

## Written Evidence Submitted by Greater Manchester Moving [CBE081]

### **Greater Manchester Moving**

We lead, support, and connect people and partners to deliver the GM Moving in Action strategy together. We are one of 42 Active Partnerships; a network of system partners working with Sport England to support the local implementation of the Uniting the Movement Strategy.

Greater Manchester Moving lead, support, and connect people and partners across the system to develop and deliver on the whole system vision and approach to GM Moving in Action. Our organisational role is an important one. It includes, but isn't limited to;

### **Understanding and Sharing**

- Analysis and understanding of data, insight and evidence (about why active lives matter and what is going on in Greater Manchester communities).
- Understanding what makes change happen.
- Translating and sharing the understanding of what makes change happen.

### **Enabling Change**

- Influencing systemic and structural drivers of active lives and inequalities.
- Engaging and influencing across the system to enable change (in priority areas, places and sectors).
- Developing and leading approaches that support culture change, system change and behaviour change across the life course.
- Facilitating, convening, enabling and connecting people and organisations across the system to work together to a shared ambition and purpose.
- Providing high quality public narrative, marketing and communications to enable change.
- Supporting people and leadership development across the system.

**Our whole system approach to system change acknowledges the importance of the built and natural environment to enable active lives for all; With the design, planning and quality of our spaces being of paramount importance to a more equitable Greater Manchester.**

## **The experiences of children and young people of their built environment**

- *How do children and young people experience outdoor spaces in towns, cities and rural areas across the country? For example, their streets, estates, villages, neighbourhoods and parks?*
- *How do these experiences vary across income, race, gender, age?*
- *How easily can children and young people travel to outdoor spaces and schools? How has this changed over the years?*

The physical environment and planning system have a clear role to play in creating safe spaces that are inviting for children and young people. Whilst the types of activity that children and young people participate in change over time; active travel, informal play, and walking are consistent in providing the opportunity to move and therefore access the plethora of mental, social and physical benefits.

From Sport England's CYP Active Lives Survey, we know that only 45.6% of children & young people are active for at least 60 minutes a day in Greater Manchester. This means that 224,600 children are not meeting the recommended guidelines of 60 minutes a day. Whilst the data shows positive trends in our post-pandemic recovery, we know that there is much more to do.

Within Greater Manchester, there are several engagement initiatives to understand the concerns and opportunities for our children and young people. Across these initiatives, safe, equitable, and healthy spaces are highlighted as common themes.

When discussing safe spaces, the perception of safety was highlighted as a limiting factor in children and young people's mobility. Specifically, the darker months of the year, welcoming active travel routes, safe community spaces, clean parks, and the stigma of being a young person were emphasised. The planning system has a role to play to shift the conversations around young people in our spaces by centring their needs and perspectives.

We also understand from our children and young people that equity and inclusion are important in their neighbourhoods. Spaces that enable feelings of belonging,

inclusion, and community are highlighted, especially concerning our streets, public spaces and parks.

Active Lives Survey data shows significant inequalities remain in activity levels, with Black (40%) and Asian (40%) children and young people, and those from the least affluent families (44%), less likely to move more. These levels of inequality are indicative of the opportunity that children and young people have to move actively and play in their neighbourhoods alongside other compounding factors.

Girls (44%) are also less likely to be active than boys (51%). Initiatives such as Make Spaces for Girls and Safer Parks for Girls guidance highlight the need for specific action to be taken to reduce these inequalities and provide safe spaces that are welcoming and reduce stigmas. However, more research is required to understand cultural differences within our communities to enable targeted action that work for all inequalities.

Finally, our children and young people are concerned about the health of the places where they live. Air pollution, mental health, lack of outdoor activities, and opportunities to walk are common concerns. The role that healthy places play in the health and wellbeing of our children and wider society is highlighted with the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership Strategy as part of the wider determinants of health.

### **The planning system**

- *How well are children and young people's needs currently met by the planning process in terms of policy and guidance?*
- *How are children and young people's views and voices heard, considered and acted upon in the planning system if at all?*

Largely the needs of children and young people are not heard or represented in policy and guidance landscape of the planning system. Children are not considered a statutory equalities group either in terms of considering their needs or consultation/involvement in decision-making.

The largest representation with our planning system for children and young people is the play space calculation within the Greater London area. From our experience, this is helpful to ensure that space is allocated but children are rarely specifically engaged and much less designed with. With this area of good practice localised to Greater London this further compounds regional inequalities and contributes to the disparity that we see in activity levels in Greater Manchester.

Our children and young people are clear that participation in decision-making is important to them. Active participation not only works to ensure that their voices can influence projects but also signals that their views are heard and important.

### **Best practice and evaluation**

- *Where are the examples of policy and good practice that are improving children and young people's experiences in the built environment, either directly or indirectly, in the UK or internationally?*
- *How are these outcomes measured? For example, through economic or health and wellbeing indicators?*

There are pockets of good practice across the UK but further support is required at a national level to support child-friendly spaces becoming our cultural norm.

At GMMoving we are working to support Manchester City Council to create a program of engagement, which we are happy to share.

### **Cross Government working**

- *How does the relationship of children and young people with the built environment overlap with policy areas beyond the work of DLUHC, such as public health, transport, policing and net zero?*

- *Are government departments working together to address children and young people's needs in this respect?*

Whole system approaches are required to enable tangible impacts for our children and young people. This should include but is not limited to housing, planning, local government, levelling-up, public health, transport, policing and climate/clean air. We would welcome cross-departmental approaches and focuses.

Particular focus on the impact of climate change in relation to the disproportionate effect on children's health as documented by Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health is encouraged.

[Child health inequalities and climate change in the UK - position statement | RCPCH](#)

Children's needs in the built environment have been ignored by Government policy for too long, resulting in enormous damage to their health, happiness and wellbeing - and incalculable cost to society. This now needs to change. There are many organisations and experts who can contribute to developing a new Government policy approach to children and the built environment, ensuring children can safely access the space outside their homes and across their wider neighbourhoods, giving them the free play, social contact, freedom, healthy development and physical activity they need and benefitting society as a whole.

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