

Inclusion and Equalities Strategy

Annual Report for 2025

Published March 2026



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1. Introduction

We're now approaching the final year of our four-year Inclusion & Equalities Strategy (2022–2026).

Since finalising the strategy in 2022, we've made big strides toward embedding inclusion across Greater Manchester's Bee Network – a world-class, joined-up transport system making it easier to travel by bus, tram, train, and walking, wheeling, and cycling – and as part of our role as a key employer and anchor institution within the city region.

Last year's report highlighted the progress made in the second year of delivering our strategy. This year, we build on that foundation, showcasing how our work has evolved, deepened, and responded to what we've heard from our communities, colleagues, and partners.

This Annual Report is part of our commitment to transparency and accountability. It's a way of showing how we're delivering on our objectives through tangible action.

It allows us to celebrate progress, share learning, and reflect on what's next, ensuring we stay on course and continue to evolve in response to the needs of our communities.



Our commitment to inclusion and equalities

Public bodies like Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) have a legal duty to promote fairness, tackle discrimination, and make sure services work for everyone. This duty is set out in the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from unfair treatment based on nine protected characteristics:

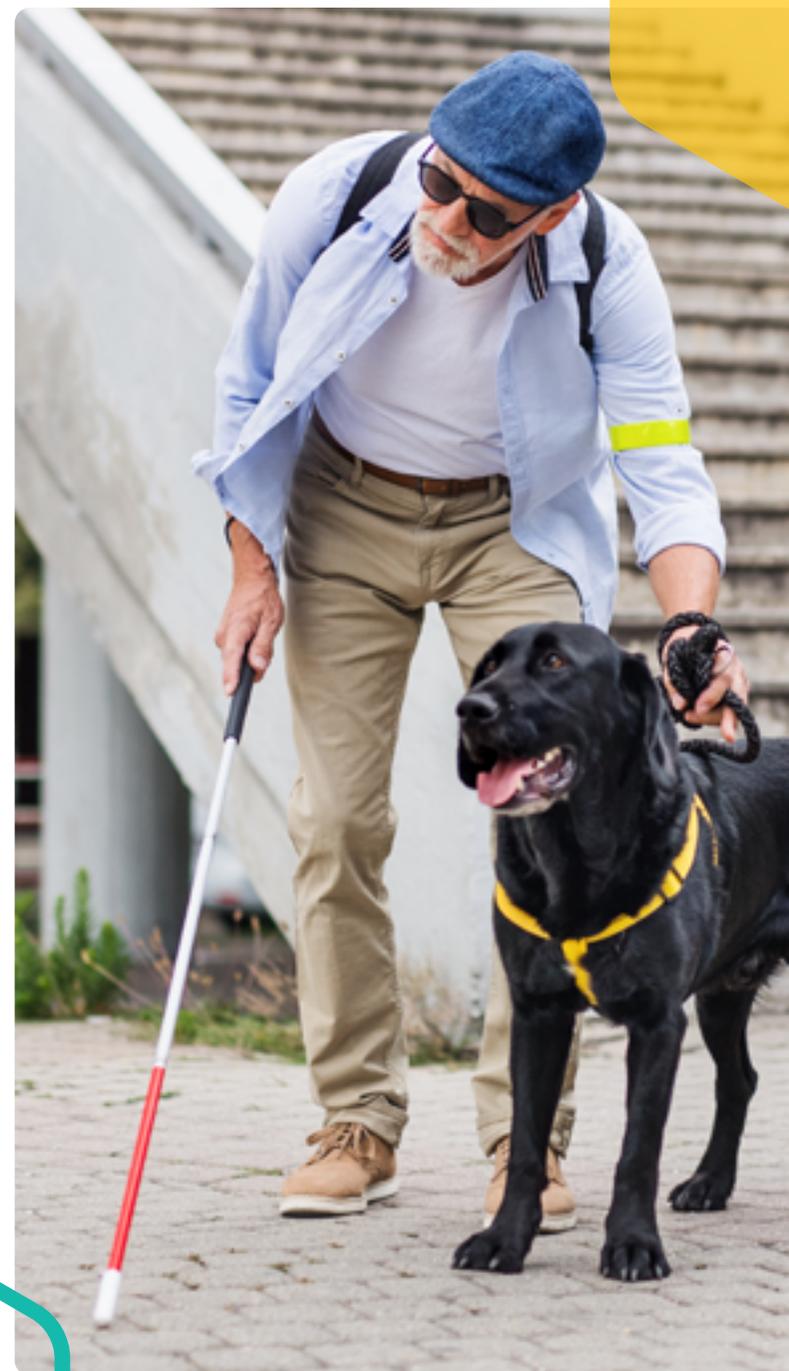
- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), we must actively consider how our decisions, policies, and services affect people from these groups. That means thinking about equality from the start – not as an add-on – and making sure we’re eliminating discrimination, advancing opportunity, and fostering good relations between communities.

At TfGM, we’ve gone further by adopting the Socio-Economic Duty, not currently a legal requirement in England. This duty recognises that poverty and economic disadvantage can create serious barriers to accessing transport, employment, and public services.

But legal compliance is only the starting point. We know that barriers to inclusion are persistent across our network and organisation. These challenges are not isolated, they often overlap and affect people in complex, intersecting ways. That’s why our focus must go beyond meeting minimum standards and aim to embed inclusion into every aspect of service design, policy development, and organisational culture.

This strategy sets out how we will go beyond minimum legal requirements and take a joined-up, proactive approach to inclusion and equalities.



Our objectives

Our objectives reflect our responsibilities as a transport provider, anchor institution, and employer. They guide how we embed inclusion into our services, policies, and organisational culture and we review them annually to ensure they remain relevant and responsive to progress.

Our current objectives are set out below.

As a transport provider, TfGM will:

1. Fully understand Greater Manchester (GM) people and places, existing inequalities and evidence-based decision making, including intersectionality, and apply that understanding in everything we do.
2. Enable diverse communities to co-design, shape and influence the GM transport system, including addressing barriers to participation.
3. Actively seek to address systemic transport inequalities and maximise the opportunity through the creation of the Bee Network to deliver an inclusive and accessible transport network.
4. Embed shared learning and maximise relationships and cross-sectoral partnership working through the GM system.

As an anchor Institution, TfGM will:

5. Use all opportunities to tackle inequalities and support equality outcomes through our organisational policies and procedures, including ensuring consistent and meaningful benchmarking and monitoring.
6. Maximise our role within the GM civic institutions to enable Greater Manchester Strategy priorities.

As an employer, TfGM will:

7. Empower our workforce to have a voice and provide opportunities to inform policy.
8. Continue to improve the quality of data we hold to understand the diversity of our workforce.
9. Seek to embed an inclusive culture within the organisation that welcomes and encourages a diverse workforce from across GM communities.



2. The Greater Manchester context

GM's population now stands at just over 3 million, with demographic data taken from the Census 2021 showing:

Sex: 50.5% female, 49.5% male.

Gender identity: Trans and non-binary identities remain at ~0.3% combined.

Ethnicity: 29.5% of residents are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. Over 91 languages are spoken across the region.

Disability: 24% of residents report a disability or long-term condition.

Age: 15.7% are aged 65+, and 31.8% are under 25.

Faith/Belief: Christian (46%), Muslim (13.5%), No religion (32.5%), with small increases in Hindu and Jewish populations.

Sexual orientation: 3.2% identify as LGBTQ.

Acorn geodemographic segmentation data from 2024 shows that within GM:
Socio-economic status: 45% fall into 'Stretched Society' or 'Low Income Living' categories, compared to 33% nationally.

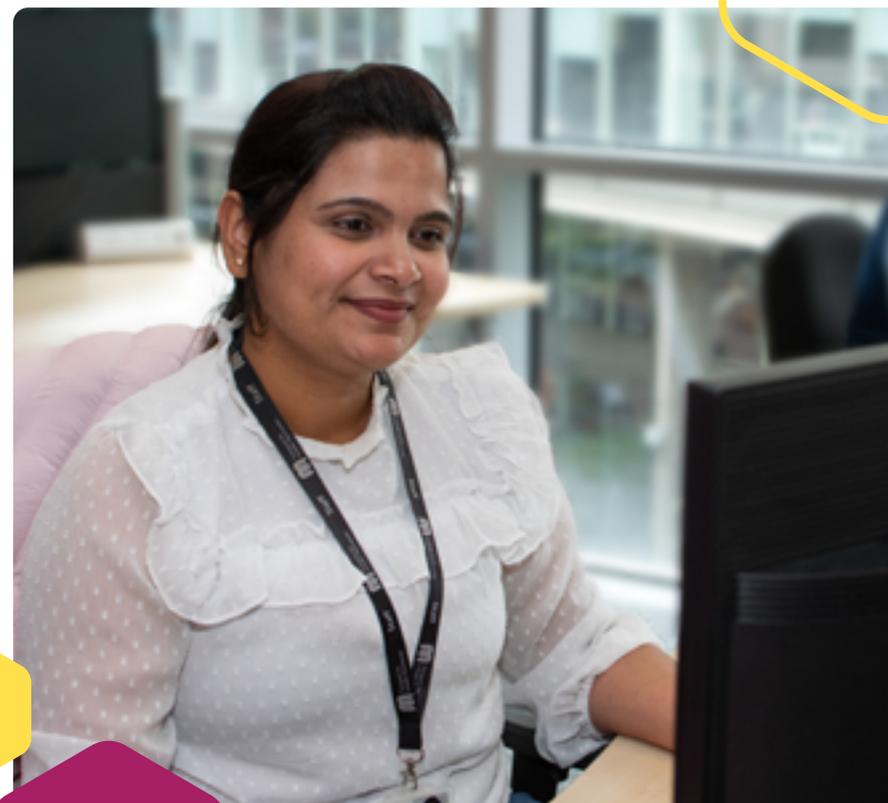


GM is a place of real contrasts and resilience. As we reflect on the past year, it's important to recognise both the strengths of our communities and the significant challenges many still face – highlighted through the following.

- GM faces deep-rooted socio-economic challenges, with pockets of severe deprivation alongside areas of wealth, creating stark inequalities. The English Indices of Deprivation 2025 shows that:
 - GM is the fourth most disadvantaged combined authority in England; Manchester ranks fourth nationally among local authorities.
 - Over one in four residents live in areas within the bottom 10% nationally for deprivation.
 - Sharp contrasts exist: in Stockport, neighbourhoods in the bottom 10% sit just three miles from areas of highest affluence.
- Cost-of-living pressures are increasing transience, disrupting community ties and straining services.
- Race-related riots have heightened concerns about safety and cohesion, including on transport networks.

As one of GM's largest employers, we know how important it is that our workforce reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. We're proud of the progress we've made, but we also recognise there is more to do to ensure everyone feels represented and included at every level of our organisation:

- The balance of men and women at TfGM has stayed broadly consistent, with women making up just under 40% of our workforce. We remain committed to improving representation in areas where women have traditionally been underrepresented.
- We've seen an increase in colleagues identifying as disabled, rising from 4.8% in 2023 to just over 6% in 2025. This is significantly lower than the 2021 Census figure of 24% for GM residents. We suspect this is due to under-reporting and are actively working to build trust and improve confidence in sharing this information.



- Our workforce is becoming more diverse in terms of ethnicity, with increases in both Black and Asian colleagues over the past year from 9.7% of our workforce to 10.4%. While we remain below the GM average, we are determined to address barriers that prevent people from minority backgrounds from joining and progressing within TfGM.
- We are proud of being a welcoming place for LGBTQ+ colleagues, with current data showing that 7.9% of our colleagues identify as bisexual, gay or lesbian, which is above the GM average of 4.7% reported in the 2021 Census. This is a consistent level to last year. However, 22% of colleagues have not disclosed this data, and as such, we have undertaken a concerted effort to improve confidence in reporting.
- We've recently improved how we collect equality data, ensuring that the options we provide are relevant and inclusive. This change not only improves accuracy but also helps colleagues feel confident that their identity is recognised and respected.
- We've changed how we recruit, launching campaigns within local communities and working closely with job centres to attract talent from the areas we serve. This is a key step towards building a workforce that truly reflects our region.

We know that building a representative workforce is a journey, not a destination. By listening to colleagues, learning from our data, and acting on what we find, we're determined to make TfGM a place where everyone can thrive.



3. What we've learned: themes and insights

Over the past year, we have reviewed equality data and insights across the Bee Network and TfGM to understand where progress has been made and where barriers remain. This work draws on a wide range of evidence, including local surveys, ticketing and travel data, workforce data and insights, and feedback from community panels and staff networks.

In addition, our approach has been shaped through ongoing engagement and co-design work with communities across GM. By collaborating directly with residents, local organisations, and service users, we ensure that lived experiences help to inform priorities and solutions, making our initiatives more responsive and inclusive.

This chapter summarises what we've learned across a number of themes and highlights action over the last 12 months which is responding to our equalities objectives. It covers the following areas in more detail:

- Safety remains a top priority, with many people, particularly women, disabled individuals, LGBTQ+ communities, and ethnic minority groups expressing concerns about feeling vulnerable during certain parts of their journeys, especially at night or in isolated areas.
- Accessibility is another central issue, as disabled and neurodivergent people, older adults, and those with sensory impairments encounter challenges with infrastructure, signage, and the overall design of public spaces and vehicles.
- Affordability is a concern as costs and complex fare structures make travel difficult for low-income households, young people, and non-UK nationals.
- Finally, barriers to engagement – such as language, digital exclusion, lack of accessible information, and a sense of disconnection from decision-making – can prevent some groups from having their voices heard.
- As an employer, TfGM also has a role in addressing employment-related barriers by promoting inclusive recruitment, supporting flexible working, and ensuring our own workforce reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.



Safety

Safety while travelling remains one of the most consistent themes raised through engagement, surveys, and consultations – and this trend is mirrored nationally. Women, LGBTQ+ people, ethnic minority communities, and disabled passengers report feeling unsafe during the first and last mile of their journeys, particularly at night in poorly lit or isolated areas. Fear of harassment or assault is also highlighted.

Improving safety isn't just about transport; it means working with local authorities, police, and community partners across GM to design streets and public spaces that feel safe and welcoming. It's about building confidence that help is available when needed: that people know how to report concerns, understand what behaviour is acceptable, and trust that police and transport staff will respond appropriately. Lighting and visibility play a role, but so do clear reporting channels, consistent staff training, and strong partnerships that make safety a shared responsibility across the whole system.

Insight from a GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on safety of women and girls on public transport, finalised in July 2025, shows that for many women, a lack of visible safety features, such as, and staff presence can heighten feelings of isolation and vulnerability. Even routine journeys, such as using the same bus stop at the same time each day, can feel unsafe if patterns are noticed – increasing risks like stalking or harassment. One negative incident is often enough to change travel behaviour permanently, with 54% of women who experienced sexual harassment saying it affected their quality of life, according to the 2020 Sexual Harassment Survey Government Equalities Office.

However, this is not an issue simply confined to women and girls. Feedback from Mayoral panels, including the Race Equality Panel, Disabled People's Panel, and LGBTQ+ Panel, reinforces that perceptions of safety are a shared concern across wider communities.



Here are some examples from the past 12 months highlighting safety focused activity across the Bee Network.

White Ribbon accreditation

This year, we have proudly reaffirmed our commitment to ending gender-based violence through reaccreditation with White Ribbon UK, the leading charity working to engage men and boys in preventing violence against women and girls. This commitment aligns with GM's gender-based violence strategy.

As well as demonstrating commitment through targeted action planning, accreditation with White Ribbon UK involves an annual day of awareness which takes place every year on the 25th of November. In line with the theme for 2025, 'We Speak Up', which encouraged men to challenge harmful behaviours, use their voices and lead by example, TfGM activity on the day involved internal and external awareness raising, including as part of a wider transport system approach with operators and GMP, based at Piccadilly Station.

Tackling anti-social behaviour on the Bee Network

The TravelSafe Partnership's (TSP) antisocial behaviour campaign 'We're Not Messing Around' launched in April 2025 ahead of the Easter holidays. Targeted at young people, the campaign used real CCTV footage to highlight the consequences of disruptive behaviour on the Bee Network. It warned that such actions could lead to police involvement, fines, and bans from the network. The campaign aimed to deter incidents, boost safety perceptions, and promote reporting through LiveChat and other channels.

TravelSafe LiveChat is a 24/7 reporting tool within the Bee Network app, which allows passengers to discreetly report crime or antisocial behaviour. Managed by GMP call handlers, it connects users within seconds and shares non-policing incidents with TfGM for rapid intervention. This initiative aims to reassure passengers and strengthen confidence in reporting and also marks the first step towards further integration between TfGM and GMP. During the campaign, the number of incidents reported through LiveChat increased by 30%.



Creating safer journeys through the '11th district' approach

In 2025, GM introduced a pioneering approach to policing its transport network. A new, joint Safer Transport Command has been set up, which brings together TfGM and GMP to deliver a more effective response to crime and antisocial behaviour across the transport network. The Bee Network is now treated as its own district for policing and enforcement – the '11th District' of GM – led by Chief Superintendent Suzanne Downey.

As a result of this approach, GMP's LiveChat data is now shared directly with TfGM's Operational Control Centre, allowing swifter intervention. Improved shared data and analysis means that resources can be targeted more effectively, in the right place at the right time. This might include:

- Active CCTV monitoring of an incident, to direct GMP to the exact location.
- Despatching TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers (TSEOs) or other staff to the incident.
- Alerting Interchange or city centre teams.
- Sending radio messages to bus drivers and depots to make them aware of imminent risks.
- Making live public address system announcements.
- Notifying the Metrolink Control Centre to take immediate action. For example, not stopping at a Metrolink stop where there is an incident underway, to safeguard passengers on-board.

The 11th District approach will continue to evolve, with investment in staffing, technology, and engagement. This integrated model sets a national benchmark for inclusive, secure transport through a whole-system approach.

TravelSafe LiveChat 24/7

Help, I feel unsafe

Thank you for contacting us. How can we help you?

There's a group of lads fighting

TravelSafe LiveChat 24/7
your direct line to the police

If you need help or see something that doesn't look right, message our transport-trained team now.

Use the **Bee Network app**, or visit gmp.police.uk/livechat or scan this **QR code**.

Always call **999** in an emergency.



Accessibility

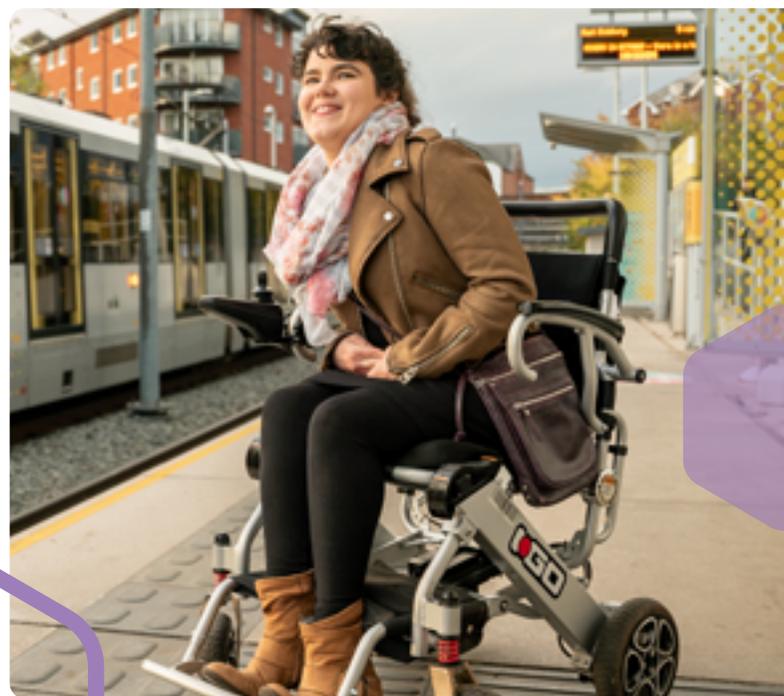
Through our data and insight, we know that disabled people report facing the greatest barriers around accessibility, with older adults also experiencing challenges. Issues highlighted relate to infrastructure design, signage, concessions, and digital access, highlighting the opportunity for improved accessibility across the network.

Disabled and neurodivergent individuals report significant challenges with the design of streets and station layouts across the network. Common issues include overstimulation, unclear signage, and unpredictable environments that make navigation difficult. Overcrowding on buses and Metrolink services, especially during peak hours, can exacerbate these problems, making it physically and mentally overwhelming for disabled passengers to move through busy platforms and vehicles. Limited space, unpredictable movement, and reduced access to priority seating or boarding support further add to the difficulty.

Additional feedback from mobility scooter users points to inconsistent enforcement of rules, inaccessible testing sites, and unclear permit systems, which create further barriers to travel. Deaf and blind passengers also face obstacles, such as a lack of British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation and insufficient tactile or audio navigation tools.

The following case studies highlight our ongoing commitment to building a transport network that everyone can use. These examples showcase practical interventions from empowering young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to travel independently, to transforming rail stations and public transport stops for universal access and leveraging lived experience to shape policy and design decisions.

By sharing these stories, we demonstrate how listening to users, co-designing solutions, and investing in accessibility improvements are central to our approach. Together, these efforts not only remove barriers but also foster a culture of inclusion, community engagement, and continuous improvement throughout the Bee Network.



Cllr Tracey Rawlins: Bee Network Committee Disability Advocate

Building on the commitment highlighted in last year's Inclusion and Equalities Annual Report, the appointment of the Bee Network Committee's Disability Advocate has been pivotal in ensuring lived experience informs decision-making. Representation matters – and this role exists to make sure disabled voices are embedded at the heart of planning and delivery. Here, Cllr Rawlins reflects on the last year in the role:

"As the Bee Network Committee's Disability Advocate, this year has reaffirmed why representation matters so deeply. Disabled people continue to face barriers that many never see – from inaccessible transport to decision-making processes that overlook lived experience. My role is about ensuring those voices are not only heard but embedded in the heart of planning and delivery.

"One of the highlights has been strengthening relationships with the GM Disabled People's Panel and TfGM's Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG). Meeting regularly with these groups has been invaluable. Their insight shapes better outcomes for everyone. As an example, I joined a site visit to review improvements for new Metrolink stops, making sure accessibility isn't an afterthought but a core principle. These moments remind me why advocacy is essential: to provide support and challenge, and to make sure lived experience informs every stage of development.

"Disabled people have so much to contribute; talent, ideas, and perspectives that enrich our communities. An accessible transport network is key to unlocking that potential. It enables people to live full lives: connecting to employment, education, social activities, and everything that makes Greater Manchester thrive. Accessibility isn't just a technical requirement; it's about equality, opportunity, and dignity.

"I've worked closely with TfGM and the Bee Network Committee to ensure that feedback from disabled communities is part of the conversation, not an add-on. Progress has been made, but there's more to do. Looking ahead, I'm excited about embedding this approach even further – creating a transport system that works for everyone."



Supporting young people with special educational needs and disabilities use the Bee Network

Over the past year, TfGM has taken steps to support young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) with independent travel, working in partnership with GM local authorities, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and GMP.

This has focused on the development of a suite of travel training materials, co-designed with partners and informed by lived experience. They have been designed to support SEND young people at key moments of transition, helping them navigate the Bee Network with greater confidence and independence. They include:

- **An Independent Travel Guide:** A practical resource for young people and their families, offering step-by-step advice on planning and making journeys safely across the Bee Network.
- **An Easy Read version:** Designed to meet the needs of SEND users, this guide uses simplified language and visuals to make information more accessible and easier to understand.
- **Instructional videos:** Covering bus, tram, train, and ticketing, these short films show how to navigate the network, including how to buy tickets, board safely, and find help when needed.

These resources are publicly available at tfgm.com/accessibility/travel-training/resources and have received positive feedback from the Greater Manchester Travel Trainers Forum (GMTTF) who support young people to travel independently.



Making rail travel accessible for all in Greater Manchester

Currently, fewer than half of GM's rail stations are fully accessible, with only around 43% providing step-free access. The ambition is to achieve full step-free access at all rail stations across GM, ensuring that every station is welcoming, inclusive, and easy to use for everyone, regardless of mobility or access needs.

Through the Access for All (AfA) programme, launched by UK Government in 2006, GM is making positive progress towards its ambition. Over the past two years, the programme has delivered accessibility improvements at Irlam and Daisy Hill stations, with further improvements at Bryn, Reddish North, Swinton, and Hindley set to follow.

These improvements have been designed through close collaboration with local communities, disability groups and equality advocates, ensuring that station designs consider feedback of local communities that use them most. We have worked closely with different groups, especially the Northern Accessibility User Group, which is made up of experts who focus on making stations easier for everyone to use. By involving them early on, we have made sure that any changes or new designs meet the needs of people with different abilities.

Over the past year, important changes have been made at Daisy Hill Station in Bolton to make it easier and safer for everyone to use. New lifts have been added, along with better security features like CCTV cameras and a safe area to go to in case of fire. The ticket office has been updated with a lower counter that is easier for everyone to use as well as accessible toilets, and new automatic doors at the entrance.

At Irlam Station in Salford, we worked with groups like the Station Café and local schools, organising educational activities focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). This encouraged young people to think about jobs in engineering and construction and also helped to build stronger links between the station and nearby residents. Local scouts were involved too: sessions were run to help them earn badges, and spare building materials were used to paint the Scout Hut and create a new footpath.





Disability Design Reference Group – impact and activities

Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG) is TfGM's pan-disability advisory group which is independently coordinated and facilitated by disabled people's organisation, Breakthrough UK. Members provide advice from their own lived experience, which supports the development of an inclusive environment across aspects of the Bee Network. DDRG represents a range of disabilities including mobility, sensory, and includes hidden disabilities, as well as intersectionality across different age groups, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, work status and GM localities.

The group has had 14 active members over the course of this year, with high attendance at all meetings as well as opportunities to get involved in site visits, testing of new technology solutions and collaborative work.

Over the past 12 months, the group has made a valuable contribution to a range of policy, service and infrastructure improvements. They have:

- Provided advice that was important in shaping physical access features like the Bury Interchange upgrade, the newest zero emission buses and Metrolink stop improvements.
- Contributed to conversations on how we recognise and value people in sharing their lived experience.
- Helped us to test new ideas to improve accessibility, including GoodMaps wayfinding resource, technology to improve safety of floating bus stops, and the 24-hour concessionary pass pilot.
- Given their input to inform transformational changes such as the introduction of Contactless Tap & Go on buses and Bee Network Rail Integration.
- Taken a lead role in a collaborative piece of work about attitudinal barriers to inclusive travel – in response to customer feedback. This is a great example of the DDRG using the Social Model of Disability for positive change and is explained in more detail in the overview of the Support for Inclusive Journeys project below.



The following quotes from some of the DDRG members emphasise the impact and value they bring to creating an inclusive Bee Network that works for everyone:

“

I get to see results of projects we have been involved with and believe we are helping make positive progress.

Paul, DDRG member

”

“

DDRG has influence with TFGM and working together we can improve understanding and access for people with disabilities and anxieties.

Lynda, DDRG member

”

“

We spoke they listened. All in all I'd say we/they have done a great job.

Angela, DDRG member

”

“

TfGM really appear to recognise the lived experience members of the group bring to development of the Bee Network... I feel privileged to have been part of an initiative that has already made an impact on our journey to make Manchester an inclusive city.

Willie, DDRG member

”

“

The DDRG provides and brings together an important, continuous voice - that engages with TfGM and connects the lived experiences of disabled people... Being part of the DDRG is and has been a true honour and privilege.

Darryl, DDRG member

”

Support for inclusive journeys

Throughout the past year, we've been working closely with the DDRG to explore attitudinal barriers to inclusive travel. The initiative was launched in response to feedback highlighting persistent attitudinal barriers to inclusive travel, particularly affecting disabled people and older passengers. The project sought to understand these barriers in depth through scenario-based discussions and to identify practical solutions that would lead to a more inclusive and welcoming Bee Network for all.

Through these discussions, we identified key challenges and refined them through wider engagement. Key areas of feedback included safety, staff availability, driving style, space and crowding, travel information, communication, and consistent inclusive practices.

Through a series of further engagement sessions, co-delivered with members of the DDRG, we discussed these areas of feedback with the GM Travel Trainers Forum, GM Youth Network, GM Older People's Network, GM Disabled People's Panel and Bury People First. These conversations generated a range of suggestions for how we could strengthen inclusive communication and understanding of inclusive practices amongst other customers and frontline staff.

We are working to further develop these action areas and will continue collaborating with the DDRG and equality groups to ensure lived experience informs future delivery.

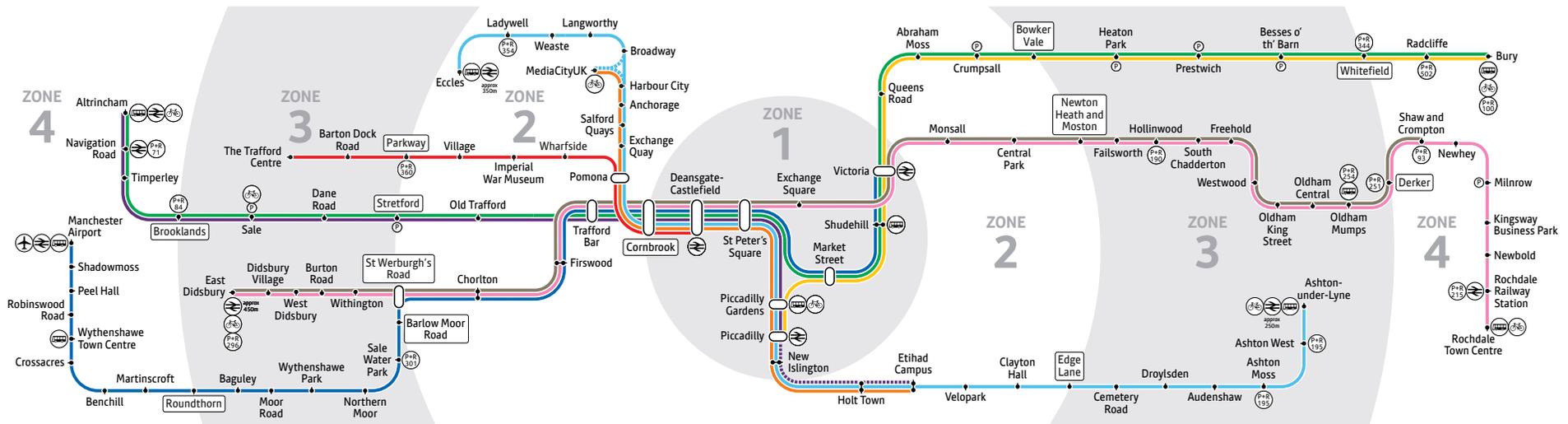
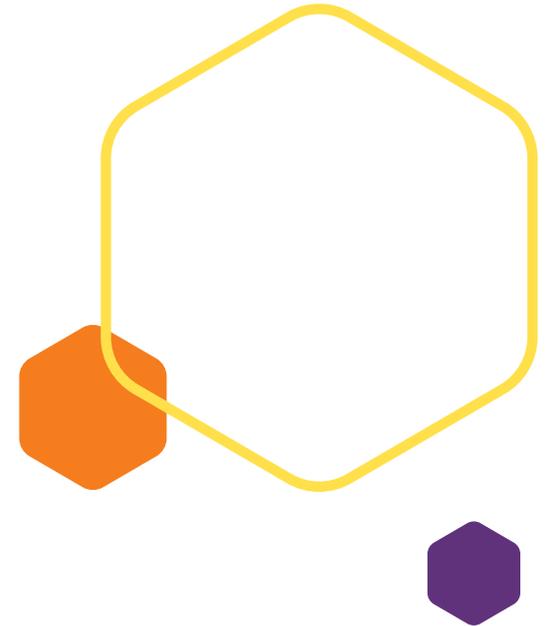


Improving web accessibility

TfGM has undertaken user testing to improve the accessibility of Metrolink maps on our website. Historically, these maps were not compatible with screen readers, creating barriers for blind and visually impaired users. The project began with a simple question: "How can we make our maps accessible and create a fallback solution that works across the site?"

Following desk research, design iterations, and development, a prototype was created to test whether the new map could be navigated using assistive technology. This version was shared with disability organisations for feedback. This helped us understand how different disabilities and software interact with the design and provided valuable lived experience insights.

As a result, new accessible Bee Network maps were published in September 2025, fully compatible with screen readers. This means visually impaired users can now hear station names and navigate the map more easily, removing a key barrier to independent travel.



Affordability

The affordability of travel continues to be a concern across GM, particularly for low-income households, older people, young adults, and non-UK nationals. Some ethnic minority communities experience higher rates of insecure employment and lower incomes, which makes it increasingly difficult to cope with rising living costs. Individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) are especially vulnerable, as they are generally ineligible for most forms of welfare support.

TfGM's Fares and Ticketing Survey highlights that perceptions of fare fairness and affordability have improved significantly since their lowest point in 2022. Agreement that fares are fair rose from 53% in 2022 to 77% in 2024, and affordability sentiment increased from 56% to 77% over the same period. While progress is clear, gaps remain: for example, 21% of disabled respondents still feel travel is unaffordable, and ethnic minority communities report lower agreement on fairness and affordability compared to White British residents.

Our engagement with grassroots organisations has highlighted that certain communities, such as South Asian women, often perceive the Bee Network as confusing and costly, which can discourage them from using public transport and exacerbate wider affordability challenges for those in precarious work or on low incomes.

GM is actively supporting more affordable travel, maintaining lower bus fares at £2 for an adult single while the national cap rose to £3. Further action has been taken over the last year to address financial barriers to accessing public transport.



Supporting lower fares through integrated contactless payment

In March 2025, the 'Tap and Go' integrated contactless payment system was launched across Bee Network buses and trams. This initiative allows passengers to simply tap their contactless card or device to pay, with the system automatically applying daily and weekly fare caps, ensuring everyone pays the lowest available price for their journeys.

Tap and Go has seen rapid uptake with more than 10 million Tap and Go journeys on Bee Network buses alone during the four months following launch.

The rollout is intended to have a particularly positive impact for equality groups, including low-income households, older people, young adults, non-UK nationals, and those with insecure employment. The purpose is to reduce long-standing barriers to affordable travel, where rising costs and complex fare structures have historically contributed to transport exclusion. This ambition aligns with the wider Bee Network vision and GM-level policy commitments, such as maintaining the £2 single bus fare locally, to ensure that public transport is not only integrated and reliable but genuinely inclusive and accessible for all.

- **Affordability:** The fare-capping feature ensures that passengers never pay more than the set daily or weekly maximum, helping those on tight budgets manage travel costs and avoid unexpected charges.
- **Accessibility:** The simplicity of tapping a card or device reduces confusion and makes public transport more approachable for groups who may struggle with traditional ticketing systems.
- **Inclusivity:** By removing the need for pre-purchased tickets and complex fare calculations, 'Tap and Go' helps to reduce transport exclusion and increase participation in employment, education, and community life.
- **Social impact:** The system complements other initiatives, such as the Care Leaver Pass, which provides free bus travel for care leavers up to age 25, further supporting vulnerable young people in their transition to adulthood.



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Free bus travel for care leavers

2025 has also seen the introduction of the Care Leaver Pass, an initiative providing free bus travel for care leavers up to the age of 25 who live in GM.

The Care Leaver Pass is a collaborative initiative delivered in partnership with local authorities as part of wider support for care leavers. It targets young people who have been in the care system, offering them free bus travel until their 25th birthday. By doing so, it directly addresses the transport challenges that care leavers often face, including cost, complexity, and accessibility.

Free travel through the Care Leaver Pass significantly removes financial barriers for around 5,000 young people leaving the care system in GM, making it easier for them to access education and employment opportunities. With the cost of transport eliminated, care leavers can regularly attend college, apprenticeships, and work placements, supporting the development of consistent routines and fostering greater independence.

The pass also improves access to essential services, such as healthcare, support networks, and community groups. By enabling care leavers to reach these vital resources, the initiative promotes wellbeing and encourages active social participation within the community.

Furthermore, by alleviating transport costs, the Care Leaver Pass allows care leavers to concentrate on personal growth and the development of life skills. This support is crucial in helping them make a smoother transition into adulthood and establish independent living arrangements.



Discounted travel for 18–21-year-olds

TfGM launched half price unlimited bus travel for 18–21-year-olds in 2025, making travel more affordable for around 150,000 young people in GM.

The half price travel scheme recognises the financial pressures faced by young adults and removes a significant barrier to regular public transport use.

By reducing travel costs on Bee Network buses by 50%, the scheme makes it significantly easier for young adults to access education, apprenticeships, and employment opportunities. This support encourages the development of consistent routines and aids in personal growth, particularly at a stage when many are transitioning to independent living. The financial relief provided by the scheme ensures that cost is not a barrier to seizing these opportunities, fostering greater equality and inclusion within the region.

The social impact of affordable travel is equally significant. Lower fares enable young adults to maintain vital links with community groups, support networks, and essential services, which are crucial for wellbeing and social participation. By facilitating easier access to these resources, the scheme helps to combat social isolation and ensures that young people remain active members of their communities throughout GM.



Representation and Engagement

We've built strong and trusted relationships with a wide range of communities and partners both locally and nationally across GM. This includes our DDRG, GM Mayoral Equality Panels, grassroots organisations, youth groups, and voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise (VCFSE) networks, as well as national bodies such as the national Centre for Accessible Transport (ncat).

These partnerships allow us to embed lived experience from protected characteristic groups into planning and decision-making, ensuring that diverse voices shape the Bee Network. Engagement takes many forms, from co-design sessions and targeted outreach to formal consultations and informal forums and is supported by accessible materials, translation where needed, and remuneration to recognise the value of people's time and insight.

Our engagement work provides rich insights into what matters most to people across GM – and to our own workforce. Through formal and informal forums, grassroots networks and targeted outreach, we hear directly from communities about the issues that shape their experience of transport. At the same time, staff feedback helps us understand operational challenges and opportunities for improvement, ensuring that those delivering services have a voice in shaping them.

These insights span a wide spectrum – from safety concerns and perceptions of affordability to infrastructure design, route planning, and driver behaviour. People tell us about the importance of well-lit streets, clear reporting channels for anti-social behaviour, and confidence that staff and police will respond appropriately. We hear how fare structures affect those on low incomes, how accessibility features influence independence, and how service reliability impacts employment and education opportunities. Staff share what matters to them too – from training and support to tools that help them respond effectively to customer needs.

By embedding these lived experiences and staff perspectives into planning and governance, we ensure decisions are informed by real-world challenges and priorities. Feedback gathered through consultations, co-design sessions, and internal engagement feeds into scrutiny processes and policy development, helping us shape the Bee Network so it works for everyone.

Over the past year, we've worked to strengthen these foundations, particularly with communities experiencing racial inequality and those who have historically been underrepresented in transport planning and across our workforce at TfGM.



Andy Burnham speaking in Manchester about new Greater Manchester concessionary travel improvements for older and disabled people.

Removing barriers for communities experiencing racial inequalities

We've taken steps to strengthen relationships with race equity groups and grassroots organisations, ensuring their experiences and insights feed directly into planning and delivery. This work is ongoing but marks an important shift toward more representative and inclusive engagement.

During Black History Month 2025, TfGM took an active and visible role within GM's spaces and forums, embracing the theme "Standing Firm in Power & Pride" and ensuring our presence was felt throughout the celebrations.

Our participation in the Greater Manchester Black History Month 2025 Civic Launch saw TfGM actively engaging with attendees, sharing updates on our initiatives to support workforce diversity and talent development. By being present and approachable, we invited feedback on our work, including the GM People Inclusion Standards and the GM Elevate Programme for future leaders, ensuring that our approach reflects the needs and aspirations of those we serve.

Internal staff engagement also created opportunities for colleagues to share experiences and participate in events. This visible involvement enabled us not only to celebrate the rich contributions of Black communities but also to gather valuable feedback directly from those represented.

A notable example was our Lunch Time Learn session on inclusive language, which we delivered in partnership with the Caribbean and African Health Network (CAHN) and GMCA and saw nearly 50 colleagues joining to share perspectives and discuss how language shapes experience.



The Asian Women's Cycle Club and the Bee Network

The Asian Women's Cycle Club, spearheaded by Krimz Girls Youth Club in Bolton, stands out as a remarkable example of how grassroots organisations can remove barriers and foster active travel among women and girls from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Supported by TfGM's Wheels and Walks programme, the club enabled over 50 participants to take up cycling during the summer of 2025, showcasing the power of community-led initiatives.

The Wheels and Walks programme aims to make walking and cycling accessible, affordable, and enjoyable for all. It offers practical assistance such as free or low-cost cycle loans, skills training, and route planning advice, alongside community grants that empower local groups to design and deliver their own initiatives. By addressing financial and cultural barriers, the programme ensures that individuals who might otherwise be excluded from active travel opportunities can participate fully.

Engaging underrepresented communities in active travel is crucial, as these groups often face a combination of challenges including limited access to bikes, low confidence, and cultural perceptions that deter participation. By collaborating directly with grassroots organisations like Krimz Girls Youth Club, solutions can be informed by real lived experience. This approach builds trust, supports long-term behaviour change, and encourages wider adoption of active travel across GM.

Feedback from participants highlighted the importance of culturally sensitive support and community leadership in overcoming barriers to active travel. Many women cited increased confidence, a sense of belonging, and improved physical and mental wellbeing as key outcomes of their involvement. The success of the Asian Women's Cycle Club also revealed the value of tailored skills workshops and peer-to-peer encouragement, which proved vital in sustaining engagement.



Recognising lived experience through remuneration

We have taken a proactive approach to understanding and addressing the barriers that prevent meaningful engagement with underrepresented communities. Central to this work is the recognition and valuing of lived experience, ensuring that community voices directly inform policy, service design, and workforce initiatives.

Recognising that financial and cultural factors often hinder participation, we have taken deliberate steps to understand and address how unpaid contributions affect engagement in the activities we deliver. In collaboration with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS), we have been examining the barriers that arise when remuneration is lacking, which can inadvertently exclude valuable voices from decision-making and service design processes.

To build a more inclusive and equitable framework, we are actively engaging with a range of lived experience groups across GM. This has helped us appreciate the diverse needs and preferences regarding remuneration, ensuring that our approach is not only fair but also sensitive to different circumstances. We recognise that remuneration is not solely financial; it can include vouchers, travel reimbursements or skills development opportunities. By offering a suite of options, we aim to empower individuals and remove the practical obstacles that might prevent them from participating fully.

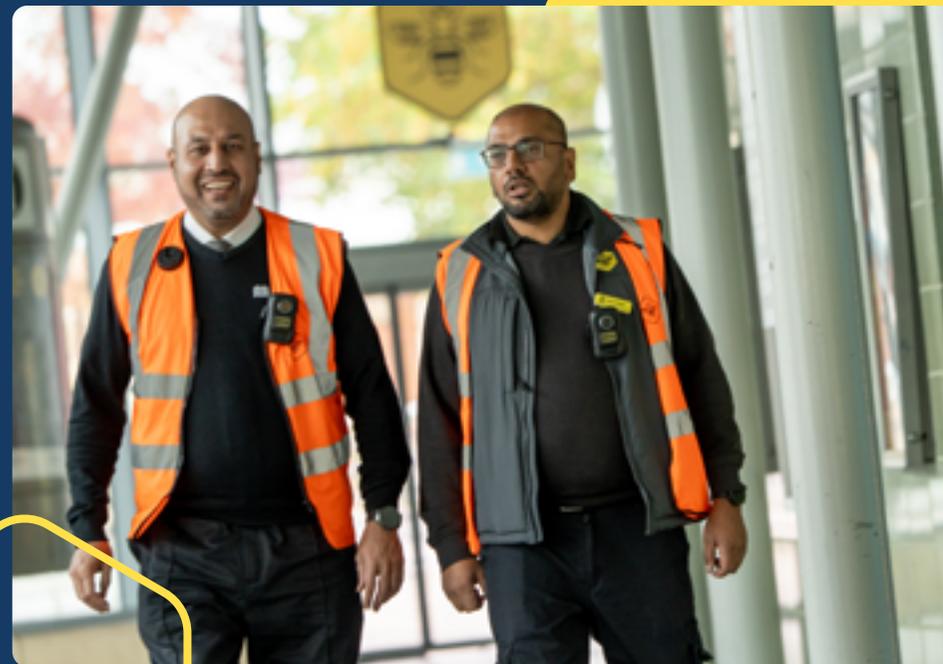
This commitment to valuing lived experience is central to our work, as it fosters trust and strengthens relationships with communities. It also ensures that those who contribute their time and expertise are recognised and supported in ways that are meaningful to them. Our ongoing partnership with GMCA and GMFRS is instrumental in shaping our remuneration practices.



Employment

Our commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace is central to everything we do. We have developed a comprehensive Equality Action Plan for 2024 and 2025 which drew on insights following independent research by After Athena. Additionally, TfGM has adopted the GM Workforce Inclusion standards and undertaken a self-assessment process to identify progress and enable benchmarking against the 13 other participating GM organisations. This demonstrated good progress but also identified areas for improvement across the standards which have informed the activities described below.

We are actively working to enhance the quality and breadth of our equality data so that we are better able to baseline our EDI activities and focus on delivering approaches that make a measurable impact. We have launched a resurvey of our colleagues with the aim of developing a more detailed picture for future ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting requirements. These ongoing efforts set the foundation for the important initiatives and policy updates detailed below, all of which reflect our dedication to supporting colleagues and creating a truly inclusive environment for all.



Advancing inclusive recruitment

This year, we have continued to embed inclusivity into our recruitment practices, ensuring that opportunities are accessible and fair for all. We have strengthened our outreach by sharing job postings with community organisations across Greater Manchester and working with the Department for Work and Pensions to identify job fairs in disadvantaged areas. These efforts help us connect with a broader talent pool and support our ambition to grow our network of community partners.

For one of our roles in Bus Operations we had multiple posts to fill, and recognising the need to do things differently, we reached out to the community and conducted open days at three of our interchanges to meet candidates close to home, where they will be working. We had 243 applicants, 6% of which had declared themselves as disabled, at selection 20% of successful candidates had a declared disability, increasing our representation and highlighting how alternative recruitment methods can serve benefits to both TfGM and our local communities. In the future we will be deepening our ties with the Department for Work and Pensions and conducting first round interviews directly within GM job centres, increasing the accessibility of the application process further.

We have also sought out volunteers from around the organisation to ensure our hiring panels are diverse, in instances where the hiring team would have been more homogeneous otherwise. Whilst these volunteers have been advocated for throughout our hiring campaigns, often hiring managers have used their own professional networks to bring in other stakeholders from across the business to bring balance to the panel. This has also provided more opportunities for our staff members to get involved in hiring decisions, furthering their own development in the process.

Our role as an anchor institution within GM carries a clear responsibility to support emerging talent. Young people should have a clear line of sight to high-quality jobs within our city-region, and we are committed to delivering this through our early careers programmes.



GM Elevate Programme

TfGM is a participant in the GM Elevate leadership development programme for racially diverse and disabled colleagues. As of December 2025, four colleagues have completed or are currently on the six-month programme. The aim of the GM Elevate programme is to positively shift the diversity of senior representation across our city region by supporting minoritised employees to progress into more senior roles.

Internship Programme Pilot

This year, TfGM introduced a new pilot programme aimed at removing employment barriers to address racial inequity in Greater Manchester. Our internships were delivered in partnership with the 10,000 Interns Foundation, providing three young people with development opportunities over a 6-week paid placement. The 10,000 Interns Foundation is a UK-wide organisation dedicated to creating paid, high-quality internships for underrepresented groups, particularly Black students and graduates. Its aim is to improve equity in employment by opening up access to sectors where diversity is lacking. The interns received weekly skills workshops, shadowing opportunities with Caroline Simpson (Group CEO) and Vernon Everitt (Transport Commissioner), and employability support. We were delighted to see two of our three interns move into long-term roles at TfGM, with the third intern returning to higher education. All interns reported feeling better equipped for work as a result of their internships, and all view TfGM positively as an employer.



T Level Industry Placements

2025 has been a formative year for T Levels at TfGM. From three trailblazer placements initially, we have since introduced a cohort-based T Level Programme with 16 placements created throughout the year. We're working directly with five of the ten GM colleges who offer T Levels, ensuring our opportunities engage young people across the city-region and giving students a chance to connect and learn alongside those from other local authority areas. T Levels are integral to the GM Baccalaureate (MBacc), and we look forward to supporting the students' ongoing professional development beyond their T Level placements with us. Anyone who successfully completes a T Level placement at TfGM will be offered guaranteed assessment should they choose to apply for a role with us.

Targeted recruitment practices for emerging talent

Across our early careers programmes, we continue to innovate our recruitment practices and ensure we are giving GM-based emerging talent the best chance of success. This year we have introduced new ways of working within our early careers recruitment including:

- College-first promotion of opportunities.
- Ringfencing programmes for GM-based talent.
- Integrating accessibility into our recruitment processes and implementing recommendations from external consultancy.
- Utilising values-based selection in hiring processes, to replace traditional experience-based criteria.

These changes have helped us to attract more diverse talent pools and align with the GM Inclusion Standards. Ultimately, they help us towards building an inclusive and high-performing organisation with a skilled and engaged workforce.



Philippa Grant – TfGM's People Director

Establishing staff networks

As we highlighted in last year's annual report, one of our key priorities has been to strengthen staff voice through the development of new staff networks. Over the past 12 months, we've made significant progress, launching several new networks and expanding existing ones to ensure colleagues feel seen, supported, and heard.

A standout example is the Neurodiverse (ND) Network, which celebrated its first anniversary in November 2025. From a small idea to a thriving community of nearly 100 members, the network has been working to identify activity to shape a more inclusive workplace for neurodiverse colleagues. For example, the network has collaborated with TfGM's People Team to make some improvements to the accessibility of recruitment practices, ensuring inclusion starts from day one.

The Women's Network was also established as a colleague network in April 2025, with Terms of Reference agreed by lead members. The network exists as a space for all colleagues who identify as women to share their experiences, influence workplace culture, and campaign on issues that matter to them. The network is a small yet growing community where colleagues can collectively stand together on issues ranging from Breast Cancer Awareness to International Women's Day.



Rosie Rodwell and Catherine Adesile, Co-chairs of the Neurodiverse Network

ND Network: Reflections on our first year of impact and inclusion

As we celebrate the first anniversary of the Neurodiverse (ND) Network this November, it's inspiring to see how far we've come. From a small idea to a community of nearly 100 members, we've worked to create a workplace where neurodiverse colleagues feel valued and empowered.

During 2025, we partnered with GMCA and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service to design Disability Pride pin badges – symbols of solidarity that have sparked conversations and normalised discussions around neurodiversity. We also represented the network at the Power of Staff Networks Conference, delivering workshops on “Bringing Your Whole Self to Work” and sharing strategies for fostering authenticity and inclusion.

Socials have helped build community, and November introduced Safe Snack Socials with contributions from DDRG and Catherine Leggett, manager of the neurodiversity support group Autentic, who has delivered neurodiverse awareness training for managers and supported the network with an educational video.

Alongside engagement, we've collaborated with the People Team to further build accessibility into recruitment practices, a move towards ensuring inclusion from the start of the employee journey.

Our progress reflects the power of collaboration and lived experience. As we move into year two, we'll focus on growing membership, deepening partnerships, and continuing to champion accessibility so neurodiverse colleagues can thrive and bring their whole selves to work.



TfGM: Leading the Way Development Programme

TfGM launched Leading – the TfGM Way (LTTW) in April 2025. LTTW is a comprehensive, in-house designed and delivered, mandatory management development programme. The programme consists of 8 modules over 7 training days and covers both brilliant basics and best practice people management and leadership. Two modules focus most explicitly on inclusion; Module 4, our employment policies and procedures, and Module 6, managing inclusion within a team. Module 6 specifically covers the Equality Act, as well as bringing to life the importance of inclusion, focusing on many significant areas of inclusion including equality vs. equity and microaggressions.

Separately from LTTW, all managers will also attend Neuroinclusive Management training which is developed by Autentic, an external training organisation specialising in Neurodiversity awareness.

For three years, TfGM has been investing in Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) training via Mental Health First Aid England. The aim of this training is to ensure that more of our managers and colleagues have the skills and confidence to have mental health conversations and to be able to confidently support any mental health crises.

The learning has been positively received, with a network of mental health champions now in place across the organisation. Additionally, we launched our Speak Up initiative, creating Advocates who can be approached to discuss any concerns or challenges colleagues are facing. These Advocates have also been MHFA trained, ensuring that colleagues who want to access Speak Up support are confident that those supporting them are trained and competent.



Family Friendly Policies

In April 2025, TfGM introduced an updated range of Family Friendly policies, encompassing enhanced entitlements for maternity, maternity support (previously known as paternity leave), adoption, shared parental, and special leave. These policies were developed with employees and trade union representatives, ensuring our provisions are in line with, and in many cases exceed, the upper quartile of comparable organisations.

Maternity and adoption leave: TfGM offers enhanced maternity and adoption leave packages, providing up to 52 weeks of paid leave. Pay includes 26 weeks at full pay, followed by 13 weeks at 50%, and a further 13 weeks at 25%. This is available to all eligible employees, supporting them throughout their maternity or adoption journey.

Maternity support leave: For maternity support leave, eligible employees are entitled to up to five weeks' leave at full pay to support their partner following the birth or adoption of a child. This entitlement reflects our commitment to supporting all family structures and ensuring partners can fully participate in early family life.

Our policies were co-designed with input from trade union colleagues to ensure they reflect the needs of our workforce and position TfGM as a leading family-inclusive employer. Significant improvements have been made to both maternity/adoption and maternity support leave, reinforcing our dedication to supporting colleagues through key life events.

TfGM has also achieved Working Families accreditation, underscoring our ongoing commitment to being a family-friendly organisation. This partnership enables us to access best practice guidance, review policies, and further develop initiatives such as a new Carer's Policy, which is in advanced development and has been created in collaboration with our recognised trade unions.



Unlocking opportunity through bus franchising: skills, employment and inclusion

The introduction of bus franchising in GM is not only transforming how people travel. It's also unlocking new opportunities for employment, skills development, and inclusive growth. As part of the Bee Network, franchising gives GM greater control over how services are planned and delivered, enabling the transport system to be shaped in a way that reflects local priorities and creates local benefits.

As an anchor organisation within the city-region, TfGM is committed to using this platform to deliver wider social value. One area where this is already making a difference is inclusive employment. Through new partnerships, we're helping young people with additional needs gain real-world experience and transition into meaningful work. One key example is the supported internship programme at First Bus Rochdale Depot, delivered in collaboration with Future Finders College in Oldham.

From September to June 2025, Kian Lewis, a local young person, joined the depot team for two and a half days per week as part of his internship. Working across engineering and operations, Kian gained hands-on experience, built confidence, and developed a strong understanding of how a busy transport depot operates. Supported by mentors and colleagues, he quickly became a valued member of the team, and has been commended by colleagues for his enthusiasm, reliability, and willingness to learn.

At the end of his internship, Kian was offered a permanent paid role at First Bus. His journey highlights how inclusive employment pathways - enabled through franchising and strong partnerships - can unlock potential and create lasting opportunities. These pathways are especially vital for young people, offering not just jobs, but meaningful routes into long-term careers, confidence-building, and financial independence.



Kian Lewis, First Bus Intern

“

I have really enjoyed learning new things every day and being part of a team and getting a job with First Bus has given me confidence and independence — it's a dream come true.

Kian

”

4. Next steps

The new Greater Manchester Strategy 2025-35, published in July 2025, commits to putting equality goals at the heart of plans, embedding inclusive practices across all public services.

As the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2050 is finalised during 2026, following public consultation, equality will be front and centre of long terms plans for transport across the city-region. In the shorter term, and as the roll out of the Bee Network continues with the first rail lines becoming integrated from the end of 2026, the commitment to delivering a Bee Network that everyone can use remains firmly in place.

We will also continue to ensure that opportunities as an employer and anchor institution are progressed, responding to our equalities objectives. This will be in the context of increasing alignment at a Group level, and opportunities presented working collaboratively and through shared leadership across TfGM, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.

Continuing to respond to feedback, data and insights, priorities for the year ahead include:

Greater Manchester Strategy and Delivery Plan

- Taking an active role as part of the GM system in the steps being taken to further embed and strengthen equality and inclusion in the plans and activities that flow from the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS). This will include **specific equalities objectives** in support of the GMS transport workstream: A transport system for a global city region, which will be scrutinised through the GM Tackling Inequalities Board.



Representation and engagement

- Listening to feedback from representative groups gathered through the public consultation on the **GM Transport Strategy 2050 and Delivery Plan**, reviewing and strengthening the content where appropriate to ensure the strategy reflects diverse perspectives and delivers inclusive, future-ready transport solutions.
- Working collaboratively with GMCA and GMFRS to establish a consistent approach for **recognising lived experience**, including fair and transparent remuneration practices, ensuring engagement is meaningful and values the contribution of those with direct experience.
- Refreshing the membership of our **Disability Design Reference Group** to ensure it represents a wide range of disabilities, impairments, and demographics. This will strengthen the group's ability to provide diverse, lived-experience insights that improve inclusive design across the Bee Network and deliver better accessibility outcomes for all user
- Working with GMCA and local authorities to embed the **GM Race Equity Framework**, ensuring that race equity principles influence policy, planning, and delivery across the Bee Network and for TfGM as an employer.



Safety

- Taking key steps towards the Greater Manchester Strategy commitment to **improve perceptions of safety** and increase patronage on the Bee Network by 2029, building the foundations for it to become the safest transport system in the country by 2035.
- Launching and embedding the new **TravelSafe Strategy**, focusing on improving perceptions of safety across the Bee Network. Over the next year, we will implement effective tactics to tackle antisocial behaviour, promote ethical and sustainable travel behaviours, create safer environments for vulnerable groups, and strengthen multi-agency collaboration to ensure resources are targeted for maximum impact.
- Involving communities in shaping **future safety campaigns** to ensure messaging is relevant and inclusive. Engaging local voices will help identify real concerns, build trust, and encourage participation, leading to improved safety outcomes for everyone.
- Undertaking a review of our **Streets for All Design Guide** to ensure it reflects best practice in inclusive street design. This review will incorporate the recommendations and insights from the GM Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Review: In Her Shoes, A Review of the Safety of Women and Girls on Public Transport, to strengthen our commitment to creating streets that are safe, accessible, and welcoming for all users.
- Following re-accreditation, we will collaborate with our Ambassadors, Champions, and internal leads to update the **White Ribbon Action Plan**, ensuring continued progress towards ending violence against women and girls.
- Rolling out new **School Streets** to create safer environments for children and continue developing proposals to reach 100 by 2028. In addition, we will deliver **improvements and renewals to crossings** within 400 metres of schools where no safe place to cross currently exists, aiming for up to 120 upgraded crossings to support safer, more inclusive journeys.



Affordability

- Preparing for the **introduction of the socio-economic duty**, ensuring readiness for statutory guidance and aligning our approach ahead of its expected implementation in 2026. This is important because the duty will require public bodies to consider the impact of decisions on people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, strengthening our commitment to fairness and reducing inequalities.
- Implementing a new strategy for **concessions** on the Bee Network to ensure there is a fair, proportionate and transparent approach to decision-making.
- Building on our review of the **free, round-the-clock bus travel** pilots for older and disabled people on the Bee Network in 2025, removing the pre-9.30 restriction for ENCTS passholders. We will use the impact evaluation to inform decision making on whether pre-9:30 concessions can be implemented permanently.
- Supporting delivery of the pledge included in the Greater Manchester Strategy to keep the **cost of travel** on the Bee Network as low as possible, so everyone can afford to get where they need to go.



Accessibility

- Embedding accessibility into **Bee Network Rail integration** to deliver equitable travel experiences for all users, ensuring stations and services meet the highest standards of inclusivity. This approach reflects the Department for Transport's Accessibility Roadmap and reinforces GM's pledge to create an inclusive transport network.
- Developing and implementing a **mobility scooter policy** across the Bee Network to make travel easier and more welcoming for all. It will be co-designed with people who use mobility scooters, drawing on lived experience through engagement sessions to ensure practical solutions that enhance confidence and accessibility.
- Prioritising accessibility and inclusivity within Bee Network infrastructure development and delivery. The **Access for All rail station improvement programme** will deliver step-free routes and improved rail station facilities to support independent travel for everyone, including those with mobility impairments, parents with pushchairs, and older passengers. Alongside this, our use of locally controlled City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding, and in future Transport for City Regions funding, ensures that accessibility is embedded in the planning and delivery of major transport upgrades across Greater Manchester. Co-design will be central to developments such as **Bury Interchange**, with early engagement from diverse communities and lived experience groups shaping features like intuitive wayfinding, safe waiting areas, and integrated facilities to ensure new infrastructure is welcoming and easy to use
- Collaborating with lived experience groups to inform **future bus fleet design** and any amendments, ensuring vehicles are accessible, comfortable, and inclusive. Engagement will be undertaken so that our fleet reflects real passenger needs and creates a welcoming travel experience for all.
- Continued implementation of the **Accessible Transport Charter**, setting clear standards and commitments for inclusive journeys across GM. This work will be shaped in collaboration with the Bee Network Disability Advocate and other lived experience groups to ensure the response reflects real needs and priorities. Our immediate focus will be progressing Pillar 3, with an emphasis on Community Transport, and Pillar 4, which centres on creating safe, accessible streets across Greater Manchester.
- Enhancing existing **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training** and tools by providing frontline staff with additional resources. This will include guidance, quick-reference materials, and support to help staff confidently assist passengers with diverse needs and deliver consistently inclusive customer service across the Bee Network.
- Working with the Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG) to co-create practical solutions that **tackle attitudinal barriers** to traveling on the Bee Network to make journeys more inclusive. This will include developing clear guidance, accessible information, and innovative approaches that empower staff and passengers alike, ensuring the Bee Network is welcoming and supportive for everyone.
- Working with lived experience groups to co-design improvements to **accessible customer information** across the Bee Network, ensuring clarity, consistency, and usability for all passengers. This will include reviewing current formats, inclusive design principles, and developing solutions that make travel easier and more confident for people with a range of access needs.

Employment

- Continuing to work with colleagues, employee networks and our trade unions to **improve the quality of our workforce data** so that we have an up to date and accurate data set to enable better analysis and baselining of our activities. We will explore whether we are able to report on ethnicity and disability pay gaps as well as the existing gender pay gap reporting; and report on this if we are able to.
- Continuing to support existing and emerging **colleague networks**, working through our networks to hear diverse voices to identify concerns and influence change. This includes inviting representatives from our networks to join our new Colleague Engagement Group with the objective of co-designing activities which will improve the experience of all colleagues and increase overall workforce engagement.
- Renewing our focus on preventing workplace discrimination and harassment by continuing to deliver our comprehensive **management training programme** and rolling out further training that addresses specific issues including preventing workplace sexual harassment, challenging race discrimination, neuroinclusive management and mental health awareness training for managers.
- Developing a **workforce resourcing strategy** and approach to talent and succession, which will enable TfGM to deliver against the objectives of the Greater Manchester Strategy; and increase the diversity of our workforce at all levels.

