

GREATER  
MANCHESTER  
**coalition**  
— of disabled people —  
GMCDP



# Annual Report 2018/2019

# Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People

## 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.

**All GMCDP publications are available in standard and large print, in Braille, audio and electronic formats.**

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## Director's Report

I'm trying to resist being negative, but it is difficult in this current climate. Since our last report, Professor Philip Alston from the UN visited the UK. He confirmed what all disabled people knew; "People with disabilities are more likely to be in poverty and are more likely to be in unsecured employment or economically inactive".

The daily challenges we face are grim, so it has been difficult for me to feel any sense of optimism. But in these challenging times, there is hope. GMCDP is, despite everything, helping to make life for disabled people in Greater Manchester a little easier. We are meeting issues head on in the face of a difficult political climate.

Due to these times of austerity we have been accused of being "fraudsters", "dodgers" and "work shy". We know all the programmes that are on Channel 5 about how people on benefits live the life of luxury; that's right, my impairment is something everyone should have if you want a free bus pass! That's why we set up a "Benefits Self-Defence" course for people wanting to understand how to cope with the perpetual attacks and threats from the DWP. The course has helped me a great deal and to this day, people still talk about it.

As an organisation we have helped set up and secure funding for the Greater Manchester Mayor's Working Group for a Disabled People's Panel. This is an incredible achievement for the representation of disabled people in regional politics, and marks a turning point for making a newly elected Mayor accountable to the hundreds of thousands of disabled people across Greater Manchester. It also enables other organisations to take part in the decision-making process to co-produce new ways of working, new ideas and initiatives that can help improve politics in Greater Manchester.

One of the most rewarding projects that I have been involved in was the "Nothing About Us Without Us" archive project, which has helped record the history of the disabled people's movement in Greater Manchester. Our history is rich and our perseverance and achievements are something not only to be proud of, but to remind people that disabled people are actively campaigning for a better world for everyone, and that there is still a long way to go. We need people involved more than ever; we cannot give up despite the mighty odds we face. Our history is rich, vibrant and never-ending, and GMCDP has been at the forefront of that, which I am incredibly proud to be a part of.

**Heather Davidson**

**GMCDP Chairperson**

**Directors**

Wadiha Ahmed

Ken Audin

Rick Burgess

Richard Currie (resigned December 2018)

Heather Davidson

Paul Doyle

Mohammed Egeh

Katherine McDermott (resigned April 2018)

Steve Graby

Maggie Griffiths

Stephen Kingsberry

Dennis Queen

Audrey Stanton

Anne Tober

Mathias Warrington

Joe Whittaker

## Managers' Report

2018-2019 was, as always, a busy year for Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People. With five projects, ten staff, as well as a busy Executive Council this year brought forth lots of positive changes.

In terms of staffing, GMCDP welcomed Inga Reichelt to GMCDP, taking on the project worker role for our Manchester Disabled People's Project. As our staff team has grown, and as we have taken on more consultancy and strategic work we increased our management team to include an operations manager role, with project worker Nicola McDonagh taking on the role to work alongside the existing manager Caron Blake. We also had our long-time member of staff Linda Marsh taking on the role of Archive Worker, sorting and cataloguing GMCDP's archive. There have been some very exciting finds already, such as photos of protests and demonstrations, hand-written notes and plans for an important rally, copies of seminal documents, and posters publicising disability art events. Linda's experience, expertise and long-time involvement has done a great service to getting GMCDP's archiving off the ground, and we look forward to what else we will unearth over time. Our two Manchester youth projects have continued to support young disabled people and provide them with excellent opportunities to gain skills, access support, as well as provided advice and advocacy.

Our governance has seen a lot of development and growth this year. In addition to our Executive Council we now have five Executive Led Sub groups (Young Disabled People's Sub Group; Membership Sub-Group; Campaigning Sub-Group; Communications Sub Group; Funding Sub-Group). These Sub Groups are led by an Executive Council member, and allow space for focussed work in each of these important areas. They enable a space for members-led central GMCDP activity, supported by staff and projects (currently supported by our Shaping Our Inclusion project). These Sub Groups will continue to be developed and expand its activities over the next year, and provide exciting opportunities for members to become more actively involved in GMCDP.

GMCDP has also been working on developing a Greater Manchester Mayor's Disabled People's Panel over the past year. This work came about after GMCDP's activities during the elections for Greater Manchester Mayor, including organising a roundtable meeting with Andy Burnham (then a candidate for Greater Manchester Mayor), as well as hosting a disability-focussed hustings held for all candidates. Throughout these

activities, Andy Burnham committed to creating a Greater Manchester Mayor's Disabled People's Panel, to provide strategic support and influence on policies which affect disabled people, and to effect change at a strategic level in Greater Manchester. We are delighted to confirm that we have been successful in attaining funding from GMCA for GMCDP to convene this Panel, which will be made up of disabled people's organisations from across Greater Manchester. Our thanks to organisations involved in the working group for this Panel over the past year, including Breakthrough UK, Manchester Deaf Centre, Disability Stockport and Manchester Disabled People's Access Group, as well as to Alex Whinnom (Chief Executive at Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisations). Your support was invaluable.

On behalf of the management team, we would like to thank GMCDP's dedicated staff team, who work tirelessly in furthering GMCDP's aims and objectives, and supporting our project activities. We would also like to thank our Executive Council for all their time and support.

We have a lot of challenges ahead, and there is – unfortunately – plenty of work for GMCDP to do in achieving its aims of a fully inclusive and accessible society for disabled people. Thank you therefore to our members for their continuing involvement and support - we are stronger together.

**Nicola McDonagh**

**Operations Manager**

## Our Funders



## The Archive Development Project

This project began in late June 2018. It is to begin sorting and cataloguing GMCDP's archive; organise a launch of the archive; and take the lead within the GMCDP staff team relating to events and resources about the history of GMCDP and the Disabled People's Movement.

Linda Marsh has been employed for 16 hours a week as Archive Development Worker. There is a Steering Group which advises on the work of the project. Members are: Anne Tober (GMCDP Executive Council representative), Caron Blake (GMCDP Manager), Tony Baldwinson (GMCDP associate member and part-time archivist), Brian Hilton (GMCDP member), Martin Pagel (GMCDP founding member), and three staff from Archives+ - Larysa Bolton (Service Development Specialist), Sarah Hobbs (Archives Officer) and Siobhan O'Connor (Communities and Outreach Officer).

The Archive is a collection of documents, reports, books, posters, postcards, badges, T-shirts, audio-visual and other items. It has all been donated to the archive by individuals and disabled people's organisations, including GMCDP, Manchester Disability Forum and British Council of Disabled People.

The collection actually began in 2005, when GMCDP carried out a feasibility study into setting up a national Disabled People's Movement Archive. Disabled people and organisations spontaneously sent material to GMCDP. This was stored with Greater Manchester County Records Office for safe keeping.

Picture of some archive materials including posters, books and t-shirts



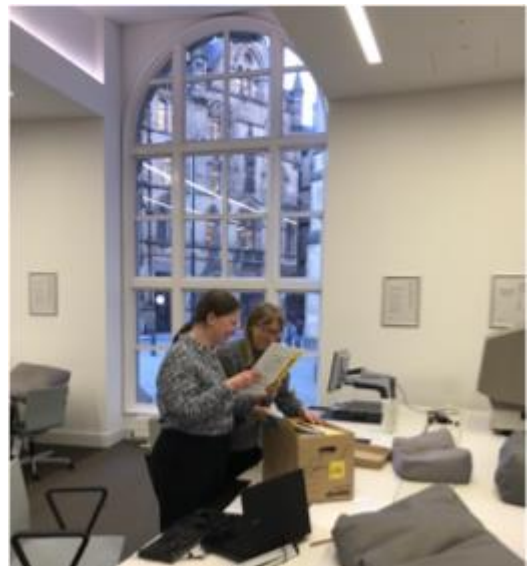
Approximately 160 boxes are housed in the strong room in the basement of Manchester Central Library, plus 32 boxes from 2006 in Archives+'s long-term



storage space in Derbyshire.

With the support of, and training from, Archives+ staff, Linda has begun a detailed sorting and summarising of box contents, based on a brief summary created by Tony Baldwinson before the boxes were moved to Archives+. There have been some very exciting finds, such as photos of protests and demonstrations, hand-written notes and plans for an important rally, copies of seminal documents, and posters publicising disability art events. Most of the archive spans from the 1960s to the present day.

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 project has also been involved in other organisations' events.



This picture shows Larysa Bolton and Linda Marsh looking through a box of archive materials in the Search Room at Manchester Central Library

Linda has represented GMCDP at consultation meetings with the People's History Museum for their exhibition 'Nothing About Us Without Us', as well as facilitating GMCDP's contribution to the exhibitions in December 2018 and April 2019. Some artefacts, such as the GMCDP and Save the ILF Banners, were exhibited as part of the exhibition, and GMCDP's booklet 'A Brief History of Disabled People's Self-Organisation' was used as a basis for a timeline which was part of the exhibition. GMCDP also had an information table at this exhibition and The People's History Museum's 'Meet the Activists' event in August 2018.

The Project, along with other GMCDP staff, also supported GMCDP's involvement in the Manchester History Rocks! Event organised by Manchester City Council for International Day of Disabled People on 3 December 2018, which included an exhibition about disabled museums. The project is also planning and preparing for a launch of GMCDP's Archive in June 2019.

**Linda Marsh - Archive Development Worker**

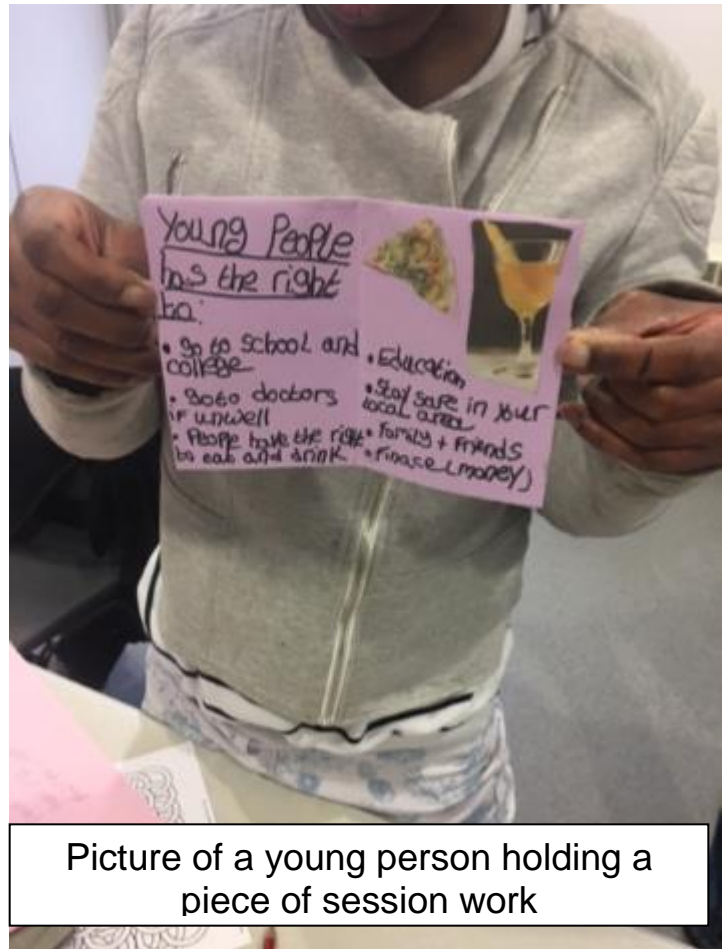
## Young Disabled Peoples Forum

In the first year of our project, we carried out one-to-one support sessions on a weekly basis, regular group sessions (1-2 per month) on impactful topics relating to young disabled people's rights, and monthly social nights designed by our participants that offer a safe, fun environment in which to socialise. Additionally we delivered outreach in various external environments.

The one-to-one support sessions have been accessed in order to gain support with a range of areas, including but not limited to: securing work experience (for example, in catering); guidance on apprenticeships and jobs; steps towards living

independently; issues relating to benefits such as PIP and working tax credits; access to accessible leisure opportunities such as gaming and drama; budgeting advice; issues relating to educational environments; building confidence to write emails and make phone-calls; working on CVs and interview advice; advice on gaining access support in higher education. This work has included referrals to other relevant support. Our participants have described feeling 'calm' and 'confident' following these sessions.

Group sessions and outreach have centred on areas to do with access rights, linked to education, health and leisure. This has included: working with young disabled researchers from Coventry University contributing to feedback about Education, Health and Care Plans; meeting with Healthwatch Manchester to discuss access barriers in health and care services; designing accessible crisis services; and conversations about young people's rights by working with 42<sup>nd</sup> Street's Make Our Rights Reality project.



Picture of a young person holding a piece of session work



Picture of young people on the project around the table

They have been creative, with sessions including badge- and zine-making, the latter taking place in Manchester libraries. Creative sessions have sparked conversation about disablism and other forms of prejudice/discrimination including sexism, racism and homophobia.

Sessions are directed by our participants, covering topics such as healthy living and safety in the community: during these, we have included focus on disabling barriers that relate to them.

Our monthly social nights officially began later in the year, having had greater emphasis on group sessions that have a highly social element to them. Planning began early on but concerns arose about building accessibility and suitability for young people's sessions. Our participants led this planning and answered questions about what sort of night they would like, what access barriers could present themselves and how we could avoid them. This included avoiding 'confusing language' and a 'lack of assistance', a 'no-smoking zone', a place where we could avoid sensory overload, and a 'safe space policy' that would combat 'inappropriate attitudes' and violence. We outlined a role for one of our most active participants to help lead the running of the social night; more will be created for others if they are willing.

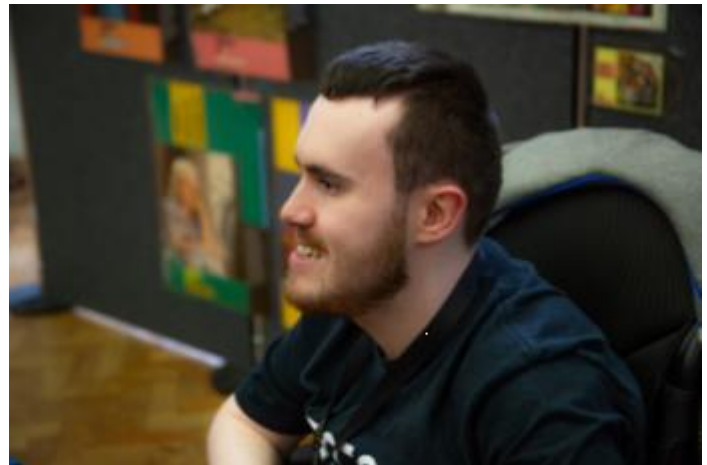
**Hannah Ross - Project Worker**

## Young Disabled Peoples Advice and Advocacy

Now in its fourth year of operation, GMCDP's Advice project has continued to offer support to increasing numbers of young (disabled) people in Manchester, many of whom are facing a broad range of austere hardship crisis, varying in nature and complexity.

Continuing its work with its partnership agencies- Manchester Mind and Centrepont, has enabled advice for young people to be well informed, quality led and accountable. Each organisation brings with it key strengths, knowledge and experiences which, when combined allows opportunities for Manchester's young people to gain access to an insightful accessible advice provision at a time of increased need.

GMCDP, as one of three agencies focuses its work on young disabled people to identify key areas of difficulty (financial hardship, housing, lack of/and inappropriate/ poor quality support). The project provides information, advice and supports the young (disabled) person through the complexities of the systems, provides input to tackle



hardship, in order to affect practical positive change, which alleviates hardship and improves the outcomes for young disabled people. It goes without saying that the challenges and difficulties faced by young disabled people and their families are increasingly harder to bear, and the need for support is crucial.

As part of the advice project's development the project has begun a process of review and rebranding in order that as a partnership we continue to reach and respond effectively to young people in Manchester who are either in crisis, or at risk of being in crisis. Over the next 12 months GMCDP anticipates supporting increased numbers of young (disabled) people from diverse communities with ranging experiences and backgrounds. GMCDP welcomes those young people who access the project for support to share experiences and knowledge, to get involved with GMCDP and campaign for change.

**Maureen Day - Advice/Advocacy Worker**

## Shaping our Inclusion Project

Year 3 for Shaping Our Inclusion was originally going to be our final year – but thanks to the good graces of our funders, Big Lottery, we have managed to secure another year on the project. The project will continue in a slightly different form from how it started.

The main aim for Shaping Our Inclusion was to put young disabled people at the heart of GMCDP. GMCDP has always felt that young disabled people have offered a lot to the organisation. It is also important that young disabled people are supported to get involved within the strategic decision making processes. There are people who have been members of the project who are now on our Executive Council.

We have also been running subgroups that feed directly into the Executive and are a great introduction to strategy and decision making processes. These subgroups are based around a theme that includes: membership, funding, communication, young disabled people and campaigning.



The project has continued to visit places in Greater Manchester where young disabled people meet to talk with them and look at the Social Model of Disability.

We have also met with many service providers throughout the borough and talked to them about how they can make their services more accessible – and the continuing feedback shows that it is being listened to and successfully implemented.

The last year extension will enable the subgroups to continue and to develop GMCDP's membership further.

**Brett Savage - Project Worker**

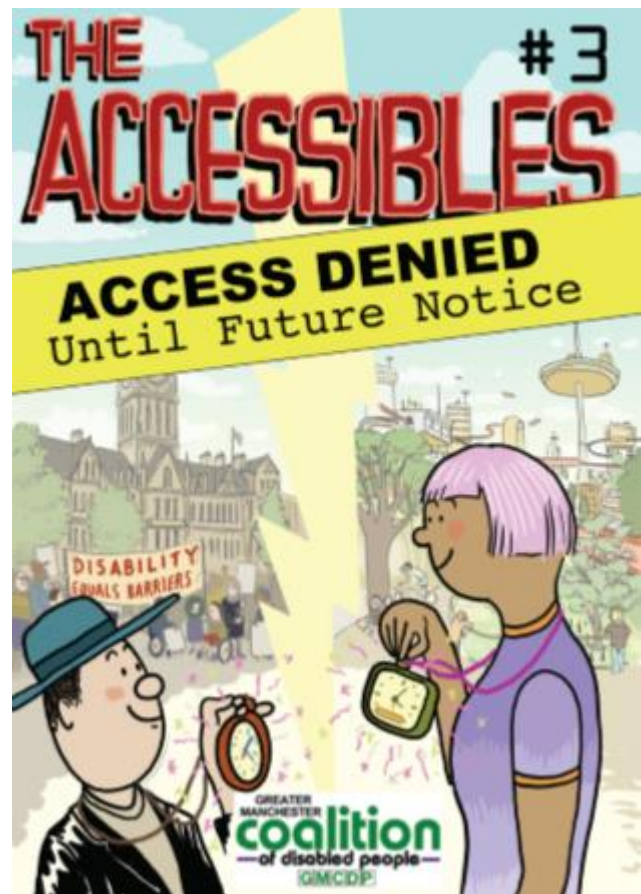
## Manchester Disabled Peoples Project

This year GMCDP, alongside many other organisations have been extremely busy with organising and taking part in a wide variety of user-led events. In particular, the Manchester Disabled Peoples Project has been achieving these aims by offering a wide selection of activities.

First, as a bit of continuation from last year, we have now finished The Accessibles 3 comic and it came out better than we imagined. Manchester City Council supplied extra funding to work alongside the local artist Jim Medway and 5 young disabled people in the Manchester borough. As many of our members, and the general public, find this comic book extremely

relatable; the extra funding means that we are now able to provide this free of charge within our general information packs and copies will be taken to each year's Annual General Meeting in December. Future plans will be to circulate this as widely as possible to raise awareness and understanding of disability equality issues, and stimulate discussion to focus on positive change.

Another major project was the screening the Defiant Lives film, which was located at the Anthony Burgess Centre. This event happened March 2018 and due to popular demand, it returned May 2018 as well. A lot was gained from this work in particular as not only did you as participants love it, it also gave us some valuable insight into how we organise future events. Once feedback was received we acknowledged that members do prefer large scale networking events so we will do our best to keep this in mind for any future collaborative events.



Cover of Accessibles issue 3

From this, we have also arranged some larger collaboration work with the pro-bono society at Manchester University Law School, in which, we aim to share information surrounding some of the legal issues disabled people may face and gain some valuable knowledge in return.

This project was a success last year and we are hoping to continue this new relationship to share our skills with other organisations in the Manchester borough.

Alongside all these major projects, Manchester Disabled Peoples Project has also been running some smaller workshop sessions called Get Life Savvy in which, we aim to educate Manchester residents about potential barriers they may face and how to overcome them. Two of our most popular and valued sessions were Disabled

peoples issues after Brexit in which, we got an impartial speaker to myth-bust the propaganda surrounding Brexit; and the other session, Local politics and disabled people in which we arranged a local councillor to speak to our members about what the



Members of the Project at the Archive Launch

council could do for an individual's own advocacy and inclusion needs. After this session had commenced we put together a hints and tips guide on how to lobby your local councillor, which was received extremely well and educated many on avenues they had not yet explored or even thought of.

Another major project we have been working on is the development of a podcast. We have been in collaboration with ALL FM to develop these ideas and create a safe space for us to talk about the social model of disability and the barriers we face because of this. We have found that editing, transcribing and producing the podcast was more time-consuming than initially thought so this is still an early phase idea but we know there is a lot of interest in this idea so we are hoping to pick back up where we left off in the next few months.

**Gemma Roberts – Project Worker, Manchester Disabled People (on behalf of Inga Reichelt)**

## GMCDPs contact details



Tel 0161 636 7534



[www.gmcdp.com](http://www.gmcdp.com)



Email: [info@gmcdp.com](mailto:info@gmcdp.com)



@gmcdp



[www.facebook.com/gmcdp/](http://www.facebook.com/gmcdp/)

Windrush Millennium Centre  
Unit 4, 70 Alexandra Road  
Moss Side, Manchester  
M16 7WD



Car park  
entrance



When you arrive at the Windrush Centre, enter the car park and turn left. Unit 4 is situated in the corner.

