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**PRESS RELEASE:**

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## **Greater Manchester Youth Network expand support for 500 more young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

Over the next twelve months [Greater Manchester Youth Network](#) (GMYN) is going to provide opportunities for more than 500 disabled and neurodivergent young people.

GMYN has been supporting young people facing various disadvantages since its inception. In more recent years the charity has started to develop and expand their offer for young people with special educational need and disabilities (SEND).

This expansion has been as a result of recognising the significant barriers that disabled young people are facing. For example, on a typical Saturday, young people with a learning disability describe spending on average only one hour outside of their home.

GMYN seeks to expand the horizons of disabled and neurodivergent young people, to support them in accessing opportunities, and to empower them to drive change for themselves and for others.

One of these programmes is the SEND Local Offer Social Action, which will support disabled and neurodivergent young people aged 11-20 to take part in social action.

Young people will be able to access support on a rolling basis, enabling them to lead positive change in their communities as and when they need it most. GMYN anticipates being able to enable over 300 young people in Manchester to experience social action through this programme, which it hopes will go some way in tackling the discrimination and mistreatment that over half of disabled people in the UK report experiencing.

The other new programme is the MCR Buddies, an innovative partnership programme supporting disabled young people aged 16-25 to access all that Manchester has to offer. With one in three disabled people in the UK describing themselves as often having difficulty in accessing public spaces, this will provide a fantastic means by which young people can be supported to engage with their community in a positive and meaningful way.

Working across Manchester's vibrant arts, culture, sports and voluntary sectors, the partnership will develop a Manchester-focussed programme where peer-aged volunteers will support and empower disabled young people to access and meaningfully participate in diverse activities in the city. This programme is aiming to support 200 young people with SEND who will have access to regular activities.

Alongside these new programmes, GMYN will grow their Travel Training support programme, enabling more young people to access public transport to get to their desired location and access social provision.

Only one in four respondents to the Greater Manchester Big Disability Survey 2022 said that they were able to travel to everywhere they wanted to go, so for young disabled people in Manchester who rely on public transport, this programme could be life-changing.

GMYN will also provide more youth voice opportunities. Through their SEND Changemakers programme they will support more young people to have an active voice in their community and make positive change for themselves and other young people. The group won 'Most Effective Youth Voice Group' at the Manchester Youth Buzz Awards this year, and are excited to continue to develop and expand the work that they are doing across the city.

Alex Fairweather, CEO and Founder of GMYN, says: "This is an exciting time for GMYN, and we are really pleased to be able to offer such support and experiences for young people that need it. We look forward to seeing what these groups of young people get up to and the change we're able to help them make."

If you'd like more information about the programmes that GMYN offers young people across Greater Manchester, please see more information [here](#).

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**About GMYN:**

At Greater Manchester Youth Network (GMYN), our vision is #YoungPeopleCan and we help young people in Greater Manchester overcome this. We deliver a range of development programmes and drop-in activities to help young people transition to adulthood feeling skilled, supported and positive. Founded in 2007 by our Chief Executive, Alex Fairweather, we have grown from a single volunteering project to a registered charity and have helped over 11,000 young people.