

Greater Manchester LGBTQ+ Equality Panel – Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The LGBTQ+ Panel is one of seven Equality Panels that have been established by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to tackle inequality and injustice in Greater Manchester, and influence change in a way that best responds to the needs of marginalised communities. The purpose of the LGBTQ+ Panel is to benefit LGBTQ+ people across the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester by:

- Championing LGBTQ+ inclusion and strengthening the voices of diverse LGBTQ+ communities in shaping and influencing policy development and delivery;
- Advising the Mayor, the GMCA, the Tackling Inequalities Board, and other relevant bodies on the experiences of LGBTQ+ communities, as well as key challenges and opportunities;
- Supporting the GMCA and its public, private, and voluntary sector partners to develop effective solutions for tackling inequality and discrimination affecting LGBTQ+ people;
- Establishing an evidence base for the current experiences of LGBTQ+ people within Greater Manchester, and evaluating current and new policy.

2. Operating Principles

Inclusivity – The Panel is aligned to the principles of an inclusive society, recognising that all should have full and equal rights and understanding that historic and contemporary structural obstacles impact different communities in different ways. Rather than trying to put forward a singular LGBTQ+ community, the Panel understands that there is a multiplicity of LGBTQ+ communities, each with varying challenges that need to be addressed and strengths that should be consciously uplifted. The Panel should make every effort to reflect the skills, knowledge, and experience of this diverse range of LGBTQ+ communities, and values the expertise of those who have experience of the oppression being tackled. If the lived experiences of Panel members do not reflect the diversity of those held by wider LGBTQ+ communities, they should make every effort to use their position to elevate the voices of those often marginalised and overlooked.

Openness – The Panel is founded on the ethos of community ownership and co-production. It will develop its priorities through cyclical engagement with the communities it seeks to benefit, and pursue an accountable relationship with these communities. It engages collaboratively with partners, namely the Management organisation: LGBT Foundation, and

is committed where possible to facilitating community involvement in its work. The Panel is open in its inclusivity – it holds that all individuals should feel respected, working to reconcile potentially conflicting views while acknowledging and representing a diversity of opinion within the Panel as within LGBTQ+ communities.

Effectiveness – The Panel’s work programme, developed through consultation with LGBTQ+ communities, will have defined objectives, actions, and measures to evidence and evaluate their impact. The Panel will focus its efforts towards achieving these priorities, delivering positive outcomes for LGBTQ+ communities across Greater Manchester.

3. Panel Membership

The Panel’s membership should aim to reflect the diversity of Greater Manchester, with broad representation across different LGBTQ+ identities; the ten boroughs; and experiences of other forms of marginalisation, such as relating to race, gender, class, and disability.

Individual Panel members sit as members of the public, seeking to provide a considered voice from their communities whilst expressing their own views. They do not formally represent a specific organisation or group but are expected to cultivate strong links to their wider communities and be committed to democratic principles. Together, the Panel builds on these to achieve a ‘collective good’ in service of LGBTQ+ communities across Greater Manchester, rather than promoting the interests of one community or organisation over others.

The Panel will decide the size of its membership and should review membership on a regular basis to enhance capability or fill specific skills gaps in relation to its work. It would be impossible to create a fully representative group, but the Panel will engage with LGBTQ+ communities to ensure that diverse voices and experiences are represented; and that particular voices are centred where appropriate. The Panel should ensure that their work is influenced by the diversity of lived experiences and intersecting oppressions within LGBTQ+ communities. In order to achieve this, the Panel may also choose to co-opt or consult individuals, who are not Panel members, as members of working groups which have been delegated specific duties by the Panel.

4. Panel Meetings

The LGBTQ+ Panel will meet monthly, with the first meeting of each year set aside for work planning. Additional meetings and/or working group sessions will take place as determined by the Panel as appropriate to its work plan.

Quorum for Panel meetings is two thirds of Panel membership. Members should aim to attend monthly and should not be absent for more than three consecutive meetings.

Panel meetings are chaired by two Co-Leads, who will be elected by Panel members at the beginning of the year for a period of 12 months. The Co-Leads are responsible for steering discussion at meetings, ensuring the Panel abides by its operating principles, and acting as a public face for the Panel in external communications; they may also delegate specific tasks to Panel members as appropriate.

In addition to Panel members, Panel meetings may be attended by the following individuals:

- LGBT Foundation staff:
 - Chief Executive
 - Head of Resources and Governance
 - Deputy Director of Inclusion
 - Head of Policy and Research
 - Policy Coordinator
 - LGBTQ+ Greater Manchester Community Ambassador
 - Communications & Marketing Coordinator
- GMCA officers invited by the Co-Leads, as appropriate to the meeting content
- Any other external parties invited by the Co-Leads, as appropriate to the meeting content.

The proceedings of the meeting will be captured in written minutes by the Policy Coordinator. The minutes will be circulated to Panel members within one week of the date of the meeting.

5. Decision-making

The Panel will seek as much as possible to make decisions by consensus, where all Panel members reach agreement on a course of action or position through deliberation; this may include conditional decision-making. Where this is not possible, however, any Panel member may make a request to the Co-Leads that a decision be made by majority vote instead.

The Panel may delegate activities to working groups of members, provided that the extent of this delegation is made clear to the Panel and recorded in written minutes. Working groups may meet additionally to full Panel meetings and should provide reports on their activities to full Panel meetings.

6. Support

The Panel will be supported by staff from GMCA and the chosen managing organisation; this will be LGBT Foundation for the initial period of two years, after which its effectiveness will be evaluated.

All Panel members are volunteers of LGBT Foundation, bound and supported by LGBT Foundation rules and processes in order to operate effectively. Reasonable travel and other out-of-pocket expenses incurred through Panel work will be reimbursed.

7. Complaints Procedure

A formal complaints procedure has been established to ensure that the Panel is functioning efficiently, and that the entirety Panel is adhering to its mission and governance guidelines. If any Panel member has grievances, they should express these formally to the Co-Leads and Management organisation (LGBT Foundation) through completing the circulated 'Complaints Form'. It is the duty of the Panel's Co-Leads and Management organisation to engage with and attempt to resolve all complaints. Please the following link below to raise a complaint: <https://form.jotform.com/222562982890365>

8. Governance Review

Panel governance, including the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct, are subject to regular evaluation and review. An informal review will be completed every six months internally by LGBT Foundation, the results of this will be circulated to Panel members for informal feedback. A formal review, where Panel governance is brought to a Panel meeting as an agenda item for extended discussion, will occur every twelve months.