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GM Place Partnership: 2025 reflections



Bolton annual reflections

2025 focus

Developed resources to help the workforce in Bolton adopt an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach.

Supported Adult Social Care to create a new framework for co-production, highlighting good practice through local voices and lived experience from Place Partnership approach.

Shaped the new local leisure contract, embedding ABCD principles into the retendering process ensuring community voice is embedded in procurement and contract for new providers.

What next

Advance the place Theory of Change and use Ripple Mapping to deepen understanding of impact.

Launch a digital platform for practitioners to connect, share learning, and access ABCD resources.

Refresh the Active Lives strategy, aligning it with the Greater Manchester Live Well agenda.

Develop new frameworks for health literacy and stigma reduction to address health inequalities.

Key learning

The importance of relationships and trust as foundational elements for future progress.

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Bury annual reflections

2025 focus

Developed a shared Theory of Change to guide collective priorities and clarify impact pathways.

Strengthened Youth Voice Participation, ensuring young people's perspectives inform decision-making.

Strengthening the relationship with the VCSE sector and Children and Youth People team which has led to the creation of a children and families working sub-group

What next

Finalise the Theory of Change and use it to set a 12-month action plan with clear themes for the working group.

Deepen Youth Voice Participation, ensuring young people continue to shape priorities.

Strengthen links with children's services and other system partners to broaden influence.

Identify and co-deliver activities with the working group that emerge from the Theory of Change.

Key learning

The process of developing the Theory of Change has strengthened relationships and built shared purpose, though completing it has taken time. The group's renewed energy shows the value of collaboration and clarity in shaping a common direction.

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Central team annual reflections

2025 focus

Facilitated local CCA workshops built around the 9 Conditions of Change, helping localities assess progress and share practical examples.

Supported the State of the Life Report (with input from 8 of 10 localities), demonstrating clear ROI from leisure investment and exercise referral programmes.

Embedded place-based working across Greater Manchester from early years and youth engagement to sport and community partnerships, including supporting phase 1 of the FA's Empower Her Fund.

What next

Support Phase 2 of the FA Empower Her Fund, building relationships between football and the place leads to diversity women and girls' football and widen reach to non-traditional football projects.

Help GM Active define its wellbeing role in serving underrepresented groups.

Revise evaluation methods to align with the 9 Conditions and replicate CCA workshops locally.

Evolve Place Partner Forums into a genuine Community of Practice co-designed with place leads.

Key learning

We've noticed a clear shift from 'proving' to 'doing' with wider stakeholders now accepting/understanding the value of physical activity, the challenge is turning that understanding into consistent and meaningful action.

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Manchester annual reflections

2025 focus

Focus on embedding place-based work across the MCRactive organisation has led to stronger connections and collaboration between health, sport and neighbourhood teams.

New cross-sector projects, such as the Older Men's Gym initiative with GPs and the neighbourhood team, demonstrate how wellbeing, social connection, and physical activity can contribute to shared priorities.

A focus on building legacy, supported by the longevity of the place investment, is helping MCRactive take a prevention-focused, holistic approach aligned with health priorities enabling genuine measurable impact over time.

Key learning

Senior and strategic leaders buy in has accelerated the adoption of place principles across the organisation and created a consistency in approach with how wider teams embed place-based principles, behaviours and ways of working.

What next

Formalise support for existing community champions and adopt learning from other GM Place teams to develop a structured network with VCSE leadership.

Create opportunities for staff to apply broader skills beyond their day roles and establish a shared approach to funding coordination across teams to reduce duplication and increase impact.

Continue embedding place-based principles across MCRactive while using extended HAF funding to widen networks and encourage collaborative practice.

Deepen trusted relationships with Step Up and identify similar community delivery partners in North and South Manchester to help diversity and increase physical activity provision across the City.

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Oldham annual reflections

2025 focus

Recruited two new key roles in collaboration with Action Together which tested a new/evolved joint recruitment approach between Oldham Council and Action Together.

Identifying priority 'places' to work with across districts using both data and local insight.

Progressed the Theory of Change to support articulation of what 'Move More Oldham' means in practice.

What next

Use the Oldham Forum model to strengthen engagement in each district.

Focus on establishing five new 'places' tackling inactivity and inequality with an initial focus of building relationships and engagement in each place.

Launch new community commissioning opportunities and begin in-place stakeholder mapping.

Complete the first full draft of the Theory of Change and understand the baseline of maturity for each new place.

Key learning

Cross-organisational recruitment (Action Together and Oldham Council Public Health) has strengthened collaboration and trust. The new process for selecting 'place', which blends data with local insight, is helping ensure activity is genuinely rooted in community needs.

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Rochdale annual reflections

2025 focus

Embedded physical activity into the 'Rochdale South Neighbourhood Partnership' agenda using a People and Place approach — shaped aims, identified anchors, and used learning from the Newbold Community Garden to inform new approach in Kingsway.

Developed new marketing resources with support from DIVA using local voices and imagery and used this as an opportunity to refresh the 'Our Rochdale Directory' to make physical activity opportunities more visible and accessible.

Collaborated with Active Travel and Environmental Management teams to prepare submit a Sport England capital bid aligning investment with physical activity and active travel priorities.

What next

Continue to embed the approach in the Rochdale South Neighbourhood Partnership, facilitating conversations with anchor organisations to identify key barriers and support needed to increase activity in Rochdale South.

Introduction of new Insight & Engagement Co-ordinator role-capacity to create opportunities for VCSFE sector, use of data and identifying community groups who have potential to grow and develop through additional support.

Focus on Women and Girls as a key audience, including supporting Street Games, working with the FA to identify and upskill local leaders to deliver satellite sessions in place and exploring how to support existing community groups to offer sustainable ways to move more in their community.

Key learning

Developing the confidence and skills of community champions has empowered them to mentor new and emerging champions in leading innovative approaches to physical activity in new communities.

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Salford annual reflections

2025 focus

Expanded work into new neighbourhoods, deepening relationships with the CVS and wider multi-stakeholder networks.

Built on this collaboration to shift perceptions of physical activity (PA) more non-traditional VCSE groups are now engaging with PA initiatives.

Achieved a major milestone with PA recognised as a pillar in Salford's Corporate Plan, influencing GP contracts and driving a surge in PACC training and Active Practice uptake.

What next

Embed reflective practice into everyday work, giving teams time to pause, learn, and understand how and why change is happening.

Build confidence among senior leaders to advocate for the place-based approach and celebrate local successes.

Support the Move More Salford rebrand which is a major opportunity to create multi-sector shared goals.

Key learning

Our relationships are our strength - but expanding into new areas takes time, capacity, and a tailored approach for each neighbourhood.

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Stockport Annual Reflections

2025 focus

Development of Active Pathways social prescribing model for access to physical activity & mentoring support.

Expanded the Confidence brand, reinforcing Stockport's commitment to reducing inactivity and health inequalities. This initiative provides accessible, welcoming, and social activity opportunities for people who are inactive or living with long-term health conditions.

Expansion of the SEND Access to Activity coaching and mentoring support for providers – especially Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) initially.

What next

Plan a sustainable expansion of Active Pathways, ensuring growth aligns with local capacity.

Continue to embed the Confidence brand as a central part of Stockport's health and wellbeing offer.
Engage system partners to support sustainability and scaling of the approach'.

Build alignment & integration into Stockport Live Well as this approach develops.

Key learning

Momentum is building, and there's increasing recognition of the importance of inclusive, confidence-building pathways into activity. The next step is ensuring that wider sectors commit resources to sustain and scale the approach.

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Tameside annual reflections

2025 focus

Conducted a Physical Activity Needs Assessment in St Peter's, layering data with playing pitch and open space reviews to inform community-led conversations and leadership approaches.

Convened a Strategic Active Travel Group to guide activation work and support community decision making.

Expanded Different Conversations work into social care. Progressed PACC roll-out, connecting with PCNs and assembling a project team for engagement in St Peter's (Ashton PCN).

What next

Push outdoor activity and Active Wellbeing, using insight from open space reviews to target communities likely to engage, adapting initiatives as needed.

Strengthen collaboration between Action Together and VCSE, particularly through recommissioning social prescribing and developing a community voice model for School Streets.

Embed PACC training and Different Conversations work in St Peter's to rebuild trust in local healthcare systems.

Key learning

Hyperlocal work is providing blueprints for scaling to other place-based initiatives like Live Well and Pride of Place, demonstrating how maturing partnerships and systems enable sustainable community impact.

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Trafford annual reflections

2025 focus

Integrated Move More Partnership action plans into Leisure Services Team and stakeholders' plans to align efforts across Trafford.

Delivered the Trafford Moving Conference, showcasing the breadth of partnerships, securing decision-maker buy-in, and highlighting the lived experiences of priority audiences.

Progressed Ripple Effects Mapping and Theory of Change, creating opportunities for shared evaluative work across stakeholders.

What next

Adapt Trafford Moving Partnership meetings to focus on place and people priorities, supporting engagement and aligning with overall outcomes.

Refine the collective purpose of the Move More Partnerships.

Embed Sports and PA Coordinator roles across the partnership.

Continue to bring Move More Partnerships together and roll out Ripple Effects Mapping to stakeholders to strengthen shared evaluation.

Key learning

The Place Partnership approach has been a catalyst to build an evidence base and impact of place-based approaches leading to further leveraged investment (e.g., Investment into Move Altringham) and growth of physical activity assets in Trafford.

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Wigan annual reflections

2025 focus

Re-purposed the SHAPE Board into a system-wide strategic board for physical activity, aligning with wider public health priorities.

Supported the launch of “Progress with Unity”, Wigan’s new strategic plan built around two key missions: Create fair opportunities for all (tackling inequalities) and Make all our towns flourish (neighbourhood approach).

Strengthened place-based partnerships e.g., Westleigh Partnership involving cross-sector collaboration with PCNs, NHS GM, Wigan Council, and VCFSE partners, supporting local leaders and new initiatives like Westleigh Wonders.

Initiating Wheeling, Walking and Cycling review and strategy. Aiming to ensure a progress with unity approach is adopted.

What next

Get Wigan Moving community of learning community of learning established with clear vision and tangible measurable outcomes agreed.

Play an active role across key strategic boards — Progress with Unity, Health & Wellbeing, Get Wigan Moving, Active Travel — to ensure physical activity remains embedded system-wide. Prepare for the next Sporting Summit to bring VCFSE sports clubs and Pro Clubs together to amplify community engagement.

Working with Wigan Borough Community First to position social prescribing (Community health building) as a viable and sustainable funding option for community-based organisations to increase physical activity levels.

Key learning

Trusted relationships are driving progress; system pace and processes can get in the way and break trust.

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