondents mentioned it suggests the potential value of considering this as an option in the future.

It's interesting that intergenerational work emerged as a theme for the Greater Manchester Older People's network to work on in the future. The network has previously explored doing intergenerational work, including having an intergenerational focus at one of our large-scale network events, however we have not yet done this. This is something that could be looked into further in the future.

12 responses have been categorized as 'other' as they don't fit in to any specific category. 'Other' responses range from people suggesting we look at changing the name of the network to suggesting that we pay travel expenses to come to our events. This latter comment is interesting as we already pay travel expenses for anyone who attends our meetings, events and training. This highlights that we need to advertise the fact that we offer this more widely going forward.



## ANY FURTHER COMMENTS ABOUT THE NETWORK

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The final question in the survey was 'Do you have any further comments about the Greater Manchester Older People's Network?'

It also included a web link for anyone who is not currently a member of the network to be able to sign up. In total 47 people responded to this question and the responses varied in theme. We received some really positive feedback here that praised the work of the network so far. Some example responses include:

**"The meetings offer a fantastic opportunity to discuss issues with other people from all parts of the region and learn from each other how things can be improved by speaking up."**

**"I think you are doing an excellent job in bringing the issues relating to older people to the fore and in giving them a voice that appears to be being heard"**

**"The Older People's Network is doing a marvelous job. I wish the resources may continue so the Older People's Network may continue."**



Some responses to this question point to the need for us to be more clear about what the network does and how it operates. These comments suggest that more publicity of the network needs to be done to ensure that more people are made aware of the work that we do. We also need to ensure that any literature we produce, including our website, states our objectives in a clear and easily understandable way. As we are currently in the process of designing a new website, we will be able to incorporate this feedback. It does however need to be acknowledged that a number of people who responded to the survey were not members of the network and completing the survey may have been the first time they had ever come across the network. It is therefore understandable that they may not be aware of who we are and what we do.

Some respondents to this question made comments relating to GM wide representation and the need for us to ensure that the network is inclusive of all boroughs of Greater Manchester. Whilst we do have members from each borough of Greater Manchester, we have more members coming from certain boroughs such as Manchester and Salford than we do from areas such as Wigan and Bolton. We have recently started doing area visits to other boroughs of Greater Manchester, to make sure that as many people as possible know about us. We have also started to hold our events in areas outside of central Manchester to ensure that older people's voices from all different areas are included in our reports. For example in May we held our participation event in Leigh. We have also been attending a number of older people's fairs, such as in Bolton and Rochdale, in order to encourage more members to join. Going forward, we need to ensure that we continue to grow our numbers and try to attract more members from the boroughs that are currently under-represented.

Some other comments that emerged here point to the need for us to ensure we use straight forward language in our communications. This is really useful for us when thinking about the future development of the network.



# CONCLUSION

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The Greater Manchester Older People's Network is currently developing a strategy to ensure the sustainability of the Network after the Ambition for Ageing Programme completes in March 2020. The fact that 97% of members who responded to the survey recognise benefits in being involved in the GMOPN demonstrates the value of the Network for its current membership and the importance of retaining key elements of our current activities and priorities. However, the findings also point to other areas, not within our current focus, that both members and the wider public would value and see as opportunities for development.

The survey demonstrates that different elements of our work are valued by different members, just as there is a variation in specific priorities. This points to a need to continue to offer a variety of ways to engage on a range of key priorities.

Further to this, our findings demonstrate that there is work to be done to improve communication of our aims and objectives, priorities and activities to network members and the wider public.

The findings from this survey and points raised in this document will play a significant part in guiding the future direction of the Greater Manchester Older People's Network. We will continue to gather the views of our members, non-members and key stakeholders in order to firmly establish our priorities going forward.

**If you have any questions about this report or the Greater Manchester Older People's Network, please email [GMOPN@macc.org.uk](mailto:GMOPN@macc.org.uk) or telephone 0161 834 9823.**

