

## Levelling up agenda failing Greater Manchester as shocking scale of poverty revealed

**EMBARGOED FOR 00.01 ON WEDNESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022**

A new data resource published by Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) highlights how the Government's levelling up agenda is failing the city region, with alarming poverty levels likely to get worse unless the Government takes urgent action.

GMPA's 2022 Poverty Monitor, launched today, finds that in Greater Manchester:

- 144,770 children are living in poverty, representing one in four children
- The number of foodbanks and other providers supporting people on low incomes to meet basic food needs has doubled in 5 years
- 181,588 households are experiencing fuel poverty, representing 15% of all households.
- 195,000 workers earn less than the Real Living Wage of £9.90 an hour.

The 2022 Poverty Monitor details poverty data across a range of key areas, including child poverty, health, fuel and food insecurity and education. It is the only resource of its kind, dedicated to revealing the scale and nature of poverty in the Greater Manchester city region.

Far from levelling up with the rest of the country, many areas of Greater Manchester are falling even further behind across a range of key indicators:

- Women in Greater Manchester can expect to live six years less than those born in the wealthiest part of the country, and men over seven years less.
- Greater Manchester has a higher unemployment rate compared to the national average, and unemployment has risen more markedly in the city region since 2019 compared to England as a whole.
- Educational attainment for 16-year-olds in Greater Manchester is lower than the England average in eight out of ten boroughs.
- Full time workers in Greater Manchester earn 8% less than the England average and part-time workers earn 6% less.

GMPA is warning that these inequalities will worsen unless there is urgent action from central government. Graham Whitham, Chief Executive of GMPA said:

“The failure to adequately respond to the cost-of-living crisis means that 1.3million more people nationally are at risk of being pushed into poverty. Prior to the pandemic, poverty was becoming more entrenched in already deprived areas across the country. The government needs to step in with an immediate response so people can meet basic everyday needs such as fuel and food, as well as implementing a national strategy to end poverty in the UK.”

GMPA is calling on the Government to:

- Reverse the £20 per cut to Universal Credit
- Increase all benefits and pensions in line with inflation
- Introduce a national poverty strategy.

Graham Whitham added:

“Locally across Greater Manchester, councils are making strides to provide advice and support to people in poverty, but the main drivers lie with central government. Unless their efforts are backed up by national action from Westminster, then the current levelling up agenda will do little to help people struggling on low incomes in our city region.”

#### Notes to editors:

Interviews available with GMPA’s CEO, please contact Alexis Darby on [alexis@gmpovertyaction.org](mailto:alexis@gmpovertyaction.org) or 07568 920 556.

The Greater Manchester Poverty Monitor 2022 will go live at 00.01 on Wednesday 25th May 2022 and will be accessible via: <https://www.gmpovertyaction.org/poverty-monitor-2022/>

The figures quoted in the press release are for the most recently available data.

The Monitor uses data from a range of government sources and service user data from organisations operating in Greater Manchester to cover the following eight areas: Child poverty, debt, educational attainment, fuel and food insecurity, health, housing, social security and the labour market.

The figures detailed in the Poverty Monitor were sourced between January and May 2022. The views expressed in this press release are those of Greater Manchester Poverty Action and not necessarily those of individuals or organisations involved in supporting the development of the Monitor.

#### Aims of the Greater Manchester Poverty Monitor 2022

The Poverty Monitor is the only resource of its kind, dedicated to revealing the scale and nature of poverty in the Greater Manchester city region. The key aims of the Poverty Monitor are to:

- provide a multi-dimensional picture of poverty in Greater Manchester;
- raise the profile of poverty and inequality in Greater Manchester among stakeholders, including local authorities, the VCSE sector, academics, businesses and journalists; and
- equip stakeholders with the knowledge they need to tackle socio-economic disadvantage in their own activities, from policy development to service design, advocacy and campaigning.

### About Greater Manchester Poverty Action

Greater Manchester Poverty Action is a not-for-profit organisation that works to prevent and reduce poverty across Greater Manchester. Our vision is of a Greater Manchester free from poverty, we work to achieve this by:

- Producing Money Advice Referral Tools – the tool lists places people can go for advice and other income maximisation support in their borough.
- Running the Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign - advocating for widespread adoption of the Real Living Wage by employers across the city region.
- Working with Local Authorities and the Combined Authority on anti-poverty strategies to tackle the high rates of child and in work poverty across Greater Manchester.
- Running Poverty Truth Commissions – embedding the voices of people with lived experience of socio-economic disadvantage in decision making structures in Greater Manchester.
- Advocating a cash first approach to local welfare - as evidence shows that when extra financial support is provided to low-income households in crisis it is used appropriately and in a way that boosts household wellbeing.
- Supporting Local Authorities to adopt the socio-economic duty – ensuring transparent and effective measures are in place to address the inequalities that result from differences in occupation, education, place of residence or social class.

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