

Greater Manchester Poverty Action - Principles

September 2021

The following sets out the principles underpinning Greater Manchester Poverty Action's approach to addressing poverty.

- **Human Rights:** We believe that the existence of poverty represents a breach of fundamental human rights. We place our concerns within the wider framework of human rights, equality of opportunity and of social, economic and environmental justice.
- **Income adequacy:** Central to our rights-based understanding of poverty, is the recognition that every person has the right to an adequate income. This right must be at the heart of long-term strategies to address poverty, including locally/regionally. This should be delivered through the labour market, the state or a combination of both.
- **Cash first:** GMPA believes that responses to poverty should focus on getting more money into people's pockets. Money gives people choice, dignity and control. Where possible, services supporting people experiencing poverty should seek to provide people with money rather than vouchers or in-kind support.
- **Dignity and Respect:** Central to everything that we do is the principle that all people, regardless of their circumstances, must be treated with dignity and respect. We put this principle into practice in our own work as well as encouraging others to build this into their work and lives. This means policy and practice aimed at tackling poverty should maximise choice and give people dignity and control.
- **Prevention is better than the cure:** Anti-poverty initiatives should be heavily weighted towards reduction and prevention. Preventing and reducing is more effective and efficient than mitigation and the delivery of crisis responses. This principle applies as much to VCSE and private sector responses to poverty as it does to the public sector.
- **Equality and intersectionality:** We recognise that some groups, for example disabled people, women, people from black and ethnic minority communities, are more at risk of poverty. We will ensure that the work we do reflects the differing experiences that people have of poverty. Understanding the way socio-economic disadvantage intersects with equalities issues is vital if we are to address poverty effectively.
- **Voice of people with lived experience of socio-economic disadvantage:** We are committed to the empowerment of people living in poverty and seek to promote this in our own practice as well as encouraging others to build this into their work. Empowerment is a process whereby people can gain more control and influence over the decisions that affect their lives. Decision making is improved when people with lived experience are engaged in this way. We believe that people who experience socio-economic disadvantage should be able to contribute to finding the solutions to the problems that affect their lives. We aim to put this principle of participation into practice in our own work by ensuring that time and resources are available to allow meaningful engagement in our activities.
- **Collaboration and convening:** We are committed to the principle that poverty is not simply a problem for those who experience it but is the responsibility of our whole society. We bring together a network of likeminded individuals and organisations and use this to strengthen change.
- **Organisational independence and being a critical friend:** Regardless of funding, we retain our right to act as an independent organisation. We are non-party political and will work with all organisations that support our aims and our values. This, and our commitment to collaboration, enables us to engage with those who hold power, as a critical friend.