**Energy supports benefits the better off and doesn’t go far enough to address the cost-of-living crisis facing low income families**

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Responding to the government’s announcement on support with energy bills, Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) believes the Government must do much more to support low-income households if we’re to avoid people being plunged into poverty this winter.

Whilst support with energy bills is welcome, the price cap announced by the Government is poorly targeted and will benefit well-off households the most as they tend to be the highest users of energy.

Responding to the Government’s announcement to cap typical household energy bills at £2,500 for the next two years, Graham Whitham, Chief Executive of GMPA said:

“We urgently need targeted support for low-income households that ensures they don’t pay a penny more on their energy bills this year compared to last, and that recognise the huge pressure rising livings costs in other areas of spending, such as food, is placing on their budgets.”

Graham Whitham added:

“We also need a comprehensive and credible plan for dealing with poverty in the long-term. This has to include an increase in pensions and, most importantly working age and children’s benefits, that reflects what people actually need to achieve a decent standing of living and to avoid financial hardship.”

As part of a comprehensive plan to deal with poverty, GMPA is calling for:

* Widespread adoption of the Real Living Wage by employers.
* Increases in benefits and pensions in line with inflation.
* Scrapping of the Bedroom Tax and two child limit on benefits.
* A reversal of the £20 per week cut to Universal Credit.
* A national benefit uptake campaign that ensures everyone is able to access the financial support they are entitled to.

**Notes to editors:**

Interviews available with GMPA’s CEO, please contact Graham Whitham on 07917644435 or graham@gmpovertyaction.org

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| **About Greater Manchester Poverty Action** Greater Manchester GMPA 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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