

GREATER
MANCHESTER
coalition
— of disabled people —
GMCDP

Annual Report 2019-2020



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Who we are and what we do

Who are we?

Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) is a disabled people's organisation; that is run and controlled by disabled people. Established in 1985, we have a long track record of campaigning for the rights and inclusion of disabled people across Greater Manchester and beyond.

GMCDP aims to: promote the independence and inclusion of disabled people in society; identify and challenge the discrimination faced by disabled people in society today and encourage and support the self-organisation of disabled people.

What do we do?

We campaign and attend demonstrations on a range of issues relevant to disabled people. We run information sharing events, open meetings and training for disabled people and service providers.

We take part in consultations with voluntary and statutory organisations, both locally and nationally, to ensure that disability equality is embedded into the development of local policies and services.

We run a number of projects for young disabled people aged 15 to 25 to offer information, training and peer support.

We actively promote the understanding and implementation of the social model of disability, which underpins all our work.

We produce accessible information on a range of independent living and other disability related issues, including fact sheets and bulletins to share information with other disabled people, highlight good practice, current issues and debates.

Directors Report

Over the year 2019-2020, Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) continued to fulfil its core mission of campaigning and working for disabled people in Greater Manchester to achieve independent living, overcome disabling barriers and become fully included in society, despite generally increasingly difficult and precarious conditions for disabled people in the UK.

A major development this year was GMCDP's facilitation of the Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel. This has gone from strength to strength, bringing together Disabled People's Organisations from across Greater Manchester and having increasing influence on policy and planning across the region.

Another exciting initiative was the instillation of our Disabled Peoples Archive in Manchester Central Library and the collaborations with the library and People's History Museum on exhibitions about the history of the Disabled People's Movement.

We would like to thank our funders, Manchester City Council, Young Manchester and The Big Lottery for their continued support and for recognising through funding the importance of Disabled People's Organisations

Further information about all GMCDP projects can be found in our Annual Report.

In September 2019, GMCDP's long-standing manager, Caron Blake, left the organisation, leaving Nicola McDonagh to take over full-time as manager. We would like to thank Caron for her leadership and commitment.

In March 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic stopped many of GMCDP's planned activities and forced others to take different forms, leaving GMCDP, like many other Disabled People's Organisations, in an even more uncertain position. However, as the financial year closed, GMCDP was already starting to work on responses to the disproportionate effects on disabled people of both the pandemic and policy reactions to it.

Finally, on behalf of GMCDP, we would like to thank the staff, executive and members who work hard to ensure the continued success of GMCDP.

List of Directors

The following people served on the GMCDP Executive Council during 2019-2020:

Ken Audin, Wadiha Ahmed, Deborah Bhatti, Heather Davidson, Dr Paul Doyle, Mohamed Egeh, Steven Graby, Kevin Greenan, Maggie Griffiths, Stephen Kingsberry, Dennis Queen, Audrey Stanton, Anne Tober, Mathias Warrington.

Manager's Report

When writing this report, it is difficult not to begin by acknowledging the end of the 2019-2020 year, which brought highly concerning international events as the pandemic began to have its impact felt across the world. At the end of February and beginning of March concerns began to be had about the potential catastrophic impact the pandemic could have on disabled people, both due to the largely unknown virus susceptibility, but also the pre-existing health, economic and social inequalities for many disabled people. The lack of guidance being given at the time, as well as the reassurances to the public that “only the elderly and the vulnerable” were likely to be affected was not reassuring for many who felt the virus may significantly impact them, and that their lives were not being protected or valued. As a disabled people's organisation, we therefore had a duty to act to protect our staff, members and Exec. GMCDP took the decision to close its office in the first week of March, switching rapidly over the course of a couple of days to a fully remote and digital provision. This decision felt sadly vindicated when the Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures confirmed that from March to July 2020 almost three fifths of deaths from Covid-19 had been Disabled people, and with disabled women almost 11 times more likely to die from the virus than non-disabled women. As the financial year closed, GMCDP was already working to address wherever possible the disproportionate effects on disabled people of both the pandemic. I would like to thank all staff, Exec and members for all their hard work during this transition.

In addition to the onset of the pandemic, April 2019 to March 2020 saw multiple changes for Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP), most significantly in the change in management after 14 years. It would be an understatement that Caron has played a fundamental part in the survival of the organisation during a time when many disabled people's organisations closed, and also for her role ensuring GMCDP has retained its core values, principles and ethos. GMCDP recognise Caron's commitment, leadership and guidance over the years GMCDP staff, exec and members thank Caron for all her work and support. Due to funding constraints, we also unfortunately lost some key members of staff, Linda Marsh, Brett Savage and Hannah Ross in this timeframe. GMCDP thanks them for all their work, contributions and commitment and welcomes their continued involvement as members. GMCDP also said goodbye to Inga Reichelt from our staff team, who did a great job setting up the Manchester Disabled People's project. We also welcomed Gemma Roberts, who has further developed the project.

After almost two years of development, GMCDP succeeded in obtaining the support and funding to convene the Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel. Two staff members were recruited, Rick Burgess (Outreach and Development Lead) and Jane Bevan (Strategic Lead). We held a public recruitment process, and established the Panel, made up of 14 organisations from across Greater Manchester. The first year of the Panel benefitted from all of the development work put into it in the years prior, enabling it to quickly develop and establish itself as the only

disabled people's panel working at a strategic level across the country. Having this structure in place enabled DPOs from across Greater Manchester to work collectively and address issues on a local and GM level, as the pandemic made its presence felt.

As well as pioneering and unique developments in disabled people's organisations infrastructure in Greater Manchester, we also saw the preservation of our history as GMCDP and the disabled people's movement. GMCDP holds the largest and most comprehensive archive of the lives and experiences of disabled people and activism in England. This archive has begun to be catalogued by project worker Linda Marsh, and we hope in the upcoming years that this will be made fully available and accessible to all.

GMCDP continued to run its other projects, including Shaping Our Inclusion, Young Disabled People's Advice and Advocacy project, Make It Happen and Manchester Disabled People's project. These enabled us to deliver support, information, advice and opportunities throughout the year, but in particular these projects – and the staff who run them – provided crucial support at the onset of the pandemic, and enabled us to continue to work, switching to a remote-basis.

I would like to thank all staff who worked for GMCDP during this year, as well as thank our Executive Council and members.

Nicola McDonagh

The Archive Development Project

This has been a busy and fruitful year for the Archive Project.

Building on the initial sorting from last year, 15 boxes of archive material have been catalogued in detail and approximately five more have been sorted and are just awaiting the final process of being numbered at the time this report was being written.

Although funding for the paid archive worker post has ceased, there is still some progress being made with the archive by volunteers. Funding is actively being sought and the Archive Steering Group will continue to meet and support the archive.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff in Manchester Central Library's Archives+. The safe housing, cataloguing and eventual availability to the public of GMCDP's archive would not be possible without their immense enthusiasm and support.

The highlight of this year was the launch of the GMCDP Archive on 19 June. Approximately 75 people attended the event in Manchester central Library.

The space was filled with a large display of posters, postcards and photographs from the archive, as well as some of the T-shirts from the Lorraine Gradwell Campaign Clothing Collection. We also arranged several tables with books, reports, newsletters and

other documents. Some of these were available to handle whilst more delicate items were protected and copies were made for people to pick up and look at more closely.

Councillor Tracey Rawlins, Manchester City Council's Lead for Disabled People, opened the event. Actress and activist Ali Briggs (AKA Freda from Coronation Street) spoke about her experiences, the importance of preserving our history, and links with disability art. One of the founding members of GMCDP, Martin Pagel, brought a rousing finale to the speeches.

A very popular element of the launch was the tour of Archives+ and the basement Strong Room offered by staff from Archives+.

The project has still been involved in events held by other organisations.

Linda continued to represent GMCDP at consultation meetings with the People's History Museum after their very successful exhibitions 'Nothing About Us Without Us' in December 2018 and April 2019. The museum is now planning a whole year of exhibitions and activities relating to disabled people in 2021.

The Project, along with other GMCDP staff, was, once again, involved in Manchester City Council's event to celebrate International Day of Disabled People on 3 December 2019. We gave support in the planning, provided exhibitions, and Brian Hilton created a set of 5 postcards to celebrate the day. An image from the second The Accessibles comic was also used on a tote bag produced to give away at the event.

GMCDP has also given some support to Judy Hunt, the widow of Paul Hunt, in publishing and promoting her book: 'No Limits: The Disabled People's Movement – A Radical History. GMCDP is hosting the book on our website and has arranged for the book to be available in audio, Braille and soon hard-copy large print

Although there is a temporary halt in funding for this project, the future still looks bright. Members of the GMCDP Executive Council and Archive Steering Group, as well as staff in Manchester's Archives+, all have a strong commitment to the archive and ensuring the continued revealing of, preservation and celebration of disabled people's history.

Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel

The GM Disabled People's Panel came into being in 2019 after a two year development process and officers Rick Burgess (Outreach and Development Plead) and Jane Bevan (Strategic Lead) were recruited.

In April recruitment started for Panel members and meetings took place with the GM Combined Authority. In May applications were invited for Panel members; an independent panel was assembled to assess applications which was made up of GMCDP, Breakthrough UK and GM Centre of Voluntary Organisations. In June, 14 organisations were appointed as Panel members.

Panel members 2019-2020

Breakthrough UK

Disability Stockport

Embrace Wigan & Leigh (Co-opted)

GM Autism Consortium Advisory Committee

GMCDP (Convenor)

Manchester Deaf Centre

Manchester Disabled People's Access Group

Manchester Disabled People Against Cuts

Manchester People First

National Association of Disabled Staff Networks

National Federation of the Blind UK

People First Tameside

Rochdale And District Disability Action Group

Salford Disability Forum.

In between meetings the two officers do a lot of research and outreach with numerous people and organisations to assemble guests, network, influence policy and assemble an agenda each month in consultation with the co-chairs and Convenor. The first meeting of the Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel (GMDPP) took place on 20th June 2019. The Panel decided:

- that we would meet monthly, in a different borough each month
- that we should help shape decisions and policy and should be involved from the beginning of processes, not merely at the end;
- that the GMCA and Mayor's decision making processes should allow for the actual amount of time needed for disabled people to engage in the development of policy;
- that senior decision makers at GMCA/The Mayor's Office should undertake inclusivity training in order to work together successfully.
- that Panel member organisations will not be able to represent every single disabled person in Greater Manchester they will represent issues using their knowledge and understanding and present evidence from their lived experiences.

Panel members were invited to identify the three areas most affecting disabled people across Greater Manchester. The issues raised included: transport and public spaces; consistency of services and different standards of accessibility between Local Authorities in Greater Manchester; accessible housing and social care packages; suitable work placements; welfare reform; access to advice and information, especially in relation to welfare reform; Independent Living.

In July 2019 two co-Chairs were elected, Michele Scattergood (Breakthrough UK) and John Kenny (Disability Stockport). We agreed areas of our workplan, Terms of Reference and Codes of Conduct, and GM Mayor Andy Burnham attended to voice his support and assistance. The Panel also developed how it would take action, measure progress and represent itself in other meetings and events.

The Panel has held thematic monthly meetings, based on the key issues identified at its first meeting. Each of these meetings have included guests, who are the senior/strategic leads in their field. The Panel has had the opportunity to engage, influence, advise, challenge and hold accountability.

In March 2020 GMCDP and the Panel moved to remote working. The Panel continued with its full monthly meetings, but also included weekly catch ups, as we ramped up our work to meet the challenge of the pandemic head on to improve the pandemic response.

More information, including the full Year One report, can be found on the Panel website: gmdisabledpeoplespanel.com

Make It Happen

The Young Disabled People's Project (Make it Happen) continued to deliver workshops and one-to-one support, and to connect young disabled people with various opportunities across Manchester, often supporting them to access them. This year also saw the project build links with other organisations, such as Contact Theatre and Archives+, exploring accessibility, representation, theatre and the history of the disabled people's movement.

Young disabled people on this project had the opportunity to attend multiple events, festivals and performances. Throughout these various activities, young disabled people had the opportunity to discuss accessibility and the importance of representation and inclusion. Many of the workshops delivered focussed on issues of representation, inclusion, leadership and liberation. Participants discussed the need for political representation and drafted their own manifestos.

We also covered the themes of leadership and resistance, two of the three themes for Disability History Month 2019, including whether a leader of disabled people needs to be disabled themselves. We also looked at some examples of disabled leaders including Chen Guancheng, Gemma Nash, Ola Abu Al Ghaib and Lorraine Gradwell - participants all rated the session with a thumbs up and said they had "learned lots". Young people explored why it is important to vote, and some were supported to do so.

Manchester Disabled People's Project

Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) and Manchester Disabled People's Project (MDPP) were delighted to see our wonderful colleague Inga Reichelt change roles and become part of our executive council. This meant MDPP also welcomed new staff member Gemma Roberts, to fill the role of Project Worker.

The project began to regain its momentum by running workshops which were both proactive and reactive to the political climate; these included reactive sessions such as "Your Vote Matters" and encouraging disabled Manchester residents to vote in the 2019 general election and proactive sessions, such as "Know Your Rights", a collaborative session with the University of Manchester's Law Society about employing a Personal Assistant (PA) and permitted work on social benefits.

We were particularly proud to deliver these sessions, amongst many others, to regular attendees and new participants. The session on accessible technology was especially popular--having high attendances on both occasions--and generated some interesting discussion on the barriers both created and removed for disabled people by different technologies. The discussion then touched on the ability of these aids to shape an individual disabled persons' version of independent living and how this may vary.

In addition MDPP are pleased with our engagement with other community organisations this year, feeling that we have attended and delivered several great community outreach programmes which have since established strong relationships through which to share good practice.

Further, the growing link with the People's History Museum will allow us to have a space to exhibit the material from the Archives+ Project, giving us an opportunity to share the history of the disabled people's movement* and to educate many more people.

A final achievement was our ability to continue working through the first few weeks of Lockdown; although this was a different experience we were able to retain the use of our remote practices.

Shaping Our Inclusion

The shaping our inclusion project continued to support GMCDP's development, further developing our sub-groups, expanding our membership and exploring various ways in which members can be involved in and lead on on GMCDP work. Shaping Our Inclusion staff also supported the initial development of the Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel, including recruiting panel members, establishing the inaugural meeting and facilitating the induction period.

Once the Covid19 pandemic began in the UK, the governance structure set up throughout the Shaping Our Inclusion project quickly adapted to remote working, regularly meeting over zoom. The sub-groups (in particular communications, membership and campaigning) met regularly in March 2020, filling action-based priorities and working with staff to try to mitigate the harm caused by the Pandemic. The Communications Sub-Group began to carry out tasks, such as providing accessible information on accessing support and services for domestic violence survivors. As disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic violence, the increase in domestic violence incidents from the very start of the pandemic was of concern. Unfortunately, the information being circulated about support available was often inaccessible, or the methods of gaining support were limited, for example being telephone only. GMCDP transcribed the information into accessible formats and contacted services and organisations directly, encouraging them to include accessible information and ways of accessing

services. We also oversaw the creation of documents, such as DNRs, a set of self-advocacy tips -to be used if taken to hospital- and hospital passports.

Sorted (Young Disabled People's Advice and Advocacy Project)

GMCDP's 'Sorted' Project has worked with young disabled people aged 15-25, living in the Manchester area. The project has provided advice and advocacy principally to challenge and remedy hardship, a crisis faced by many young disabled people. The project has effected change by increasing personal income, improving access to mainstream activity, and by challenging lack of access to a broad range of independent living services. The end result is evidenced in the increased choice(s), liberty and dignity of young disabled people who have been involved.

Working with young disabled people and their supporters, the project has specifically focused on:

- Obtaining and challenging full benefit entitlement for young disabled people, with a particular focus on DLA/PIP and Universal Credit under Limited Capability for Work and work related activity rulings and legacy benefits such as ESA (Employment Support Allowance). The project has secured £45, 818 for individual young disabled people in the last twelve months.

- Obtaining vital independent living services, and challenging any provision which prevents or excludes, either intentionally or unintentionally,

young disabled people's opportunity to participate in mainstream activities. There has been a notable increase, for example of disabled students contacting the project due to facing unresolved matters relating to finances, support, and/or lack of access.

The Project has supported, through advice and advocacy, provision to 24 young disabled people previously unknown to GMCDP and to 14 young disabled people already known to the organisation. Delivery of support has varied in terms of nature, and complexity of issue(s). Very often young disabled people have required support to deal with multiple layered issues which compound hardship and distress and cannot be managed in isolation. Occasional one off enquiries were however received into the project. 'Sorted' worked in partnership with Manchester Mind and Centrepont to draw upon and share experiences and, knowledge, which has increased support and outcomes for a diverse group of young people. The project underwent a rebranding process this year to allow for clearer and more easily identifiable aims and to create a clearer message to young people with the intention of reaching wider numbers of young people.

The next 12 months will no doubt be an especially challenging time with an unprecedented need for support, advice and advocacy. The challenge remains to reach and deliver to all individual young disabled people who need support, as well as to influence and make sustained, real change for and with young disabled people.

Our funders during 2019-2020



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