

Greater Manchester Growing Older with Learning Disabilities



Our report What we did and what we found out



Our funders and partners





Introduction

GM GOLD stands for Greater Manchester Growing Older with Learning Disabilities.

The project ran from June 2018 to March 2020. This is a report of what we did.

Funding and support

The Project was funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and set up by Ambition for Ageing. Other groups took part:



- Manchester Metropolitan University



- Pathways Associates



- Future Directions



- SPICE



- My Life, My Way



- Manchester People First



What the project was for

The idea of the project was to talk to people who have a learning disability, who are over 50 years old and live in parts of Greater Manchester.

We wanted to find out what they think about the area they live in, and ask them:

- Do they feel part of their local community?
- Do they see people they like and do things they enjoy?
- What helps them do this, or stops them doing this?

Research Buddies

Research buddies got the funding and supported different parts of the project:



- Melanie Chapman – Project Lead
Manchester Metropolitan University



- Daniel Docherty – SPICE/Future Directions
and expert by experience



- Jenny Neville – SPICE, Future Directions



- Pauline Doyle – Pathways Associates



- Anna Fedeczko – Pathways Associates



- Sue Caton – Manchester Metropolitan University

- Andy Needle – Manchester People First





Co-Researchers

Our first job was to build a team of “Co-Researchers’ who would go out and talk to the older people with learning disabilities.

To do this we sent out information, put on an information day and visited groups such as self-advocacy groups, family groups and services for people with learning disabilities.

To be a Co-Researcher you had to have a learning disability, be over 50 years of age and live in Greater Manchester.

17 people joined us as Co-Researchers. They were:



• Winifred Sidebottom (Bolton)



• Christopher White (Bolton)



• Maisie Hardman (Bolton)



• Gwyn Jones (Bury)



• Stephen Owen (Bury)



• Richard Hughes (Manchester)



• Shirley Odell (Manchester)



• Delwyn Lord (Oldham)



• Frank Grenfell (Rochdale)



• Joyce Beard (Salford)



• Andrew Barber (Tameside)



• Michael Adams (Tameside)



• Carol Green (Tameside)



• John Hendrickson (Trafford)



• Pauline Hendrickson (Trafford)



• Alison Ratcliffe (Wigan)



• Carol Ratcliffe (Wigan)

People who also helped

Leon Rae, Eileen Bennett from Bolton New Openings
Ayse Aslan, Rachel Bonser and Monwara Begum



Team building

We held 6 workshops to get to know each other, build our confidence and learn about different ways of doing research.

After the workshops, we had a meeting every month.

We chose the questions we wanted to ask people.

We practiced interviewing ourselves to see what was the best way to ask the questions.



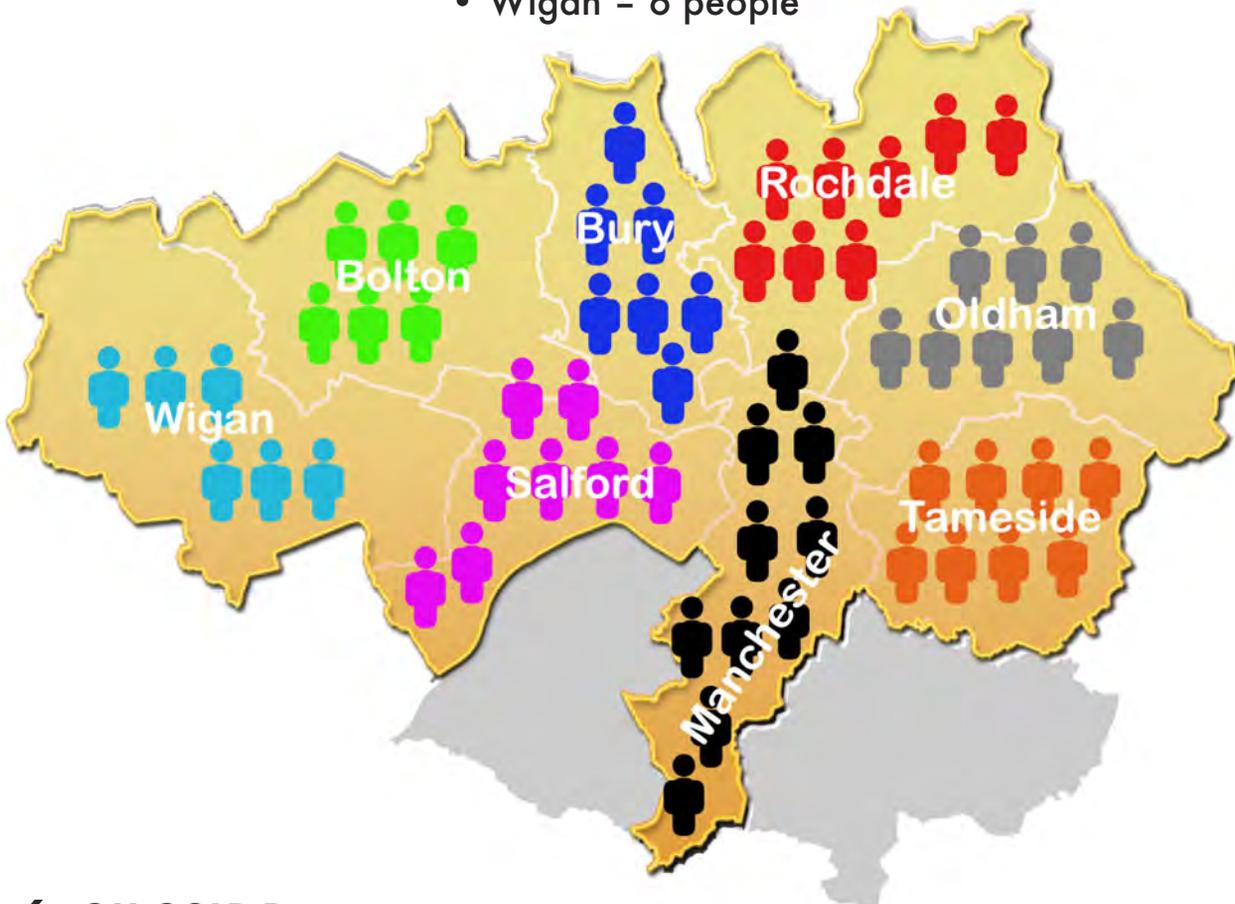


Meeting people

Then, we went out and met people on their own or in groups, asked our questions and wrote down what people said.

We met 59 people who were aged between 50 and 79 years old. They lived in these areas:

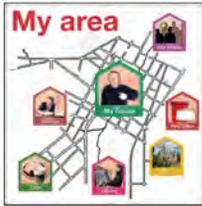
- Bolton – 6 people
- Bury – 7 people
- Manchester – 10 people
- Oldham – 8 people
- Rochdale – 8 people
- Salford – 6 people
- Tameside – 8 people
- Wigan – 6 people





What we found out

After we had asked everyone, we looked at what we thought were the most important things people had told us.



Things that make a place good to live in

- Things to do, places to go
- Friendly people, good neighbours
- Clean and quiet area
- Good public transport
- Feeling safe
- Living somewhere a long time helps people know the place and feel they belong there





Things that stop a place being a good place to live



- Nothing to do
- Being far away from friends
- Hard to get to or travel to other places
- Busy roads
- Litter
- Noisy neighbours, drunkenness
- Crime and Hate Crime

What people said were the most important things for them



Doing things and meeting people

Being able to do things and take part in activities with other people stops people being lonely.

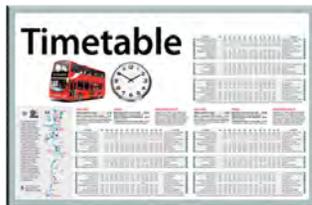
Sometimes lack of support, health, or family issues can make it hard for people to meet people and do things.



Transport

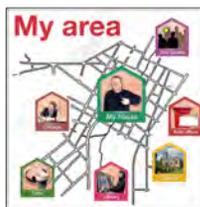
Transport is very important.

- Most people do not drive, so may need support to use public transport
- Bus stops can be hard to get to, timetables are not easy to understand
- Taxis can cost a lot. Some taxi drivers are not as helpful as others
- Ring and Ride type services are not always reliable



Feeling Safe

People told us they were worried about crime and do not feel safe when it gets dark. People are scared of being victims of hate crime.



Things that could help are:



- Knowing the local area
- Being with other people
- More police



- Personal security such as pocket alarms, window locks, door chains and intercom
- Phone with emergency numbers



- ID cards



Health and mobility

A lot of people who have a learning disability have health problems. Things can get worse as they grow older. They may find it harder to get out and about.



Growing older

Most people we talked to did not want to grow older.

- They did not like changes to their health and the way they looked.
- People often had to move home when their family got older or died.
- They missed friends and they did not have anyone to talk to about growing older.
- Missing parents was an important issue.



These things make it harder to go out and meet people.



Telling people what we found out

People and groups can do things to make life better for older people with a learning disability. So, we want to tell them what we found out.

We are doing this by:

- Making a video.
- Writing reports and articles.
- Going to meetings, Partnership Boards and self-advocacy groups.





- Going to events for older people, making sure they know what is important to older people with learning disabilities.
- Going on radio shows – We would love to go on TV.
- Running a workshop at the North West Regional Self-Advocates Conference in Blackpool.

What we think needs to happen

Growing older and health



- People with a learning disability need information about growing older and having a good life – People still have lots of friends and go out.
- They need to hear good things about growing older.



- People need support to talk about and remember family and friends who have died.
- Our team members could become 'GM Gold Champions' – They could talk and train people and services.

healthwatch



- People could join their local Healthwatch and help make services better.
- Services need to make sure older people get health checks.



- People should get free prescriptions and dental care from a younger age. Not everyone does.
- They may need advice on benefits.

Travel

Many older people with a learning disability need support to get around. This could be things such as:



- Travel training and money for support to travel need to be part of care and support plans and individual budgets
- More help at bus stations and tram stops
- Speaking timetables (like they have in Edinburgh)
- Announcements at each stop on buses (like they have in London)



- Show people how to use Apps such as CityMapper
- Training for taxi drivers
- Concessionary taxi fares for people who have problems using public transport



- Make Ring and Ride better – Easier to book, travelling further, arriving on time

Feeling safe



- More police who know how to help and know where people with a learning disability live
- More community policing
- Better street lighting and more CCTV
- Training about personal safety for people



Contact us

(GM GOLD)

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