

Sustainable Consumption and Production

**Empowering schools to lead on environmental
sustainability**

22nd January 2026

Why Schools?

- **Schools as Sustainability Hubs:** Schools influence communities and future generations by implementing practical/pupil led climate action projects.
- **Policy Alignment:** Helping to deliver our environmental ambitions (CE, waste, sustainable lifestyles) and school climate action plans (DfE Requirement)
- **Wider social benefits:** Health and wellbeing; increasing skills development; fostering community cohesion.
- **Creating lasting change:** Leads to lasting change across the community and beyond



Eco Refill Shops Programme

<https://gmgreencity.com/projects-and-campaigns/school-eco-refill-programme/>

Programme Overview

- Partnership with Pupils Profit enabling pupils to manage refill shops.
- Gives young people the skills and tools to play a part in tackling the climate emergency and be part of a circular economy
- Aim: at least one participating school in each of the 10 boroughs (original target).



Programme Objectives



Empowering Pupils:

Pupil-run refill shops reduce single-use plastics, build real-life skills, fosters responsibility and community pride.



Reducing Plastic Waste:

Refill shops reduce single-use plastic waste, supporting circular economy principles within schools.



Life Skills Development:

Teaches financial literacy, marketing, and customer service to prepare pupils for future jobs.



Impact:

Leads to lasting changes across the community and beyond.

“By empowering students to take the lead in shaping their school’s future, it reinforces the idea that small actions lead to meaningful change.”

Programme Status – Eco Refill Shops

- Round 1 launched Jan 2024 - 10 shops
- Round 2 - 15 new shops launched Jan 2025.
- Round 3 – 21 new schools – (launches scheduled Jan 2026).

Funding support from GMCA, Salford Council, Rochdale Council, Suez Recycling and Recovery UK, Next Energy, Stockport iCan.



Progress and coverage

Year 1/2 highlights:

- 46 schools engaged
- 3300+ containers saved from waste
- Confidence & social skills gained
- More than half of the schools are in the most deprived neighbourhoods in England

LA	Schools funded over 3 years
Bolton	5
Bury	2
Manchester	7
Oldham	2
Rochdale	6
Salford	10
Stockport	4
Trafford	5
Tameside	2
Wigan	3
TOTAL:	46

“The shop has raised awareness of sustainability issues and encouraged a change in behaviour amongst stakeholders.”

ECO Refill Shops in 21 GMCA Schools

Full year impact Wave one 2024, and Wave two 2025

289

children leading
a Refill
Revolution

18,911+

people
discovering the
power of re-use

148+

openings with
sustainable
household products

3,359+

plastic
containers saved
from waste



Pupils Profit

Enterprise based PSHE learning

Investing in Tomorrow's Environmental Leaders

Case Study: D.A.R.E: – Dukesgate Academy Refill Emporium

“In a world where every action matters, five remarkable Year 6 students have taken the initiative to lead by example.

Their Eco Shop, ‘D.A.R.E.’ is more than just a project; it’s a movement fuelled by passion and determination.... a testament to what young minds can achieve when driven by passion and responsibility.”

Sarah Ellis, Assistant SENCO and DSL at Dukesgate Academy, Salford



Key Highlights

- **Student-led enterprise:** Five Year 6 pupils launched D.A.R.E. to reduce plastic waste and promote sustainability.
- **Impact:** Significant diversion of plastic bottles from landfill; raised awareness across the school community.
- **Empowerment:** Students reported increased confidence, purpose, and leadership skills.
- **Recognition:** Presented their journey at Oxford University to 100+ peers, teachers, and United Learning representatives.



Future Vision

- Dedicated community hub in a repurposed shipping container in an unused area of the staff car park.
- Eco Shop, Clothes Bank, Community Café, and Food Bank under one roof.
- A welcoming space for sustainability, inclusivity - where people can come together, share resources, and support one another.

“With leaders like these paving the way, the future of sustainability is bright - not just within the school but for the entire community.”

***Sarah Ellis, Assistant SENCO and DSL
at Dukesgate Academy, Salford***

Eco Grants for Schools Programme

<https://gmgreencity.com/projects-and-campaigns/eco-grants-for-schools-projects-2024-2025/>

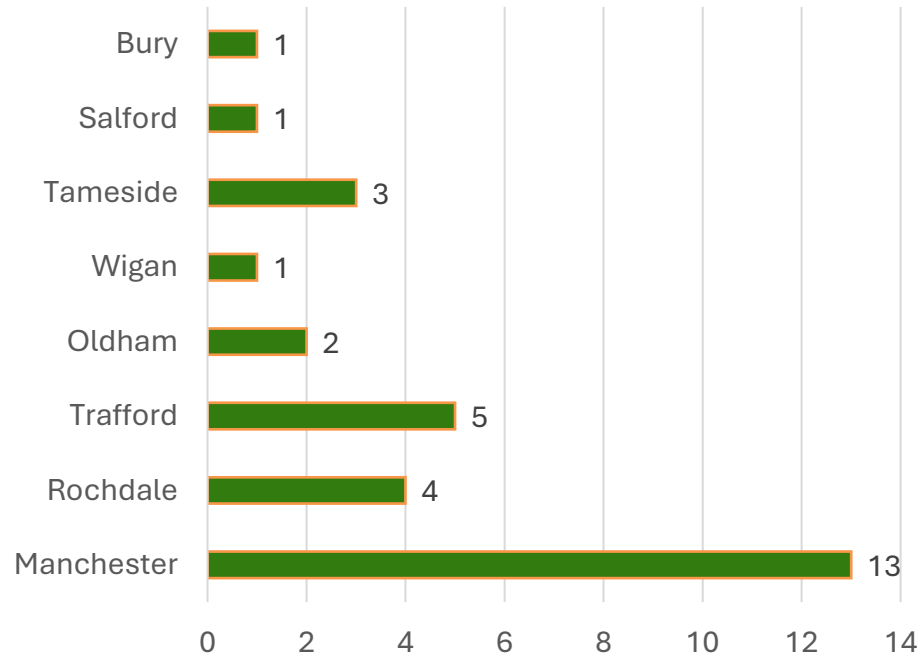
Programme Overview: Eco Grants

- **£2000 Grants:** Micro-grants to kick-start school and pupil-led sustainability projects → Waste Reduction & Circular Economy, Climate Education, Food
- Programme develops **practical skills** and aligns with Greater Manchester's **environmental goals**.
- Projects include school growing hubs, sustainable food education, waste reduction, improved recycling facilities and composting, and circular economy initiatives – uniform swap shops, reimaging plastic waste.



Round 1

- 59 applications → 29 awards
in first wave → £53,382.83



Round 2

TIMELINE

Applications Closed	19 Dec 2025
Assessment	Jan–Feb 2026
Awards Announced	March 2026
Documentation & Onboarding	March–Apr 2026



together
we are

**GREATER
MANCHESTER**

**ECO GRANTS
FOR SCHOOLS
ARE OPEN NOW**

Schools can apply now for up to
£2,000 in funding

More Information

www.GMGreenCity.com

GMCA

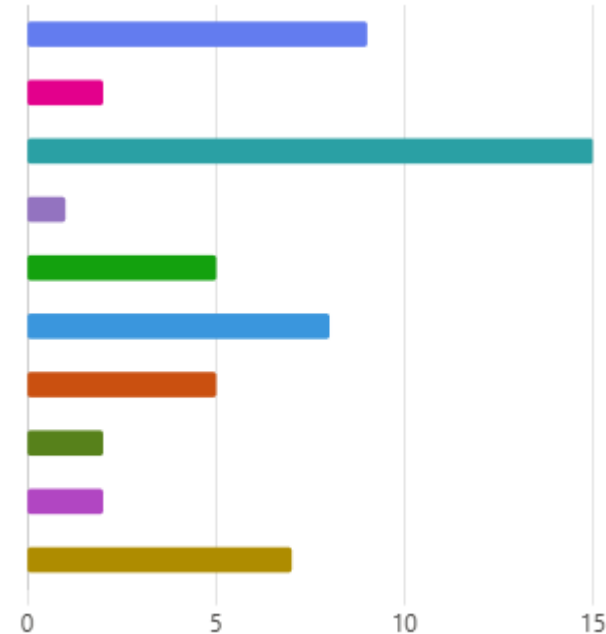
GREATER MANCHESTER
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Round 2: Applications - LA / Academy Trust

Local Education Authority control 26
An Academy Trust 30



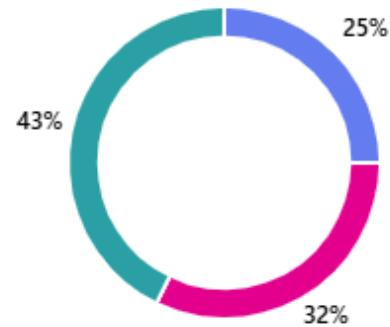
Bolton 9
Bury 2
Manchester 15
Oldham 1
Rochdale 5
Salford 8
Stockport 5
Tameside 2
Trafford 2
Wigan 7



Round 2: Applications by type / category

● Special Educational Need Establishment	4
● Nursery	0
● Primary School	38
● Secondary School	9
● Further Education College	0
● Pupil Referral Unit	0
● Other	5

● Waste reduction and circular economy - Fashion, Textiles or Plastics	14
● Education on sustainable lifestyles	18
● Sustainable food and tackling food waste	24



Case Study: Field to Fork

Whalley Range 11-18 High School

- Transformed unused space into a thriving school garden with fresh produce.
- Students gained practical green skills and sustainability knowledge - Reducing Food Miles and Tackling Food Waste Through Action
- Creative Upcycling: Recycled materials became garden features, unavoidable food waste turned into compost
- Strengthened cross-curricular collaboration on environmental learning
- Built a legacy: A permanent growing area for future cohorts





BEFORE

Outdoor area
the school
wanted to
transform into
a growing area



AFTER

Outdoor area as it looks now.

There are windows to the school corridors on each side or the garden and students and staff have commented on the plants growing there and how the space has improved.



DURING

- Learning about food miles and investigating food packaging
- Sowing seeds: Carrots, Peas, Beans, Corn, Beetroot, Tomato
- Seedlings transplanted to raised beds in garden
- Sweetcorn, tomatoes, courgettes, potatoes, onions, leeks and strawberries just some of the items successfully grown and harvested



DURING

- Students using recycled cans and pallets to create an upcycled planter
- Students preparing the garden for winter and learning about composting
- Information about the project written up for the school magazine range review shared with students, staff, parents and governors

Future Plans

- Skills and knowledge passed on from one group of students to the next
- Cooking activities using their own harvest to allow students to share their learning with families
- Greenhouse expansion to grow stronger and healthier seedlings
- Rainwater collection and irrigation systems
- Develop local partnerships to improve knowledge – Local Garden Centre, Urban Diggers



Next Steps

“Together, we can scale impact and inspire the next generation of changemakers.”



✓ Continue delivering programmes and tailored support for schools



✓ Showcase and amplify case studies – share success stories with partners and wider stakeholders



✓ Unlock co-funding opportunities to scale impact



✓ Build on and align sustainability programmes with school climate action plans

Recommendations

The Partnership is requested to:

- Note and comment upon the update.

www.GMGreenCity.com

Bolton Manchester Rochdale Stockport Trafford
Bury Oldham Salford Tameside Wigan

together
we are

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