

# Manchester

## Introduction

**Eve:** Welcome to series two of the GM Moving Podcast where we share with you how we are enabling people to get moving. I'm Eve, Strategic Director at GreaterSport; leading, supporting, and connecting GM Moving, Greater Manchester's movement for movement. Supported by investment from Sport England, Greater Manchester partners have been taking a whole system place-based approach to embed physical activity into everything for happier, healthier, more connected communities and active lives for all.

In each episode we share stories of what this looks like in action in each of the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester. I'm back in Manchester Central Library for today speaking to Angela Martin and Stacy Partridge from Manchester Active. And Jane Gardiner is joining me today as one of my colleagues at GreaterSport and the Strategic Lead for the GM Local Pilot network.

Manchester is estimated to be home to over half a million people. The latest Active Lives data suggests that 72% of the adult population are now moving for at least 30 minutes a week. Activity levels are lower however for children and young people, and over 30% of adults of south Asian, black and other man ethnic groups are moving for less than 30 minutes a week. This activity increases to over 40% for people in lower socioeconomic groups and over 50% of people over 75. Today we'll hear about the great work that's going on locally to build relationships and trust between people and partners in place to address these patterns and enable active lives for all.

So let's dig in and find out why moving matters to local lead Stacy...

## Conversation

**Stacy:** For me moving is about a competitive element. I love being challenged through a range of different sports. Mainly football has been the key sport that I've taken up from the age of seven, but then playing vast amounts of sports. Recently started playing tennis and since I've had a dog is walking, they've been the key things. And then they're also trying to get me to join a rounders team as well.

**Eve:** Who's trying to get you to join a rounders team?

**Stacy:** One of my friends she got injured playing football. And so she's trying to get me to go down and play, but it's flat bat when I used to play round bat.

**Eve:** Oh right, there you go. Well shout out to your friend. Who's clearly an activator in getting you to try something else this summer, well done. And anything in particular that you get out of being active?

**Stacy:** It's a socialising element and creating more friends from it and got a common interest.

**Eve:** And you Jane?

**Jane:** Yeah, probably a mixture. I played netball for a long time. Probably more for the social elements. We are quite a nice group of friends that have grown from that. But then being outside, I like riding my bike, walking, running, just to think it just gives me that little bit of head space, free time just to get out and work through whatever's going on in my head.

**Eve:** What's it look like for you then Angela?

**Angela:** So I've always been active at school, love sports, but probably wasn't particularly great at them. And the competitive element isn't for me. Learnt to swim as a kid. My parents were really big walkers, we walked everywhere. That was like our main mode of travel. They took us to every park across Manchester and Greater Manchester. So I've really got that love of being outdoors.

I do a lot of walking, walk daily, got into gym and fitness in my late teens. And I've pretty much always had some gym membership up until I had children. Didn't have the time. Luckily, there was like a workplace offer. It was a yoga class, circuit class, and that was just absolutely perfect for me. I could fit it into my day. And I think the other thing about being active for me is quite often, it's been my only chance to get my me time. Fitness is a big thing for me, done a bit of social jogging with friends in between us having kids and things, we regrouped.

Really want to get into cycling this year, the kids are getting into cycling now, so it feels like we can start to venture that bit further. It's a life skill for them isn't it. And giving them confidence to cycle on roads, et cetera. And hopefully that's something that they'll have as a behaviour as they grow up and they'll cycle to school, et cetera.

**Eve:** So how old are they?

**Angela:** I've got a six year old who doesn't like walking and cycling, and a ten year old who loves walking and cycling. Complete opposites! We've found scooting with the youngest one is just perfect. Trying not to say we're going for a walk, just so we're going out. You just think of all these ways of getting everybody out. And actually it benefits me because I can walk faster so I can walk briskly.

**Eve:** You certainly learn as a parent how to design moving in by stealth! It's a good way of bringing it into your work.

**Angela:** Yeah.

**Eve:** So getting stuck into your jobs and your role and the Manchester Local Pilot. So, yeah, starting with you Stacy can you just tell us a little bit about your role and what the Local Pilot looks like in Manchester?

**Stacy:** For me I'm quite new to the Local Pilot, probably been about six months isn't it now Ange?

**Angela:** Yeah

**Stacy:** For me it's been really good to look at and come in with a new fresh pair of eyes and have a look at how everything's going. Learn about all the different projects that have been happening and challenge people in the way that they've looked at their principles and their approaches to the way that they're doing things and, and build them relationships.

So that's been like my key first six months is just building relationships, building that rapport, learning about everything that's happening and going on. Not just within the Pilot but within them communities as well to look at that whole system approach. And what are the contributing factors to the way things are happening within that community.

**Eve:** And you've got a focus haven't you in some particular communities and setting the context, I mean, Manchester's huge and densely populated. It's the equivalent, isn't it of often about three different local authorities in one. So it's helping people picture the size, the complexity, the diversity of the population, the different needs.

**Stacy:** Yes. So four areas across Manchester, one being in the south which is Woodhouse park in Wythenshawe, we've got Newton Heath, Miles Platting in the North, and then we've also got an Ancoats, Beswick, Clayton and Openshaw.

So we've got quite a big remit across Manchester, and we've also got looking at four target audiences across them which is children and young people in and out of school setting, people who are unemployed or at risk of being unemployed, people with a long-term health condition or at risk of getting a long term health condition. And the idea around it is because that could potentially make up with quite a lot of the families who were in the neighbourhoods that we were working in.

**Eve:** Great. Thank you. And Angela, have you been involved for longer?

**Angela:** I'm one of the managers in the Health and Wellbeing team, which is where we sit and lead on walking, cycling, and the Pilot. I came into the role end of 2019, got a target audience, the place based working, the target audiences. But then we have a second tier of work, which is around walking, cycling and that's citywide. So myself and Laurel, our walking and cycling officer, our role is to be able to pull that together and connect things and collaborate with other partners who also are working in that area and have that agenda. So we call them the two tiers of the Manchester Local Pilot.

**Eve:** And then Jane, so your job is that weaving and pulling people together across all the different ten Local Pilots, the ten different districts, in Greater Manchester and then obviously GM as a whole. So you get to spot the patterns and the similarities and differences.

**Jane:** And really to bring people together to share their learning. So obviously it's a completely different approach to how we were working before. And I think when we first started there was a lot of nervousness around that. We used to be very much KPI focused and maybe always told the good story. And I think something that we have had to get used to within the Pilot is when things don't go as well that's okay. And I think that's something that we've had to work with all of the locality needs be comfortable in doing. So we try and convene that space for people to come together, a supportive network for each other. I think Manchester has really embraced that and come along to the...

**Eve:** Nervous laughter there.

**Jane:** ...to the forums and input and bring to life their examples. And I think other localities really feed off that, when other localities take in that information and thinking, how can they put that back in their locality and vice versa. It's really important for everyone to be a part of that and feel as one network rather than ten individual.

**Eve:** And that's certainly been the beauty when I've come and joined some of the Local Pilot forum conversations is just you get that sense of it's a safe space for those honest conversations. And it's so rich that storytelling and what comes out then in the learning and in the challenges and in the joy that comes and things do work. And that's the point of this podcast really is how do we amplify that and help more people to see and hear and get a sense of what it's all about and make it real. And we definitely will be digging into some of the challenges.

So, that honesty is about being honest about when it doesn't work, warps and all. But before we go there, let's talk about the good stuff. So any particular examples of when it's felt good or things that you are seeing happening that may have been made possible because of the Local Pilot approach?

**Stacy:** So when I first came in there was the Heart and Soul event and that celebrating the first phase of the work where they recruited community researchers that had been out doing lots of talking with residents. Finding out what would make Woodhouse Park a healthier place to live. And they managed to go away and have loads of conversations about over seventy ideas. And then they were able to have a look at them and reduce 'em down to twenty six.

So they managed to look at these twenty six ideas and they went out into different locations across the community to display their ideas of what they've come up with from their conversations. And then they brought this all together into the celebration event, which is a celebration of their work and inviting local residents.

**Angela:** And that was really their time to show off to their friends, family, other residents what they'd achieved. They had their own exhibition and display and photographs and this great artwork. And they were really, really proud on that night of what they'd achieved.

**Stacy:** And the feeling that that gave me when I went there is like this is not just any type of event or celebratory event of the work that they're doing. It really had that feel of you can tell this is all about them residents. And really they've been at the heart and focus of everything, which goes with the name of the

Heart and Soul project, from being working across different things in the community. It was just really refreshing to see.

And cuz if you've seen the residents, when they first started to what they're doing now. We had an event last week and they're up talking to local partners. You asked would they do that twelve months ago? They wouldn't have been able to do that. So there's been a lot of work done in terms of supporting that confidence building and giving them the tools to be able to stand up and talk. And be proud about what they're doing and also trying to take that ownership of it as well.

**Eve:** Fantastic.

**Jane:** There were two different ways you did the community engagement didn't you because Covid got in the way.

**Angela:** You're right we tried to start the Heart and Soul project in 2020, it was all prepped ready to go. And then it just felt like with the pandemic community engagement was a bit of a challenge and we were having to tweak the sessions it felt like almost on a weekly basis. People had to be socially distanced. We hired the biggest hall within the forum to keep people apart and we bought visors and, hand sanitiser and stuff like that. And, it was just difficult to keep the momentum going and the engagement with the residents.

Some of it then switched to online, but I think people were just distracted because of the climate at the time, and it just didn't quite land. And we decided to pause it and went back in 2021. Went out with a much bigger engagement piece, leafleted the area. It was interesting. We started to get people that wouldn't traditionally engage in a project like that. A couple of them were feeling quite isolated or didn't have particular connections in the local community. Others were looking for things to do. Some came through from contact with other partners, so the family centre and other wellbeing services. And we've probably engaged with about twenty five residents in total, but we've got this core group of eight residents that came to weekly sessions and weekly workshops.

And they started to go out and walk the area and discuss the question, 'What makes Woodhouse Park a happier and healthier place?' And they went out and engaged with I think about one hundred and fifty plus residents at key locations across the ward. And they really owned it, they really took charge. They went through role playing that when they were gonna be out in public, what they were gonna say and what they were gonna ask. And engaged with a really wide

range of people from young people to older people and came back with this mass of ideas. These seventy plus ideas, which then got condensed, cause there were lots of similarities.

And we held a celebration event in October, and since then Stacy's been working with them. They've all got their very own personal interest in parts of the twenty six ideas that they want to take forward. They're currently working most of them together on creating a walking trail. That was one of the priorities. Initially when they were out and about in the area, they were saying, there's nowhere nice to walk, it's not pleasant. If you want to go somewhere nice you have to leave the area. You have to go out to Cheshire or further afield. And then naturally from exploring the area, they discovered lots of nice places and that opinion changed. And now they've found a figure of eight that they've created, it takes in a couple of the parks. They've discovered a wood.

We had a workshop last week, and they presented that to all the stakeholders who came along. We did a bit more of a workshop and a bit of a discussion to see how we're gonna take that forward. But that's very much gonna happen in the next couple of months. And they actually want to activate the walk as well, so not just create it, create a map or a digital walking offer. They want to take people out on the route and lead walks. They're gonna target families and mental health. So they've got lots of ideas and we are supporting them to pull all of that together.

**Eve:** Sounds fantastic. I want to go and do this loop of eight now. But what a great example of building that local agency and ownership and voiceover of what happens and different tools in their bag from maps, to way finding, to walk leaders. Fantastic example.

**Stacy:** The work that we're supporting with Step Up Manchester as well, a lady called Nicole who's doing all that working; Openshaw, Clayton, Ancoats and Beswick. And what she's brought there is she brought local organisations and loads of partners who work in the area, created an advisory panel. And then the support she's been able to activate for people to apply for funding through her.

So she's got some funding that she's able to give out, but it's the support that she's been giving them, because I've found a lot of the issues around them may be people being able to write and a successful application. She's done a lot of work with all the local people in terms of building their confidence, building their skills to be able to apply for stuff. And it's like there's a lady who really wants to start her own forest school and the support that she's able to give her

this woman is now ready to go and supported this woman to make her own ambition.

**Eve:** What does that look like in practice there's been a lot there around building up that confidence you've talked about in both of those examples. In practice how do you do that? How have you been doing that? What does that look like?

**Stacy:** So she's been using an organisation and connecting up with them and they support people with applications and bid writing and things like that. And also how to support them to maybe become a CIC and things like that. Rather than just saying here's this person, can you help them? It's been really more of a partnership, like I've got this person are you able to come in to support? And it's been like everybody's working together because Nicole's built that relationship up with them in the first place.

And quite often if you just look to give it to somebody else that person's not got that relationship with them, and it's how you connect them dots. And I think that's a really big key to everything is the relationships and that trust, and support that you give to people enables them people come back to you so when they do need help they will come back and ask you.

**Eve:** So building up that trust in those relationships between individuals, but also between key partners working together in a place?

**Stacy:** Yeah. So I think that's been a key success in terms of relationship building.

**Eve:** So understanding the different contributions that different partners can bring?

**Stacy:** Most definitely. And yeah, you've just nailed it in one.

**Eve:** You're doing it! It's easy to say that, it's harder to do that in practice and in a pandemic as well!

**Angela:** In the early days of the Pilot slightly before my time, there were a number of attempts at engagement in the four wards. And its obvious engagements are a really significant part of our approach and it's been a really strong theme throughout the work we're doing, underpins our work. And I think across all the wards there's different attempts at engagement, but didn't quite result in what we were hoping for. There was a bigger need for support and



resources than we'd expected. And we couldn't necessarily provide that or they needed more direction.

I think Kim did a piece herself, that just resulted in all of this qualitative work, and then it was like what do we do with that now? We engaged with a partner who works with children and young people in the summer holidays, and that resulted in lots of quantitative data, which we wanted the qualitative data. So we tried all these different ways and, it wasn't quite working and we couldn't quite find our feet with it really, but that learning led us to then engage with MACC, the voluntary, community and social enterprise representative in Manchester, and start discussing the development of a community engagement programme.

So I think without those early days of attempting engagement ourselves, we wouldn't have got to a point where we understood the connectivity with the VCSE sector and the need to work with that sector.

**Jane:** I was just thinking about the example of working with cycling and working with British Cycling and how you adapted those courses?

**Angela:** Yeah, cycling's a good one. We were starting to hear there was a bit of interest in Cheetham from various people. They didn't necessarily know what they wanted to do but they were just interested in cycling and they could see that it would benefit the wider community.

So we started having a conversation and it led to a number of things really. There was one guy who was interested in holding a bike library at a mosque. We recruited five residents to go on the British Cycling Ride Leaders training, cuz people knew they wanted to lead rides locally. But the challenge with getting people on the training there was all of these barriers. They didn't have a bike, they didn't know how to cycle, they'd not cycled for a very long time.

So working with Laurel and Beth at British Cycling, we just started meeting them in a park and going for a little bike ride and building confidence. And then that led to linking in TFGM to build confidence on roads, et cetera.

So all of these things we were putting into place in order to get a group of people on a training course. We were able to get them through the training and they started leading rides.

And then we were also approached around the same time by the University of Glasgow and British Cycling. They wanted to test the community intervention. So again, we went into Cheetham in December and had an engagement session.

Didn't know if anyone would turn up. And we had probably twenty five plus ladies that came through the door. Many couldn't cycle, but they were just really eager to hear more and they wanted to learn to ride a bike. It was cause some of them were a bit of a dream. It was like a real thing they wanted to achieve. And that programme, the intervention started in I think end of January, it was a nine week weekly session and we had a pause for Ramadan for four weeks and they've just completed the final session on Sunday.

**Eve:** Fantastic.

**Angela:** And majority have been out on the road, everyone's learned to ride a bike, and we had a celebration evening on Monday night. There was just so much love in the room, everyone was proud and everyone got a chance to speak. And it's just amazing to hear the ladies talk about this had been a dream of theirs.

And one lady said initially her son had thought this was just a crazy idea. So he just thought it was silly. And then last weekend he was driving past the park and thought, 'oh I wonder if my mom's in the park cycling, I might go and see how she's doing', and he was really proud of her.

And some of the ladies have started going cycling with children and families, and they just don't want this to stop. I think this is very much it feels like it's just the start and equally the facilitators that supported the programme have asked if they can come back, see how the ladies are doing they wanna support them. It's just interesting from an early conversation, not quite knowing what you want to do, how we've been able to tap into the office and services and develop new things and test new things and just try things really. That test and learn approach has been really key. If it didn't work, it didn't work, we've tried it, but people came with us on the journey so to speak.

**Stacy:** Some of the women were not sure how they would be perceived as Muslim women riding a bike. So it is really nice that they experience it as realising no they can. It doesn't matter of your religion.

**Eve:** It shifts cultural norms doesn't it? About it being for everybody in a way that works for them. I'm sure the listener could hear the joy coming out. Watching your face then and you can just see that sense of the joy it does bring doesn't it when things work and that shifts there with influencing other partners and how they're working their processes. That shifting, you said examples there Stacy of how investment flows and how it works. All really key enablers in how we make this change happen.

So there about a lot of the good stuff that's really working and you start to touch upon some of the things where you'd had to adapt and learn. But I guess to dig into with honesty where it's really challenging, what's been really difficult or the biggest challenges you've faced so far?

**Stacy:** For me I'd say with one of our projects called 'Seeds of Joy' in Miles Platting. I think a challenge that we found is maybe the engagement. So a big thing was people's perceptions are saying like, 'oh they don't engage in Miles Platting, they don't do this.' And when people are saying like, 'oh, they won't turn up to this' and you're just thinking, okay. And we've been looking at it and rather than listening to what they're saying in terms of they won't turn up, we've just been thinking right, what can we do differently to attract this neighbourhood and engage the residents in this community?

And then we've been having like a gardening session going on every Tuesday, one till three, and it's taken a good two months I would say, just to get four community gardeners to be involved in that community garden and be there regularly, and try and take that ownership, which now two of them have got their own set of keys to go into the garden whenever they want, and for us four has been like a really big success.

**Jane:** I'm Really interested in your community engagement and how you did it differently. So you said you were learning from how the partners had done it before, and saying like they were engaged and how did you get those four gardeners?

**Stacy:** So one of the ladies, she makes me laugh actually, because I turned up to a community event for something else of another project. I sat there on the table with her and was doing a mapping exercise and she just stood up. She went, 'There's not even many residents here, there's only a few of us.' And it just made me laugh to think actually everybody in the room and they was trying to do it for the community. And this was about them having the residents involved.

So from then on, I thought, okay. And then we've had the garden open more and she's been going past and seeing the space open. And then Olivia she's been speaking to her and it's just built her confidence up. She goes 'I'm always walking past the garden and if I just had a key I could go in' and it's just built up in time when things fall into place I think by chance with that person.

And the other two they came to a community event last year, and then they stayed for a little bit longer. And each time they came to an event they carried on coming. And then they realised that the gardens were over the road because

we did a lot in another garden called Holland Street, which is further down the road. And now this year we've concentrated on another space called The Retrace Street Garden, and then they live over the road facing it and they work full time, but they've been coming in on their time's off and the weekends to help maintain that garden and keep on top of it.

So that's opened over a period of time with them first being involved in The Seeds of Joy last year. And then that's then followed on by trying to keep them involved in everything going forward so that's been really key.

And then the other fourth one is actually a lady from a project from Heart and Soul in Wythenshawe. She was one of our community researchers there, but she's moved to the North. And so we knew she had an interest in and now we can't keep her away.

**Eve:** Fantastic

**Stacy:** And we've been doing a lot of work in terms of how we're linking in with a lot of the partnerships and it's almost as if everyone's doing their own thing and that co-work and production and people working in collaboration with each other isn't quite at that point of everyone working together.

How can we put that as part of our work within the Seed's of Joy and bring people together into it? And we're gonna be holding a partners event to bring people into the same room and talk and ask people, but using Seeds of Joy as that anchoring cuz we've met with them, talked with them all about the project. So we really wanna get them into the same room.

That's another thing people then don't turn up, but I know we're talking about the challenges. We held our first family friendly event which was about creating little activities where people would go on little nature treasure hunts where they had to go and find these cards and answer a question. And we had over a hundred people come to this.

**Eve:** They did turn up!

**Stacy:** But we did a lot of pre-work with that. We went door knocking. We found the time between four and six was a good time where just before they were making their tea, or they might have just sat down to eat it. We managed to go around and we'd give them a little voucher and say they could win certain prizes for coming along and free refreshments and everything was free there.

And I think that was the first time the community have actually really all came into one of the community spaces that they've got the activities that they didn't realise that we was getting them to do were getting them active, moving around the garden and just a real nice day for people just to come and see something different. And the people we did the door knocking and give the vouchers to, we had about seventy vouchers given out.

I think there were about fifty seven of them who came back and put them in from the door knocking and the individual tickets that we had given out. So it has shown to us that the people we did connect with beforehand to promote it and bring them along, that really did actually play a big part. And other people were saying to us, well we did some door knocking with some of the local partners, and we tried to give them a plant and then talk to them but we weren't interested.

**Eve:** So change in those perceptions of whether people get involved and how to engage and involve people in the mix there of actually going to people. Literally knocking on people's doors speaking to them where they're at. And you turn up for them and then to expect for them to turn up in other spaces that maybe aren't where they naturally go.

**Stacy:** So my learning from that is like, not always listening to what other people say, learn it for yourself and ask questions about how they did it and what they did to then maybe how you'd do something and if you could slightly do things a little bit differently to maybe get a different outcome.

**Eve:** And have you seen that influence of the work then in other people's end perception of how they're trying to involve people locally?

**Stacy:** Well, one lady saw the space and she was like, 'Oh, I'd love to really do something for the Jubilee within this space.' And I think what she didn't realise was how short of a turnaround that was, but it actually started that thought process is actually, they may be able to use this community space to do something.

And hopefully by next year, that's maybe something we are aiming to get to is that they see this community space as theirs and their taking up ownership and they can run their own activities. And that would be a real positive for that community due to the lack of community venues and spaces to be able to use. So if they can start creating positive associations with the space then I think that would be really positive for that community.

**Eve:** I love the Seeds of Joy name as well cause it sounds exactly like what you're doing really.

**Stacy:** And these are the names that the community researchers have come up with so this is the co-creation team. So last year we had a group of three local gardeners and they made up the co-creation team. And they did all the support with the planning, the support with the events and activities. And then this year we've made a Seed's of Joy a subgroup. And it's made up of about fourteen local residents then as well and then they come and be part of it.

So like, for example, when we did the event they did like an arts and craft stall, and they've been invited to help design what these events look like and be part of them. So now we create this subgroup and then we're gonna be looking to cuz we have to think carefully about not bringing loads of people in and ruining the co-creation group, but we are subtly going to be bringing one or two more into it to build a bigger picture and bigger group.

**Angela:** That's really important because it's felt like there's a very small number of residents who are managing and maintaining some quite small green spaces, community gardens, and one of the aims is to connect that together so they can build that support network and build resilience and upskill the residents and also create another walking theme to that as well.

There are these great assets that people are looking after and their lovely. And how can we encourage people to come out of their houses and start to go and explore these community spaces and link them together. So that naturally creates a place people can go and walk to and from.

**Stacy:** That's our July event. So we've got five local community gardens that they're going to walk to all these different gardens and the gardens are gonna get to show off and show where different spaces and the work that they're doing.

So that's gonna be our focus of one that the group into the different gardens and seeing it, but also we do see gardening as well as getting people moving and getting people active around the spaces.

**Eve:** Such great examples of how people often don't realise some of the assets they've got in their own neighbourhood. And we saw that during Covid didn't we. People suddenly discovered what gems they've got on their doorstep. How we can amplify that and create that pride of place.

And I guess final question, so we started off at the beginning Jane and you were talking about the importance of shifting metrics and measures of success, and you've talked a lot about how it feels. So I'm just wondering about any key learning around how you'll know that you are making progress, if we're not using some of those traditional counts of bums in seats?

**Jane:** Utilising the residents who run the co-production team or run the community researchers team and gathering their stories and their journey. So from when they started to what they're doing now. I think that would be a good measure to then get their perspective on things. I think that would give people a good insight into the projects and how things have worked, because each of them will have their own story to tell. And they will have all benefited in slightly different ways to what others have.

**Eve:** Brilliant. Bring on more storytelling and more feedback and thank you. It's been an absolute pleasure. So thank you very much to all of you. And I look forward to hearing what's next, and seeing it, and feeling it.

## **Outro**

**Eve:** We've heard how moving matters to everybody and how we can all play a role to design moving back into everyday life. Now we'd love to hear how you keep moving, and the ways you are supporting others to live an active life. You contact us on our socials. We are on Facebook and Twitter, just search GreaterSport, and don't forget the #GMMovingInAction.

Please do share this episode to people and organisations who will find it useful and join the movement for movement. A big thank you to everyone who's investing in this work and playing their part to test, to learn and to make this happen. This series is a MIC Media production.