GM Recovery Risks and Opportunities

21/04/2020

Risks:

- Rise in poverty and extreme poverty across Greater Manchester as those just above the poverty line drop below, and those already in poverty suffer further reductions in income. Especially concerning if household debts are increasing during COVID-19.
- Economic shock and health inequalities have greatest impact on already deprived communities, and effects are more long lasting in those areas.
- Long-term health consequences are more prevalent and longest lasting among low income residents.
- Financial challenges put pressure on local authority led welfare provision (local welfare assistance schemes, council tax support schemes).
- Community response to support vulnerable and isolating residents in the short-term masks needs (in some instances long-standing) among low income residents.
- Spike in people facing financial hardship and deprivation as interim national support is withdrawn, such as evictions when the ban on evictions is lifted, people becoming unemployed when the furlough scheme ends, and a return to lower Universal Credit payments.
- VCSE funding shifts to crisis responses and away from preventative and strategic responses.
- Further institutionalisation of large-scale food handout support, which may not be the ideal model going forward despite its importance at a time of crisis.

Opportunities:

- Identification of a large pool of volunteers able to support projects addressing poverty.
- To better coordinate responses to poverty each borough has an officer and elected member who has oversight of support for low income and vulnerable residents.
- Co-production in establishing a new approach to tackling poverty.
- Local welfare assistance schemes emerging as a priority in each borough for phasing out of direct food provision role. A clear one-stop shop LA route to crisis and financial support for residents is needed in each borough
- Increased communication between boroughs leads to greater opportunities to identify and replicate good practice in GM.

Contact details:

Tom Skinner
Director - Greater Manchester Poverty Action
tom@gmpovertyaction.org

Graham Whitham

Director - Greater Manchester Poverty Action
graham@gmpovertyaction.org