



MEDIA RELEASE

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True extent of poverty in Greater Manchester revealed

Greater Manchester Poverty Action are calling for urgent steps to tackle poverty as new analysis reveals already high levels of poverty in Greater Manchester are likely to have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

New analysis of poverty in Greater Manchester launched today reveals that:

- 620,000 people are living in poverty
- 200,000 children live in households with an income below the poverty line
- 157,000 households are experiencing fuel poverty
- Around a quarter of a million people are claiming help towards housing costs
- 20% of all jobs in Greater Manchester are paid less than the Real Living Wage.

The data, gathered as part of Greater Manchester Poverty Action's 'GM Poverty Monitor 2020', finds signs that already high levels of poverty in the city region are likely to have got worse during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- The number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits in Greater Manchester rose by 93% between March and August 2020.
- There has been a sharp increase in the number of people claiming Universal Credit in each of the city region's ten boroughs.

Campaigners are calling for tackling poverty to be put at the heart of the city region's recovery plan from the pandemic, but say efforts to address poverty locally need to be supported by national policy.

Graham Whitham, Director of Greater Manchester Poverty Action said, "The Poverty Monitor highlights the worrying scale of poverty across our city region. Even before the pandemic, Greater Manchester was home to some of the highest rates of poverty in the country. COVID-19 has hit the poorest communities hardest, and so will the economic fallout. It is vital that tackling poverty is put at the heart of the recovery".

Graham continued, "Over recent years, local efforts to tackle poverty have been hampered by central government policy, which has increased poverty across the country in recent

years. We need action from central government to provide a platform on which we can tackle poverty locally”

Greater Manchester Poverty Action is backing national calls on government to:

- Introduce a UK wide anti-poverty strategy
- End the two-child limit on benefits and the benefits cap
- Boost Child Benefit payments
- Make permanent the Universal Credit uplift introduced at the start of the pandemic.

The Poverty Monitor also reveals staggering inequalities within Greater Manchester and within individual boroughs, both in respect of levels of poverty and outcomes. Even those Greater Manchester boroughs that are perceived as more affluent have high levels of inequality within them.

Table showing some of the key findings in the Greater Manchester Poverty Monitor 2020

	Percentage of residents experiencing fuel poverty	Ward with the highest rate of child poverty	Ward with the lowest rate of child poverty	Area with the highest rate of food insecurity	Area with the lowest rate of food insecurity	Percentage of children who are school ready	Average hourly pay
Bolton	11.9%	Great Lever 55%	Bromley Cross 18.5%	Halliwell and Brownlow Fold 37.62%	Dunscar and Egerton 10.62%	Boys 57.2% Girls 74.8%	£12.54
Bury	10.6%	Sedgley 50.4%	Tottington 19.2%	Fernhill and Pimhole 32.09%	Nuttall and Tottington 12.34%	Boys 64.6% Girls 77.1%	£15.12
Manchester	15.5%	Longsight 59.5%	Chorlton 23.6%	Harpurhey South and Monsall 39.24%	Castlefield and Deansgate 3%	Boys 56.8% Girls 72.3%	£13.75
Oldham	11.7%	Werneth 66.2%	Saddleworth North 19.1%	Busk 41.22%	New Delph, Dobcross and Austerlands 12.31%	Boys 58.1% Girls 74.4%	£12.65
Rochdale	12.2%	Central Rochdale 57.4%	Norden 23.2%	Central Rochdale and Mandale Park 37.67%	Springfield Park 13.31%	Boys 57.5% Girls 71%	£12.78
Salford	11.2%	Ordsall 59.3%	Worley 13.4%	Higher Broughton 30.22%	Salford Central and University 11.78%	Boys 57.9% Girls 74.4%	£13.03
Stockport	9.8%	Brinnington Central 42.8%	Stepping Hill 18%	Brinnington 39.61%	Marple Bridge and Mellor 10.26%	Boys 63.8 Girls 74.8	£15.99
Tameside	10.7%	St Peter’s 52%	Mossley 25.3%	Ashton Central 35.44%	Stalybridge South 15.88%	Boys 56.3% Girls 74.7%	£12.73
Trafford	10.4%	Clifford 48.2%	Timperley 15.2%	Partington 28.7%	Hale 10.9%	Boys 67.8% Girls 80.9%	£17.16
Wigan	10.8%	Ince 42.9%	Winstanley 15.4%	Laithwaite and Marsh Green 40.73%	Shevington 15.36%	Boys 59.5% Girls 73.7%	£13.35

Greater Manchester Poverty Action is warning that both the short and long-term consequences of the pandemic will hit those on the lowest incomes hardest. This means local efforts to 'Build Back Better' from the pandemic need to put tackling poverty at the centre.

Graham Whitham said, "Whilst Greater Manchester Poverty Action recognises that the main drivers of poverty lie with central government, it is important that we do everything we can locally to tackle the issue. A number of the city region's boroughs, including Salford and Manchester, have anti-poverty strategies in place. However, tackling poverty needs to be at the heart of Greater Manchester's recovery plans and more action is needed to reduce and prevent poverty."

Measures that can be taken locally to tackle poverty include:

- Adoption of a poverty strategy by local authorities and their partners.
- Employers paying the Real Living Wage and improving terms and conditions for employees.
- Promoting benefit take up and financial inclusion so that people get the financial support that's available to them.
- Taking a 'cash first' approach to local welfare provision. This prioritises giving people monetary rather than in kind support such as food parcels and energy vouchers.

Notes to editors:

Interviews available: Contact Graham Whitham on graham@gmpovertyaction.org or 07917644435.

To access the GM Poverty Monitor 2020 go to: <https://www.gmpovertyaction.org/poverty-monitor-2020/>

The aim of the Poverty Monitor is to support policy makers and organisations tackling poverty in Greater Manchester to better understand the nature of poverty across the city region. The Monitor is not an exhaustive list of indicators, and users are encouraged to use the links and sources provided on the page to find out more about the nature of poverty in their area.

The Monitor uses data from a range of government sources to cover the following seven areas: *Child poverty, educational attainment, fuel poverty, food poverty and the poverty premium, health, housing, social security and the labour market.*

The figures detailed in the poverty monitor were sourced between July and September 2020 on behalf of Greater Manchester Poverty Action by the Population Health Research Team at Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Greater Manchester Poverty Action carried out some additional analysis. The views expressed in this press release are those of Greater Manchester Poverty Action.

About Greater Manchester Poverty Action

Greater Manchester Poverty Action is a not-for-profit organisation that works to address poverty across Greater Manchester.

Our vision is of a Greater Manchester free from poverty where all residents can realise their potential and access the benefits of living in a diverse and vibrant city region.

We **convene and network** organisations from public, private and VCSE sectors, and people with lived experience of poverty, to foster collaboration and innovation and to maximise the impact of efforts to address the **underlying causes of poverty** across Greater Manchester. We **equip stakeholders** with the knowledge they need to tackle poverty. We carry out **research and advocate for changes in policy** at a local and city regional level and sometimes at a national level to address the structural and systematic causes of poverty.

There are three strands to our work: *Policy and research, programmes and network support.*

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