

Fighting together for free access to justice

Greater Manchester Law Centre

Annual report 2025-2026

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Fighting together for free access to justice

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January 2026: GMLC's Welfare Benefits Supervisor Dan Manville attends Parliament alongside other members of the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers (NAWRA) to discuss the need for welfare benefits advice to become a statutory duty, enabling more people to access the vital advice they need to secure their benefits entitlements and bring themselves out of poverty.

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Below: November 2025: Director Jason Tetley, Chair Andy Walsh and Treasurer Ben Clay introduce the GMLC AGM, held at Cross St Chapel in central Manchester.



Chair's report

Welcome to Greater Manchester Law Centre's annual report. It is a privilege to chair the board of trustees and help provide support to our staff and volunteers. I wish to thank all staff and volunteers for the tireless work and dedication to improving the lives of others. I also wish to record a thank you to our funders and sponsors for supporting the work that we do and our members for believing strongly enough in a fairer society that they joined GMLC.

All of us have witnessed the inexorable rise in the cost of living and the pressure on household budgets. Structural inequalities in the UK deepen the problems for those with less room for making economies, but their concerns are pushed to the margins.

The founding principles of GM Law Centre are to provide 'Free Access to Justice' through the provision of advice, along with a strategic commitment to fight for positive changes to the circumstances in which our clients live. The following pages carry direct testimony of the positive life-changing impact our work has on individual lives. We also campaign and work in partnership with others to reduce the need for people to resort to services we provide.

This year, our office has fielded almost 22,000 enquiries, an average of 90 enquiries for every business day. We cannot hope to meet this level of need without addressing the structural inequality in society. Nevertheless, GMLC is proud to report that our casework has directly assisted close to 3,000 individuals and we have secured £2.73m in benefits that had been wrongly denied this year. Every pound won in welfare benefits eases the pressure on its claimants, and creates a multiplier effect in the local economy. Our welfare benefits work is supported by students from Manchester Metropolitan University. The long-standing partnership offers training to the students and helps to build capacity in our service.

With our office based in Levenshulme, it is inevitable that half of our clients are drawn from the Manchester borough, but our casework stretches across the ten boroughs. One of the ways that we extend our reach to all the boroughs of the Combined Authority is by working with partner organisations. Increasing the capacity of other organisations helps to deliver a broader benefit to the widest section of our region. Our Neighbourhood Advice Projects offer some of the strongest examples of joint working on a local level, with GMLC staff taking referrals from local agencies to provide advice to residents in their own area.

GMLC works locally, regionally and nationally. Through our work with Greater Manchester Tenants' Union (GMTU), we have supported tenants' groups across the country to help improve tenants' rights. Our work with national networks is informed by client experience and local campaign groups that help bring pressure for changes in legislation. GMLC this year also worked with Liberty to show local community groups how they can use the law to fight for their communities. GMLC is a member of the Law Centres Network, the national body for law centres, to drive national campaigns and lobby Parliament. If you know of an organisation that we should work with, please get in touch.

The new Renters' Rights Act and Employment Rights Act contain new protections for renters and employees. GMLC organised training on these Acts for 170 people from over 50 organisations. These pieces of legislation are far from perfect, though they do bring some welcome improvements. In housing, it is our view that the impact of the new Act will be limited due to a lack of capacity in both Legal Aid and local authority enforcement teams. We continue to push for improvements in renters' rights, and have met with the Ministry of Justice to lobby for further reform. MOJ officials responded positively but others in government have been less responsive. More pressure needs to be built, so we have offered our support to the tenants' movement, including the national Resist Rent Rises campaign, to challenge rent increases in the private sector.

The ex-Mayor of Greater Manchester has a new job, where he has pledged resources to end homelessness. We wish him well: with around 400,000 people reportedly homeless in the UK, the need is acute and growing. Ultimately, as the GM Commission on Social Housing has outlined, the most equitable, affordable and economically sensible solution is to build more social homes for rent. In the meantime, GMLC continues to support those trying to find a decent stable home to live in. This year, the Museum of Homelessness highlighted the work GMLC has done with Manchester rough sleepers in an exhibition, first shown this year in the Museum of Homelessness' London premises.

At last year's AGM, we had a major focus on our opposition to the proposals to introduce a national ID card scheme. Whilst the lobby for such a scheme remains strong and an ever-present danger, it is pleasing to note at this year's AGM that following the huge wave of opposition the imminent threat of a national ID card scheme has receded for now.

If you are not yet a member of GM Law Centre, but believe as we do in providing practical assistance to those in need and campaigning to change the way our society is structured, I invite you to join us.

- Andy Walsh, Chair, Greater Manchester Law Centre

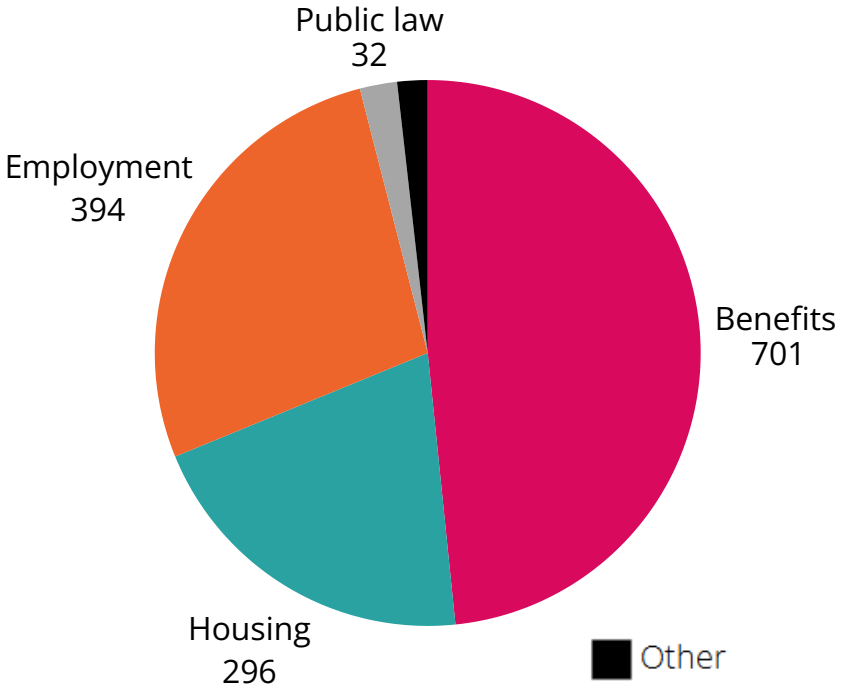
GMLC in numbers

21928 The number of enquiries received by the Law Centre this year.

2975 The number of individuals we were able to provide with at least initial or enabling advice on their legal issue.

1449 The total number of cases our casework teams handled across the year.

£2.73m The total amount of welfare benefits won for GM residents across the year. This is slightly down, as the Covid pandemic backlog has eased.



GM borough	% of caseload
Manchester	56
Stockport	8
Salford	7
Trafford	6
Oldham	6
Rochdale	5
Bolton	4
Tameside	3
Bury	3
Wigan	2



February 2026: GMLC's Housing and Public Law solicitor Kate presents at the Homes for All conference in Sheffield on the new Renters Rights Act and how to challenge rent increases at the First-Tier Tribunal. Groups including Sheffield Tenants Union, Food & Solidarity Newcastle and Greater Manchester Tenants Union attended.

Housing

Zain and Karim keep being evicted by the Council - but have been given nowhere else to go

Zain and Karim are refugees who became homeless after they were granted their refugee status. Despite being approached for assistance, Manchester City Council has not provided them with any offers of accommodation. As a result, since 2025 they have had no option but to sleep rough, initially in Lincoln Square in Manchester city centre. In late 2025, the Council evicted the people sleeping in tents in Lincoln Square, without offering them anywhere to go. Zain and Karim, alongside many others, are now sheltering in a former council owned “welfare centre”, which has been left empty for several years. The Council is seeking to evict them from this centre, claiming that it is not safe for them, but still offering no alternative accommodation. Zain and Karim approached GMLC when they received the Council’s eviction claim. They are now defending what will be, at the least, the sixth eviction of ‘trespasser’ homeless refugees by Manchester City Council over the last 2 years. With GMLC’s assistance, Zain and Karim are arguing a human rights defence, asking the Council to explain the aim they are seeking to achieve and how yet further publicly funded eviction proceedings is a reasonable way of achieving it.

GMLC stops Sonny's retaliatory eviction and rent increase after he reports disrepair

Sonny, his wife and 3 children noticed significant disrepair in their home shortly after moving in. Despite frequent reporting, their landlord failed to address the issues. In 2024, the roof of the kitchen collapsed due to a suspected leaking pipe and the property became damp and mouldy. Concerned about his family’s health, Sonny complained about his landlord’s behaviour to the Council, which led to partial repairs being undertaken at his home. However, shortly after, he received a Section 21 no-fault eviction notice followed by possession proceedings in court. GMLC helped Sonny to file a defence on the basis that the claim was issued out of time and was therefore bound to fail. Sonny's landlord subsequently withdrew his claim but, less than 2 months later, served a Section 13 Notice with an unaffordable rent increase from £1000 to £1500 per month. GMLC challenged this decision by applying to the First-Tier Tribunal and a judge decided that the rent should not increase from £1000 for the next year. As Legal Aid is not available for rent increase cases, GMLC worked on this case *pro bono* (for free) to protect Sonny’s family from a back-door eviction.

Welfare Benefits

GMLC's Neighbourhood Advice Project helps a survivor of torture escape destitution

Fatmata suffered numerous challenges in her journey from West Africa, including sexual torture and imprisonment on her way to the UK. After being placed in a Women's Refuge, she was helped to put in an initial application for Universal Credit. Due to her lack of English, functional illiteracy and mental health struggles, she did not accept her claimant commitment on her UC account, leading to her account being closed without any specialist input or care from the DWP. This was her only source of income, leaving her destitute, whilst dealing with her trauma in an unfamiliar country. Fatmata was referred directly by her GP practice to GMLC's Neighbourhood Advice Project, which meets people in their local area around South Manchester. She was helped to appeal her decision, and GP records were applied for with a subject access request. Such was the sensitivity of the records, the GP had to issue a pre-warning about its contents. Once these GP records were submitted the Tribunal, the DWP quickly folded and allowed the appeal, backdating her award and preventing her continued destitution.

John brings Equality Act proceedings after the DWP fail to make reasonable adjustments

John was a Universal Credit (UC) claimant with health issues that amounted to a disability. In 2025, he had a health scare, and shortly afterwards, UC started a 'review', asking him for copies of bank statements and photos of certain documents. John was not digitally enfranchised and struggled to provide the information in the formats required. The constant questioning and threats to his entitlement led to a serious decline in his mental health. He became very paranoid and was detained in psychiatric hospital. After six months, UC stopped paying his rent. With the support of ward staff, he contacted UC to ask what he had to do next. At that point, to enable them to have a conversation, his Jobcentre started treating him as a standard jobseeker rather than someone in hospital. They "invited" him to an appointment with standardised messages telling him that if he did not comply, his benefit might be affected. This fed into the cause of his mental ill health and prolonged the stay in hospital. John approached GMLC and issued proceedings under the Equality Act. The claim argued that UC's failure to make reasonable adjustments for John, and the way their systems worked to prevent people in John's situation from communicating with them, amounted to indirect disability discrimination. Eventually, the DWP sought to settle the case, and John received several thousand pounds in damages.

Employment

GMLC supports Carol to reach settlement after her employer unilaterally increased her hours

Carol worked for a large organisation as a private minibus driver for her employer's customers. Her day started when she picked up the first customer, but the employer unilaterally changed the route which added an additional 45 minutes to Carol's journey, which also had an impact on when she could take her diabetes medication. She tried to negotiate a more reasonable and safe arrangement, but the employer was adamant that the terms would not change, leaving Carol no choice but to resign. She took claims of unfair constructive dismissal, failure to make reasonable adjustments and discrimination arising from a disability. GMLC supported her in preparing her case for Preliminary Hearing and drafting her Schedule of Loss. This enabled Carol to better represent herself and, ultimately, to achieve a very good settlement and avoid the ongoing stress of managing a complex legal battle.

GMLC helps Abdul gets his unpaid wages after he is dismissed at a meeting to discuss his role

Abdul was told by his employer – a small estate agency – that they were in financial difficulties and would have to reduce his hours. They then just stopped paying him. He challenged this and was given excuse after excuse and told that they would pay him by a certain date, but they never did. At a meeting called by the employer to discuss this, the employer suddenly said that Abdul was underperforming and he should not come back to work. GMLC helped Abdul put in claims to the Employment Tribunal for unfair dismissal, wrongful dismissal and non-payment of wages. When we did this, the employer finally engaged with ACAS. A settlement was quickly achieved, paying Abdul all he was owed in wages. The claim was withdrawn.

Kelly was refused her flexible working request and gets a better settlement with GMLC's help

Kelly worked as a receptionist. She was in a large team and they covered early morning and late shifts. When she was on maternity leave, she put in a flexible working request to request only early shifts so she could pick up her son from the nursery. This was immediately refused by the employer and they failed to do a genuine investigation or to provide her with reasonable reasons for their refusal. Kelly resigned and took claims of unfair constructive dismissal, failure to follow the flexible working regulations and indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex. GMLC supported her with all her casework from submission of her claim onwards. With our support, she felt confident to represent herself at her Preliminary hearing and shortly afterwards received a settlement offer that was higher than her original proposal. Kelly was very grateful to reach a quicker and better outcome.



April 2026: GMLC's Employment solicitor Sarah Murphy gives a presentation to the Neuro-inclusive Organisations Network on how workers can have effective conversations with employers on neurodiversity and reasonable adjustments.

Strategic litigation

Layla's disabilities make it harder to get a social home - so GMLC brings a judicial review claim

Layla, her husband and their four children became homeless in 2019 after being evicted from private rented accommodation. Layla has medical conditions which affect her mobility and requires a downstairs bathroom and bedroom. She also has mental health conditions that are exacerbated by her housing insecurity. The family opened an application on Manchester City Council's platform for allocating social housing (Manchester Move) in 2019, and were placed in temporary homeless accommodation. For 7 years, they were then moved around between different temporary accommodation, sometimes with no access to a downstairs bathroom. Layla approached GMLC, and her solicitor helped her to get moved into temporary accommodation with access to a bathroom.

At the same time, Layla raised an issue with her solicitor about Manchester Move. Over the last 7 years, Layla has frequently surveyed Manchester Move and bid for any homes that became available. She became frustrated with the way that the platform worked, as the family noticed they were frequently restricted from bidding for properties with a warning message appearing that the properties were not suitable for households needing an "adapted or adaptable" property. When they asked the Council about this, they were told that they could not bid for properties without a downstairs bathroom as they would not be medically suitable, regardless of whether properties could be adapted to add such a feature. The effect of this was to artificially reduce the pool of properties available for Layla to bid on, causing delay in her search for social housing.

Layla instructed GMLC to bring judicial review proceedings against Manchester City Council, claiming that the allocations policy operates in a discriminatory manner towards disabled households. The proceedings have been ongoing since June 2025. Layla's position is that the operation of the allocations scheme as it currently stands creates an artificial reduction of properties that disabled people can bid on. Layla seeks compensation, and a declaration that the allocations scheme is unlawful, so that it is amended to enable disabled people a better chance at securing a social home in a reasonable timeframe. The Council argues that the scheme is not discriminatory.

The judicial review was heard by the High Court in mid-November 2026, and we await judgment. During the case, the local authority has already started to make improvements to the scheme.

Pauline brings a judicial review claim against a 20% rent hike by Places for People

Around 30 tenants of housing association Places for People on an estate in Oldham, built in the 90s, were hit by a decision in February 2025 to raise their rent by 20%. The decision letter warned them that a similar rise would follow the next year, moving them towards the "market rent". Many of the tenants had been there since the 90s and 00s and it was the first they had heard that their properties were not social housing. They demanded that they only pay social rents.

Alongside Greater Manchester Tenants Union, the tenants began to organise, and GMLC were instructed by Pauline, a long-term tenant on the estate. Pauline had mutually exchanged her Council property with a friend in 2003 so that she could look after her disabled grandson. Pauline threatened Judicial Review on the basis that her home had been "made available to those who needs were not adequately served by the commercial housing market" and that Pauline's home had not been "let on the open market" before 1st April 2010, which we argue means the home is social housing, in line with the definitions in Part 2 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. An application for judicial review was filed in the High Court in Manchester. Places for People did not back down, but agreed to hold off the rent rise until the judicial review had been determined.

Being a tenant of a housing association generally means that you are a social tenant unless your tenancy agreement states otherwise e.g. it is designated as a market rent tenancy, but legally there can be exceptions. Places for People take the position that despite them being a housing association, they did not use grant funding to build these homes, so they are not social homes and have always been treated as market rent homes. The tenants take the position that these homes were allocated to them in the same way as social housing and have always been treated that way. Many of the tenants hold documents that are consistent with social housing, and many tell stories of being allocated these homes in circumstances of overcrowding, medical need or escaping DV.

This is a complex matter which is now set to be heard over 3-days in 2027 in the High Court. We are aware of other tenants of Places for People being affected by this issue, so the case is likely to have a wider impact. Whilst the facts and law in question in this case are unique, it speaks to the wider struggle to protect social housing.



September 2026: tenants gather for Pauline's court hearing.

Campaigns

GMLC began its life as a campaign for a new Law Centre, but also as a campaign for free access to justice. We know that legal work alone cannot transform our communities in the ways that they need it to. We fight to defend and improve the rights of low-income communities, both in our legal work and through campaigning.

Make welfare benefits advice a statutory duty

GMLC's Welfare Benefits team has been supporting the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers (NAWRA) to argue for the government to create a statutory duty for local authorities to provide people with advice on their rights to welfare benefits. S.4 of the Care Act 2014 arguably creates this duty for people with social care needs, but currently it is too vague to be enforceable, and NAWRA wants to strengthen it to ensure that getting good advice on benefits is not a postcode lottery. For disabled people especially, understanding how to apply for disability benefits and how to appeal unlawful decisions can be the difference between living a decent life and deep poverty.

In January 2026, NAWRA launched the campaign, and advisers including GMLC's Dan Manville went to Parliament to meet wita Marcia De Cordoba, Stephen Timms and other MPs to discuss the idea. Since then, NAWRA has teamed up with Resolve Poverty and other groups, holding two round tables in Manchester and London to work out what the duty could look like and to plan the campaign.

Defend protest rights and access to justice

GMLC continues to watch with dismay successive governments' dismantling of protections for peaceful protesters, and attacks on the rule of law in the name of expediency. We have shared news and comment in our newsletter and website about (now withdrawn) plans to limit jury trials in some criminal cases, and the contempt proceedings being brought against barrister Rajiv Menon KC for raising the principle of 'jury equity' in his submissions at a criminal protest trial.

We have also continued to fight for access to justice across the civil justice system, making submissions to government consultations and speaking to policy-makers about the need for better Legal Aid funding and access to justice in the face of the 'managed decline' of the Legal Aid system.

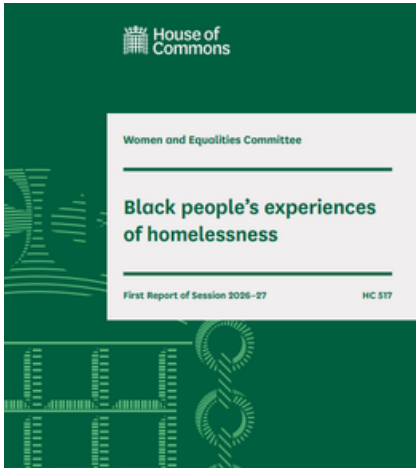
Resist Rent Rises

Since early 2026, GMLC has been working with Greater Manchester Tenants Union and other tenants' organisations across Britain on the Resist Rent Rises campaign. Several of our staff and volunteers have helped the nascent campaign to create an online tool to assist renters, trained tenants' unions and community groups across the country on the new Renters Rights Act 2025, created resources on taking rent increase challenges to the First-Tier Tribunal, and attended protests and events to argue for private sector rent controls and more social homes. In July this year, GMTU and GMLC worked together to support tenants on a housing estate in Bury. A new landlord company had bought up a large number of homes on their estate, and was now raising their rents all at once, sometimes by hundreds of pounds per property. GMLC helped the tenants submit rent Tribunal challenges en masse at a public meeting. The campaign continues. The online tool is available at resistrentrises.org.

Keep Salford's social housing allocations scheme fit for purpose

In late 2025, Salford City Council made changes to its social housing allocations scheme. Amongst the changes was the addition of a new 'local connection' policy that required homeless applicants to be in 'settled' accommodation in Salford for 5 years before they could join the social housing waiting list. This was applied retroactively, and so in one sweep, we estimate that hundreds of people were kicked off the social housing waiting list, including dozens of families living in homeless temporary accommodation, many of them refugees or migrants to the UK. GMTU organised meetings with affected households, and GMLC spoke at these meetings to help people to understand their rights.

As well as assisting with the campaign, GMLC took on several cases to review the Council's decision to remove people from their lists on this basis, arguing that the new policy was unlawful because it did not give reasonable preference to homeless people and was indirectly discriminatory on the basis of race/nationality. Two of the homeless people whose cases we took on were returned to the social housing register and are now in social homes. Others await review decisions. While we work on individual cases and support the GMTU campaign for the policy to be changed, we continue to raise awareness of problems caused by strict local connection policies, which are becoming more prevalent across local authorities under pressure to reduce their social housing waiting lists. We made in submissions on this point (and others) to Parliament for the Black Homelessness Inquiry in January 2026. You can read more in our evidence to the inquiry, available online.



Feedback and Awards

Awards

GMLC was announced as the Manchester Law Society's President's Charity of the Year 2026. The group's publication, the Manchester Messenger, carried a feature article in February 2026 explaining what we do and the importance of access to justice, written by our Director Jason Tetley.

GMLC were also shortlisted this year for another Greater Manchester Pro Bono award - though we did not take the win, we were proud to be shortlisted and to attend the awards ceremony in November.



November 2026: GMLC staff and volunteers attend the Greater Manchester Pro Bono Awards.

Feedback

"From start to finish Sarah was very helpful, honest and supportive. Sarah got the outcome we wanted in employment law and I can't thank her enough. If anyone is being bullied or harassed at work you can get support please don't think you have to put up with it." - Employment team client

"We won the case against the landlord [in a] Section 21 eviction. We were very satisfied with the help and support we received." - Housing team client

"Without the help, patience, and hard work of this organisation I would've been homeless and realistically very much doubt that I would've been alive today. [T]hese people really are unsung heroes who until you need them you will never truly appreciate the difference that they bring to the lives of many." - Benefits team client

Our volunteers

By the community, for the community. Volunteers remain the lifeblood of the Law Centre. From our enquiry line, benefit advice and employment services to our campaigns and management committee, we are supported by dozens of amazing volunteers.



My role includes carrying out interviews and representing clients for PIP appeals. It is a meaningful and rewarding role. It allows me to make a direct impact in the Greater Manchester community. In addition to this, I have received great training and mentoring, which has made the role accessible to me. It is very disheartening to see so many people who have been failed by the very systems that are meant to support them.

– Maria Loray, Legal Advocacy Student Project volunteer



I volunteer at Greater Manchester Law Centre because of the way it supports those who need help most. I help triage enquiries by speaking with clients. I really enjoy volunteering because I feel like I'm making a positive contribution to the community and helping people access the assistance they need. Justice should reach every person, and that belief really matters at GMLC.

– Momen Alnsour, Reception volunteer



Through [the LASP] programme, I developed my legal writing, interview skills and communication skills, especially when communicating with vulnerable clients. This programme showed me the importance of legal representation and support provided by legal professionals. I still use some skills such as legal researching and attention to detail in the paralegal role that I currently hold.

– Satiya Yaya, former LASP volunteer



March 2026: Dan Manville and our Legal Advocacy Student Project (LASP) volunteers hard at work at the GMLC office carrying out casework for clients appealing negative DWP decisions on disability benefits.

Accounts

GMLC's financial accounts for 25/26 shows a surplus of over £31,000. A long-standing priority has been to develop our self-generated income, and we have seen Legal Aid and *inter partes* costs rise year on year. Over the year, we saw over £210,000 of income being generated through our casework. We are especially pleased that a third of our fee income has come from Housing and Public Law cases where we were successful, meaning our opponents were required to pay our costs. The total of Legal Aid income includes sums received after April 2026, as the Legal Aid system was out of action for 8 months due to a cyberattack that meant the online portal for payments was closed.

GMLC is funded through a combination of legal fees, grant funding, member subscriptions and one-off donations. In the year, both of our long-term funders, AB Charity Trust and Legal Education Foundation renewed our grants for a further 3 years. In addition, the funding for our long-standing Housing justice work was extended by the Oak Foundation through to December 2029.

We were the recipient of a large bequest in the year that increased donations significantly. We cannot rely on one-off donations, however, and would encourage anyone that supports our fight to regularly donate by standing order and become a GMLC member via the GMLC website.

Figures at a glance	31 March 2024	31 March 2025	31 March 2026
Cash at bank	£212,670	£247,568	£216,205
Regular donors	94	96	96
Employees	16	18	17
Income	£463,534	£602,621	£609,640
Expenditure	£458,192	£549,074	£577,941
Reserves	£202,666	£256,958	£288,657

Thank you

Principal funders

AB Charitable Trust, Access to Justice Foundation, Justice First Fellowship, Legal Education Foundation, Manchester City Council, Manchester Local Care Organisation, Manchester Metropolitan University, Ministry Of Justice, Northern Consortium, Oak Foundation, Three Guineas Trust, University of Manchester

Board Members

Andy Walsh (Chair), Ben Clay (Treasurer), Denise McDowell, Aisha Khan, Sukhdeep Singh, Giles Elliot, Kevin Allsop, Craig Holmes, Alison Treacher, Arwa Graf



Supporting organisations

Bolton TUC, Clyde & Co Solicitors, Freedom from Torture, Garden Court North Chambers, Glaisyers Solicitors, Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit, Resolve Poverty, Greater Manchester Jain Centre, Greater Manchester Tenants Union, Greater Manchester Welfare Rights Advisers Group, Green & Black Cross, Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, Kenworthy's Chambers, Law Centres Network, Leigh Day & Co, Manchester Mind, Manchester TUC, Manchester Law Society, Maternity Action, Manchester Museum, Public Interest Law Centre, Refugee Action, Safety4Sisters, Thompsons Solicitors, Unison Manchester Community and Mental Health branch, Unison Probation and Cafcass (North West), Unison Manchester City Council, Unison Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust branch, Unite Greater Manchester Social Action Branch, North West 389, Unite, GM RMB 102/999, Unite NW/55 Fujitsu North West Branch, Unite NW/70209 (Service), Unite GM Community Branch, Unite Citizens Advice Manchester NW/11403, Bideford Community Centre, Westcroft Community Centre, Barlow Moor Community Centre, Didsbury Mosque, Dandelion Centre (Wythenshawe), Estate of Mr F B Carter

Cover image: October 2026, GMLC trustee Ben, Housing team members Claire, Helen and Rosie, and volunteer Charlie attend a Greater Manchester Tenants Union protest for rent controls in St Peter's Square.
Left: 'Council Homes not Luxury Flats' placard at the same protest, against the backdrop of the new Manchester skyline.