



**GREATER
MANCHESTER
YOUTH
NETWORK**

#YoungPeopleCan

Strategic Plan 2024-2027



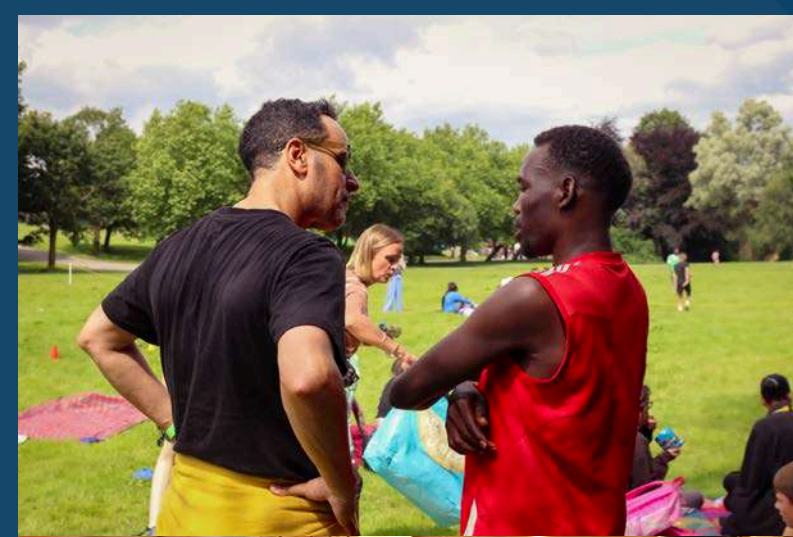
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Liam McDaid-Jones
Chair

As the newly appointed Chair of GMYN, I am delighted to present our ambitious three-year strategy, marking the next phase of our charity's growth and impact. For the past 17 years, Greater Manchester Youth Network has positively influenced the lives of over 11,000 young people across Greater Manchester. This strategy outlines our goals to reach even more individuals aged 10-25, guiding them towards adulthood.

GMYN is more than just a charity; we inspire and uplift young people to help them achieve their potential. We provide vital support and resources to help them thrive, even in the most challenging circumstances. Our unwavering commitment to fostering growth, resilience, and a deep sense of purpose is at the core of our mission, creating a nurturing environment for all.

This strategy has been developed with young people at its heart, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are met. All stakeholders have had the opportunity to contribute, embedding our values and vision, encapsulated in, '#YoungPeopleCan'.

As a board, our responsibility is to ensure that this strategy is brought to life, allowing young people across Greater Manchester benefit from the programmes, support and opportunities we offer.

Proudly part of #TeamGMYN



Alex Fairweather - CEO

It's always heartwarming to see all the hard work and impact GMYN has made since our last strategy. The charity has grown and the volume of young people we support has grown too. GMYN is needed now more than ever, and it is with great pride that we launch this new strategic plan to show what further impact we want to make. It shows our ambition, our dedication and a real passion for making sure young people have every chance to succeed.

This new strategy has been produced with input from staff, trustees, stakeholders and, most importantly as always, our young people. It shows how much passion and drive our team has. It will give us clear direction and will continue to ensure that we are youth led, allowing young people's voices to be heard and acted upon.

I want to thank everyone who has contributed to this new strategy. We really appreciate all the support and valuable insight from all our stakeholders. We cannot do what we do and make the difference we make without the dedication and support from all our funders, partners and friends.

I continue to be proud to be part of #TeamGMYN. **1.**

About us

For many young people, moving towards a positive future isn't easy. GMYN believes all young people deserve access to positive experiences.

GMYN supports young people aged 10-25 across Greater Manchester by offering innovative and exciting opportunities they may not be able to access elsewhere.

At Greater Manchester Youth Network (GMYN), our vision is **#YoungPeopleCan.**

Our mission is to enable young people to have a positive impact on their own lives and the wider community.



What we do

Our key focus is supporting young people who face particular challenges, including:

- Care leavers and cared for young people.
- Young people with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Disabled and neurodiverse young people.
- Young refugees and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- Young people who are not ready for work.

Our developmental programmes and drop-in activities help young people to:

- Improve their wellbeing.
- Strengthen their social connections.
- Develop new skills.
- Boost their contribution to their communities.
- Increase their confidence.



At GMYN, **inclusivity**, **empathy**, and being **youth friendly** is the lens in which we operate. We want to go above and beyond and feel that our values demonstrate this:

Our values

We have **compassion**, creating a supportive and nurturing environment where everyone part of GMYN can thrive and feel valued.

Fun is at the heart of GMYN, making every experience enjoyable and engaging.

Throughout GMYN, **creativity** shapes everything we do, ensuring innovative programmes and inclusive activities that engage and inspire.

With **courage** at our core, GMYN strives to create transformative change, fearlessly innovating and advocating for young people.

Continuous **learning** is core to what we do ensuring we reflect, adapt, and evolve to better meet the needs of the young people we support



Our strengths as an organisation



- We are a positive and collaborative organisation, always looking to work with others and share our ideas and delivery models.
- We have a strong reputation for being a dynamic and exciting charity, praised by young people, families, communities and partners.
- We have a dedicated and passionate work force, who all bring a mix of backgrounds, experiences and skills.
- We provide autonomy for our delivery team, enabling them to bring their own skills and experiences to provide a diverse delivery offer for young people.
- We always aim to provide a positive working environment for our staff, investing in promoting wellbeing and being open to new ideas.

The strengths of our delivery

- We provide a long-term approach, focussing on specific provision for young people when needed, rather than high volume.
- We have a young person centred approach, to ensure we tackle all barriers to engagement and achievement.
- Our programmes are flexible, allowing young people to dip in and dip out when they choose, providing better accessibility and meeting the needs of our beneficiaries.
- We provide a springboard to other opportunities, allowing young people to access other support and progression routes when they need it.
- The variety of our delivery programmes allows us to self-refer our young people to our different support offers, providing a more intersectional approach.
- Our approach and variety of support offers allows a young person to be connected to not just a single youth worker, but to the whole charity.



What we deliver



Our young person-centred approach provides a flexible support offer so young people can opt to participate when needed. Young people receive tailored support to meet their short and long-term needs.

We embed ourselves in local communities and work alongside the local authority, social workers, carers, partner organisations and schools to ensure cohesive, joined-up support.

We bridge a gap between young people and where they should be. This is through helping them build key life skills, increasing their confidence, improving their mental health and wellbeing and building a support network. Once these essential foundations are in place, young people have greater stability and can start to look to the future.

How do we do it?

We ask each young person what it is they want to do!

They choose their activities and what they want to get involved in. This means we can be flexible, youth-led and responsive.

GMYN delivers various programmes and services which provide many different supportive offers. Our development and drop-in activities include:

- Independent life skills workshops (cooking, budgeting, team building, travel training, social skills).
- Wellbeing / mental health activities (walking, gardening, volunteering, arts & crafts, sport, social activities).
- Work readiness sessions (CV writing, interviewing, work experience).
- Social action and volunteering, connecting young people with platforms to have a say and influence decisions on issues that matter to them.
- One-to-one support to meet the needs of individuals by exploring issues and barriers, providing individualised emotional support and setting goals to work towards.

Theory of Change

Context

Many young people find that moving towards a positive future isn't easy.

Early adverse experiences often leave young people with limited support networks and contribute to poor mental health and low aspirations.

GMYN believes all young people deserve access to positive experiences.

Our innovative services offer exciting opportunities and support that young people are not able to access elsewhere.

Beneficiaries

GMYN supports young people primarily aged 10-25 from across Greater Manchester.

A lot of our work focuses on young people who face particular challenges, including:

Cared for young people and care leavers.

Young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Needs.

Disabled and neurodiverse young people.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) & new arrivals.

Young people who are not work ready or need extra support to secure employment.

Approach

Supporting Youth Voice

Young people can influence change within our organisation and more widely on the issues that matter to them.

Community

We see young people as important, influential parts of their communities. We also work collaboratively developing local community approaches with partners.

Strengths

We focus on the positives that young people can contribute and develop.

Flexibility & Responsiveness

We support young people to achieve through empathetic, flexible, inclusive support.

Creativity & Tailored Support

We adapt to strengths and needs of young people.

Support

Social, Relationship Building Activities

Emotional Wellbeing Support

Independent Life Skills Development

Employment, Education, Training Support

Volunteering Opportunities

1:1 Support

Social Action Projects

Creating Youth Platforms for young people to influence services, co-design work and lead projects.

Access to experiences that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Outcomes

Improving their wellbeing

Strengthening their social connections

Developing new skills

Boosting their contribution to their communities

Increasing their confidence



Goal: Young people are safe, heard and capable of great things.

Our plans going forward

Since GMYN first started in 2007, we have supported over 15,000 young people and now deliver over 25 unique programmes across Greater Manchester.

GMYN has seen growth over the past few years, and we are immensely proud that the charity has developed from a small idea with some excited and willing volunteers to what it is now. We have made some great friends and gained new supporters along the way. We are excited to see what the future brings.

We know we need to develop, prepare and be ready for what the next three years holds for GMYN. All young people should have equal access to high-quality youth provision and we know that this is currently not the case. We want to ensure that we are well-placed and well resourced to deliver youth work that is responsive, inclusive, and has a real, lasting impact. This new strategy sets out how we are going to strive to get there.

GMYN's ambition for 2024-2027

Over the next three years, GMYN's strategic focus is to apply all of our experience and expertise to continue adapting to meet the changing needs of the young people we support. We want to make sure our values remain central to everything we do by increasing opportunities for young people to take part in decision-making, have a voice and the ability to influence both GMYN as a charity and external decision makers.

We want to continue building on our passionate team, our processes, our reputation and diversify our income generating abilities. Wellbeing remains a main focus for us and we will always try to improve our offer to our young people, staff, partners and volunteers.

Partnership is key to GMYN and over the next three years we want to be an even better organisation to work with. We want to share our knowledge and help other groups make their own impact. We are well placed to do this and we have the passion and drive to provide more leadership and support.

We have ambition but we believe we can do this with the team and drive we have. We have already made a big impact and we know we can do much more. Our new objectives over the following pages set out what we want to achieve and how we will know we have succeeded.



Programmes & Services



"GMYN have helped my mental health... I feel happy. GMYN is something to look forward to every week. I want to keep coming to GMYN to improve my life skills"

“ GMYN will continue to evolve and develop its delivery to ensure young people are safe, heard, and capable of great things. Our previous pilot programmes for younger children, and young people with disabilities has proven we can expand our support and core offers. ”

We will

- Increase our offer for younger children, with a focus on 10 years upwards, providing support at crucial points in children's lives.
- Create opportunities for older young adults who are aging out of GMYN and are too old for our support. These could include volunteer placements/work placements.
- Focus on key transition points in young people's lives such as aged 10/11, 16-18 (i.e. school transitions) 21 (for CEYP that may be losing a statutory service)
- Increase our support for preparing young people to be 'world ready' providing life skills for independent living.
- Increase our specialist support for young people struggling with their health and wellbeing and mental health.

Key success measures

- By 2027 GMYN will have a defined core offer for all young people aged 10-25. Detailing entrance and exit plans as well as key transition points.
- By 2027 GMYN's programmes will be linked to local and national health and wellbeing outcomes such as the use of social prescribing and mental health support.
- GMYN will have additional specialist support to support young people as well as the rest of the team, e.g. counsellors/in house mental health support. Staff member with specialist role.
- GMYN will have new opportunities for young people aged 25 plus, to still be involved with GMYN and participate/support in different roles.



"GMYN allow us to make decisions and, hence, give us the ability to believe in ourselves"

“

Learning from our previous successes we will continue to build upon our existing Youth Voice work and continue to promote the key message that **#YoungPeopleCan.**

”

We will

- Develop new platforms and opportunities to ensure young people can evaluate GMYN's core programmes/services.
- Ensure that every designed GMYN youth programme has involvement from young people in line with the Lundy model of participation.
- Ensure that young people are involved with all recruitment at GMYN including staff and trustees by creating accessible and meaningful opportunities for influence and decision making.
- Continue to regularly collect and act on feedback from young people, piloting new and innovative methods to capture youth voice.
- Provide opportunities for young people to directly influence decision makers and make change.

Key success measures

- GMYN will deliver an annual peer evaluation of programmes and services designed and led by young people.
- GMYN's recruitment processes will involve young people as equals, making key decisions and adapting our processes.
- All of GMYN programmes will be co-designed with young people's input and involve young people as evaluators.
- GMYN's young people will directly change policy and practice, improving provision and support across GM.
- GMYN will have direct quotes and messaging from our young people in our communications, showcasing the impact the charity has made.

Influence



"GMYN's support has been amazing, not just to help me get work but also to get employers to listen to us and make changes. More of this has to happen!"

“ GMYN will continue to develop its strategic role in the youth sector, providing leadership and support to the wider sector. We will help create new opportunities for learning, sharing of information and enabling other youth organisations to collaborate. **”**

We will

- Develop and grow the Youth Alliance Greater Manchester, playing a key role in leading on driving the agenda for change in GM and responding collectively to the challenges faced by young people and the sector.
- Develop and grow our training offer, providing opportunities for learning and sharing good practice.
- Raise the profile of youth work to ensure it is acknowledged and appreciated as a key driver for enabling and supporting young people.
- Continue to seek out new opportunities for collaboration and sharing of skills, knowledge and experience in order to better deliver as a collective youth sector.

Key success measures

- By 2027, the Youth Alliance Greater Manchester will become an established partnership of organisations, able to respond to opportunities and create new approaches.
- By 2027, GMYN's training offer becomes a high-quality and sought after package of support, generating income and meeting the needs of the sector.
- By 2027, GMYN's presence and reputation will grow to cement our role as a leadership charity in the youth sector.

Social Value



"GMYN gives us the power to change things. It is extremely important that our opinions are heard"



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GMYN must ensure that social value is prioritised over the next three years, in order to focus on our environmental impact and protect our future beneficiaries.

”

We will use the Social Action Framework to identify key areas where we can make changes and improvements as an organisation, and how we deliver our programmes and services. We want this to be genuine and create realistic goals that fit with GMYN's ethos and values.

We will

- Support Local Economic Growth: purchasing through local and ethical supply chains where possible with a focus on SMEs and VCSE groups.
- Invest in our staff team: enabling staff to give back to their communities, feel fulfilled and develop personally & professionally.
- Provide more opportunities for young people to engage in environmental social action projects
- Provide more opportunities for beneficiaries to learn about social value and how they can make change.

Key success measures

- GMYN will complete an annual ethical audit, detailing our green spend and environmental focused activities, providing insight to improve our approach.
- GMYN staff will provide 50% of their volunteering time to focus on social value and will have a better understanding of the charities aims for improving our environmental impact.
- By 2025 GMYN will have a "Green Champion" who leads on developing our social values and identifies new ways for the charity to improve its business operations.
- By 2027, GMYN will have reduced our Carbon Footprint: reducing our impact on the environment within our business operations.



"GMYN brings meaning to my week"

“ GMYN will continue to develop and embed an inclusive culture throughout the charity, ensuring a welcoming environment for all young people and all those who work or volunteer at GMYN, or wish to join **#TeamGMYN**. ”

We will

- Champion Equity and Diversity: contributing to Greater Manchester being a place where people from all cultures, identities and experiences can thrive.
- Develop an EDI youth focus groups that bring intersectional young people from diverse backgrounds together with a focus on raising awareness and championing the voice of underrepresented young people.
- Maximise opportunities to attract, develop, support, and retain diverse representation across all job levels within our workforce.
- Provide ongoing training and development opportunities on topics related to equity, diversity, and inclusion, empowering #TeamGMYN to deepen their understanding and challenge biases.

Key success measures

- By 2026 GMYN will complete an EDI audit and development plan with set targets for monitoring and reviewing our inclusivity.
- By 2026 GMYN will have increased representation within the team to better match the communities we are supporting.
- By 2026, GMYN will have launched our EDI Youth Focus Group as well as an action plan for identified campaigns and projects.
- GMYN's salesforce system will enable us to review and monitor demographics of young people and target underrepresented groups that aren't accessing our services.



"I speak to new people. I go outside with GMYN.
I am proud that I am now confident in myself"



“ GMYN will continue to look at various methods to generate income and sustain our delivery of programmes and services. As the charity's income now exceeds £1 million, we must prepare for new opportunities and adapt to an ever changing funding environment. ”

We will

- Increase our supporter base and create new partnerships with businesses, philanthropists and donors.
- Increase our unrestricted reserves to at least six months operating costs to enable us to sustain our support and delivery for young people.
- Improve our systems to ensure the charity is managing and spending its funds more efficiently and effectively, in line with our social value plan.
- Continue to look at ways of decreasing our dependence on grant income and fund our delivery via other income streams such as donations, local authorities purchasing and trading.
- Review GMYN's location and place based delivery model to determine the correct choice as to where we should have our physical bases.

Key success measures

- By 2027, GMYN will have maintained a minimum of six months of expenditure of unrestricted reserves to ensure the continuation of our core delivery services and to enable investment in further development.
- Increase in donors / partners to bring in over 50% of GMYN's income by 2027.
- GMYN will increase the number of corporate partners providing CSR support by 50% by 2027.
- By 2027, GMYN will have met our social value goals and has budgeted/spent income in line with "green" objectives.

"GMYN has turned my life around. If it weren't for them, I don't know where I'd be right now – they are like my family"

“

GMYN will continue to invest in measuring and demonstrating our impact. We will showcase to existing and new supporters that the work we do and the support we offer is vital and transformative.

”



We will

- Demonstrate qualitative and quantifiable evidence for the need of our work and the transformative impact it has on young people.
- Share and celebrate our success, showcasing that #YoungPeopleCan via various platforms such as events, press, social media and youth voice.
- Promote our role as a leading youth charity, not just delivering vital youth services but also supporting the wider sector.
- Increase our supporter base by regularly communicating our stories and impact, giving the opportunity for stakeholders to feel a more personal connection with GMYN.




Key success measures

- GMYN will deliver monthly stakeholder updates via newsletters and press releases that allows us to engage with our supporters.
- GMYN will have increased presence in media including regular updates and stories in newspapers, radio and tv.
- We will produce an annual GMYN impact report evidencing our support and the achievements of young people, disseminating this to new and existing stakeholders.
- GMYN staff will have ownership and pride over the work they do for young people, seeing the impact their work has.



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