

Greater Manchester
Moving > ^ < v

Impact report 25-26



Welcome

Greater Manchester Moving (GMM) is a Greater Manchester (GM) charity with a clear purpose to change lives together through movement, physical activity and sport.

We **lead, support and connect people and partners** across Greater Manchester to develop and deliver on a whole system vision and approach to **GM Moving in Action.**

During the year ended 31 March 2026, the Charity's objects were:

- ✓ promoting and enabling increased levels of participation in physical activity and sport;
- ✓ encouraging sporting, recreational, and other leisure time activities that promote health and wellbeing;
- ✓ the provision of recreational and social facilities and opportunities for the public at large or those who, by reason of their age, disability, social and economic circumstances or protected characteristics, have need of such facilities;
- ✓ the improvement and preservation of good health and wellbeing through engagement in active lives.

We have started to measure our success across three strands; organisational culture change, system change across sectors and change for communities in tackling inequalities. You will see examples of these throughout this report.



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Our work

GM Moving CEO Hayley Lever gives an update on the progress we've been making over the last year and beyond, especially in having a more critical impact across the wider system.



[1] Organisational culture change

Throughout the last year, we've noticed more connectivity across the team in the work, and working closer with some of our partners.

There have been some great examples of this over the last year, three of which are detailed in this section.

Strengthening environmental sustainability through greater team connectivity

This year, GM Moving's environmental sustainability work shows a clear shift: from building foundations with external expertise to embedding shared ownership and connected practice across the whole organisation.

In the first half of the year, the organisation focused on establishing the core infrastructure for change. Work with consultants helped shape the Action Plan and begin the carbon footprint measurement process. Early workshops—first with the working group and then with all Strategic Leads—revealed that embedding environmental sustainability commitments required more time, more conversation, and more distributed leadership than initially expected.

This period was defined by **learning how to work together differently**, adapting structures on the go, and recognising that meaningful change depends on shared responsibility rather than a single lead or team.

By the end of the year, the impact of this intentional, collaborative approach had become visible. Teams were not only aware of our commitments—they were proactively integrating them into their own work. Finance and procurement policies were updated to support and incentivise active travel, reflected in the staff survey where 78% agreed the organisation supports them to travel actively. The organisation also received external validation, with Sport England praising GM Moving's proactive leadership in this space.



Strengthening environmental sustainability through greater team connectivity (cont.)

The new finance system and website further strengthened internal connectivity by making environmental sustainability more visible and trackable across the organisation.

Deepening the understanding of our own environmental footprint as a team has also been critical. The first full organisational carbon footprint result—134 tonnes of CO₂—was shared at a team day, using the moment to deepen collective understanding of where the greatest impact lies.

At the same time, the organisation recognised areas where shared practice still needs strengthening. Only 65% of staff agreed that environmental considerations shape every decision, signalling the need for continued confidence-building and practical integration. The presence of a proactive board champion has helped ensure environmental sustainability is embedded at every layer. This now a standing item on every board agenda.

Crucially, the team's growing internal connectivity is now shaping how GM Moving looks outward. With stronger internal practice, the organisation is beginning to influence partners and networks.

At the team day, staff explored how to embed standardised system-wide carbon measurement into monitoring and evaluation processes for events and networks—an early step toward extending the organisation's leadership role across the wider system.



Global mindset shift

Over the past few years, we've enjoyed sharing the Greater Manchester journey and learnings across the country. In the last year, our CEO has had the opportunity to go overseas on a sharing and learning trip to Australia and New Zealand, which emerged from our role convening a [Global community of practice](#).

The opportunity has stimulated a mindset shift to a **global mindset**, with more of the team open to learning from other countries around the world. This has led to several introductions across the team to share learning internationally, such as the place approach to evaluation and learning, as well as ongoing policy and influence meetings set up with Sport England, the Australian Sports Commission, and Sport New Zealand.

A [series of blogs](#) was written, to ensure the sharing of learning and reflections from the trip and to keep the ripples happening. Conversations with local and national partners have helped to share the key learnings around the what and the how of work in other countries- including World Health Organisation colleagues.

The opportunity to support and influence global partners' direction through the trusted space and informal network of the Global community of practice is clear.

Since the Australia and New Zealand tour, partners have shared feedback to evidence the lasting impact from the connection through the Global CoP, highlighting how people feel "more connected to the global movement."

Other members of the team are planning to attend future international events to share the Greater Manchester learnings whilst learning from others too.

"Your contribution has significantly strengthened the global community of practice, with colleagues noting new connections, collaborations, and relationships formed because of you. Forums and networks are still active and expanding, illustrating sustained value."

"There was a lasting influence on teams, culture, and language. Teams continue to reference analogies, stories, and moments from your visit that "stuck," demonstrating strong cognitive and cultural impact."

More connectivity across the team and in partnership across the women and girls work

Over the past year, we have increased our focus on women and girls as a priority area for tackling inequality, recognising the clear gender gap in physical activity levels.

Data shows that fewer women (60% vs 64% men) and girls (47.7% vs 53.4% boys) are active enough compared with men and boys.

To address this, we have been working closely with Merseyside Sports Partnership (MSP), the Active Partnership for the Liverpool City Region. Collaborating across two city regions is a new approach for us, and it has enabled us to bring together partners from a wide range of sectors to share learning and tackle a challenge we both face.

Together the Mayors of Greater Manchester (Andy Burnham) and Liverpool city-region (Steve Rotheram) co-signed the [Brighton plus Helsinki Declaration](#) on behalf of our city regions, becoming the first place-based signatories in the declaration's 30-year history (right).

We also hosted two online engagement events that brought together people from across both regions who are committed to improving activity levels for women and girls, with over 380 sign-ups and 244 attendees.



Much of our progress comes from the connecting role we play in the wider system. By breaking down silos, we can support more targeted and effective approaches. Every internal work area is represented, and insights from our data are already influencing other parts of our work.

For example, we know that there is low participation among women from ethnic minority communities in the GM Walking Festival. In response, next year's Festival will include a stronger focus on walking for leisure, with the desired outcome of showcasing walking as a means of enjoyment, not just health and fitness.

More connectivity across the team and in partnership across the women and girls work (cont.)

Signing the Brighton + Helsinki Declaration jointly with MSP has already helped accelerate change. It has raised the profile of this work within the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG), challenged traditional boundaries within the sports sector, and opened up new opportunities for collaboration.

Working collaboratively with MSP has strengthened our capacity, allowing us to share skills, knowledge and ideas—particularly valuable for small teams. This partnership has created a support network, improved how we use resources, and increased the reach and impact of our work. Our communications teams have also worked closely together, helping us develop a clear, shared narrative that makes it easier for partners across both regions to engage with this agenda.

Beyond women and girls, this collaboration has helped build wider relationships between colleagues across the two Active Partnerships. It has also enabled us to share and expand initiatives such as Right to the Streets and Active Bystander training, which originated in Greater Manchester and are now being used to strengthen connections with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

“Learning from the work of GM Moving around ‘Right to the Streets’ offered Claire and I the opportunity to bring this person-centred approach to addressing barriers that exist for Women and Girls to our region.

We are currently trialling the application of the Right to the Streets Card Deck to design of our streets and routes. Pilot sessions using the toolkit have shown that the discussions really get people thinking beyond the traditional thoughts of adding lighting and CCTV and get people to imagine a space that would feel and be safer.

We are also sharing this work within transport planning networks and will be presenting at Active County Cambridgeshire 2026.

We are excited to continue exploring more elements of the toolkit with our local authorities.”

Lee Davies, Principal Projects Officer in the Active Travel Development Team at Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

[2] System change across sectors

To support Active Lives For All across Greater Manchester, everyone has a role to play.

We must work together to have the change we need for our Greater Manchester residents.

There are many examples across our work where we've been able to widen our reach or strengthen our relationships across different sectors by working together.

Two of these examples can be found in this section.

Better Conversations expands across sectors

Over the year there has been a significant shift with the Different Conversations training. They started as 'Better Conversations' workshops with Trafford and Manchester Social Care, which encouraged non-clinical staff to have more in-depth conversations about helping inactive people with long term health conditions to move more.

Different Conversations is now embedded across Active Adults, Health and Children and Young People Teams. The aim is to upskill people to talk about movement and activity in a different way.

Through the Patchwork Programme working with Early Years practitioners, child minders, leisure staff and parents, we have upskilled and increased confidence across 3 boroughs (Tameside, Bolton & Wigan). Working with key champions to help translate Physical Literacy in their boroughs across workforces. All of these now understand the importance of Physical Literacy to support positive experiences for children and young people.

Through the Work Well programme we have delivered Different Conversations training to coaches and held regular meetings with Work Well programme managers to explore feedback and the potential going forwards. Alongside this we have worked with businesses to refresh our [Active Workplaces Toolkit](#) so more places can create a positive culture around everyday movement throughout the workday.

The Better Conversations model has been received positively across several sectors, and we are now starting to develop some work around Active Madrassahs, recognising diverse ethnic or faith backgrounds as an audience we are prioritising work with. In addition, ['Moving Conversations'](#) training is now mandatory for all adult social care staff in Tameside.



Distributing grants to local communities

This year through our Walking and Wheeling Grants programme and the Live Well Festival we have enabled communities to be more active. In our most recent round of Walking and Wheeling Grants we distributed £85,000 to 19 community groups across Greater Manchester.

Using an Active Lives and IMD data led/targeted approach we focused on prioritising funding for groups working with people with long-term health conditions, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, global majority communities, older adults and women.

The grants support groups to use walking to improve activity levels and tackling social isolation. One group, **Angels of Hope for Women** (right), started as a walking group with many participants progressing to running. Some members' confidence grew to the point they completed a 10K at Media City in Salford.

From a strategic perspective, we have also worked to ensure that we work with partners from across the system who also deliver grants to ensure maximum impact for communities.

Hosting a joint networking event with TfGM with over 30 attendees, bringing together groups who have been funded by both organisations to share and learn from each other. Attendees reported this event was 'valuable', 'informative' and 'inspiring'.

In addition to this, we have also been supporting the GMCA Live Well team with their spring festival by holding and distributing the money for the grants to enable community organisations to host events for the festival. This has highlighted the important role our organisation plays in connecting the system to the wider community. This worked because we are a trusted partner and have flexible governance and processes which allow us to play the role the GM Combined Authority were unable to do.

As a result, £82,000 worth of grants has been distributed to community groups, and there is a clear link to the ways in which this has helped support people to be more active.



Live Well Grants went to over 200 groups and has built strong, lasting relationships, helping to co-design the festival in 2027.

[3] Community engagement

Throughout the year we have continued with our targeted approach to tackle inequalities by distributing the leadership through our networks.

This is where the leadership is distributed among various individuals and organisations and is essential to achieving Active Lives for All.

Stockport Padel Project

The **Stockport Padel Project** successfully targeted 12 Year 3 and 4 children identified as having low confidence and/or activity levels. The initiative directly addressed local data showing a drop in activity levels at this age group, with only **33% achieving Chief Medical Officer guidelines**. The project was driven by the need to advocate for and position the delivery of the CMO daily active minutes.

The children walked to the Manchester Padel Club each week for four consecutive coaching sessions. After only one session, one student progressed from having **"no coordination from bat to ball"** to confidently hitting the ball and demonstrating great skills during a subsequent PE cricket lesson.

Beyond physical skills, children showed **more enthusiasm for PE** and improved coordination and listening skills. The ability to share the rules they had learned significantly boosted their confidence.

To ensure sustainability, the families of participating children received a **credit** to use at the Padel club, encouraging continued participation.



School Games Fund through the Active Education Network

Rather than direct delivery, our role is intentionally driving change to embed and prioritise physical activity to address or build our understanding of inequalities through our networks. By distributing leadership, through shared learning spaces, community investment funds and training, we have a wider, more sustainable impact.

In Greater Manchester, the traditional model of delivering school sport and competition has evolved. GM Moving took the opportunity to test a different approach, instead of using School Games underspend to provide more competition at County level, which often engaged students who already accessed multiple, existing competitive opportunities.

Across the last two academic years, offered School Games Organisers (SGOs) £650 to provide opportunities for children and young people facing the biggest inequalities in their borough. Shifting their focus from mass-participation events to highly intentional, inclusive opportunities, these localised opportunities are reaching children and young people who have historically been excluded from taking part in physical activity, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), in pupil referral units (PRU) or Alternative Provision (AP) and those struggling with the transition to secondary school.

SGOs from six of ten boroughs across the region designed initiatives that addressed specific local data and insight, such as the sharp drop-off in activity levels during Key Stage 2 or the emotional barriers faced by Year 7 students transitioning into secondary school. From indoor climbing, crown green bowls, para laser run, padel, and glow dodgeball, the offers were often non-traditional but the intent with every opportunity was always clear. This was key to engaging and ensuring a positive experience for all the Children and Young People involved. The GM Moving fund has proven that targeted, SGO-led interventions are a powerful tool for tackling inequalities.



Empower Her – working with National Governing Bodies of Sport

Our Place and Sport team have been focusing on strengthening relationships across the sport sector to connect National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and system partners around shared priorities such as inclusion, welfare, and place-based approaches. Through the Sport Connect forums, we've brought together NGB representatives, local delivery partners, and system colleagues to explore how we can work differently, aligning around welfare, safeguarding and disability inclusion. These sessions have become valuable spaces for open discussion, mutual learning, and collective problem-solving. They've helped partners see where their efforts overlap and where collaboration can have the greatest impact on the ground.

We recognise the importance of embedding lived experience in shaping provision so we can better meet the needs of our communities. This approach was central to the *Empower Her* project delivered with the FA, a fund designed to create more opportunities for women and girls to try football in ways that work for them. With the gender activity gap remaining a priority in GM, the fund marked a shift from traditional funding models by building in processes that allowed community members to influence the application design through focus groups and to take part in participatory grant making via the decision-making panel. This involvement helped diversify the organisations applying and strengthened the relevance of funded projects.

The response to the fund showed that this approach works. Applications came from both established football organisations and community groups new to the game, resulting in 34 projects being funded and £61,500 invested across Greater Manchester.

As one community leader involved in shaping the fund reflected:

“Community voices were genuinely valued, the process was flexible and accessible, and decision-making felt transparent. It didn’t feel like we were being consulted – it felt like we were part of shaping something impactful.”

The project also deepened our understanding of how we can support NGBs to adopt place-based approaches. As more organisations look to work in this way, *Empower Her* highlighted the value of our role in connecting NGBs with place leads, building relationships across the system, and helping them reach and fund more diverse groups. The learning gained reinforced the clear benefits of involving communities in both the design and assessment of funding processes.

Active Madrassah

One way in which we are working with partners to better engage with underrepresented communities is through the Moving in Madrassah pilot in Bolton. Active Lives data continues to show persistent inequalities in activity levels for people from Asian ethnic backgrounds compared to the GM average. They are less likely to be active (49.5% vs 62.1% levels of active in South Asian adults compared to GM average).

Delivered by KRIMMZ Youth Club and Bolton Muslim Welfare Trust Health & Wellbeing Forum, a commissioned leadership programme aims to increase the confidence and capability of female leaders working with young people in Bolton mosques. We have engaged with 10 different Madrassah settings in Rochdale, Bolton and Trafford and supported a growing group of female leaders (60+), opening new ways for girls and young women to get involved in being active.

The pilot has been shaped through ongoing conversations with trusted community leaders and delivery partners. Creating opportunities for young Muslims that feel relevant and accessible, as well as helped to distribute both leadership and accountability of the approach. A key champion of the work has been the CEO and Founder of KRIMMZ, she understands both the importance and opportunity movement plays in wellbeing and faith practices.

Just as important has been the strengthening of relationships between community organisations, faith settings and wider system partners helping to build a shared understanding of what inclusive provision really looks like.

“By bringing movement into madrassahs, we’re shaping a generation that values health, connection and spirituality all at the same time. Moving in Madrassah is more than just about getting children active, it’s about creating balance between faith and wellbeing.”



Looking to the future

Brand new Chair of the Board of GM Moving, Steven Pleasant MBE, is joined by CEO Hayley Lever to reflect on how this year's extraordinary collaborative accomplishments can steer the work for the year ahead and the long-term future.





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