

GM Moving Podcast - Catalyst: Marcomms episode

Eve: Welcome to series two of the GM Moving Podcast, where we share with you stories of how people and partners across Greater Manchester are creating the conditions for active lives for all. I'm Eve, Strategic Director at Greater Sport, leading, supporting, and connecting GM Moving Greater Manchester's Movement for movement.

For our first 12 episodes of series two, we journeyed around Greater Manchester, speaking to local partners to hear more about the work they're doing, taking a whole system, place-based approach to embed physical activity into everything.

Our last four episodes in this series have a slightly different focus as I speak to our catalyst leads, our key catalysts of engagement, people, leadership, marketing, and communications, and evaluation.

We have learned that if we invest in and pay attention to these things, this will speed up the rate of change across the whole system to enable more active lives.

For today's episode, we're back at the podcast studio at Manchester Central Library, where we're joined by Nicky Hawkins, Beth Sutcliffe and Karen Hall to hear about the work they're doing to support GM Moving marketing and communications.

First up is Nicky. I started off by quiz Nicky about her own personal relationship with moving. She told me it's taken her 42 years to realise how moving and being active and sweaty, is so important to her mental wellbeing. Nicky is an expert in public narrative and framing and has been key to the GM Moving Communications journey, helping us think about the ways people's messages and stories influence how others respond, think, feel, and act. Nicky used to be part of the Frameworks Institute and joined the early days of the local pilot. They did some initial workshops with local pilot leads to help us all be more intentional about the language we use to ensure it has the effects that we intend and works.

Nicky has helped us to reframe physical activity, so it's not something that's over there for other people, but it's a more natural part of everyday life for all of us helping people reimagine and design ways in which the world around us to enable more active lives.

I ask her about what effect those early workshops had on the work.

Nicky I think what's amazing for me, hearing that from those early workshops that we had was how much control you have and how much of a source of power and influence it is to be able to make these really intentional choices about how you represent the work and talk about the work. And I think that's something that I try to leave people with because sometimes it can feel overwhelming. People's perceptions, people's attitudes, the big narratives that we have about social issues. How on earth can one

person or even a great group of people make an impact on that. But actually I think that every act of intentional communication, has incredible potential and recognising that and celebrating that and seeing it as a source of power, and something to embrace. Yeah, something to embrace really positively and feel really good about, rather than something to feel overwhelmed and, like you can't make enough difference.

Eve: Next is Beth. Beth is a Strategic Director for Greater Sport and says that moving is a massive part of her life and brings her a lot of joy. She played lots of sports when she was younger and says if she doesn't do it now, like walking and cycling, she misses it. Did I mention she's also played rugby league for England with several world Cups under her belt?

I asked Beth how from those initial workshops with Nicky, she took those learnings and embedded them across our work in the local pilot.

Beth: Yeah. I think it was just a real start point of inspiration really to make us realise how much we were in control really of influencing, not only to reframe physical activity in the sense of it being something that relates to everyone, but also being really challenging to ourselves about how we make sure all our imaging and language is inclusive as well. So we've done a lot of work over the last couple of years on really making sure that the things that we put out there to the system and to the public is really relevant, diverse, and meaningful to everyone in Greater Manchester in particular and wider. And that's took time to do and I think we're still got a long way to go, but we've got so much better at that and where the Local Pilots played a massive role there it's helped us really understand that. It does massively mean a difference if you've got imagery of local people that relate to where they live and, they can see their neighbour in physical activity messages and imagery and all the stuff that is produced at a local level, and that resonates with people. So people take notice of it. They see themselves in it as well. It sounds obvious when you say it out loud, but I think there's been a big shift in all of us to realise that over the last year or two, and it's making a big difference in terms of how we produce stuff and, and put stuff out there.

Karen: But it's true. If you can't see yourself in the imagery and how is it for you, how is it relatable? And I think that there's been lots of work done across that medium, so we've benefited from that. I benefited from that in my role.

Eve: That's Karen. Karen grew up with a very competitive brother and spent quite a lot of family breakfasts getting hit by a flying ball. She credits her PE teacher for introducing her to rugby, and she's been playing ever since for over 20 years

Karen says that working with GM Moving has helped her to reframe what moving means to people who may not have been given the opportunities she did when she was a young girl. Here she gives an example from This Girl Can, a campaign and project for

the National Lottery that aimed to reframe how girls defined physical activity

Karen: And also This Girl Can campaign really changed how we looked at imagery and how we were approaching the target audience and the levels and barriers that are involved in people maybe not taking part in physical activity in the language, the fear of judgment and all these other layers to it as well

Beth: Think the type of activity as well, that we realised that representing different types of activities. So we are reinforcing that everyday activity message. And sport plays a massive part in all the work we do and it's hugely important to a lot of people's lives. But we want to get people who are not doing anything, doing something. So making sure people recognise and identify and understand that. Walking, gardening, moving a little bit more is so important and valuable, and representing that in the marketing comms that we produce, just keeps reinforcing that message and making it more of the norm. I think on that as well we've done quite a lot of work on being confident about talking about physical activity as well.

So whether or not it's introducing the job that you do, the role you do in a new room with a new group of people, or if it's down the pub or in your social life, how you talk about physical activity can change that one person's perception of what it means to be active. So we don't have to think about brand campaigns, but also those individual conversations play a massive role. So we have done a lot of work on our key messages as an organisation, for example, in supporting system partners to really think about if you've got three minutes with someone to talk about physical activity, what do you wanna say? And try and have an impact about what you're saying and a bit of a call to action. That's really helped as well to think about those different layers of influence, like you described.

Eve: Really tapping into everyone as a storyteller. Which is quite hard, isn't it? People quite often get a bit nervous about telling stories and then they start and you discover how everybody has brilliant stories, everyone has some form of relationship to physical activity that is relatable to others. So just providing that space and that platform and that invite to share your story and know that that will resonate and that you can support others to then move a little bit more as well. Because a couple of specific campaigns I guess you might talk about Beth.

Beth: Yeah. So alongside the framing stuff we did back at the start of this journey. We commissioned some research with a company called Britain Thinks, and a lot of the insight that came from that shaped the That Counts campaign, which was recognising that one, we needed to shift the perception of what we mean by physical activity in sport and back to that everyday movement idea.

So how can we, through a campaign, help to do that so the language that counts is trying to encourage people to recognise that everything counts in terms of any

movement is gonna have a positive benefit on your health and, your wellbeing. But then also we did focus groups and interviews through the research project. And what we found was that people really resonated with messages about the here and now. So I'm thinking about what physical activity and movement provides them. So, it does help them to sleep better. It makes you feel instantly, your mood increases, your mental wellbeing increases. So that is what people resonated with and wanted to hear.

So that helped us shape the That Counts campaign. And then that's gone on to influence future campaigns that we've done. Currently we've got Keep Moving, which we've rolled across Greater Manchester, but is being used in localities as well, and really staying true to that research and keep going back to that and remembering what came out of that research. And again, that's what came from the research that we did, that people were confused by messaging and they wanted something really simple and clear. And the other key thing to mention from the research is like being really clear in our messaging as well. So what are we saying when we mean physical activity, how many minutes? Is it every day? Is it once a week?

Eve: I guess we're still on the GM campaign side. So just briefly about, cause walking has been an important part of all that, hasn't it? As I guess the most common way that people are likely to move every day. So just tell a little bit about that campaign.

Beth: Yeah, that was a really nice campaign to be part of cause it was all about the joy of walking and what walking enables you to do. So connecting with green space, connecting with other people. It being so accessible, it being for everyone, pulling that campaign together again, building on the Britain Thinks research, but then doing focus groups out in the community and the campaign was just built on stories from Greater Manchester, from a range of different people about what walking meant to them. And that was a lovely thing to be a part of because it did bring just joy listening to the stories as well, and such a simple thing and something that everyone can access as well.

Eve: And you can check that out on our YouTube channel still. I love that. I love that Maxine Peak's voice talking over. Fantastic. And one of the examples of the reframe that's happened has been that shift away from focusing on sport as you described to everyday movement. And GM Moving, being all about everybody moving all the time and people moving more as a movement. And then we are seeing how that is shifting as well across the ten boroughs. So it's now Stockport Moving is your strategy, is it? Is that right?

Karen: Yeah. Stockport Moving Together.

Eve: That's right. Stockport Moving Together. How has the Local Pilot given you maybe space to approach Marcomms differently?

Karen: It's very much working within place based spaces and with local community groups and local organisations. And I work quite closely with the marketing teams just to try and establish what the key messages are. And that's where Stockport Moving Together came from, because luckily in Stockport, they've done a real piece of work for our ride about getting the Local Pilot embedded into the strategy and a number of strategies within the council.

And they've really made a case for how important it is. So we had a strategy in 2019, an active community strategy, and it was PDF up on the website and I think within three years it had about sixty nine views or something like that. So for me it was just about starting about how we could just make it more visible to Stockport residents and make it more meaningful, and obviously pulling all the learning from all the campaigns that had already happened that was already happening, and trying to tie those all together.

So Stockport Moving Together was a really great way of just trying to bring it all under one key brand, but also with that simple messaging about how moving more can mean anything to all types of people. Pulling out the local stories, the Brinnington Map story, we focused on that. We produced a video around that that then linked into Age UK Stockport and the work they're doing. Cause they take out walking groups with the Brinnington map and then they've got digital inclusion, and community events happening and just how all these things tie in. And it's not always a starting point is physical activity. And natter, for example, might be a lead into a walk with a friend. That's definitely something I've found in Stockport.

The starting point isn't always moving more in these local situations. It might be just pop in for a cup of coffee and have a chat and be less socially isolated, be less lonely, and find out what's going on through that channel.

So it's really just about bringing those stories to life. So we've used a lot of video to tell those stories across Stockport. We've looked at the Stockport County Community Trust Group, Wellbeing Group. We've always got the SEND swimming where there's lots of learning that's happened between Seashell Trust coming together and Life Leisure coming together. So we are telling all the stories of the parents who have benefited from that, and the staff at Life Leisure who are now receiving training and how that's impacted on the service that they deliver in that area. So really just bringing those stories out to Stockport residents, because there'll be people in that community that will never have seen their leisure centre as somewhere they could go or somewhere for them, if they're a parent or carer of someone, with SEN needs.

So hopefully just really amplifying what's happening at hyper local level towards a bigger audience, a bigger Stockport audience, and just making sure they understand that it can move in different ways. It doesn't have to be sport or fitness. It can be doing the garden. It can be playing in the park with friends. It can be finding out what's happening at your local wellbeing group, because it's not just about the physical

benefits that you say those long term health benefits, it's more about those immediate benefits of just the wellbeing element of it and just feeling better and having more of an outlet in your community. So it's been a really interesting journey in terms of trying to tie all those things that are happening together from a comms and marketing perspective.

So I hope that's just been the start. We launched that in July and now we're looking to see how we can really start to grow that movement through the networks that sit behind that. And that's allowed me roots into those or the voluntary sector, the networks that sit behind the strategy and things like that. Hopefully much more local stories to tell. So have more than 69

Eve: So have more than sixty nine people in here?

Karen: Hopefully. Yeah, we have the launch saw like over probably about 2000 people watching the video. And I think one of the great things about partnership work and collaborating with so many organisations is that one of the videos we put out on our channels was then amplified on another one, Stockport County, for example, which has a huge reach and that's tripled our figures easily. So yeah, there's a real domino effect that you always hope to see in comms and marketing where people take it and then tell their stories on top of that as well.

Eve: So that can be quite hard sometimes for comms teams that have been used to being told to control the message, control the brand, control the narrative, hold onto it quite tightly. Whereas you described, you used the word spread and grow, which there's a level of having to let things go and let other people and partners take those messages and possibly, shift and tweak them slightly in place. Is there anything that's been challenging in that or any joy that's come from that process?

Karen: It's quite challenging in the traditional channels that you use, traditional marketing channels that you use don't always fit the Local Pilot type approach. Cause it is so hyperlocal, your general council comms, social media channels or channels that you use as a marketing professional don't always quite hit the mark.

There's been a lot of need to rethink that, but there's been lots of joys. I think the story is joyful, I think one chat that I got in touch with was Phil from Woodley in Stockport, and he was recovering from a stroke at the time and, he was using physical activity to get back to some level of fitness and it was really, really helping him. And then he was diagnosed with cancer. And they had to remove a tumour and that set him right back. And then he had to start again and build again. And he was just doing exercise, like lifting cans, fruit or vegetables, things like that. And at one point I think he was strapping his feet to exercise bike to try and get him go in again. And his story was just incredibly inspiring and I felt like that was one that needed to be told because if Phil

could do that Phil was able to get active in that scenario. And I just think that's a really helpful message, especially for people with long term health conditions with a key target group, with a Local Pilot that was really powerful. So I managed to get him as a 'We are undefeatable Champion' and now he features on their campaign and their material, and he's a local resident who just really, I think had a really powerful story that we knew about locally but didn't know about beyond that. And now hopefully we've been able to share that journey and share his story and people will feel inspired by that. So that's joyful.

Nicky That's amazing. I love that story. It challenges some of the ways that we probably think about physical activity, which is very linear that you go on a journey from here to here and you have to improve, and then here you are running a marathon at the end. I think we all fall victim to the idea that this is something that's like a linear story whereas actually real life, it's always messier than that and there's always setbacks and there's always days where you are not feeling in a position to up your game and actually I think it's just so nice to have stories that amplify this idea of stop starting.

Beth: I think some of the challenges it's an interesting thing just to get some people's thoughts on actually, is that that thing of having to play to the media and feed the beast that you like so often stories that people want are not necessarily stories that we want to tell. So yes, the story of someone going from zero to running a world record marathon is a great story and it's gonna get a lot of press, but actually the stories that you've just told and what we want everyone to hear because we want people to be inspired by that and their real, but that's not necessarily gonna get on the front page news. I think there is a challenge there and often the stories we want to share as well are maybe less about one individual, but about how the systems work together to make change or, a couple of organisations have been flexible and done something differently and made a difference to someone's life. So how would you tell those stories in a powerful, meaningful way that's gonna resonate with the media in order to influence as wide as possible? And I think that's something we're still really challenged with.

Nicky This is definitely something I spend a lot of my time thinking about and trying to understand and work within is how do you tell stories that are enabling and empowering and inspiring for individuals, but also don't rely on responsibility and the owners being solely on an individual which is the classic story, the hero's journey. Whereas in real life, rarely does anybody do anything entirely by themselves and without some structural system or provision that is actually spurring them along the way. So I think the work that you guys are doing is so important, but I agree with you that those are quite more difficult stories to tell in the media.

Because of the stories we've come to believe, to tell about ourselves and believe that we need to hear. There's so many good things that I hear about and that I think about, and sometimes it's a question of telling the story in a different way about what's featured in the story and if somebody has gone on this amazing journey, how and why

and what can we learn from that and what can we do more of or possibly less of. And I often think about Park Run as a really good example of something that seems so basic but has been so transformative for so many people and now loving the fact that they've made it into Park Walk, which is so much more accessible to more people. This simple seeming intervention. This bit of provision has this incredible power that can affect people's lives. And I think those are the stories that we need to be able to tell more of. And the media should definitely be profiling more.

Eve: Help us with that then please. Cause it is a constant challenge, isn't it?

Karen: I think the other thing we're getting better at, and we again still need to improve, but like being a really clear audience, but also how we measure impact of that market and comms. So yes, if we've got a public campaign, we're gonna measure impact by the amount of engagement on social media, the amount of downloads of whatever we're producing, but actually marketing and comms is playing a massive role in shining a light, gathering those stories. So actually success might be sharing that story with a locality or a community group or health partner. And if that story helps them to learn and understand what they can do to do something similar, but in their context, then that's success. And how do we capture that success and how do we relate that back to that story and the way we presented and translated that learning in that way that made a difference. And seeing marketing comms as having a role at different layers and it not just being about public campaigns.

Karen: I absolutely agree. I think that it's not just about the analytics. It doesn't show the breadth of the work that's happening. So in terms of in a locality situation, how is that message getting across? How are you communicating with partners? What's happening to have those discussions across the board? How comms might be enabling stakeholder engagement is key. So the marketing and communications work, and it's all about how we're engaging stakeholders, how we're making them understand the message that we wanna put out there. How do we then make them part of the fabric and, and part of the voice piece for that as well. One of the things that came up today on a meeting, was we're always trying to reach the inactive and that's where a lot of the learning comes in and how the language, the imaging style. But then how do we then include clubs that have a massive role in their community and have lots of inspiring stories? How do we include them in the narrative as well? And I think the answer is that we try and include both. But it's just about where you put your resource and how you then involve stakeholders and, and then utilise them as a way to bring the message to a wider audience.

Eve: There's a little sense of authentic stories of real people's real experiences, not the linear journey of the hero's journey within a place. And all those things you said that are relevant about the pictures that you see, the images that you see of people in that journey and telling those authentic stories. And then rather than just as you said Beth, rather than just maybe your traditional broadcast campaign that might be about who's

clicked on it, engaged in it, and in the most passive way, potentially to far more an invitation to participate. So far more how do you tell your story? How do you share and actively participate in all of this from where you are Nicky looking in, is there anything that you've seen that's shifted when you can look back over those last three years?

Nicky Yeah, I mean, I can see from the outside how well you have done at telling a story that is about all people and the role that movement can play in their lives and how the system needs to change to make that possibility. And I can see that like some of the language that has intentionally used more or less of really reflects that. And doing a workshop now, with people who are working inside the system and just seeing how well that's been embedded. I do think the last bit of what I just said around the wider system is the hardest bit of the story to tell, and how we just have this tendency to default back to what an individual can do, or should do, or should feel inspired to do versus how a system can change to facilitate that. So I can only imagine that that is a constant tension within the day to day rolling out of what it is you're trying to do, which is to shine a light on how the system needs to. But also keep inspiring people and talking to people directly in ways that are really super relevant to their lives.

But, I do think it's often a question of what's in and out of the story and just keeping a wider focus so that if someone's been able to go on a journey and become more active. What was it that was there that was the catalyst for that? Or was there ongoing support? And I think that just being able to keep that wider lens on things and keep guarding against that tendency that we have. And we all have to want to tell a really simple story about somebody doing something amazing off their own bat and triumphing over adversity. So we can tell more complete stories.

Beth: What really relates to that is the work we've done around measurement, evaluation, and learning and direction as well to how we measure, how we capture learning then helps us value things differently and notice things differently, and then tell a different story. Marketing and comms team can't tell a story unless we are thinking about and reflecting and capturing learning in a different way to feed that story. So again, I think we've come on a massive journey from the start of the Local Pilot and wider work to yeah, really challenge ourselves to how we capture learning and sense make that, and that's not easy in itself cause that takes a lot of time and a lot of thought and a lot of energy and you can see the shift in the way that the learning's come through from a Local Pilot. They're deliberately meeting in spaces and giving time to that and feeding that back. And yeah, working together to sense, make it and draw out key themes and try and identify what is enabling change and helping people to be more active.

Karen: It's tricky to tell such a complex story. That's definitely a challenge I've had. It's so complex, a Local Pilot, there's so many things happening and things happen like you say in a test and learn situation. So it's a much slower process. So it's like how do you draw out, how do you make the complex relatable for people. Why is it important to me

that this is happening in Stockport? How do you explain that bigger picture that's a real change of what you're trying to achieve? I think with Stockport Moving Together, we've just tried to focus on five outcomes that we're looking at for local residents, like being their wellbeing, the environment they live in, and then trying to utilise them as themes and to grow out of and, make sure that we're really covering off what's important to them. Yeah, it is really trying to make that complex, relatable and for people to understand what it is you're trying to achieve. It's finding the language. and the stories to try and tell how it is.

Nicky That's one of the things we've talked a lot about in the workshops that I've been involved with is finding points of connection and also overcoming that tendency for jargon to be habitually used to try and explain this stuff, whereas actually knowing that for people who aren't working on this, they're not living and breathing it every day that those words are meaningless. , well, sometimes worse than meaningless. They're actively pushing people in the opposite direction and, making this feel even less like it's something for me. And how do you when you're working with experts who are really steeped in anything from engineering to systems thinking and everything in between. The work that they're doing to understand the complexity of this and in their particular fields is so important. But sometimes they need to translate that and we need to translate that with them so that it can be meaningful for people. And I think there's a lot of really great work that stays stuck in the jargon complex space and just doesn't feel like it matters. So there's like the job of communicators to unlock and unleash that into the real world.

Karen: Absolutely. Yeah.

Eve: So when we were talking about developing the GM Moving in action strategy and thinking about some of the cultural things that hold inactivity in place. So one of those we referred to was the research of Britain Thinks, and that I'm not sporty, so this isn't about me. So how do we shift this is about everyone moving every day. And then it was also, any day, any day, any time of the day and all the issues that come up, whether they're, particularly if you're a woman and girl and, thinking about people feeling prohibited from accessing their local streets and being active in local places and doing some work to think about that from persuasive, creating streets and spaces that everyone feels safe and they belong and invited to be active. And then the weather, whatever the weather.

So one of the campaigns as well has, has been thinking, hasn't it, about how we get away from that feeling that you can't do it's Manchester, it's Greater Manchester and it's wet. So it's been quite a lot of intention as no around setting out what are some of these key mindset. And myths that we have that hold inactivity in place and get in the way, and how do we align the whole system, which is really tricky to try and have some key messages that cut through a hell of a lot of noise.

Karen: I think that's particularly interesting at the moment with the work that we're doing in the health space. So you are working, touching your point with real specialist experts in their field. They could be working on a very specific clinical pathway with someone who's got a long term health condition and, risk and all, all that comes with that plays a massive part in their jobs in terms of they want to traditionally prescribed someone a program or an intervention or it through a pathway that might include exercise or physical activity, but is very specific to that condition, to that moment in time. And how do you work with someone who's in that mindset very rightly wants to provide the best service for the patient that they're working with and make sure it's safe and relevant to their condition and where they're at on that journey. But at the same time, get that normalisation across that physical activity is safe for everyone, and that whatever exercise or movement that you do is gonna benefit your health condition alongside that more clinical pathway.

So how do we help the health services sector have some key messages, some normalisation of narrative around physical activity alongside some quite clinical professional specific pathways, if that makes sense. So that's something that we're talking about at the moment and thinking about and working out what would be the best things that could help that sector.

Eve: Comes back again to your point as well, Karen, about, again, it's not doing things to you people, it's working alongside people, both with lived experience and those as professionals within the system to make sure that you're navigating that complexity and what can otherwise can feel quite tricky because so much that you're trying to balance there to make sure you do come up with a message that is both inspiring. And it gives people agency and power in their life whilst not playing into potential risks and fears in the system. What I'm hearing is it can be quite hard. It takes a lot of people to think and collectively to create some alignment around messaging, but don't be disheartened because actually it's a huge amount of learning, which sounds like it's making a real difference.

Nicky And the incredible power and potential. It often comes as seen as the afterthought, like after the real work has happened, you just put some nice spin on it and maybe make the colours look nice at the end and then pump it into the world. Whereas actually ... tomorrow

Karen: Tomorrow as well, they do that tomorrow.

Beth: Right now.

Nicky Whereas actually thinking through this stuff and being really intentional about it and working it out is the work. It's not the bit that follows the work, and I think that

that's something that I like people to recognize when it comes to comms is that it works but it pays off like and gets it right and it can be transformative.

Karen: Behaviour change communication isn't as straightforward sometimes as other types of communication, I don't think because of all those inherent complexities, different motivations, different levels of viewpoint on what, what even activity is and things like that. And to overcome those with one campaign, it is like a real feat if you do achieve it. And I do think like the campaigns that have been put out like GM Moving More, That Counts, do really resonate with the type of target audience we're looking at. But it is, then about for me as well, in a locality, how can you use that to go further within Stockport and how do you then take that messaging and make that work across work that's happening, and then get them to embrace that messaging. And then put that out as well. Yeah, there's lots of work still to be done I feel but great start all the insight that's been going through the Think Britain research. I refer back to that all the time when I'm sat down and even just writing a post. How do we communicate that there's an activity on here or that actually you don't actually have to go to an activity to be physically active. So yeah, it's all about that intentional thinking about who's actually going to be receiving that message and whether it's gonna be where it's gonna mean anything to that person.

Eve: So next question is, what does the future look like? So where do we need to go next when thinking about our marketing and communications in this space?

Karen: In my area, for me, we started the work in terms of making it more visible about what's actually going on on a systems level across Stockport, and we started to try and communicate that complexity but make it meaningful. So for me it's more now looking at a local campaign, again, building on the work that's already been done and then seeing if we can try and target some of the audiences. So maybe women cause in Stockport from the last Active Lives report, we've had a huge increase in inactivity in females. So whether we look at targeting females. Building on work that's happened across like the GM Moving and This Girl Can, and see if we can run something along the lines but make it stop or focused or whether we look at other groups, play space type campaigns where we actually go into that area and try a comms campaign there. Looking at how communities work together. A street challenge or something similar, I don't know, for me it's now looking at where can we focus that comms activity to make an impact on those, in those target areas in a much more micro level.

Eve: Okay. So it might be a target group or it might be a target place area that's a focus?

Nicky Yeah. For me it's always about how can comms change the system? How can we recognise the very real barriers, whether it's fear of safety or not feeling supported. Often people don't feel safe because they aren't safe. How do we actually recognise that we can change the system? And it's not just a question of reassuring people, it's

about actually changing how the whole thing works, and using communications with that real dual focus of continuing to inspire and continuing to change how we think about what physical activity is, but also, how we use communications to keep making the system work better for people and do what people need and not have it be just this constant going back to you should do different, and I think that that's always gonna be the tension. And where I celebrate success and where I want to do more is really focused on tangible changes to the system that have a transformative effect on lots of people's lives, and the role communications can play in that.

Beth: I think getting quite specific to Greater Sport and our role in GM Moving and I think we are really looking at how we measure and learn from the journey and the progress and the success we've had so far with all the things we've been talking about today, and analyse that a little bit more and get some real meaning from that to help us then think about where do we go next. We really got to a place now where we've got some brilliant stories across the system. We've got some great learning and reflections about how organisations and approaches are making a real impact and change. How do we as a marketing and comms team collectively translate those stories so they are really meaningful to different audiences and help others make change? And, I mean that in Greater Manchester, but also nationally as well. And how do we learn from what's happening nationally. There's so much going on with other active partnerships and other Local Pilots across the country. How do we gather their lived experience and evidence and insight and make sure we're learning from that and not just staying on a treadmill and doing more and more of the same thing. So I think it's that learning and adapting piece for me and playing a role to drive that as part of a company.

Eve: What's the invitation, I suppose, for people listening to get involved and starts us off one of those is just to spot and notice shifts in language, shift in imagery and in metaphors. We saw in Covid how quickly actually those things can shift in that moment. We saw massive shifts in language and in ways of working, and then in what we were, yeah, communicating, one of the areas going forward. So one of the things that currently holds inactivity in place is that car centred language and focus and design of place, the idea that car is king, which obviously relates to the session that Nicky, you and I have been in this morning, really of engineers and across Transport for Greater Manchester, people across Greater Manchester to reflect on what are things that they're seeing change. So we've moved from focusing on cyclists. People generally talk about walking, cycling, wheeling now and, having imagery, which I'd say is far more about this is something for everybody. And this can be you on a tricycle, It's gonna be on a cargo bike. This is about kids. This is any age, and I've seen that shift happen over a couple of years across the whole of GM. But it's helping people to notice this and then to feel that whilst it might feel hard we are doing it, those changes are happening. And then to be able to imagine where we can take it next and be intentional about those changes. So that's one invite, notice where the changes are. Cause that gives us all a bit of hope that we can make significant changes to address

really wicked issues, what else? Any, anything else that you would put out as, I guess a call to action to people listening or an invitation to get stuck in?

Nicky The big one would be, know that you don't have to be stuck in a story and that whatever your role you have some power around the story you tell and how you tell it. And that language can be a real source of power. And I think that it can be disheartening sometimes because you can feel like you are up against some really dominant perspectives and stories. But we do have an enormous ability to make really intentional choices. And over time it doesn't happen overnight to start to see those shifts.

Eve: We're not stuck in a story. I'll take that one away. Definitely Beth.

Beth: So we're not stuck in a story, but mine would be to tell your story where you can as well, whatever that story is, and don't be apologetic about what physical activity and movement means to you or your organisation or your work. And I think the power of the stories, whether that is an individual, an organisation, or whoever, talking about the value of physical activity and movement to their world or their collective worlds is huge, isn't it? And just going back to the GM Moving in action strategy, writing phase where we engage with lots of different people across the system to hear their story. That was the bit that everyone got inspired by and moved by and galvanized by. And to help build a movement, you need your own story and to share that story so others feel. Permission to tell their story and that is a snowball effect of, yeah, the power of this activity.

Eve: Tell your stories and enjoy the process.

Karen: If you could see it, then you can be it. Say it again, but...

Eve: Set your story free.

Nicky www.Stockport.gov.uk/movetogether, for a bit more information on what's happening in Stockport as well.

Eve: Fantastic. Well, thank you all very much. I hope people listening have enjoyed as much as I have and I look forward to hearing all those stories. So thanks for your time. And enjoy your onward journeys.

Outro:

Thanks for listening to this GM Moving podcast.

Public narrative, framing and communications have become a really powerful catalyst in our work across the Local Pilots and GM Moving more widely.

We'd love to hear from you. Are there any messages or stories you found to be powerful in your work or life crafting communications that resonate with people and their diversity isn't easy. What do you find? If you'd be interested in continuing the conversation, please get in touch via your email. You can also contact us in our socials when Facebook and Twitter just search Greater Sport. And don't forget the hashtag #GMMovinginAction. Please do share this episode with people and organisations who will find it useful and help us grow 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.