

Greater Manchester Further Education Innovation Programme Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Statement

Equalities Objective

To widen equitable access to innovation support by reducing barriers to participation and proactively ensuring programme engagement reflects the diversity of Greater Manchester's communities, businesses and places.

Greater Manchester Further Education Innovation Programme (GMFEIP)

GMFEIP (incorporating the Innovation Connector Network and Innovation Literacy Programme) is committed to ensuring that innovation support is inclusive, accessible and representative of the diverse communities and businesses across Greater Manchester.

The programme is designed to reduce barriers to participation in innovation activity, particularly for businesses, communities and individuals who may traditionally be excluded from innovation ecosystems, business support, AI adoption or collaborative R&D opportunities.

Through the established reach and trusted presence of Greater Manchester's Further Education Colleges across all ten boroughs, the programme will provide accessible, locally delivered innovation support with no restrictive entry criteria, ensuring broad and equitable access for businesses and residents.

Our Approach to Inclusion

The programme will actively promote equality of opportunity by:

- Delivering activity across all Greater Manchester boroughs to ensure geographic inclusion and reduce concentration of opportunity.
- Providing accessible events, workshops and support sessions at community-based college venues and partner locations.
- Offering practical and approachable innovation and technology support designed for businesses with varying levels of confidence, experience and digital maturity.
- Encouraging participation from underrepresented groups, including women-led businesses, ethnically diverse communities, disabled entrepreneurs, social enterprises, microbusinesses and businesses located in areas of deprivation.
- Ensuring marketing and communications use inclusive language, imagery and channels appropriate to diverse audiences.
- Colleges engaged in the project will comply with the Public Sector Equalities Duty

Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

The programme will collect anonymous Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) monitoring information following events, workshops and one-to-one business support activity.

This information will be used to:

- Understand the diversity and representation of programme participants.
- Identify underrepresented groups or communities and proactively act to reach these groups.
- Monitor accessibility and participant experience.
- Inform continuous improvement to programme delivery, communications and outreach activity.

Where participation data indicates that certain groups or communities are underrepresented, the programme team will implement targeted engagement and marketing activity to improve inclusivity and reach. This may include:

- Working with community organisations, local networks and representative groups.
- Targeted digital and community-based marketing campaigns.
- Tailored event formats, locations or timings.
- Additional accessibility support where appropriate.

The GMFEIP delivery team will regularly review engagement and EDI data to ensure delivery reflects the diversity of Greater Manchester's businesses and communities. Programme Job Descriptions will include reference to continuous improvement in relation to inclusivity.

Commitment to Inclusive Innovation

The programme recognises that inclusive innovation is essential to achieving sustainable economic growth across Greater Manchester.

By widening participation in innovation support, productivity improvement and AI adoption, GMFEIP will contribute to Greater Manchester's ambitions for inclusive growth, reduced inequality and broader participation in the city region's innovation ecosystem.