

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**10 OCTOBER 2023**

## Starmer has an opportunity to set a course that ends poverty in the UK, says Greater Manchester Poverty Action

**Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) has responded to today's Labour Leader's speech to the Labour conference with a call for Keir Starmer to be bolder on eradicating poverty in the UK.**

Keir Starmer announced today at the Labour party conference the party's priorities, ahead of a General Election in 2024.

These included a commitment to a 'making work pay with a 'real' living wage', building 1.5million more homes and 'breaking the class ceiling.'

But while Starmer pledged to 'move forward' from the cost-of-living crisis, GMPA believes the leader of the opposition missed an opportunity to go further by bringing the entire country behind a national mission to eradicate poverty, including by harnessing the expertise of what's already happening in localities.

Responding to the Labour Leader's speech, GMPA's Chief Executive, Graham Whitham, said:

"While Starmer addressed the struggles experienced by people up and down the country in his speech today, we know from our work in Greater Manchester and elsewhere across the country that there is a groundswell of anti-poverty activity being driven by ourselves, local authorities and voluntary and community organisations that seems to be missed by politicians at Westminster.

"These local responses to poverty must often work hard against national government policy that has so often failed low-income households and communities in recent years. However, the potential under a Labour government to harness this energy is significant, with examples of impactful responses to poverty being stood up in places across the country."

GMPA works with local authorities and their partners to develop local anti-poverty strategies. In Greater Manchester and beyond, local councils have introduced anti-poverty strategies drawing on GMPA's anti-poverty framework, despite there being no national government mandate for them to do so.

Building on this work, GMPA supports local authorities and partners to boost household incomes through a cash-first approach to welfare that promotes giving people who are facing a financial crisis money rather than in-kind support such as food parcels or energy vouchers. GMPA also supports employers to adopt the real Living Wage and strives to ensure people access all the benefits they are entitled to.

Graham continued: “Our country needs a solid plan for ending poverty and boosting living standards that ensures people can afford a decent standard of living year in, year out. In the context of limited economic growth and constrained public sector funding, regardless of who forms the next government, localities will be central to setting the country on a course to end poverty.”

**Ends**

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**Notes to editor:**

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Broadcast and print interviews available with Graham Whitham.

**Who are Greater Manchester Poverty Action?**

Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) is a recognised leader on poverty in the UK and exists to end poverty in Greater Manchester and beyond.

We deliver independent, evidence-based activities to address socio-economic disadvantage. These focus on maximising the financial resources available to households, amplifying the voices of people with lived experience, and working with our network to achieve meaningful change.

We won't stop until our city-region is free from poverty.

**Work includes:**

- [Local anti-poverty strategies: good practice and effective approaches](#)
- [Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign](#)
- [Money Advice Referral Tools](#), supporting people to access advice and maximise their income
- [Money Matters programme](#), providing debt and benefit advice in schools
- [Fortnightly newsletters](#)

Further information can be found by visiting <https://www.gmpovertyaction.org/>.