

Healthy Me Healthy Communities

Reducing health inequalities together since 2012

Business Plan & Our Impact 2025-28

MAKING A BIG DIFFERENCE
TO PEOPLE'S LIVES



CREATING LASTING POSITIVE
CHANGE FOR COMMUNITIES



IMPROVING PRACTICE
AND POLICY



Contents

1. Executive Summary
2. How it began
3. Purpose, Mission & Vision
4. Making Change Happen
5. Collaboration & Influencing
6. Our Impact in 2025
7. The Healthy Me Healthy Communities difference
8. Our priorities for the next 3 years
9. Gorton Central Story
10. Healthy Me Healthy Communities People
11. A taste of our partners & collaborators
12. Appendix



Executive Summary

At Healthy Me Healthy Communities, we believe in the power of people and place, working together to tackle today's societal challenges, alleviating the everyday struggles faced by many people and meeting the ambitions of residents and communities.

Often when organisations look to improve the lives of those affected by poverty, discrimination, and exclusion, they overlook local knowledge, skills and expertise.

Since 2012, HMHC has been developing neighbourhood approaches and developing multi-sector collaborations, empowering people and communities. Our approach creates quality services that make a big difference to people's lives, create lasting positive change for communities, improve practice and policy that make a positive contribution to regional priorities for health, economic and social outcomes.



At Healthy Me Healthy Communities, our work is embedded with participation, collaboration and community leadership

Rich Browning, CEO, Healthy Me Healthy Communities CiC

We have developed a business plan for 2025-28 that is exciting, ambitious and sustainable, building upon our organisational strengths, current needs and future trends. During 2023, we completed a comprehensive review of Healthy Me Healthy Communities. We examined our strengths, undertook a market and competitor analysis and most importantly assessed where we add value for people, communities and customers. This review has shaped our business plan, which links together three aspects of our work: making a big difference to people's lives, creating lasting change for communities, and using our expertise and learning for improving community practice, service delivery and policy.

For over 10 years, we have developed a community power approach and delivered programmes enabling greater influence and meaningful involvement of residents in how decisions are made locally. Since 2024, we have been proud to work with Manchester City Council's Making Manchester Fairer programme, setting up and overseeing the Making Manchester Fairer Community Forum, supporting the Programme Board.

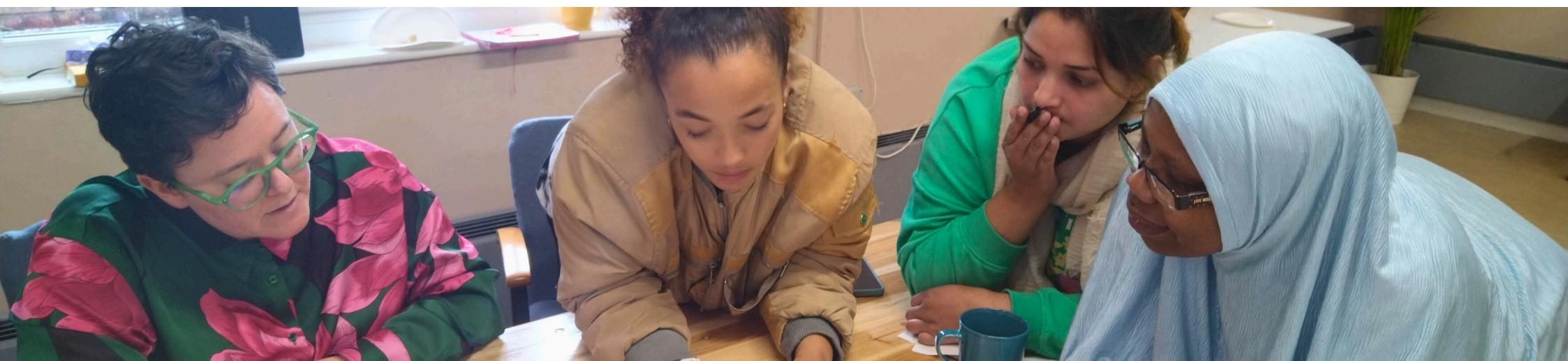


The Making Manchester Fairer Community Forum has been critical to ensuring that community perspectives and voices of lived experience are embedded in our decision-making structure

Making Manchester Fairer In Action, Public Health Annual Report 2025

For 2025, we will be expanding our community power work, supporting and creating more opportunities for residents to get involved and have greater influence, bringing about improved outcomes, stronger communities and improved public services. At Gorton Central, we are developing a 'plant-rich, planet-friendly' food security project combining public health, climate change and circular economy neighbourhood approaches.

We hope you enjoy reading our story and discovering our plans for the coming years. We look forward to working together so everyone can enjoy a long, healthy and happy life across the country, from towns to cities and coast to countryside.



How it began

Rich Browning set up Healthy Me Healthy Communities CiC in 2012 after a long history in the statutory sector, working in adult education and public health.

He moved to Manchester in 2003 after growing up in North Staffordshire and believes it was his childhood there that spurred him on to set up a community interest company that would help people overcome social exclusion and discrimination.



“ *I was brought up among lots of poverty and unemployment, and as a teenager, I cared for my Mum, who was in and out of hospital with mental health issues. About 12 years ago, I was offered voluntary redundancy from the local authority I worked for. It came just a year after my Mum had died suddenly, so there was a bit of, ‘if not now, when do I set up this social enterprise?’ I couldn’t answer it, so it had to be now.*

Rich began building community engagement and development projects in Fallowfield, Longsight and Rusholme. One of the early successes was a film club, offering screenings and socials for people in the area who were experiencing loneliness. The momentum started to grow.

Building on the success of our first Community Grocer in 2015, we received further investment from the housing association, One Manchester, resulting in our first member of staff. Then, Manchester Health Care and Commissioning gave us our first big contract. Both were key milestones in the business, as Rich explains:

“ *I wasn’t salaried for the first three or four years, and it was only when investment came in that I could get paid. The investment meant we were able to bring in a deputy and a project manager, and since then, we haven’t looked back. In terms of alleviating poverty, projects such as the Community Grocer are the hook. It’s about the quality of engagement people have when they come for that food.*



But, most importantly, what we will be working towards is making a big impact on people's lives and creating lasting change for communities. It feels as if there is a real drive at the moment, and something special is happening to make Manchester fairer for all.

One of the Community Grocer projects was at Gorton Community Centre, where we started delivering food services in 2017. The centre, which was run at the time by local volunteers, closed during the pandemic and afterwards there was an opportunity to reopen and use the space to help people living with mental health issues, as well as older people in the community. Gorton Central was born – another of our milestones.

Over £1 million in investment has been secured since then and there are some ambitious plans for the HQ since we took on a 25-year lease from Manchester City Council in January.

Our volunteers are trained to find out what is going on in people's lives, why they're using food poverty projects, and how we can support them. We then use this learning from the frontline to influence and support improvements in wider practice and policy across the region.

It is Rich's drive to alleviate food poverty that led him to his recent appointment as Vice-Chair of the Manchester Food Board, which brings together decision-makers from across Manchester's economic, health, environment, housing, farming and social sectors to look at how food can be used to bring about positive, meaningful and lasting change for a sustainable food system.

Purpose, Mission & Vision

PURPOSE

1. Make a big difference to people's lives
2. Create lasting change for communities
3. Influence and improve practice and policy, adding value to services.

OUR PROMISE

Co-creating lasting improvements for people and places, practice and policy.

MISSION

We are on a mission to harness the power of people and place, and working together for healthy, thriving communities and quality services.

VISION

And our vision is for “everyone enjoying a long, healthy and happy life”



Values

Passion

Loving what we do and the difference we make

Integrity

Always doing the right thing

Innovation

Looking at problems from a different angle

Collaboration

Working together brings about better outcomes

Respect

Treating everyone with dignity and valuing difference and diversity





Creating lasting change:

- When people are in control of their lives and can meet their needs, they have hope for the future.
- This improves people's mental health and their capacity for managing their daily life and fulfilling their potential.
- People can access what is on offer, make the most of opportunities and benefit from social networks.
- People have the energy and confidence to get involved and influence decisions affecting their lives, and help to make great places to live.
- This contributes to a more just society, with less poverty, less discrimination and reduced health and wealth inequalities, and everyone benefiting from improved public services.
- Breaking the cycle of poverty, inequalities and discrimination.

Making change happen

Our work is grounded in a clear **Theory of Change**, which defines how targeted actions lead to meaningful and lasting outcomes.

- To realise this change, we focus on **Seven Levers** that drive sustainable impact, ensuring that interventions are strategic, holistic, and evidence informed.
- Recognising that everyone's journey is unique, we provide an **Escalator of Support**, guiding people step by step towards greater independence, resilience, and growth.
- Finally, our **Services** put this framework into action, offering tailored programmes and resources that support individuals along their journey.



7 Levers For Lasting Change



Escalator Support

Being financially secure
Living well
Achieving aspirations
Building sustainable communities
Collaborating in partnerships



Our Services

Together, these elements form a cohesive system designed to create enduring, positive change.

7 Levers for Lasting Change



- **Build on Assets** – Use asset-based, needs-led, and trauma-informed approaches.
- **Connect to Support** – Link communities to services and networks that address root causes.
- **Empower** – Engage those most affected by poverty and inequality in decisions that impact their lives.
- **Tackle Health Inequalities** – Address the underlying drivers of poor health outcomes.
- **Powering Communities** – Grow community power to influence change and shape local priorities.
- **Collaborate for Impact** – Connect communities to services and networks, bridging knowledge, skills, and opportunities across sectors.
- **Shape Better Policy** – Improve practice and policy for effective, lasting service delivery.

Healthy Me Healthy Communities' **escalator**, supporting people to move from just surviving to thriving in resourceful communities.



- Being financially secure
- Living well
- Achieving and aspiring
- Building resourceful and sustainable communities
- Collaborating, influencing and partnerships

And we achieve this through our services



- Gorton Central
- Gorton Together Growing Garden
- Good Food Gorton
- Learning Store
- Ageing Well programmes
- Manchester Care Leavers Collective
- Inclusive Health Research

Alongside our work leading and supporting city-wide initiatives:

- Making Manchester Fairer Community Forum
- Manchester Community Power Forum
- Manchester Food Board





Gorton Central community hub is our home where we develop exciting, innovative, and quality services and collaborations:

- Community Grocer & Food Hub
- Place Nav – our place-based Advice, Signposting, Referral service
- Skills and development opportunities
- Volunteer programme
- Living-well activities
- Community growing garden
- Co:Lab neighbourhood shared workspace
- Community and health engagement & research
- Affordable and accessible fitness and social activities



Good Food Gorton is our new approach and builds on over a decade of experience tackling food insecurity through a plant-rich, planet-friendly approach that addresses the root causes of poor nutrition and food system inequalities.

- **Community Grocer**, which provides affordable, healthy food and reduces waste; signposting and support, connecting people to welfare, wellbeing, and employment services;
- **Community Growing Garden**, which offers hands-on learning and promotes circular economy practices.
- Education and workshops on healthy eating, sustainable living, and food skills – empowering individuals, strengthening community resilience, and fostering a fairer, more sustainable local food system.



Our **Learning Store** delivers transformative outcomes in employability, skills development, and community leadership through a supportive and inclusive approach.

- First Step workshops that help individuals build confidence and essential life skills.
- Accredited training in partnership with the Association for Accredited Learning to enhance employability and career progression.
- Community and food leadership programmes empower participants to lead positive change in their neighbourhoods, promoting sustainable practices, collaboration, and local resilience.



Working with Manchester City Council, the **Manchester Care Leavers Collective** empowers young people aged 16–24 with lived care experience who are NEET, placing them at the heart of designing and improving systems that affect their lives.

- Operating from DISH via the Greater Manchester Digital Security Hub, participants co-produce activities, workshops, and peer support, building confidence, life skills, financial literacy, and independence.
- Through work experience, creative opportunities, and peer navigator training, the project improves health, well-being, and employability while ensuring care leavers' voices shape policy, practice, and community support across Manchester.



Our **Inclusive Health Research** supports clinical health researchers to engage with people most affected by health inequalities, embed inclusive research practices and make breakthroughs for testing, treatment and care.

- Healthy Me Healthy Communities is working in partnership with research organisations, in integrated care systems, and with residents to support inclusive involvement in community health research.
- We provide a tiered offer for health researchers, including venue, recruitment and facilitating participant fees. [Connecting communities to health research opportunities](#)



Building on our existing **Ageing In Place** programme of older-people-led activities, a new **Heritage Lottery Fund Programme** for 2026.

- The project will capture the social heritage of Gorton Community Centre, capturing the history of a working-class social movement since the 1960s- tackling the big issues of different eras - unemployment, health, cohesion, poverty and environmental issues.
- We aim to recognise and raise awareness of the unique traditions, history and culture of the community, to contribute to a new Inventory of Living Heritage as part of the implementation of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Collaboration and influencing

We are proud of our work in fast-tracking our frontline learning into and practice and policy. Some of the recent successes include:

Bringing food insecurity and community practice expertise to Manchester's food approaches and strategies as a founding member, and our CEO is the vice-chairperson of the **Manchester Food Board**.

Commissioned by Manchester City Council to facilitate the **Making Manchester Fairer Community Forum**, working with the MMF Board for a fairer future for Manchester residents

Priority Setting Partnership
Another exciting milestone for HMHC, continuing our work with VOCAL, developing a Priority Setting Partnership (PSP) with the James Lind Alliance and neighbourhood partners. The PSP brings together residents, primary-care workers and neighbourhood stakeholders shaping future health research topics and neighbourhood priorities. The PSP was funded by the National Institute of Health Research.

Gorton Central
Following a period of co-location, in 2023 we completed a community asset transfer for a pre-loved but well-worn community centre and Gorton Central was born. With funding from The National Lottery and the Dept of Levelling Up we have started a capital programme of refurbishment creating the 'modern community centre'.



Co-leading the **Manchester Community Power Forum**, working with Manchester City council, Manchester Local Care Organisation and community partners to develop community power structures and place plans.

Gorton Central Story

We have been turning a pre-loved but well-worn community asset into a modern community centre in one of Manchester's famous neighbourhoods.

Once a derelict paint factory, this preloved community centre is being transformed into a place to learn, grow, make connections, a hub that can make a big difference to people's lives and bring lasting positive change to communities.



Gorton Central history...

Once upon a time, a local paint factory became the cherished Gorton Community Centre. The original 1930's site comprised a one storey office, stores tunnel and external buildings. The derelict building was saved by passionate residents and transformed into the Centre, owned by Manchester City Council and managed by a local committee. A first-floor extension and a new community hall were later added, together with our Award-winning 'Britain in Bloom'garden.

Today...

In 2017, in partnership with the Centre committee, HMHC launched Community Gorton Grocer and later, after the Centre had been closed during the pandemic, we reopened with new Covid-19 support services. During this time, we completed essential refurbishments and created new community spaces for engagement, collaboration and nurturing community leaders.

The future...

From 2023, the baton (and paintbrush) was handed over to HMHC following a successful community asset transfer and soon after we received the fantastic news of securing over £350k capital and revenue funding from the National Lottery and Department of Levelling-Up.

Our vision is built around engagement, collaboration and inspiring lasting positive change for people and communities. We are proud of our collaborations with existing partners and many new partners to Gorton including VOCAL, Sky media and Department of Levelling-Up investment.

Our Impact in 2025



3000 Hours of community activities delivered



1400 Attendances at our Ageing in Place activities



4000 Visits to Gorton Central Food Hub



£40K Saved by Food Hub members



6 tonnes Of fresh produce redistributed



18 Local volunteers giving over 3500 hours per year



3 Local people employed with quality jobs and pay



3000+ Hours of adult learning across Greater Manchester



330 Accredited qualifications



16 Residents supported in their Making Manchester Fairer Community Forum role



100+ Taking part in health research workshops



£30k Given out in grants to older people activities using participatory budgeting



£500K+ In revenue income secured for delivery of community programmes



The Healthy Me Healthy Communities difference



Emma is a Business and Finance Administrator at Healthy Me Healthy Communities. Her journey to employment began as a service user of the Gorton Community Grocer.

Emma relocated to Manchester from North Wales with her young family. Attending the Community Grocer helped her to feel more connected to Gorton and gain familiarity. She felt less lonely, and it improved her mental health. Increasing her confidence meant she was open to more opportunities.

Emma felt valued and built her confidence, leading her to apply for a paid role. Regular income made her more financially stable. These secure and flexible hours mean she could work around caring commitments and further encourage her to aspire

Now in her free time, she regularly contributes to Community Health Research and has recently spoken at a lecture on why community involvement in health research is so important.



You volunteer for a while, then embed yourself within that community. It strengthens your self-worth, and it helps you aspire for better things!

The Healthy Me Healthy Communities difference



Jonathan is an 'Ageing in Place' Volunteer for the Age Friendly Space, Healthy Me Healthy Communities, and a Gather Eat Move Funding Panellist

In his early years, Jonathon attended the children's nursery and play group that was run at Gorton Community Centre before it was renovated and became Gorton Central. As a resident, he has returned to volunteer and make his own contribution to the community.

Since joining the Age Friendly Space in September 2023, Jonathon initially attempted a DJ set with a laptop and speakers, but found it ineffective due to loudness for some and difficulty hearing requests for others.

Going forward, he actively cleared tables and chairs after sessions and enjoyed talks on various topics, including physiotherapy, energy efficiency, IT security, and Tai Chi. He also contributed to creating an age-friendly walk map for Gorton and Abbey Hey.

“The highlight of my 18 months with the age-friendly space was being invited and taking part in the assessment of funding applications for Gather, Eat, Move. I really enjoyed learning from others and using some of my transferrable skills in assisting with this.”

The Healthy Me Healthy Communities difference



Amber is a Community Forum Member of the Making Manchester Fairer Community Forum

"I'm proudly a working-class, working Mum from Harpurhey. I applied to the Community Forum to be on the right side of change, to hope to inspire myself and inspire others, especially Mums, that you can be a working Mum and contribute to your community. I thought I'd hit the jackpot when I moved to Harpurhey; it's got everything you could want and need. I want to break the social stigma and show people you can be somebody if you put your mind to it."

When Amber birthed her daughter, she had no one to advise her about returning to work and making the most of funded childcare. She now aspires to help others and show them there is another way to live. Amber feels that by working with the Making Manchester Fairer Programme Board and the Department of Public Health, they are "sorting things out - we can keep trying to make things right, if we keep trying, we can't go far wrong. Because of what we're doing together, the future can be better".

“

Being a forum member has been empowering; it's given me confidence I never had. From being a forum member, I now feel I could go back into education. I now belong in spaces that I didn't belong in before. I'm confident on the path I'm on now.



Our business achievements

- Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter member and 2024 winner of the 'best for health and wellbeing – SME' category
- Partner of the Cancer and Us project winning 'Educational Impact Award' at the GM Cancer Awards 2024
- Association for Accredited Learning 'People, Culture & Wellbeing' Quality Mark
- Living Wage Employer
- Disability Confident Employer
- SME News 'Best Community Support Organisation 2023 – Greater Manchester'
- SME News 'Best Community-Focused Social Enterprise 2023 – Greater Manchester'
- 'Pride of Gorton Community Group' Award for the Gorton Community Grocer

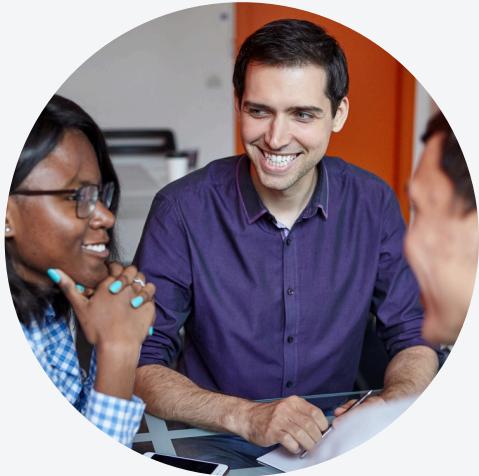
Our priorities for the next 3 years

The priorities for the next 3 years have been influenced by the people we work with, including individuals, partners and wider stakeholders, with our 2025-28 priorities building upon organisational success for a financially sustainable social business.

Healthy Me Healthy Communities Aims

- 1. Scale our impact:** Expand and replicate our proven programmes to reach more people.
- 2. Lead in community engagement:** Show how community engagement improves public services and lives.
- 3. Empower communities:** Enable residents and groups to take initiative and lead change.
- 4. Promote sustainability and equity:** Contribute to a greener, fairer, and more inclusive society.
- 5. Invest in our team:** Develop, retain, and nurture talent to strengthen organisational capacity.
- 6. Communicate our impact:** Effectively tell our story and demonstrate measurable outcomes.
- 7. Forge new strategic partnerships:** Build strong collaborations that enable us to make a real, lasting change.
- 8. Strengthen governance:** Maintain robust, transparent, and accountable structures.
- 9. Enhance financial resilience:** Secure sustainable funding and long-term financial stability.
- 10. Build a strong brand:** Establish a clear, trusted, and recognisable identity.

Our aims are translated into action, measurable outcomes, and lasting impact through our Business Delivery Plan, ensuring we make a meaningful difference in people's lives, drive positive change in communities, and inform best practice and policy.



Leaving Care Collaborative

Manchester Care Leavers Collaborative is a project that uses the principles of community power and knowledge, systems change and lived experience voice to enhance the health and wellbeing of young people leaving care in Manchester.

Commissioned by Manchester City Council and based at DISH, the Collaborative will co-design a report about their life experiences, strengths, aspirations, and what they need to live happy, healthy lives.



Good Food Gorton

Responding to new food security challenges, Good Food Gorton is our 'plant-rich, planet-friendly' new food project combining food aid, cooking and learning about how we can make positive changes for a sustainable food system. We started in style! - With 'Our Farm Urban' hydroponics wall installation, provide knowledge and skills alongside a supply of fresh produce.



Gorton Together Heritage Project

Gorton Together is a heritage project capturing the rich and diverse history of Gorton Community Centre (Gorton Central) - its people, activities, and the difference it made to people's lives. Funded by the Heritage Lottery, the project will deliver heritage activities, training and connect to city archive & heritage partners, sharing learning on the importance of social movements for the significant events of our times.

Healthy Me Healthy Communities People

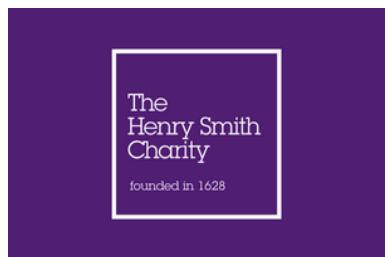
Healthy Me Healthy Communities is overseen by a dedicated and talented team of Directors:

- Emma Blanhorne currently works in higher education and is driven by a desire to widen participation in learning and reduce health inequalities.
- Rich Browning is the founder and Chief Executive Officer with a passion for tackling poverty and social exclusion that comes from lived experience, and he has over 20 years' experience in private, statutory and VCSE sectors.
- Jamie Hibbert is passionate about learning, personal development, and community action for overcoming social injustice and discrimination, and he brings professional and volunteering experience to HMHC.
- Idowu Morafa brings a lifetime of education, employment and community service to HMHC and is a founding Director of 'Across Ummah' CiC.
- Jon Usher brings business acumen from his extensive career in business-to-business marketing in the appliances, catering and pharmaceuticals sectors.
- Valery Touchet-Djomgoue brings a fresh perspective from her sustainable fashion background and helps drive positive change for Manchester communities.
- And we thank Julie Mansfield for all their commitment, passion and support for Healthy Me Healthy Communities.

Day to day, the organisation is managed by a talented team

- Rich Browning, CEO, is responsible for strategic leadership & partnerships, business planning and financial management.
- Hollie Walsh COO, is responsible for business operations, research and learning services.
- Kate Harrison, Services & Business Manager, leads our services and partnerships, developing new frontline delivery and business opportunities.
- Vacancy, Gorton Central Coordinator, leading our Gorton Central and neighbourhood partnerships.
- Ellis Sadgrove, Facilities and Reception Assistant, is overseeing Gorton Central as a modern community hub.
- Rachel Carroll, Development Manager, leading a codesign leaving care programme with Manchester City Council
- Amanda Aitken, Ageing in Place Development Worker, is leading our ageing-well approaches and delivery.
- Emma Danis, Finance and Business Administrator, providing business and finance support.
- Michelle McKenna, delivering inspirational community food training including HMHC's accredited Food Works course.

And a taste of our partners and collaborators



Appendix

Healthy Me Healthy Communities CiC

Gorton Central
Highmead Street
Gorton
Manchester
M18 8PE
T: 0161 222 3633
E: info@hmhc.co.uk

Company Number: 08259109
Registered: 18 October 2012

Accountant
Amel Ltd
54 Parkstone Drive, Manchester. M45 7HQ

Finances:

Operating year: 1st November – 31st October

YEAR END	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS/LOSS
2025 Projected	£602,220 tbc	£565,100 tbc	£37,120 tbc
2024	£621,680	£588,499	£33,181
2023	£295,413	£405,395	(£109,982)
2022	£466,487	£463,664	£2,823
2021	£424,991	£443,456	(£18,465)
2020	£471,008	£344,358	£126,650
2019	£280,003	£205,334	£74,669
2018	£114,538	£111,576	£2,962