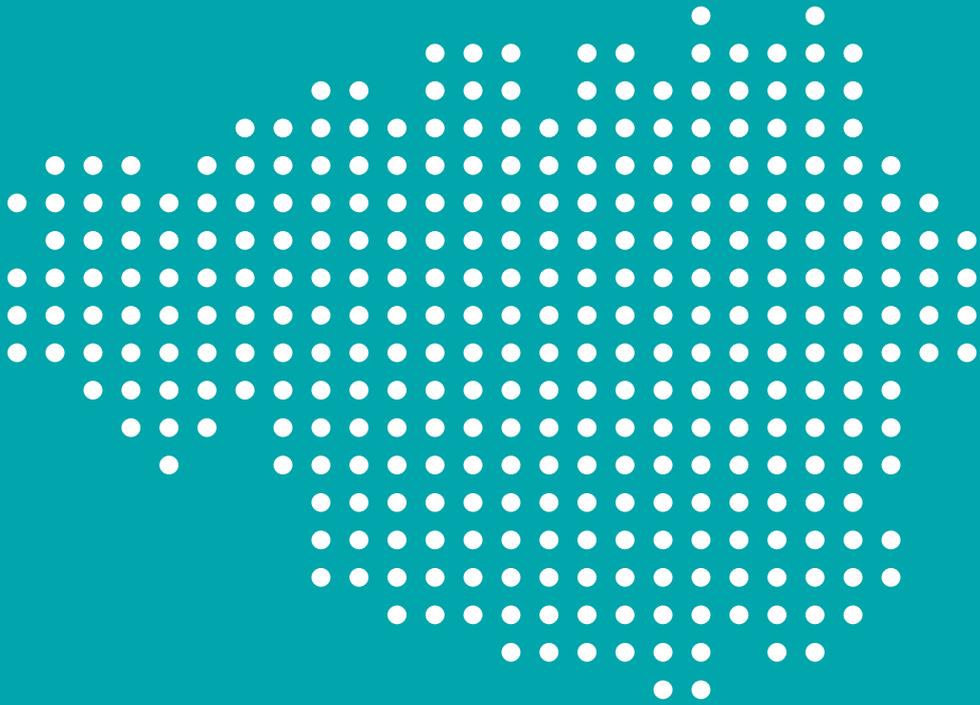




GREATER MANCHESTER
POVERTY ACTION



GREATER MANCHESTER POVERTY ACTION

Impact Report

2017–2020

MARCH 2021

Contents

1 Introduction	3
2 GMPA's main strengths	4
3 Impact	6
3.1 Policy and research	6
3.2 Programmes	7
3.3 Network support	8
GMPA's work during the pandemic	10
4 Annual Impact Survey 2020 – results	11
Appendix: Thank you to our Principal Partners and funders	14

1 Introduction

“So many organisations are involved in combating poverty and in dealing with the effects of it, but to have an independent organisation whose role is to focus wholly on the causes, effects and mitigation of poverty is so vitally important. An organisation that is not in ‘competition’ with others, but instead serving them to do what they do better is similarly important.”

Respondent to GMPA’s 2020 Annual Impact Survey

Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) was incorporated in May 2016. The organisation was established to combat growing levels of poverty across the city region through policy and systems change. Initially GMPA’s work was delivered through a voluntary network. Since 2017, we have grown the organisation’s staff team and begun to develop and deliver several outputs that have enabled us to shape the way Greater Manchester responds to poverty.

GMPA’s 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.

This Impact Report details GMPA’s achievements up until December 2020 as we work towards our vision. In light of COVID-19, which has hit Greater Manchester hard, now is a good time to consolidate our achievements; to reflect on what has been effective and enable us to think about how we can strengthen our work in 2021 and beyond.

Our achievements to date include growing the number of Real Living Wage accredited employers, supporting local authorities in establishing anti-poverty strategies and initiatives, building a network of nearly 1400 stakeholders committed to addressing poverty and bringing together organisations from across the public, private and VCSE sectors to take collective action on food poverty.

We have been able to evidence the value of our work through stakeholder feedback via annual surveys in 2019 and 2020, the results from the latter being detailed in this report.

Feedback from the 2020 survey found that among GMPA’s network:

- **97%** believe that GMPA’s policy and research reports are either very useful or useful for their work.
- **96%** believe that the work of GMPA to help raise awareness of the effects of poverty and its causes is very important or important.
- **92%** strongly agree or agree that GMPA is a vital source of information about how poverty can be tackled in Greater Manchester.
- **84%** say that the work of GMPA has had a strong positive impact or positive impact on the extent to which their own work focuses on addressing the causes of poverty.

“Tackling poverty and inequality, wherever we find it, is the central mission of Oxfam, including in the UK, so we are very pleased to support the work of GMPA as a lead and convener, working in partnership to challenge policy and practice and make Greater Manchester a fairer place for all, placing the views and experiences of people in poverty at its heart”

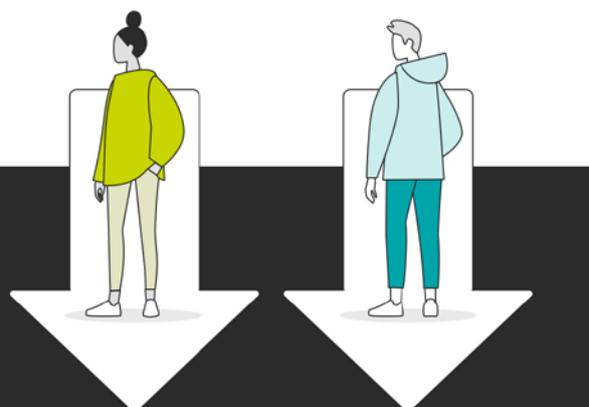
Anela Anwar, former Head of Programme Development, Oxfam GB

Poverty and economic inequality in Greater Manchester results in widely varying health, education, and economic outcomes for the city region’s residents. Even before the pandemic there were an estimated 620,000 people living below the poverty line. Whilst GMPA recognises that the main drivers of poverty lie with central government, our work to date shows that there is much that can be done to address the problem locally. This Impact Report is a timely reminder of what can be achieved.



Tom Skinner, Chief Operating Officer and Graham Whitham, Chief Executive Officer

620,000
people are living
below the poverty
line in Greater
Manchester.



Our focus on reduction and prevention

Often local responses to poverty focus on handouts and crisis support. GMPA believes there is more that can be done locally to reduce and prevent poverty. Our work encourages activities that help to prevent poverty by working with stakeholders to consider the root causes of poverty and to take a more strategic approach to tackling the issue. By championing changes in policy and practice, for example promoting the Real Living Wage, we are helping to put in place practices that prevent people falling into poverty in the first place.

“We are concerned at the degree of poverty that exists in Greater Manchester, with poverty being an everyday reality for many of our customers. We believe that GMPA shares our values and ambitions in making a real difference in people’s lives and will drive positive change in Greater Manchester.”

Kate Gascoigne - Executive Director Customer Experience, Irwell Valley Homes

Our convening power

GMPA maintains a growing network of nearly 1400 individuals and organisations from across the public, private and VCSE sectors with an interest in tackling poverty in Greater Manchester. We are able to draw on the network’s knowledge, experience and

expertise to directly inform policy making at a local authority and combined authority level and in the design of programmes.

“One Manchester supports Greater Manchester Poverty Action because we believe that it is only through working together and collective action that we can realise our ambitions.”

Dave Power, Group Chief Executive, One Manchester

Our policy and research expertise

GMPA has developed a unique role in developing research and policy thinking that focusses specifically on poverty in Greater Manchester by utilising our in-house policy and research expertise, and by working closely with our network.

Our role as a critical friend

We play a supportive role, working productively with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and local authorities on various pieces of work (for example being part of Manchester City Council’s Family Poverty Strategy core delivery group). However, key stakeholders recognise that we will hold them to account and welcome this input. Through our ‘insider’ influencing strategy we have created a space where we are able to act as a critical friend to those with power across the city region.

3 Impact

There are three strands to GMPA’s work: Policy and research, programmes and network support. This section sets out our impact and achievements against each strand of work.

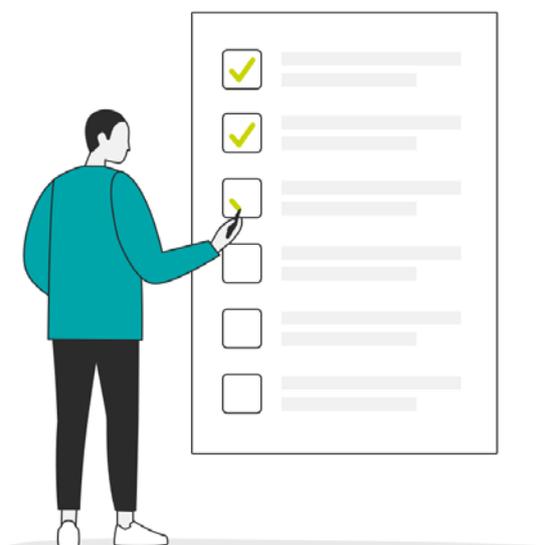
3.1 Policy and research

GMPA’s policy and research work aims to strengthen the city region’s knowledge base and identify strategic and practical responses that address the underlying causes of poverty. GMPA’s policy work has focussed on local social security policy, with two significant pieces of research exploring local welfare assistance schemes, local poverty strategies,

Through our policy and research work we have:

- Successfully influenced the development and implementation of poverty strategies in Manchester, Salford, Tameside and Trafford.
- Influenced the redesign of local welfare assistance provision so that they better support people living in poverty.
- Ensured socio-economic status has been included in Equality Impact Assessments during COVID-19.
- Lobbied for the introduction of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, working with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Growth Company in designing the Charter.

GMPA’s local welfare assistance scheme checklist enables local areas to understand how they can maximise positive outcomes for residents through their scheme.



the socio-economic duty and the poverty premium. Additionally, we provide an evidence base on the nature and level of poverty in Greater Manchester through our Poverty Monitor.

“So glad you are there doing what you do to support us and provide good research that can influence policy makers.”

Respondent to GMPA’s 2020 Annual Impact Survey

“I pay tribute to Greater Manchester Poverty Action for championing this [the Good Employment Charter]”

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester. GMPA Podcast. Published 26th August 2020.

GMPA provides strategic support to stakeholders across Greater Manchester and beyond. We are on the [End Child Poverty Steering Group](#), we sit on the [GM VCSE Leadership Group](#), Manchester City Council’s Family Poverty Strategy Core Group, the Tameside Poverty Action Group, and other equivalent forums.

Greater Manchester Poverty Monitor 2020

GMPA produced the Greater Manchester Poverty Monitor 2020 detailing some of the key statistics relating to poverty across the city region. The Monitor provides a snapshot of poverty across the city region and explores how different areas compare. The aim of the Monitor is to support policymakers and practitioners to understand levels of poverty in their area to help inform and shape responses to the issue.

The Monitor is broken down into seven categories:

- Child Poverty,
- Education,
- Fuel poverty, Food insecurity, and the Poverty Premium,
- Health,
- Housing,
- Labour Market, and
- Social Security.

It lays bare the scale of the challenge facing efforts to drive down poverty in Greater Manchester.

In the first 24 hours after the Poverty Monitor web pages went live on October 21st, 2020, they received 1704 hits and that count now stands at almost 5,000. There were 325 tweets, retweets and likes about the Poverty monitor on the day it was launched and Facebook carried many posts, shares and likes.

The Manchester Evening News reported “The ‘true extent’ of Greater Manchester’s poverty levels has been revealed, with ‘staggering inequality’ shown even in the wealthiest areas and things have ‘been exacerbated by the pandemic’, according to GMPA” and GMPA’s CEO Graham Whitham was on the BBC Radio Manchester Breakfast news.

“The GMPA Poverty Monitor is a great resource to help Greater Manchester districts track levels of poverty and disadvantage at a local level. Often, it is difficult to source integrated local authority and ward level data and analysis. The Poverty Monitor does some of this work for you, presenting information in a user friendly and understandable way.

“In Salford, we are using the Monitor to inform the development of our updated Tackling Poverty Strategy and will provide a useful source of intelligence to help us monitor and track our progress in the future.”

Jonathan Stancombe, Policy and Partnerships Manager, Salford City Council

3.2 Programmes

GMPA’s programmes aim to connect organisations and individuals to identify and strengthen existing anti-poverty work and to enable greater collaboration. They have focused on aspects of poverty such as in-work poverty and food poverty, with the over-arching aim of addressing the underlying causes of poverty.

Through the Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign (hosted by GMPA) we have seen considerable growth in the number of accredited Living Wage employers in the city region. There are now over 299 accredited Real Living Wage employers in Greater Manchester. Up from 26 employers seven years ago.

The Campaign has successfully influenced adoption of the Real Living Wage by Salford, Manchester and Oldham councils (all of which are now working to become ‘Living Wage Places’). For Manchester City Council alone, adoption of the Real Living Wage benefits 1000 workers to a value of £1.5m per annum.

Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign and the Greater Manchester Housing Providers

The GM Living Wage Campaign has been working over recent years with the social housing providers in Greater Manchester to encourage accreditation as Real Living Wage (RLW) Employers and use of their procurement and purchasing influence to promote the RLW through their supply chain.

We have organised events with the GM Housing Providers (GMHP) group to promote the RLW to those Housing Providers who were yet to accredit as LW employers. More than half of the 23 housing providers are now accredited RLW employers, and work on promoting the RLW with them and among their networks has continued.

Members of GMHP have worked collaboratively on social media campaigns and events each year during Living Wage Week. This has included producing short films explaining the benefits that the RLW has on their workforce, and in particular their apprentices, and a [report to celebrate Living Wage Week 2020](#). We continue to work with GMHP towards the aim of all members accrediting.

In 2019 GMPA launched a Food Poverty Action Plan for Greater Manchester - A plan to address the underlying causes of poverty co-produced by over 100 stakeholders as part of GMPA's Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance programme that ran from 2017 to 2019. As a result of this work, over 100 pledges to tackle food poverty were made by 50 different organisations, including:

- GM Health & Social Care Partnership working to increase uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers, and to measure risk of food poverty across GM;
- Kellogg's increasing their support for school breakfast clubs;
- Several housing providers convening food support providers in their neighbourhoods for a joined-up approach that tackles the underlying causes.

"I applaud the work of the many people and huge range of partner organisations involved in the Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance to reduce and prevent food poverty, support communities to plan and adapt to the challenge of food poverty and work with partners to address the structural and economic issues that underlie food poverty."

Andy Burnham, Mayor of GM speaking at the launch of the Food Poverty Action Plan

3.3 Network support

GMPA maintains a growing network of nearly 1400 stakeholders across Greater Manchester, made up of people working in the VCSE, public and private sector, as well as people with lived experience of poverty, who support our vision of a city region free from poverty. This gives us considerable convening power, and the ability to connect stakeholders across systems so that they can achieve greater impact through their work.

GMPA's network support aims to equip stakeholders with the skills, knowledge and expertise they need to tackle poverty. This work includes our fortnightly newsletter, our website, other communications work and maps of support services.

The newsletter promotes good practice and keeps our network informed of relevant developments in policy and practice. It is sent directly to nearly 1400 people by email and has now reached 130 editions. All the main articles are also added to our website.

"GMPA is recognised as the 'voice' of poverty across the region."

Stacie Cohen, Manchester City Council

"I look forward to reading the newsletter."

Respondent to GMPA's 2020 Annual Impact Survey

“Personally, if all web owners and bloggers made good content as you did, the web will be much more useful than ever before.”

Respondent to GMPA's 2020 Annual Impact Survey

“The regular update from GMPA has lots of interesting and relevant information which I use to inform and shape my work.”

Respondent to GMPA's 2020 Annual Impact Survey

[GMPA's maps of support services](#) have been maintained by GMPA since January 2017. There are three maps detailing food providers (foodbanks, food pantries/clubs and meal providers), household items and repairs services and advice and information services. The maps enable people experiencing poverty, and those supporting them, to access support quickly and efficiently. The maps have received over 87,000 hits to date.

Food providers map

We first shared our food map in January 2017 to provide an up-to-date resource detailing food banks and other types of food support. The map is primarily used by those who are supporting people experiencing food insecurity.

The map has also powerfully illustrated the increasing problem of food insecurity in the city region as the number of foodbanks and other food providers has grown and grown.

The GMPA Emergency Food Providers map is freely available to everyone and is accessible

from our website to help the public and advisors when directing people to their nearest, accessible food bank, pantry or meal provider. When the food map was first shared it showed only one style of pin for food banks. Now, with the increasing number of pantries and the number of venues being used for more than one type of food provider, there are 4 pin styles. In January 2017 there were 136 food providers. As at 15th February 2021 the map details 228 food providers (an increase of 68% on January 2017). Of those 132 are food banks, 57 are food pantries or food clubs and 39 are meal providers.

The map has had over 68,000 hits.

The detailed data behind the maps has also been used by other organisations e.g. the Kindling Trust, Street Support and housing associations.

“The food map is an excellent resource for the foodbank and it's users, and really appreciate the time that must have gone into making it so up-to-date before Covid.”

Respondent to GMPA's 2020 Annual Impact Survey

“The maps detailing food aid providers and other support services is absolutely fantastic, and we refer to it several times a week and share it with clients and referral agencies.”

Freya Lightfoot, Assistant Project Manager, Manchester Central Foodbank

GMIPA's work during the pandemic

During the pandemic GMIPA's work focussed on supporting crisis responses and supported stakeholders to take poverty into account when designing and delivering responses to need. This work included:

- Using our knowledge of food aid support systems in Greater Manchester to gather intelligence from food banks, food pantries/clubs and meal providers. This information was used by the GMCA, GM Health and Social Care Partnership and each of the ten GM boroughs to coordinate food provision and support. Specifically:
 - GMIPA advised how to support residents on low incomes who would usually access support through services that have had to close or adapt their operations.
 - Maintained online maps of food aid providers and other support services available to people on low incomes. Between March and December 2020 the food providers map on the GMIPA website received over 26,000 hits.
- Maintaining an understanding of how local authorities, the GMCA and other stakeholders are supporting people experiencing poverty. Specifically:
 - Shaped the Equality Impact Assessment tools developed by local authorities to assess the impact of community responses (the provision of food, access to prescriptions and other welfare support) to the pandemic on different groups of the population. We developed a policy briefing and presented this to the Greater Manchester Humanitarian Assistance Group during the first lockdown (see: www.gmpovertyaction.org/socio-economic-duty/). The briefing focussed on ensuring socio-economic status/poverty was included within the Equality Impact Assessment tools and explained how this could be done and the issues that should be taken into account.
- Supporting local authorities in allocating additional hardship funding from central government to people struggling financially during the pandemic. This has included developing policy briefings and presenting to the Greater Manchester Humanitarian Assistance Group. This work focussed on using the funding to achieve the best possible outcomes for residents experiencing poverty, including advocating for 'cash first' responses to poverty that prioritise giving people monetary payments over in-kind support (such as food parcels or energy vouchers).

“We’ve been pleased to see GMIPA’s work closely aligning with our agenda in Wigan. In particular, we know that GMIPA is supporting local authorities and their partners to adopt a ‘cash first’ approach to local welfare provision. This is about ensuring people are supported through monetary payments in addition to local food and other support. This helps give people choice and dignity, empowering them to meet their own needs. Wigan has taken this approach to supporting families eligible for Free School Meals through payments made direct into their bank accounts during the 2020/21 Christmas holidays. This ‘cash first’ approach is the most effective way of helping low-income families put food on the table at a time when many are struggling to make ends meet. It is important that GMIPA continues to champion this approach.”

Cllr Paula Wakefield,
Lead Member Equalities
& Domestic Abuse, Wigan
Metropolitan Borough Council

4 Annual Impact Survey 2020 – results

“The combination of networking, research, policy influencing, information activities and tools developed by GMPA have provided a reliable point of reference for those working on different dimensions and aspects of poverty across Greater Manchester.

“I think this broad range of services and activities in and of itself is the main contribution of GMPA, as it creates channels to connect a complex network of stakeholders and helps them find new ways to work together effectively, while also supporting their work more directly by providing evidence, training and networking opportunities.”

Dr Silvia Galandini, Domestic Poverty Lead, Oxfam

In July 2020 GMPA ran its second Annual Impact Survey (building on the first survey we ran in 2019). We wanted to find out more about how people in our network felt about our work, what they valued and the different ways in which GMPA had impact. This section details the main quantifiable findings from the survey.

The first section of the survey results relates to the level of importance respondents placed on aspects of our work and influence. A large majority of our network (as illustrated in figure 1) said that GMPA’s work was either very important or important across a range of different areas, including providing them with a means by which to influence policy and practice (86%) and strengthening the voices of people in poverty (89%).

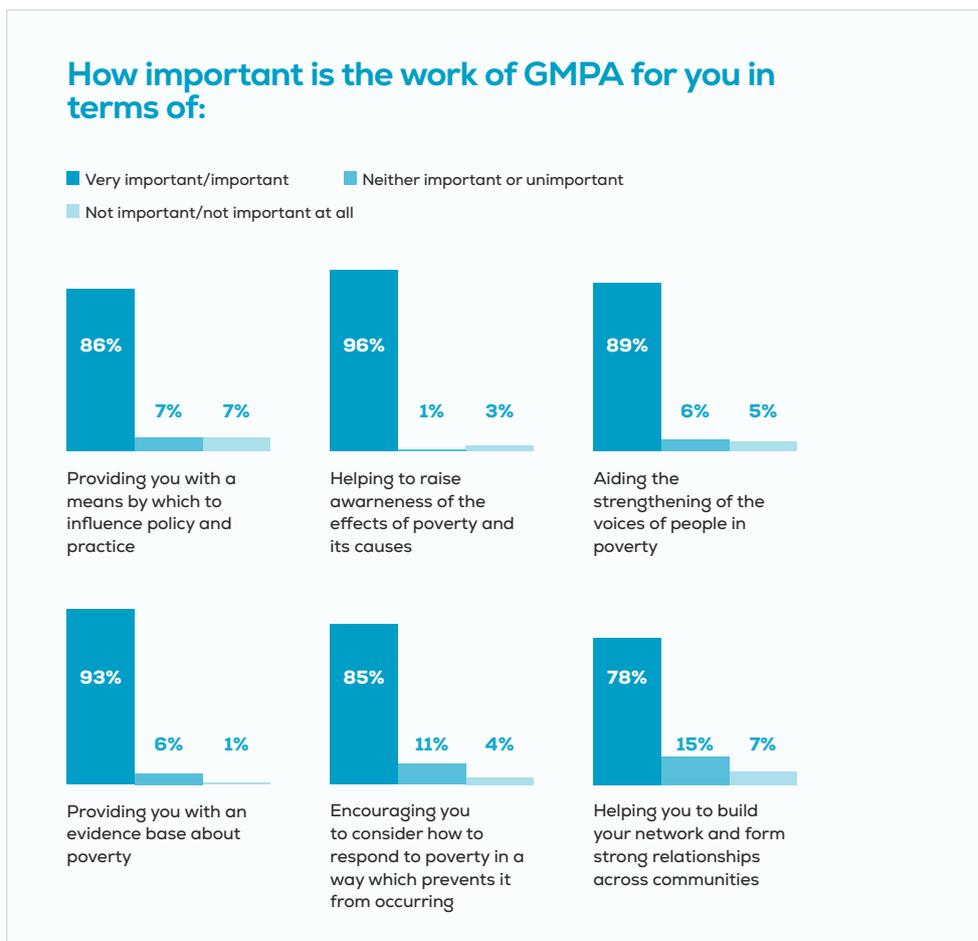


Figure 1

How useful are the following aspects of GMPA's work?

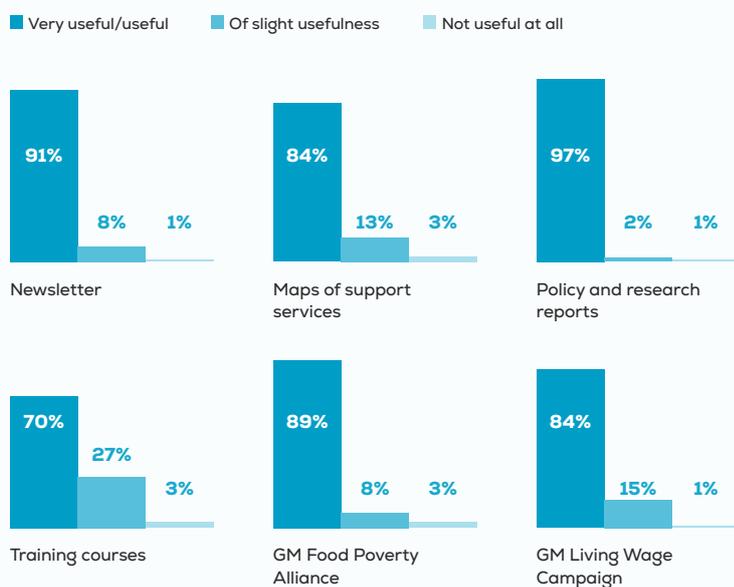


Figure 2

We then asked respondents to tell us how useful our research reports, activities and programmes were and what had been the most important contribution made by GMPA to the poverty agenda in Greater Manchester. Figure 2 shows that all aspects of our work are valued by our network, including the GMPA newsletter (rated as very useful or useful by 91% of respondents) and GMPA's policy and research reports (97%).

Respondents were asked to reflect on the extent to which GMPA's work has impacted on different aspects of their work. The findings, detailed in figure 3, illustrated a positive impact across a range of different areas. For example, 84% of respondents said that GMPA's work has had a strongly positive or positive impact on the extent to which their work focusses on addressing the causes of poverty.

To what extent has the work of GMPA impacted the following aspects of your work?

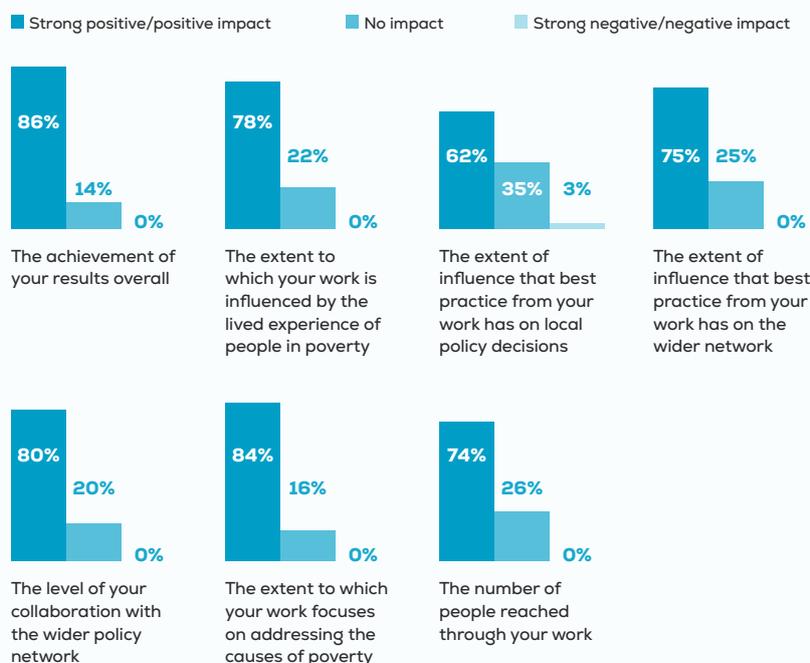


Figure 3

As a result of the work of GMPA, my organisation has become:

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which GMPA's work has strengthened their organisation's work (figure 4). The findings suggest that GMPA is supporting organisations in a number of ways, including supporting them to be more knowledgeable about the causes of and solutions to poverty (81% strongly agreed or agreed with this statement) and more informed by research and evidence (86% strongly agreed or agreed with this statement).

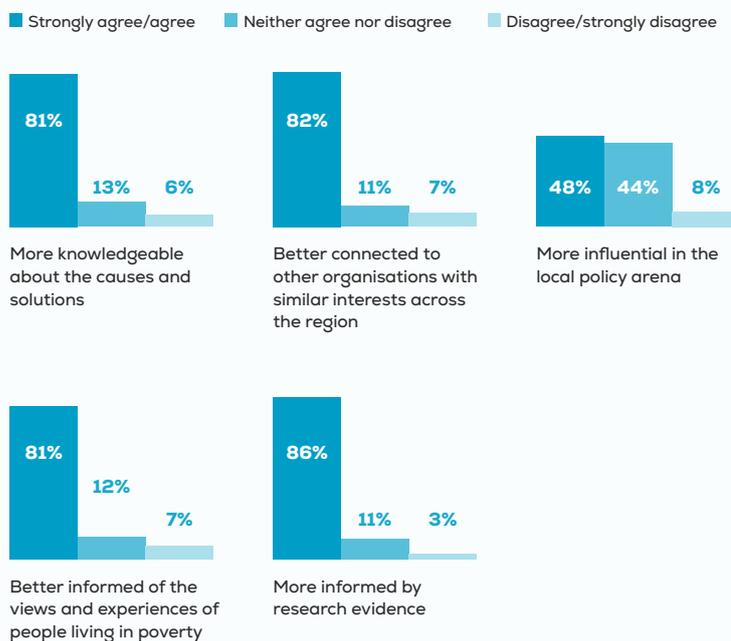
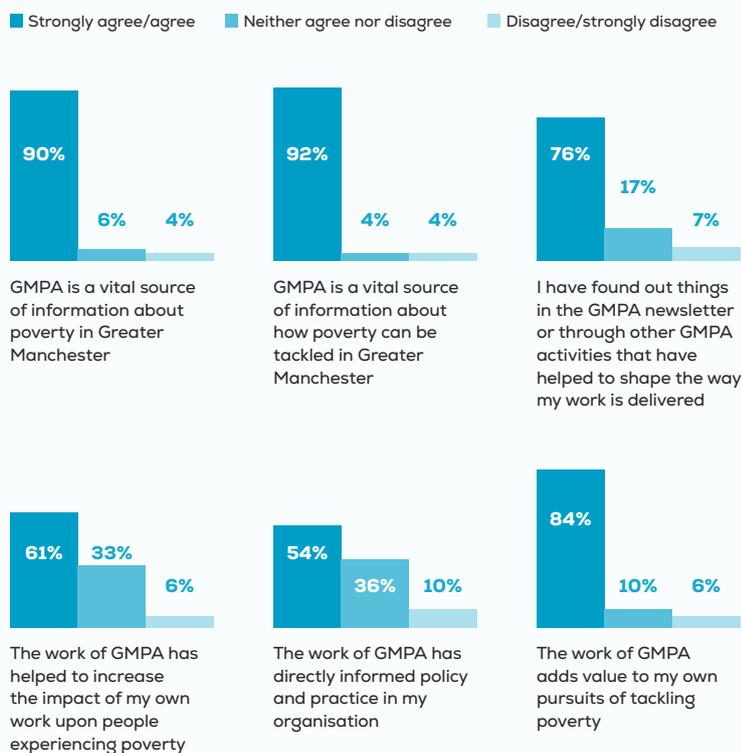


Figure 4

How strongly do you agree with the following statements?



The findings detailed in figure 5 further evidence GMPA's ability to support and strengthen the work of organisations in our network. Among responses, 90% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that 'GMPA is a vital source of information about poverty in Greater Manchester', and 84% strongly agreed or agreed that 'GMPA adds value to my own pursuits of tackling poverty'.

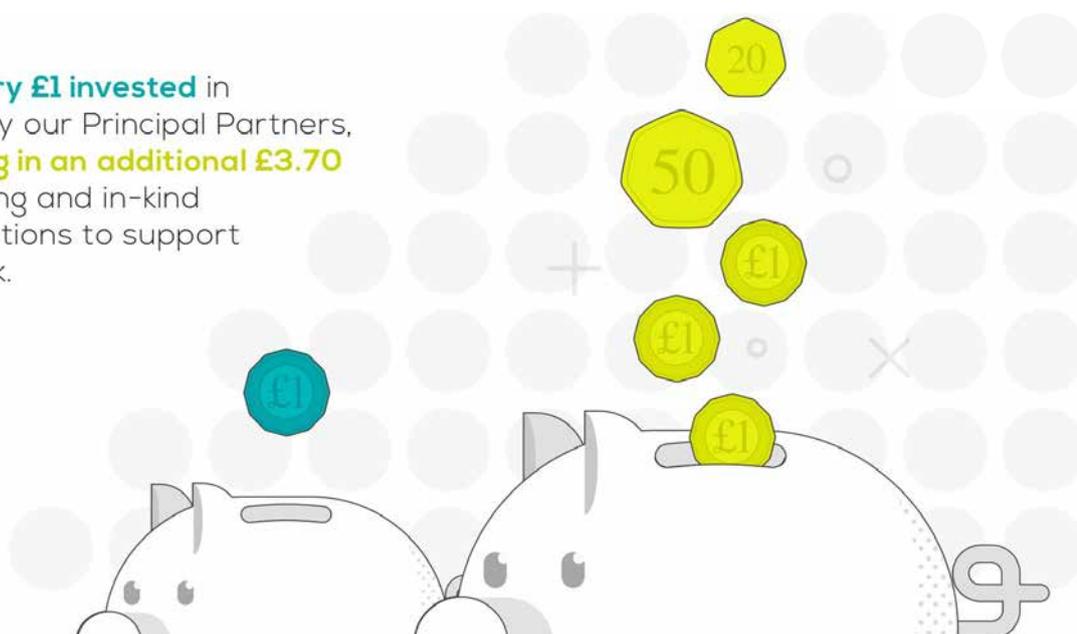
Figure 5

Appendix: Thank you to our Principal Partners and funders

GMIPA is reliant on financial and non-financial support from funders and other stakeholders. Without this support the work detailed in this report would not be possible. The support includes contributions from Principal Partner organisations made since the scheme was launched in 2018. Principal Partners commit to supporting GMIPA financially each year and through strategic advice and support.

We are also grateful for the support we have received from other funders including the National Lottery, Trafford Housing Trust's Social Investment Fund, Seedbed, The Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford, We Love Mcr, Young Manchester, Onward Housing, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Unison, Greater Manchester Housing Providers and Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership.

For every £1 invested in GMIPA by our Principal Partners, **we bring in an additional £3.70** of funding and in-kind contributions to support our work.



Principal Partners share our vision and acknowledge the important role GMIPA has to play in strengthening efforts to tackle poverty across the city region.

The annual financial contributions of Principal Partners met around 30% of GMIPA's core costs in 2020. This funding enables GMIPA to leverage additional resource. In 2020, for every £1 invested in GMIPA by Principal Partners, we have brought in an additional £2.50 of funding to support our work – some of which covered the rest of our costs, and some of which helped us to run various projects. GMIPA is also able to leverage significant in-kind contributions (e.g. through volunteer placements). Taking these in-kind contributions into account, for every £1 spent by Principal Partners, GMIPA is able to bring an additional £3.70 through funding and in-kind contributions.

We would like to acknowledge the support or involvement of the following people:

John Hacking (GMIPA's GM Living Wage Campaign Coordinator), Chris Bagley (GMIPA Communications Manager), Emily Dearden, Ian Jones and Mary Gogarty of the Population Health Research Team at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, (Poverty Monitor 2020), Simon Watts (Strengthening the role of local welfare assistance schemes), Sian Mullen (GMIPA's Food Poverty Programme Coordinator), Sophie Kelly (2020 Impact Survey), Joel Wade (Infographics), Chris Hough of WPBees (Website maintenance), Naomi Dake (HR support) and everyone who has contributed to our policy and research work, the GM Living Wage Campaign and GM Food Poverty Alliance.





gmpovertyaction.org