

Impact Report 2022 - 2023



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Introduction

John Hannen, Chief Executive Officer



Impact reports are a good way to communicate to the outside world the change an organisation makes - but importantly it is also a chance for us to look back, take stock and reflect on our recent work.

This report shows how we have invested in communities, supported people to raise their voice and change policy, created new community projects and built new partnerships. We have brought funders together, conducted research shining a new light on community work, and supported public bodies to work with voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, large and small. This report highlights a wide variety of work, all focused on increasing economic and social inclusion. It's testament to the work of a dedicated and enthusiastic staff team that so much has been achieved in a short time.

When I look at this impact report, what is clear to me is that GMCVO is part of something bigger.

Importantly, the real impact is more than that generated by us directly, but it's in the work of everyone we have stood alongside, been helped by and supported. It's generated by those who have funded us and put faith in us. It's the impact of leadership organisations in Greater Manchester's VCSE sector who we work with to grow the influence of our sector. It's been generated by the GMCVO Board through the support and steer they give to the staff team. We are part of a community of organisations seeking to change Greater Manchester's economy and society.

We couldn't do this work alone and more importantly, we wouldn't want to. Ultimately, this report shows the change we have all made.

Thank you to all for making this possible.



Stitched Up took part in our 'Communities in Control' Week of Action

Our Mission

GMCVO will drive economic and social inclusion in Greater Manchester through effective collaborations and supporting other organisations to achieve their goals. We will support better decision making by increasing the accessibility and diversity of learning and insight.

Our Vision

- Greater Manchester communities will have accessible spaces to connect.
- Greater Manchester community activity is adequately financed.
- Greater Manchester leaders will understand inequalities and the operating environment in Greater Manchester.
- We will embed new approaches through testing, learning and sharing.



One of our investees, Invisible Cities, delivering a tour in Manchester

INVESTMENTS

We believe that all people who lead social enterprises, trading charities, community benefit societies and cooperatives in Greater Manchester should have access to affordable financial products and services to help create a more inclusive economy. As such, offering accessible [social investment](#) is a priority growth area for us.

We started our first investment fund - Access to Growth - in 2017 through funding from Access the Foundation for Social Investment, The National Lottery Community Fund and Big Society Capital. In 2022 we launched GM Local Access Ltd, a £6.2 million fund aimed at improving the social economy in four boroughs across Greater Manchester.

Since 2017 we have provided social investment of over **£4.9million** into the Greater Manchester social economy.

Our current loan portfolio stands at over **£2.6 million** and we have funds available for a further **£9.25 million** including our latest £4 million Greater Manchester-wide fund launching Summer 2023.



In 2022/23 we invested **£647,561** to **6** organisations with an additional grant element of **£37,439**

These organisations are based in **Bolton, Oldham, Stockport and Wigan**, each with between **0 - 8 full-time employees**.



We supported **7** community groups to set up Community Benefit Societies. They now have over **167 community members** and can access the Resonance Community Developers fund

We supported **8** Community Benefit Societies to access **£495,000 in feasibility loan funding** and **£85,000 in land acquisition funding** to develop community-led housing or sports facilities across 4 Greater Manchester areas



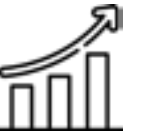
We supported **3** social enterprises to develop and occupy disused railway station buildings in Trafford, Altrincham and Heaton Chapel through **Action Stations**, a partnership with Northern Rail, Network Rail, LCR and TfGM.

We continue to support our **74 investments** to ensure they are able to grow sustainably and deliver maximum impact in relation to their mission.



Since receiving investment, **84%** of investees surveyed note an increase in their organisation's resilience

Since receiving investment, **94%** of investees surveyed have seen an increase in their overall social impact. **56%** have seen a substantial increase

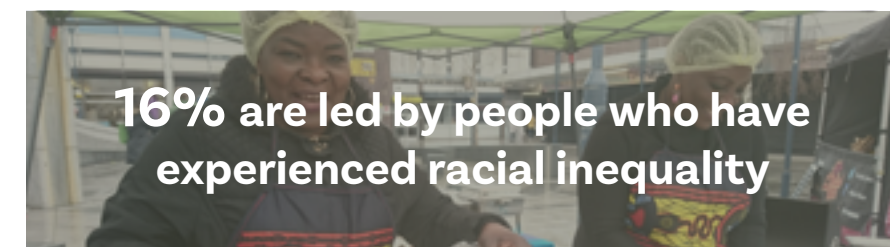
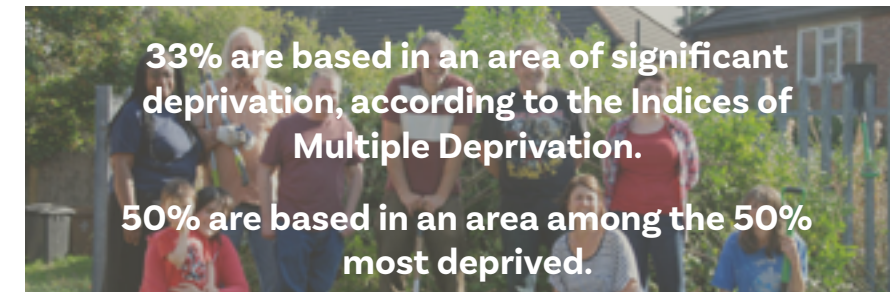


98% of investees surveyed would recommend social investment from GMCVO to other organisations

We ran **26 workshops** to support organisations trading for a social purpose. **253 attendees** learnt more about funding community buildings, business planning, social impact, marketing, finance, social investment, diversifying income, enabling them to become better able to access social investment



Of the investments made between April 2022 and March 2023:



POLICY



GMCVO and members of our management team sit on **27 boards and committees across Greater Manchester**, using our connections, experience and skills in the VCSE sector to drive economic and social inclusion in the city region.



We worked with GM Cancer and a steering group of VCSE organisations to create [a comprehensive resource](#) for the cancer system to help tackle Inequalities in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care. Its recommendations are now central to GM Cancer’s tackling inequalities strategy, and a VCSE strategic lead has been recruited to continue work with the VCSE organisations.

We worked with GMCA to promote its foundational economy fund to the VCSE sector, [publishing a blog](#) and hosting an information session for the sector. Almost **50% of the successful applicants are VCSE organisations**, representing a **£190,000 investment in the sector**, with the potential for more to follow. This funding will develop the sector’s role in the foundational economy, which employs 42% of workers in Greater Manchester.



GM Equality Alliance’s language subgroup has continued to produce [inclusive language guidance](#) to help us and others avoid insensitive language and ensure consistent, respectful communications when referring to groups. Organisations as far away as Scotland have requested permission to incorporate our advice into their materials and resources uploaded to our website continues to be accessed.

Case Study

In July 2022, GM Equality Alliance wrote an open letter to the heads of Greater Manchester Police (GMP), the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the GM Police and Crime Commissioner to raise concerns about the Government’s new trespass laws, which threaten to criminalise nomadic members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. We secured a commitment by

GMP and the CPS to appoint relevant Single Point of Contact officers, and improved the wording of GMP’s Policy and Procedure on Unauthorised Encampments, including the inclusion of recommendations to use the best practice ‘negotiated stopping’ approach. It also prompted the GMCA Community Safety Partnership to develop policy on ‘stopping places’ to share with GM local authorities. GM Equality Alliance is following this up to ensure all ten localities embrace it.



An event at MUD Kitchen as part of the ‘Communities in Control’ Week of Action

Case Study

As part of our work in championing, evidencing and developing the VCSE sector’s role in creating an inclusive economy, we have published a series of blogs and the first chapter of [a portfolio of good practice, focused on community ownership](#). These publications help to demystify the concept of an ‘inclusive economy’ and help VCSE organisations

understand how they contribute to creating it, encouraging them to think about their economic as well as social impact.

For policy makers and funders, the portfolio describes the role the VCSE sector plays in the economy and how their work contributes to the GM Strategy vision of a ‘greener, fairer, more prosperous’ city-region.

Case Study

Following recommendations from GMCA’s Co-operative Commission report in January 2020, GMCVO collaborated with some of the commissioners involved in the report and other stakeholders to co-found the Innovation Coop.

and resources to come together to create innovation, grow new businesses and provide mutual support.

It will seek to build inclusive economies and community wealth by establishing and nurturing a cooperative culture across sectors – a culture that generates impactful social enterprises, cooperatives, small and medium (SME) sized start-ups and scale-outs that focus on people and planet.

This cooperative will take a new approach to solving today’s problems, providing shared, trusted spaces for people, organisations, ideas

GRANTS

We specialise in distributing grants to small organisations who support low income and marginalised communities.



£353,822.80 of grants were distributed to **111** Greater Manchester organisations

Grants were distributed as part of **9 grant programmes** to support mental health and wellbeing as well as disability and deaf inclusion.



We hosted Communities in Practice meetings for **36** of our granted funded organisations (across 3 funds) to share learning, provide peer support, develop new ideas and elicit general feedback.

RESEARCH

Often, formal research treats the VCSE sector as a mechanism to reach people. We look at the relationships between organisations and their communities and how different types of organisations have different types of impact.

We host the **Greater Manchester Third Sector Research Network** for those conducting research within the VCSE sector. We provide a space for members to share ideas and experiences to learn, support and network.

The **269 members** include staff and volunteers from within the VCSE sector, academics, and independent researchers.

We held **6 research-related events** which attracted **76 attendees**.

Our researcher obtained a PhD for her investigation of the role of community-based organisations in the facilitation of social capital. Findings have been shared at two major academic conferences and insights will inform our work going forward.

We led a partnership of Research Network members to deliver a one-day event on 'Learning from Failure'. By creating a safe space for honest discussions, the event helped to embed conversations about failure in everyday VCSE work among the **36 attendees** representing VCSE organisations.

Case Study

We facilitated focus groups with VCSE organisations across Greater Manchester who support older people to find out about their current work, priorities and future plans, and to gather feedback on the Greater Manchester Age-friendly Strategy. The discussions focussed on topics such as funding, preventative planning versus crisis planning, cost of living crisis, digital technology, changes to health infrastructure and the impact of Covid-19. We also conducted desk research and used data collected as part of the Ambition for Ageing programme to understand who is working to support older people in Greater Manchester.

The report and recommendations from this work will feed into the GM Ageing Hub strategy refresh this year.

Case Study

We commissioned community-based organisations to conduct focus groups across Greater Manchester to find out if findings of the Big Alcohol Conversation conducted in 2019 still resonated with participants, and whether anything had changed in the wake of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The focus group participants were from population groups that are disproportionately affected by alcohol.

The results of this research work are being fed into the GM Drug and Alcohol Transformation board to inform the new Drug and Alcohol Strategy Action Plan, and are also informing the Alcohol Harm priorities in the GM Integrated Care Board (ICB) Joint Forward Plan.

Case Study

Our track record in high-quality applied research has generated demand for our services.

In Spring 2022 we were invited to join the project ['The role of communities and connections in social welfare legal advice'](#) as a co-investigator. The project was looking for an experienced researcher with the right community connections in Greater Manchester and approached us because of favourable recommendations from our work on the ESRC-funded Jam and Justice project.

We have also been sought out for our expertise in conducting research in and with communities. We delivered a workshop at the University of Manchester's annual Methods Fair – a popular event that aims to showcase different research methods to an audience of postgraduate research students.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The [Greater Manchester Funders Forum](#), facilitated by GMCVO, brings together independent grant makers, social investors and public sector funders to share intelligence, perspectives and understanding of the needs of the communities of Greater Manchester.

There are **125 active members** who are able to coordinate programmes, align plans and together create more strategic impact.

We held **3 events** with **52 attendees** that brought funders together to explore important topics such as inclusive grant-making.

We also facilitated a funder collaboration group that brought together **14 partners** to focus on ways to work collaboratively to tackle inequality.

"We joined the Greater Manchester Funders Forum Collaboration group as we were interested to know how other funders approached grant making and were keen to connect with funders to share learning and best practice.

We've gained a lot from our involvement in the group. It has provided a good networking opportunity and enabled us all to have the space and time to build trusting relationships which has enabled honest and open discussions. We have shared information, discussed and learnt about each other's approaches and perspectives to grant making and has lead us to review our own application criteria, due diligence and processes again.

Perhaps most importantly, it has provided us with the opportunity to work collaboratively with other funders to look at how we can continue to reduce the barriers that prevent many small and grass roots organisations from accessing funding and also help to create the conditions to encourage collaboration amongst these groups."

- Peter Yarwood, Grants Co-ordinator, The Charity Service (GM Funders Forum member)



With learning from our **7-year partnership programme, Ambition for Ageing** that invested over £2 million into over 1,500 small projects, we developed a **Good Practice Guide to delivering microfunding** to share how to embed our approach in an inclusive way, encompassing co-production and wraparound support to local community groups and organisations.

Launched in April 2022, we host the **Local Access Programme** that brings together **4 lead partners** and **14 local entrepreneurs** to deliver free-to-access business support, networking and training that enables social businesses to access investment that will help them grow their social impact.



Local Access Programme partners



"Our volunteer helped pull me out of a dark place and I cannot thank her enough for that."

Following the success of the GM Integrated Care funded **Mental Health Surge** programme in 2021/22, we brought together **9 groups in Wigan and Bolton** to work collaboratively to develop perinatal mental health and wellbeing support. This work attracted a further **£140,000** in funding and supported over **800 families**.

"My mental health hasn't been good since lockdown, being pregnant and giving birth then was hard. Coming here has really helped."

We worked with **3 VCSE Mental Health providers** to train **5 staff** to become **Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners** who will offer psychological therapies to communities experiencing racial inequality, LGBTQ+ communities and people with learning difficulties and autism

"The support of GMCVO throughout this was process was invaluable, from helping us interviewing potential students, to liaising with the university to overcome challenges with the students observing clinical intervention at existing 'Improving Access to Psychological Therapies' (IAPT) providers"

- Kristian Wraxhall, Pure Innovations

Greater Manchester's Hidden Talent was a youth employment programme working with young people aged 16-24 not in employment, education or training. GMCVO led the programme which took place in the first half of 2022.

The programme brought together **8 locality based organisations** who hosted Talent Coaches to work holistically with young people and two further partners that supported the wider programme

The programme supported **142 young people**; **55** entered education or training; **40** gained employment; **10** gained a qualification; and **over 115** were supported to job search.

Many young people had characteristics and circumstances associated with major barriers to education, employment, and training. Notably, on self-disclosure, **30%** declared they were neurodiverse, **27%** had a mental health condition and **17%** had experienced homelessness.

Case Study

When Wahida joined the programme in January 2022, she was living in supported housing and was unable to find work. She had been going through a difficult period in her life, struggling with housing, drug abuse and mental health issues.

Through the programme Wahida was supported to undertake a volunteer placement to develop her skills and was put in touch with a local housing support service who helped her move into her own flat. Feeling significantly more confident and secure, Wahida felt she was able to seek work, and with further employment support from the programme, was able to secure a position as a support worker in a residential home.

ORGANISATIONAL



We provide meeting and conference space in our social enterprise, **St Thomas Centre**, and pride ourselves on ensuring the venue is inclusive and accessible.

“Lovely venue, great to have a gender neutral bathroom”

“Nice extra space for wheelchairs, easy to get around and nice to have egg free sweet treats”



We have **5,947 subscribers** to our eBulletins, across **5 regular bulletins** to a range of Greater Manchester based equalities organisations, organisations led by and/or supporting people experiencing racial inequality, social enterprises, organisations and academics involved in research and the wider VCSE sector.

People with caring responsibilities, both young and old, face significant challenges in gaining and maintaining work. Through our own projects we have researched this issue and supported many organisations to adapt their service approaches. Building on this in our own work we offer flexible working to our employees built around their needs and availability. We have also reviewed and improved our approaches to maternity pay, dependents leave and bereavement leave. We strive to be a carer friendly employer.



We became members of the Diversity Forum in December 2022 and signed the diversity manifesto, reflecting our ongoing commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging throughout GMCVO. We are working with the Diversity Forum to embed these within GMCVO and improve all systems, processes and policies.

On average our female staff earn **14% more** than our male staff

On average staff of an ethnicity that experiences racial inequality earn **14% less** than the overall average salary**

71% of our staff identify as female and **29%** identify as male*

21% identify as LGBTQ+*

13% are of an ethnicity that experiences racial inequality*

42% are neuro-diverse, have a disability or long term physical or mental health condition*

29% work reduced hours by choice*

42% have caring responsibilities*

46% are aged 50+*

*Based on an anonymous survey which 83% of our staff responded to

**Our staff are paid equally according to their role and responsibilities. This figure reflects the need to increase diversity in regard to ethnicity in our management team, an issue we are working to address.

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