

Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

Report to: Executive – 13 September 2017

Subject: Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-22

Report of: Geoff Little, Deputy Chief Executive (People, Policy and Reform)

Summary

This report sets out the rationale, development and process that has taken place to complete the Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022. It explains how the Strategy (appendix 1) supports the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy and in particular how the new Our Manchester approach has been used to develop the Strategy in conjunction with existing data and intelligence. Once adopted, the Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022 will provide the overarching framework and priorities for the City Council and partners from all sectors over the next 5 years.

Recommendations

Executive are asked to adopt the Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022.

Wards Affected: All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2012-2015

Our Manchester Strategy 2016-2025

Family Poverty Strategy report, December 2016 Economy Scrutiny Committee

Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022, June 2017 Economy Scrutiny Committee

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Manchester has one of the highest rates of child poverty by local authority area with 35.5% of children under 16 living in poverty according to the most recent HMRC and DWP data from 2014. Of those living in poverty, the vast majority (69.4%) are living in workless households, whereas 13.6% are living in working households and 16.2% are classed as other poor. The proportion of children in poverty living in working households is rising, however, there are still some suggestions that this data underestimates the volumes of in work poverty. The 35.5% figure equates to 36,255 children under 16 living in poverty out of a total number of 101,845. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has also predicted that the number of children living in poverty will rise sharply by 2020, in part due to planned benefit reforms affecting families with children.
- 1.2 The December 2016 report to Economy Scrutiny Committee provided a summary of how The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 had made a number of significant changes to the Child Poverty Act 2010. The report set out how the Council and its partners had responded to these changes and had decided that a Family Poverty Strategy for Manchester was still needed given the high percentage of children under 16 living in poverty and the strategic focus on inclusive growth. An initial draft of the Strategy was also presented to the Committee which had been developed using the Our Manchester approach and sought to add value by focussing on areas not already covered by existing programmes of work or strategies.
- 1.3 The views of the Committee were incorporated into a revised version of the Strategy which has been used to undertake further engagement and consultation with key internal and external stakeholders including Economy Scrutiny Committee in June 2017. This report provides a summary of the Strategy and presents the Executive with a final draft of the Strategy for approval.

2.0 Manchester Strategy 2016-2025

- 2.1 The Our Manchester Strategy 2016-2025 sets the strategic framework for the refresh of the Family Poverty Strategy. The refreshed strategy supports delivery of the strategy and specifically the ambition to create 'a progressive and equitable city'.
- 2.2 The Our Manchester Strategy document makes specific reference to lifting children out of poverty, reducing inequality and reducing the number of looked after children in the city. The importance of early years services, new approaches to tackling complex issues, and the need to tackle fuel poverty are highlighted. There is also a focus on improving school attainment to above the national average; supporting unemployed residents into secure and sustainable employment, which pays at least the Living Wage; and progressing their skills and careers.
- 2.3 The Family Poverty Strategy also supports the delivery of the Our Manchester; Our Children: Manchester's Children and Young People's Plan 2016-2020

which seeks to improve outcomes for children by decreasing risk and increasing resilience. It recognises that there are certain fundamental needs that every Manchester child should be able to count on. These include a safe, warm home environment; stable parenting; regular healthy meals; access to healthcare; and a family income above 60% of the national median. Along with these basic needs there are also a number of resilience factors that can help a child to succeed and reach their potential, despite any problems or setbacks they may face. These are: Belonging, Coping and Learning.

3.0 Our Manchester Approach

- 3.1 A Working Group of a number of City Council officers from different services and key partners including Registered Providers and Manchester universities was established in January 2016 to lead the development of the new Manchester Family Poverty Strategy. The Working Group is one element of a mixed-methods research methodology that has been adopted in order to gain a comprehensive and robust picture of family poverty in Manchester. This has not only included a thorough review of the latest published national research and locally held data sets, but has also involved extensive engagement directly with Manchester residents.
- 3.2 Using the 'Our Manchester' approach, the Working Group and colleagues have been trained to undertake a series of ethnographic, strength based conversations with over 120 residents across the city, to hear about the lived experience poverty in Manchester. This has been complemented by bespoke creative engagement sessions led by Z-arts and Contact Theatre, and by 96 contributions from school children who have been engaged by City in the Community. A thematic analysis of the strength based conversations was completed and is included in the Strategy.
- 3.3 This approach represents a new way of developing strategies in the city and has been well received by those taking part, community organisations and residents. The views of families living in low income areas of the city have been listened to at an early stage to inform the development of the Strategy, rather than simply being consulted on a set of draft priorities, drawn up by officers.
- 3.4 A key priority is to re-engage communities in the actual delivery of the Strategy and, where possible, co-design of solutions. This is critical to ensure that the ethnographic approach is followed through into delivery, not just in the production of the Strategy.

4.0 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1 Since December 2016, the Working Group have sought to engage with a broader set of partners to seek their feedback on the draft Strategy and approach. This resulted in a successful engagement event in March 2017 at the University of Manchester with a variety of voluntary sector and public sector organisations including Emerge, Citizens Advice Bureaux and MACC as well as colleagues from education, housing and health who work in the

most deprived areas of Manchester. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) were also invited to the event and Mike Hawkrigg delivered a presentation in which he talked about the definition, causes and costs of poverty and JRF's strategy for solving poverty. He was also asked to provide a critique of the draft Manchester Family Poverty Strategy and to suggest how Manchester could improve outcomes for low income families. Attendees also participated in a facilitated workshop which asked them to provide their feedback on the draft Strategy and how their service or organisation could help to deliver it.

- 4.2 A revised version of the Strategy was produced following this event and was circulated to internal and external partners in the city for their final comments. These comments have now been incorporated into the final draft below.

5.0 Family Poverty Strategy Priorities

- 5.1 A high level summary of the final draft strategy is provided below alongside the full version which follows this report.
- 5.2 As stated above, the aim of the Strategy is to add value by identifying a small number of important priorities which will make a significant impact on children and their families, but that are not already being delivered in the city. The 10 priorities in Table 1 below are set out under three main themes and have been developed following a detailed analysis of the available intelligence and with input from a range of partners. Each of the priorities has an identified lead or working group who have been tasked with driving its implementation.

Theme 1: Sustainable work as a route out of poverty

- 5.3 The Strategy recognises that well-paid and sustainable work remains the best way of increasing household incomes and moving families out of poverty. Manchester's economy needs to be one which can provide opportunities for local people to benefit from the growth of the city. This very much aligns with the 'progressive and equitable' theme of the Manchester Strategy and the recent national and local work on inclusive growth. The Manchester Work and Skills Strategy 2016-2021 sets out a number of objectives and priorities which will deliver positive outcomes for Manchester residents.

Theme 2: Focus on the Basics – raising and protecting family incomes

- 5.4 Although raising household incomes through employment remains the best route out of poverty, there are a number of challenges facing families living in poverty that need to be addressed in the short-term such as the impact of welfare reforms, the poverty premium and the cost of food and fuel.

Theme 3: Boosting Resilience and building on strengths

- 5.5 Where basic needs cannot be met, families need to be supported to become more resilient. It is recognised that boosting resilience in children and their parents is more likely to lead to positive outcomes in relation to education,

employment and their ability to cope with future challenges, however, it is also important for professionals and organisations to change the way they work to allow them to better recognise the strengths of a child or their family.

Table 1: Summary of the themes and priorities of the Strategy

Sustainable work as a route out of poverty
1. Affordable, flexible and high quality childcare for parents
2. The role of Anchor Institutions
Focus on the basics – raising and protecting family incomes
3. Mitigating the impact of welfare reform on families with children
4. Tackling the poverty premium
5. Food and Fuel
6. Improving Children’s Health
Boosting resilience and building on strengths
7. Strength based approach in communities (Belonging)
8. Improving the identification and signposting of families in poverty (Coping)
9. Poverty proofing services (Coping)
10. Embedding careers advice and aspiration in schools (Learning)

6.0 Next Steps

Communication and engagement

- 6.1 Members of the Working Group are working with the City Council’s internal Communications Team to design a more accessible version of the Strategy. This document will be ‘Our Manchester’ branded and will focus on the key messages from the Strategy and how they have been developed following the conversations with residents. Channel Plans are being developed so that the document can be aimed at residents and frontline workers who are in contact with those living on low-incomes in a variety of community settings.
- 6.2 Once adopted, the final full version of the Strategy will also be given an ‘Our Manchester’ branding and will be launched at an event in autumn 2017.

Implementation and reporting

- 6.3 Discussions about the implementation of the Strategy are already underway and the Working Group will be refreshed with a revised set of Terms of Reference and a full implementation plan. A key objective is to ensure that responsibility for delivering the Strategy sits with a broad range of partners and stakeholders across the city and is not just driven by the City Council. The City Council’s Reform and Innovation Team are supporting this work and progress will be reported to the Manchester Investment Board and to Economy Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.4 Update reports will be in the form of progress updates against the 10 priorities set out above and will include a narrative on the activity to date alongside specific data and intelligence where relevant to evidencing progress. Updates will also include any relevant information from other work which will help to

deliver the aims of the Strategy including Health, Work and Skills, Early Years and Education.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The Executive are invited to consider the Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022 and approve its inclusion in the policy framework for Manchester City Council.

FINAL DRAFT 30/08/17

Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022

1. Vision

Our aim is for everyone in the city to have the same opportunities, life chances and potential to lead safe, healthy, happy and fulfilled lives, no matter where they are born or live. This means reducing the disparities between different areas of the city and between the city and the national average. The most successful societies in the long term are those that are the least polarised.

Although the numbers are falling, one in three children in the city continue to grow up in poverty. We need to work with families to lift them out of poverty. We want all children growing up in the city to achieve their potential, but too many children in difficult situations never do. They continue to face significant challenges as they move into adulthood and are often unable to secure and sustain good quality employment with opportunities for career progression. In the short-term, children growing up in families dependent on benefits will face increasing cuts to family income and opportunities as a result of welfare reforms and austerity.

2. Introduction

‘Unless you support everyone so we all have the same opportunities in life you risk people slipping through the cracks’

The Our Manchester Strategy 2016-2025 recognises that inequality remains a significant issue in Manchester which is fundamentally unfair but is also holding back the city. The ‘A Progressive and Equitable’ theme of the Strategy sets out how the city can become more equal by improving residents health, skills and creating improved employment opportunities. There has always been a strong social case for tackling poverty and child poverty in particular. This remains the case and Manchester firmly believes that tackling poverty in society is the responsibility of everyone who works and lives in the city. As well as the social argument, there is an increasingly compelling economic case for tackling poverty. The recently approved Greater Manchester Strategy has ‘living well in Greater Manchester’ at its core, recognising the importance of people and place in ensuring residents reach their full potential, improve productivity and help to reduce the pressure on public spending in areas such as health and welfare.

At a national level, the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission which was launched in April 2016, conducted a 12 month independent inquiry into inclusive growth and its findings were reported in March 2017. A major focus for the Commission’s work is the role of cities as the primary drivers of economic growth as well as the places where people are most likely to experience inequality and poverty. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines inclusive growth as “economic growth that creates opportunities for all segments of the population and

distributes the dividends of increased prosperity, both in monetary and non-monetary terms, fairly across society”¹.

The final report sets out a four key sets of recommendations for placing inclusive growth at the heart of public policy and finance which are equally directed to central government, councils and UK city regions. They are as follows²:

- Place-based industrial strategies: Delivering business-led productivity and quality jobs.
- A fundamental reset of the relationship between Whitehall and the town hall, underwritten in new social contracts.
- Inclusive growth at the heart of public investment.
- Making inclusive growth our working definition of economic success.

This Strategy recognises that the causes of poverty are varied and that many of the challenges families in poverty face are interdependent. There are many existing strategies and programmes of work underway in Manchester which aim to deal with some of the issues faced by families in poverty.

This Strategy supports the delivery of some of these strategies and also aims to provide a challenge to others to ensure that addressing poverty is a central component of their delivery. A brief summary of some of these strategies is provided below:

Our Manchester: The Manchester Strategy	Provides the overarching strategic vision for Manchester and sets out the type of city it will be in 2025. Has five themes including ‘A progressive and equitable city’ and a ‘Thriving and sustainable economy’.
Our Manchester, Our Children: Manchester’s Children and Young People’s Plan 2016-2020	Provides the strategic narrative for children and young people including 4 overall outcomes, 4 principles for how we will work, 3 obsessions and 4 underpinning behaviours. The Family Poverty Strategy will support the delivery of this plan by improving outcomes for young people who are affected by poverty and their families.
Early Help Strategy	Owned and implemented by Manchester Children’s Board. Sets out how all partners will work together to reform, strategically plan, jointly commission and deliver a range of provision to support children, young people and their families at the earliest opportunity.
Work and Skills Strategy	Sets out how Manchester’s businesses can be supported to grow by equipping residents with the skills and attributes they need. Identifies how the city’s residents can be better connected to the employment opportunities being created

¹ OECD (2015)

² Inclusive Growth Commission; Making our economy work for everyone (2017) *Final Report*

	across Greater Manchester. Will address poverty by increasing the number of residents that are able to access sustainable and healthy work with opportunities for in work progression.
Neglect Strategy (in development)	A Greater Manchester Neglect Strategy is in place and a specific Manchester one is being developed. It is recognised that poverty is often one of a number of factors that can lead to child neglect, however, the majority of children living in poverty are not neglected and this highlights the importance of building on family strengths and developing skills such as budgeting to develop resilience.
Homelessness Strategy	Sets out a vision of a city where homelessness reduces year on year, integrated services underpin increased self-esteem and enable citizens to reach their full education and employment potential; and where early intervention supports people to maintain their independence. Highlights the current challenges and how the city can drive down homelessness.
Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy	Details the ambitions for delivering DV&A services between 2016-2020, with a focus on early intervention and prevention, recovery for victims and holding perpetrators to account. Details service pledges for ensuring people get the right support at the right time, including: seeking help, managing risk, training and developing the workforce, and adapting delivery.
Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy	This sets out the city's ten year vision for reducing health inequalities and improving residents' health, with seven priority areas for children's and adults' physical and mental health. The strategy highlights that poverty can affect children's physical and emotional health and wellbeing and identifies key actions for addressing this.

3. Background and scope of the Strategy

Manchester's previous Family Poverty Strategy 2012-2015 was written in a different economic and political climate, with the effects of the 2008 financial crash still being felt. The Children's Act 2010 had placed a duty on local authorities to work in partnership to address poverty and publish a Child Poverty Needs Assessment and Child Poverty Strategy.

In 2017, the picture is different. The Welfare Reform and Work Bill removed the duty to produce a strategy and also sought to make changes to national targets and measures of poverty. The four measures of child poverty identified by government are as follows:

- (a) children living in workless households in England;
- (b) children living in long-term workless households in England;
- (c) the educational attainment of children in England at the end of Key Stage 4;

- (d) the educational attainment of disadvantaged children in England at the end of Key Stage 4

In general terms, living in poverty means not having enough resources to meet your minimum needs.³ There are a range of different thresholds used to define who is living 'in poverty' but the most common practice in the UK is to say that those with a household income of under 60% of the national median income are living in poverty – a measure referred to as 'relative low income'.

In Manchester, there was a strong view that a Family Poverty Strategy was still needed. Manchester has one of the highest rates of child poverty by local authority area with 35.5% of children under 16 living in poverty. Of those living in poverty, the vast majority (69.4%) are living in out of work poverty, whereas 13.6% are living in in work poverty and 16.2% are classed as other poor. The 35.5% figure equates to 36,255 children under 16 living in poverty out of a total number of 101,845⁴. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has also predicted that the number of children living in poverty will rise sharply by 2020, in part due to planned benefit reforms affecting families with children.⁵ This Strategy seeks to ensure that children living in Manchester are protected against these national changes wherever possible.

Figure 1 (below) compares the proportion of children in Manchester to the other English Core Cities using 2014 data from HMRC and DWP. Manchester has the highest proportion of children under 16 living in poverty of the eight cities. Figure 2 (below) shows how the proportion of children living in poverty by type of poverty. Manchester has the second lowest proportion of out of work poverty and the second highest proportion of in work poverty. The proportion of children in poverty living in working households is rising, however, there are still some suggestions that this data underestimates the volumes of in work poverty. One reason for this underestimation is that the HMRC and DWP data assumes that all children in families in receipt of key out of work benefits are in poverty, but that only children in low income families in receipt of both working tax credit and child tax credit are classed as being in in work poverty. Unfortunately, other data sources such as the 'Household Below Average Income Series' are only available at a regional geography. Despite these limitations, the data in Figure 2 does clearly demonstrate that living in a household where no one is working is still the most significant cause of poverty in large English cities.

³ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) *UK Poverty: Causes, costs and solutions*

⁴ HMRC (2013) *Child poverty and child benefit data*

⁵ Institute for Fiscal Studies (2016) *Living Standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2015/16 to 2020/21*, quoted in Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) *UK Poverty, Causes Costs and Solutions*,

Figure 1: Percentage of children under 16 living in poverty in English Core Cities, 2014

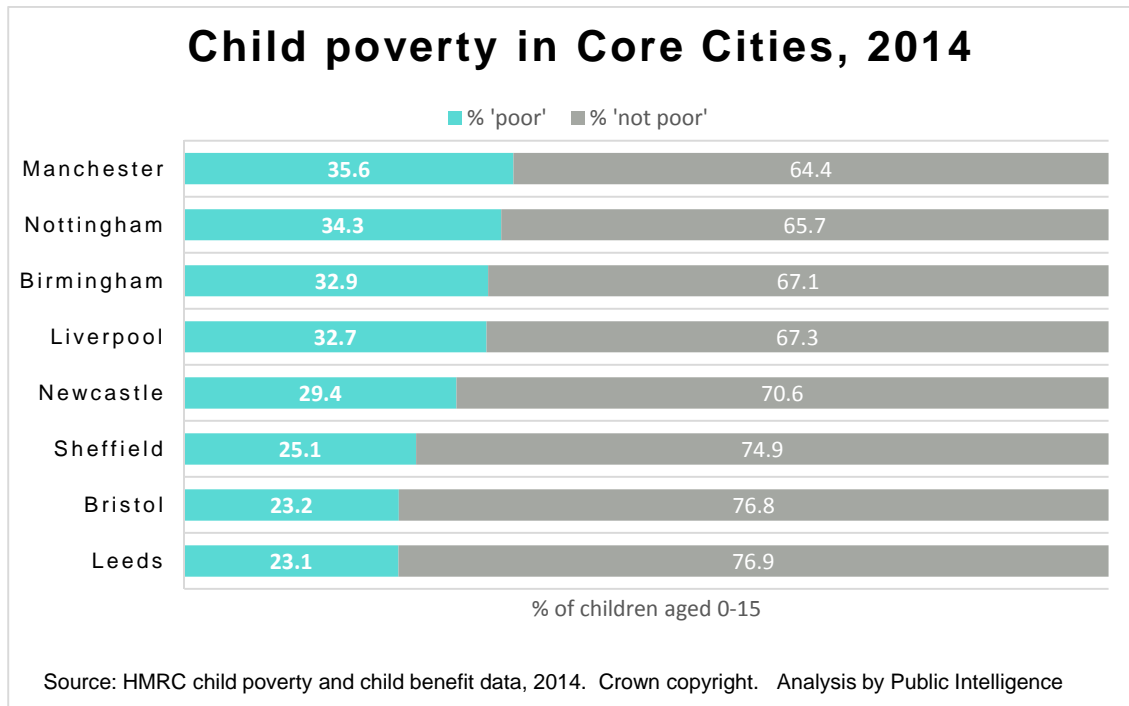
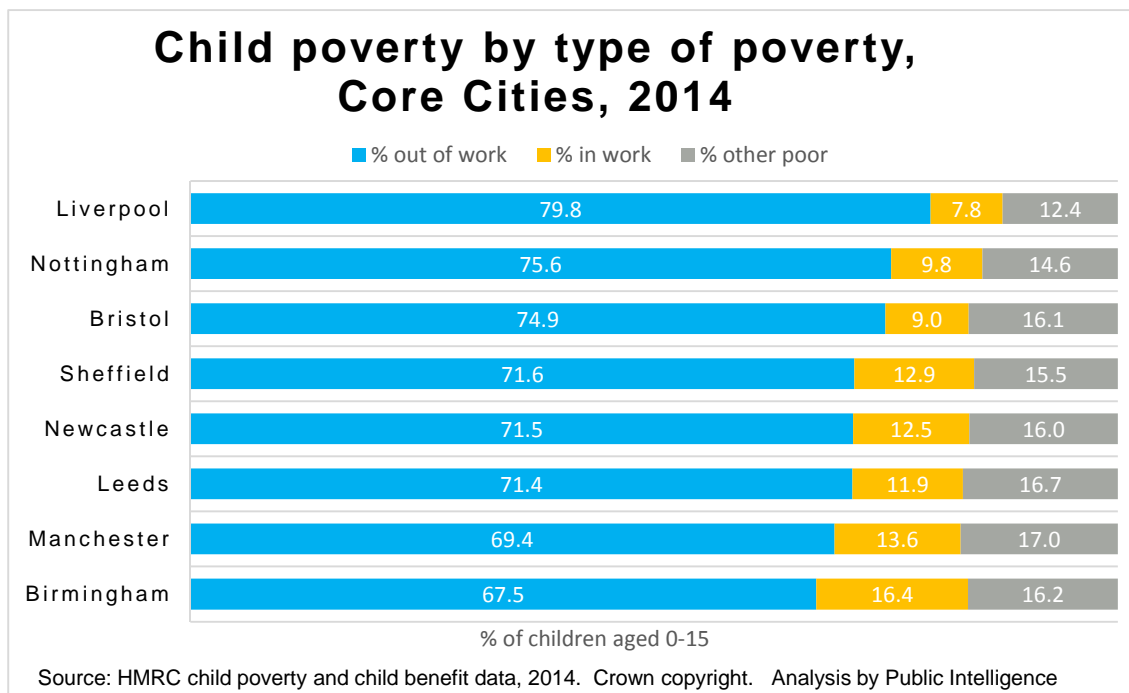


Figure 2: Children under 16 living in poverty by type of poverty in English Core Cities, 2014



This Strategy focuses on families with children up to the age of 19 who are living in poverty. Children aged 16 to 19 are included in recognition of the importance of this transition point and progression into post 16 education, training, apprenticeship or at the upper age into higher education or work.

From the outset, a number of key principles have guided the production of the Strategy. These include the importance of sustainable employment as the key method of reducing poverty and mitigating the impact of welfare reform on children. Meeting basic needs has also been recognised as being of the highest priority. That said, this Strategy also recognises that, within its lifetime of 2017-2022, there will still be children growing up in poverty for whom some of these basic needs will not have been met.

The Strategy therefore seeks to build on the risk and resilience approach adopted by the Our Manchester, Our Children: The Manchester Children and Young People's Plan which aims to improve outcomes for children by decreasing risk and increasing resilience. It recognises that there are certain fundamental needs that every Manchester child should be able to count on. These include a safe, warm home environment; stable parenting; regular healthy meals; access to healthcare; and a family income above 60% of the national median.

Along with these basic needs there are also a number of resilience factors that can help a child to succeed and reach their potential, despite any problems or setbacks they may face. These are:

- **Belonging** e.g. having good friends, loving relationships, opportunities to socialise, pride in neighbourhoods, being able to move between – and communicate accordingly – in different environments.
- **Learning** e.g. having appropriate space and equipment to learn, opportunities for parents to learn how to support their child's learning, ability to have ideas and aspirations, knowing what is possible, having positive role models, recognition of (and access to) different kinds of informal learning (including through culture and sport), development of 'soft' skills.
- **Coping** e.g. mental toughness, ability to see the positive, ability to handle emotions and deal with problems, opportunities to be good at things, feeling valued, knowing where to get help, services recognising where children need help.

A mixed-methods approach to researching the current picture of family poverty in Manchester has been undertaken to help guide the development of this Strategy. An Our Manchester approach to the development of the Strategy was taken which involved a range of ethnographic strength based conversations in communities to hear about the real-life experience of living in poverty in Manchester. A full analysis of the mixed methods approach is provided in section 6 below and in some of the appendices.

4. How will poverty be addressed?

Joseph Rowntree Foundation recommendations

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) recommends that national and local government, businesses, anchor institutions, voluntary sector organisations, communities and citizens themselves, work together to solve poverty by:

- Boosting income and reducing costs;

- Delivering an effective benefit system;
- Improving education standards and raising skills;
- Strengthening families and communities; and
- Promoting long-term economic growth benefiting everyone.

JRF makes particular recommendations for addressing child poverty. It suggests:

- Supporting people to be good parents, helping parents share care and stay in work, minimising the adverse impacts of separation on children, and supporting children and parents' mental health;
- Giving access to high-quality, flexible and affordable childcare to parents on low incomes, allowing them to work and improving children's pre-school development;
- Ensuring all children from low-income backgrounds can succeed in school;
- Ensuring all young people leave school with the support, advice, skills and confidence to move successfully into education, training or the labour market and towards independence;
- Raising and protecting family incomes so they can afford essentials, reduce stress and give children the opportunity to participate socially and educationally.

These recommendations appear to be sensible and align well to Manchester's focus on work as a route out of poverty, providing the basics and also building resilience. They provide a useful framework to test in a Manchester context and have helped to inform the local set of priorities below.

Interventions to reduce health inequalities

It is now widely accepted that improving the health of the population and reducing the inequality between the health of those in the most deprived areas and those in the least deprived areas primarily requires action across all the social determinants of health, as well as actions to address equity of access to health and care services, and individual lifestyle behaviours.

A 2014 review of the evidence for effective local actions to reduce health inequalities has identified the following areas for focus⁶:

- Early intervention
 - Good quality parenting programmes
 - Improving the home to school transition
- Education
 - Building children and young people's resilience in schools
 - Reducing the number of young people not in education, training and employment (NEET)
 - Adult learning services
- Employment
 - Workplace interventions to improve health and wellbeing
 - Working with local employers to promote good quality work

⁶ UCL Institute of Health Equity (2014) *Local action on health inequalities series*

- Increasing employment opportunities and retention for people with a long-term health condition or disability
- Ensuring a healthy living standard for all
 - Living wage
- Healthy Environment
 - Addressing fuel poverty and health problems related to cold homes
 - Improving access to green spaces

The Manchester Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy⁷ identifies the following priority areas for reducing health inequalities and improving health in the city:

- Getting the young people in our communities off to the best start
- Improving people’s mental health and wellbeing
- Bringing people into employment and ensuring good work for all
- Enabling people to keep well and live independently as they grow older
- Turning round the lives of troubled families
- Integrating the health and care system
- Promoting and supporting self-care.

Manchester specific priorities

The aim of this Strategy is to add value by identifying a small number of important priorities which will make a significant impact on children and their families, but that are not already being delivered in the city. The priorities below have been developed following a detailed analysis of the available intelligence and with input from a range of partners. Each of the priorities has an identified lead or working group who have been tasked with driving its implementation. The 10 priorities are set out under three clear headings which are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of the themes and priorities of the Strategy

Sustainable work as a route out of poverty
1. Affordable, flexible and high quality childcare for parents
2. The role of Anchor Institutions
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5. Food and Fuel
6. Improving Children’s Health
Boosting resilience and building on strengths
7. Strength based approach in communities (Belonging)
8. Improving the identification and signposting of families in poverty (Coping)
9. Poverty proofing services (Coping)
10. Embedding careers advice and aspiration in schools (Learning)

⁷ http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200048/health_and_wellbeing

a) Sustainable work as a route out of poverty:

This Strategy recognises that well-paid and sustainable work remains the best way of increasing household incomes and moving families out of poverty. Manchester's economy needs to be one which can provide opportunities for local people to benefit from the growth of the city. This very much aligns with the 'progressive and equitable' theme of the Manchester Strategy and the recent national and local work on inclusive growth. The Manchester Work and Skills Strategy 2016-2021 sets out a number of objectives and priorities which will deliver positive outcomes for Manchester residents. Specific objectives from the Strategy which will support low income residents into sustainable work include:

- Develop a clear and coherent work and skills offer for people who are furthest from obtaining work and those cycling between unemployment and low paid work
- Embed work as an outcome in commissioning and reform programmes, especially for those that are at some distance from the labour market
- Reduce the gap between resident and workplace wages
- Support more Manchester residents into work which provides a good standard of living via the real Living Wage and Healthy Work principles
- Promote opportunities for in work progression which will increase wages for existing employees and will also generate opportunities for new entrants to the labour market
- More young people in education, employment or training
- Make connecting employment opportunities to Manchester residents a priority for businesses

The importance of education should also not be underestimated. Schools have a responsibility to ensure that children in Manchester develop the skills and attributes required to succeed in a competitive labour market.

The introduction of the 'National Living Wage' by government in 2016 has benefited many workers in Manchester, however, this is not a real living wage and will not be sufficient to lift low paid workers and those under the age of 25 out of poverty. Working families need to earn at least the real living wage and need to be working longer hours in order to make work pay, however, a number of barriers to achieving this still exist.

- **Affordable, flexible and high quality childcare for parents**

Issue: Affordable childcare remains a major barrier for many parents that are seeking work or additional hours, especially lone parents. As Universal Credit is rolled out, claimants will be encouraged to move into work or to increase the number of hours they work. Finding affordable childcare and dealing with school pick-ups and drop-offs and school holidays presents a significant challenge to families, especially larger families in wards such as Moss Side and in areas of the city such as Wythenshawe where major employers operate shift systems. Government proposals to increase the volume of free childcare available to over 3's from 15 hours per week

to 30 hours per week offers an opportunity, but there are concerns about whether sufficient levels of childcare provision is available.

Action: An in depth study into childcare in Manchester will be undertaken which will be led by Children’s Services. This study will determine the current availability of childcare in the city including the cost and flexibility. It will also assess the take up of free childcare for under 3’s for those on benefits and whether there is capacity to deliver the 30 hours a week of childcare for over 3’s from September 2017. Consideration will also be given to the options for provision for working parents during school holidays when universal term time provision is not available.

“More job opportunities for working parents that fit in within school terms and school hours”⁸

- **The role of Anchor Institutions**

Issue: All employers in Manchester must be encouraged to make addressing poverty a core corporate objective, it cannot remain solely as a priority for the public sector and voluntary and community sector.

Action: A letter has been produced in the Our Manchester branding which makes a specific ask of employers from all sectors in the city to use their recruitment practices, procurement and assets to maximise the benefits to low income residents of the city. The response provided by Anchor Institutions will set the example by which smaller employers can follow with the Our Manchester Forum and the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce playing a lead role in promoting this approach. Key objectives for employers include targeting employment opportunities and apprenticeships to residents from lower income neighbourhoods, paying staff a real living wage, and encouraging in work progression. There are also opportunities to improve the procurement and commissioning policies of many public sector Anchor Institutions to ensure that social value is a major part of the scoring mechanism and that any commissioned services are targeted at lower income neighbourhoods. There are also specific opportunities arising from the establishment of a single hospital trust for the city, the development of the local care organisation and a single commissioning organisation which will be known as the Manchester Health and Care Commission. The full letter is included in Appendix 3a.

b) Focus on the Basics – raising and protecting family incomes:

“Happy children, safe neighbourhood, warm house, decent food, health”⁹

Although raising household incomes through employment remains the best route out of poverty, there are a number of challenges facing families living in poverty that need to be addressed in the short-term.

- **Mitigating the impact of welfare reforms on families with children**

⁸ Quote from Z-Arts consultation 15th October 2016

⁹ Quote from Z-Arts consultation 15th October 2016

Issue: As detailed above in section 4.3, ongoing welfare reforms will have a significant impact on those neighbourhoods of the city with the highest levels of benefit claimants and the highest number of children living in poverty.

Action: The Welfare Reform Programme Board will continue to coordinate Manchester's response to these reforms and will work in partnership with Registered Housing Providers and the Voluntary and Community Sector to share information and target advice and support to those families that will be impacted by the benefit cap and other reforms.

- **Tackling the poverty premium**

Issue: Low income families need to be supported to manage their finances to ensure that they are able to pay for their housing costs whilst ensuring that they have enough money available for essentials such as water, food, clothing and heating (including avoiding the most expensive pay-as-you-go tariffs). There are known triggers during the year which place additional financial stress on families which need to be proactively addressed such as the need to purchase new school uniforms before the school year starts in September. Some residents are also accessing high interest rent-to-own companies such as BrightHouse and PerfectHome to purchase furniture and electrical household products.

There are still a large number of people in Manchester without bank accounts and this increases the cost of everyday items as they have no entitlement to discounts offered to people paying by Direct Debit. A functioning bank account is also essential for the payment of benefits and helpful to access regular employment.

Action: A cross sector group will be established to mitigate the impact of the poverty premium on low income families and to identify pressure points or triggers throughout the year such as school holidays, school uniform expenditure and Christmas. The group will include representatives from Registered Providers, local credit unions and charities such as the Citizen's Advice Bureaux. The group will focus on tangible actions such as working with high street banks, the Post Office and Job Centre Plus to maximise the take up of bank accounts. A particular focus will be on promoting existing ethical alternatives to rent-to-own companies such as Smarterbuys and Fair for You.

- **Food and Fuel**

Issue: The evidence linking poor quality housing and insufficient or unhealthy food with poor health outcomes is extensive. Although the social housing sector in Manchester has seen significant investment in properties over the last decade, improving the energy efficiency of the private rented sector remains a significant challenge. The growth in the number of emergency food providers since 2010 has been well documented, but this is only part of the food help picture.

Action: Make a robust case for a targeted investment programme which improves the energy efficiency of private rented and owner occupied properties within the neighbourhoods with the highest levels of child poverty. Ensure that any investment in improved efficiency and effectiveness of heating schemes in social housing

properties reduces costs and benefits low-income families. Build on existing good practice across Greater Manchester which has linked improvements to the positive impact on health outcomes.

Work with FareShare GM and other food charities to divert as much surplus food as possible to low income families with children. Encourage more sustainable food help such as food cooperatives and penny pantries that encourage healthy eating and weekly budgeting.

● **Improving Children's Health**

Issue: It is now widely accepted that improving population health and reducing the inequality between the health of those in the most deprived areas and those in the least deprived areas primarily requires action across all the social determinants of health, as well as actions to address equity of access to health and care services, and individual lifestyle behaviours.

Action: In order to support the Manchester Health and Wellbeing Strategy priority to 'give young people in our communities the best start in life', the following public health programmes will be delivered to support children and young people's health:-

- Improve the take up of the Healthy Start initiative which provides free vouchers to women who are pregnant or have children under 4 and are on qualifying benefits. The vouchers can be used to purchase plain fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables, milk, infant formula milk and vitamins.
- Continue to commission the Oral Health Improvement Programme for children and young people, including increasing the provision of fluoridated milk for children in Early Years services and primary schools.
- Co-ordinate local work to reduce infant mortality including work to: increase safe sleeping and ensure babies have a cot to sleep in; increase immunisation uptake in babies and flu immunisation uptake in pregnant women; ensure early access to high quality health care; support mothers to breastfeed their baby and have good nutrition in pregnancy; reduce smoking and substance misuse in pregnancy; tackle overcrowding in housing; and reduce maternal obesity.

There is also a need to take focussed action to reduce smoking prevalence, particularly in low income neighbourhoods which would have a significant positive impact on the health of all family members and their finances. A Specialist Stop Smoking Service will be available in North Manchester from late 2017 and options for provision in Central Manchester will also be explored.

c) **Boosting Resilience and building on strengths:**

As outlined above, where basic needs cannot be met, families will be supported to be more resilient. It is recognised that boosting resilience in children and their parents is more likely to lead to positive outcomes in relation to education, employment and their ability to cope with future challenges. There is also a need to challenge the practice of professionals and institutions to ensure that they are better able to meet the needs of families and build on their strengths and resources.

- **Strength based approach in communities (Belonging)**

Issue: In keeping with the *Our Manchester* approach, a strength based approach to working with low income families is required which is based on the analysis of the strength based conversations which have been summarised in 4.6 above. This approach needs to highlight the existing strengths children and families have identified and how these can be utilised and built upon by the services they come into contact with.

Action: A short resident facing summary of the Strategy has been produced by Manchester City Council's Communications Team. This document provides an overview of the approach that has been taken, the analysis of the strength based conversations and a summary of the actions that are being proposed. Volunteers will use the document to broker further conversations with residents in low income neighbourhoods to discuss how the findings relate to their neighbourhood and what positive actions can be achieved to build resilience. One of the important findings of the analysis has been the vital role that cultural, sporting and community facilities play in building resilience in people's lives. Maximising participation and improving access to these facilities for families living in poverty will be a key priority, as will linking to Neighbourhood Team's and Place Plans.

- **Improving the identification and signposting of families in poverty (Coping)**

Issue: At present, poverty is rarely used as one of the indicators which identify families that need additional support. Programmes of work such as Early Years, Complex Dependency (Confident and Achieving Manchester) and Troubled Families all work with low income families, however, poverty or low income is not always used as one of the basket of indicators. A more universal offer is required that can provide support for low income families.

Action: This Strategy seeks to improve the identification of families who are in poverty to ensure that they do not fall between the gaps and are connected to the advice and services they need to improve their situation such as the Early Help Hubs and Voluntary and Community Sector. Manchester City Council's Reform and Innovation team will lead a piece of work which will incorporate family poverty into existing programmes of work such as 'Trust Your Instincts'.

- **Poverty proofing services (Coping)**

Issue: Once families in poverty have been identified, it is essential that professionals, services and institutions are able to better understand how to work with them in a strengths based way to boost resilience. Professionals often make assumptions about families, parents and children, a strength based approach needs to challenge these assumptions and behaviours. Poverty proofing services is one such way that professional practice and organisations can change to better recognise the strengths of a child or their family and how they can make a positive impact.

In 2011, Children North East sought to gain a better understanding of the experience of poverty among children and young people. They found that discrimination in schools was one of the biggest issues faced by young people, who experienced a range of barriers to learning due to their families' low incomes, as well as additional problems such as bullying, being unable to afford uniforms or being excluded from participating in extra-curricular activities. This research led to the development of a toolkit entitled 'Poverty Proofing the School Day' which aims help schools to identify and remove barriers to learning and reduce the stigma and discrimination faced by pupils living in poverty.¹⁰

Action: Building on this best practice from elsewhere, a poverty proofing toolkit will be developed, which will identify the impact of poverty and detail possible actions or solutions to mitigate its impact. The toolkit will be adaptable for different uses and different organisations including health and the Voluntary and Community Sector and will use a strengths-based approach and learning in line with the Our Manchester ethos. For schools it will focus on using the Pupil Premium monies to overcome barriers to learning and to develop tailored approaches to support individual children from low income families. For service providers and businesses it will help to illuminate any practices that could be providing additional barriers to those on low-incomes, and to ensure that everyone is able to access services from a level playing field, with no-one receiving a lower quality service because they are poor. Anchor Institutions from a range of sectors will be asked to adopt the toolkit.

The toolkit will be co-developed with the support of partners and key stakeholders as well as with residents, to ensure that it reflects what is important to residents and best meets their needs.

- **Embedding careers advice and aspiration in schools (Learning)**

Issue: Manchester's economy continues to deliver significant growth and there are opportunities for knowledge intensive jobs in expanding industries such as Creative and Digital; Construction; Business, Financial and Professional Services; and Science, Research and Development. It is essential that these opportunities are communicated to children in all schools, especially in the lower income areas of the city to create aspiration and to ensure that children, parents and teachers develop a shared understanding of Manchester's current and future economy. Young people and employers have also identified a range of softer skills which are important such as emotional intelligence and self-management.

Action: Although there is existing activity within this space, it needs be reviewed within the context of the spatial distribution of poverty within the city. Existing work includes the role of CEIAG leads within schools, the provision of labour market intelligence and a number of structured and adhoc employer engagement schemes. One of the Our Manchester Strategy 'We Wills' is to provide a meaningful work placement for every child in the city. This is something which could be encouraged with a particular focus on secondary schools in lower income neighbourhoods. There are existing programmes that effectively engage children in primary schools with the

¹⁰ Mazzoli Smith L and Todd L (2016) *Poverty Proofing the School Day: Evaluation and Development Report*

world of enterprise and employment, these need to be rolled out across targeted neighbourhoods. Greater Manchester Higher is a collaborative network of higher education providers from the city region who are working together to provide impartial information, advice and guidance about progression routes to higher education. The programme will be targeting secondary schools and colleges in a number of wards which have high proportions of children in poverty.

Work is also underway to produce a curriculum for life which draws on the softer skills which young people and employers have identified as being important. The Council's Reform and Innovation Team are currently working with schools to embed these skills into existing lessons. The five themes that have been identified for a successful curriculum for life and employment are: skills for employment; relationships; self-management; health and citizenship.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Progress will be reported to the Manchester Investment Board and to Manchester City Council's Economy Scrutiny Committee. As the themes in Table 1 don't lend themselves to readily available quantitative metrics with clear baselines, a narrative update approach may be more appropriate than a metric based outcomes framework, however, overarching quantitative reporting of income measures, fuel poverty and Key Stage 4 attainment will continue and a baseline will be produced.

Update reports will be in the form of progress updates against the 10 priorities set out above and will include a narrative on the activity to date alongside specific data and intelligence where relevant to evidencing progress. Updates will also include any relevant information from other work which will help to deliver the aims of the Strategy including Health, Work and Skills, Early Years and Education.

Table 2: Outcomes framework

Priority	Responsible for reporting	Action	Required outcome
1. Affordable, flexible and high quality childcare for parents	Manchester City Council Children's Services	Study completed to determine the current availability of childcare in the city including the cost & flexibility	Better understanding of the market & ability of the sector to deliver free childcare. Appropriate interventions to develop more capacity or flexibility developed.
2. The role of Anchor Institutions	Our Manchester Forum & Manchester Investment Board	Letter sent to Anchor Institutions requesting a response & lobbying via existing networks.	More young people from low income families and disadvantaged neighbourhoods securing employment in anchor institutions or through their supply chains.

3. Mitigating the impact of welfare reform on families with children	Welfare Reform Programme Board	Intelligence and data used to share with Manchester City Council services & partners.	Impact of reforms such as the benefit cap mitigated. More residents supported into employment.
4. Tackling the poverty premium	Working group to be formed including Registered Providers & CAB	The group will work with high street banks, the Post Office and Job Centre Plus to maximise the take up of bank accounts. Ethical alternatives to rent-to-own companies will also be promoted.	More families supported to make better financial decisions which protect their income. Public services delivering same quality of services in low income areas.
5. Food and Fuel	Manchester Food Board & New energy efficiency working group	Promote established of more sustainable food help offer. Develop the evidence base for new programmes such as energy efficiency improvements to private rented properties in low income neighbourhoods.	More families eating healthier food & food help developed into a more sustainable offer. More low income families living in energy efficient homes with improved health outcomes.
6. Improving Children's Health	Manchester City Council Public Health	Public health programmes will be delivered to support children and young people's health including; Healthy Start, the Oral Health Improvement Programme for children and young people & local work to reduce infant mortality	More young people in low income neighbourhoods with improved health outcomes.
7. Strength based approach in communities (Belonging)	Family Poverty Strategy Working Group	Communications document used to broker further conversations with residents in low income neighbourhoods to discuss how the findings relate to their neighbourhood and what positive actions can be achieved to build resilience. Webb Memorial Trust & other organisations continuing dialogue with young people.	More resilient families who are able to access local facilities including cultural & sporting venues.

8. Improving the identification and signposting of families in poverty (Coping)	Manchester City Council Reform and Innovation	System of early identification of families in poverty established & linked to 'Trust Your Instincts'.	Improved identification & signposting of families in poverty to ensure support is offered at an early stage e.g. through referrals to Early Help Hubs.
9. Poverty proofing services (Coping)	Manchester City Council Reform and Innovation, University of Manchester	Poverty proofing toolkit developed which will identify the barriers caused by poverty and detail possible actions or solutions to mitigate the impact.	Improved practices put in place by service providers & businesses to ensure that everyone is able to access services from a level playing field, with no-one receiving a lower quality service because they are poor.
10. Career advice and aspiration in schools (Learning)	Manchester City Council Work and Skills; Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Leads	Improved labour market intelligence and careers advice in schools within areas with the highest levels of family poverty. Curriculum for life rolled out in schools.	More young people aware of the opportunities within the local labour market. More aspiration within lower income neighbourhoods.

6. What we did

6.1 Summary of approach

A mixed-methods approach to researching the current picture of family poverty in Manchester has been undertaken to help guide the development of this Strategy. This has involved:

- A review of the latest published research into child and family poverty in England
- Collation and mapping of local data relating to family poverty across Manchester
- The establishment of a 'Working Group' to guide the development of the Strategy comprising; professionals from Manchester City Council services; leading academic researchers from the University of Manchester; and key partners such as Wythenshawe Community Housing Group
- A range of ethnographic strength based community conversations with over 120 individuals, led by members of the Working Group and their colleagues. These have taken place in various locations across Manchester, to hear about

the real-life experience of living in poverty in Manchester today. They have included semi-structured 1:1 interviews, group discussions and focus groups.

- Collecting anonymised data from Early Help Assessments (EHAs).
- Contributions from City in the Community, collected through their engagements with schools. A total of 94 primary school children from schools in Beswick, Clayton, Newton Heath and Openshaw have provided written contributions.
- Bespoke creative engagement sessions delivered with children and young people by Z-arts over 2 days and Contact Theatre over 1 day.
- Contributions from the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), including an initial think-piece, followed up with a round of 1:1 interviews with key local institutions, regarding the current and potential role of Manchester's anchor institutions in addressing poverty

6.2 What we know - 2017

What does poverty mean to the people who experience it?

The relative income measure is important but it does not give the full picture of the lived experience of poverty, which is about much more than just household income. Factors such as outgoings, the increasing costs of living, additional costs brought about by having additional needs such as a disability, as well as the emotional and physical implications and poverty of aspiration, all need to be taken into account. People with this level of income experience exclusion from the activities and opportunities that the average person enjoys.¹¹ Without this picture it is impossible to address the underlying causes of poverty and effect real change.

Some of the challenges caused by being in poverty include:

- Inability to afford basic living costs – such as housing, heating, clothing (including school uniforms) and healthy regular meals;
- Dealing with uncertainty and insecurity every day – including how much money you might receive from an insecure job with varying hours, whether you can pay the bills and keep a roof over your children's heads;
- Discrimination and marginalisation – including when looking for work and accessing services;
- High levels of stress due to constrained budgets - the impact of continually focusing on not having enough money has been found to be more detrimental to mental wellbeing and decision making than one full night without sleep;¹²
- Pressure placed on relationships – between generations and between couples, contributing to family breakdowns, and also between friends;
- Feelings of shame, stigma, low self-esteem, loss of hope and frustration;
- Children not doing well at school;
 - in 2015, 52% of Manchester children who were eligible for free school meals (FSM) reached the expected level of development at age 5, compared to 65% of children not eligible for FSM¹³;

¹¹ *Poverty in the UK: a guide to the facts and figures* (August 2016) available at <https://fullfact.org/economy/poverty-uk-guide-facts-and-figures>

¹² Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) *We can solve poverty in the UK*

- at Key Stage 4 in 2016, Manchester's Attainment 8 results were 1.4 below the national average, however, Manchester disadvantaged pupils (those receiving pupil premium) results were 1.2 higher than the national average for disadvantaged pupils
- Chronic health problems – some brought on by inadequate housing or being unable to eat regular healthy meals;
- Mounting levels of debt – due to trying to balance household budgets on an inadequate income;
- Reliance on informal childcare that can become suddenly unavailable if a friendship breaks down;
- Vulnerability to child neglect, domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse;
- Unable to take a full part in society.

“Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or buy the essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty, and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation – and even discrimination – because of your financial circumstances. The constant stress it causes can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.”¹⁴

Families in poverty are under continual pressure to meet the rising cost of essentials such as food and housing, and have to make impossible decisions about what to go without. Shelter and YouGov research conducted in July 2016 found that nearly half of UK working families (3.7 million) were cutting back on food and clothing to pay for rent and housing costs. 1 in 10 families surveyed had skipped meals due to lack of money and almost 60% were struggling to meet rent and mortgage payments. Rises in these basic living costs disproportionately affect poor families because they account for a much higher proportion of their income. A drop in income due to ill-health or a cut in hours can quickly leave families at risk of losing the roof over their heads.¹⁵

“I think can I afford to have the heating on? I work, you know what I mean? I shouldn't have to think about that. When the kids are asleep in bed, I'll just put a blanket over me because I can't afford to have it on when I work for a living.”
Participant, Manchester, JRF workshop¹⁶

Causes of poverty and exacerbating factors

It is difficult to separate the causes of poverty from its consequences. The same issue can not only cause someone to fall into poverty, but can also be brought about – or made worse - by living in poverty. For example, job loss can result in falling into poverty. However, being in poverty in the first place can make it more difficult for

¹³ Ofsted (2016) *Unknown Children: Destined for disadvantage?*

¹⁴ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) *UK Poverty: Causes, costs and solutions*

¹⁵ Shelter and YouGov research quoted in The Independent 14/07/16, under the headline *Nearly half of working families are cutting back on food or clothing to pay rent or mortgage*, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/housing-crisis-families-cut-back-on-food-or-clothing-to-pay-rent-mortgage-a7256746.html>

¹⁶ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) *We can solve poverty in the UK*

those experiencing poverty to achieve good qualifications in school and gain secure, well paid employment in later life. Ill health can lead to job loss, but it can also be the result of living in poor housing conditions and can stop someone being able to work. Actions to enable people to build a life outside of poverty need to acknowledge the complex, interconnected and often cyclical nature of poverty, and the individual barriers faced by those experiencing it.

Some of the factors that can cause someone to fall into poverty, or make life more difficult for those living in poverty include:

- Living on out of work benefits, especially those that have been reliant on benefits over a long period and whose income has been impacted by a series of welfare reforms
- Insecure, low paid jobs and zero hour contracts – Circa 24% of jobs in Greater Manchester do not provide decent pay, prospects for development or job security, or enable people to save or build up a pension for later life;
- Sanctions, reductions and delays to benefits due to national welfare reforms are also causing increasing problems;
- Not accessing the benefits they are entitled to – partially due to the ‘system’ appearing confusing and difficult to navigate;
- Being unable to secure well paid, secure work around childcare commitments;
- Being unaware of, or misinformed about, the welfare system, available support or the financial benefits of working;
- Falling into debt;
- Low levels of savings due to low levels of income;
- High costs of essential goods and services including food, fuel and housing;
- Automation leading to job losses in sectors that traditionally employed those with lower level skills;
- Unexpected life events and moments of transition – e.g. family or relationship breakdown, redundancy, bereavement.

Researchers have found that people living in poverty face the added burden of a ‘poverty premium’. For the basic goods and services, low-income families pay approximately £1,280 more, per year, than better off families.¹⁷ This includes higher costs for:

- *Credit and borrowing* – Poor credit ratings can prevent access to reasonably priced credit, overdrafts or loans from high-street lenders, so low income families tend to turn instead to high-interest charging options such as rent-to-own shops, catalogues, doorstep lenders and pay-day loans.
- *Gas and electricity* – Lower income families are often tied to higher tariff pre-payment meters, find it more difficult to access (predominantly online) information about better deals or switching supplier, and, without bank accounts are unable to access discounts for paying by direct debit.

Protected characteristics and vulnerability to poverty

¹⁷ Save the Children UK (2011) *The UK Poverty Rip-Off: The Poverty Premium 2010*

The latest data from the Office of National Statistics indicates that 33% of the UK population (18.3 million people) experienced poverty at some point between 2010 and 2013. Almost anyone can find themselves affected by poverty but there is evidence which suggests that having one or more protected characteristics can make an individual more vulnerable.

Gender: Women are more likely to be vulnerable to poverty. The changes to welfare reforms following the austerity cuts since 2010 have had a disproportionate impact on women. Particularly as women are more likely to be in receipt of a number of benefits that were either cut or frozen such as Child Benefit. The fact that women earn on average 12% less than men and are more likely to be employed in part-time and lower paid work makes them more vulnerable to poverty.

In addition, social issues which significantly impact on women increase the likelihood of women living in poverty. For instance, women fleeing domestic violence will often find themselves in worse economic circumstances having left their partners or when trying to raise a family alone with on average lower pay than men. Approximately 60% of those living in single parent households experienced poverty between 2010 and 2013 compared to less than a third of those living in households with two or more adults.

Disability: Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has also established a clear link between poverty and disability, ill-health and caring responsibilities. They found that 48% of people in poverty in the UK are either disabled themselves or living with a disabled person.¹⁸

Ethnicity: Certain Black and Minority Ethnic groups, particularly those from Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are more likely to experience discrimination and tend to have lower levels of pay. Therefore making communities from these groups more likely to live in and experience poverty. Women from Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities are worst affected as they are less likely than Bangladeshi and Pakistani men to be in paid employment.

White British children from low income groups are also more likely to live in poverty. A study by the Sutton Trust education charity has found that disadvantaged children from Chinese backgrounds are almost three times more likely to achieve the benchmark five good GCSE's as their white working class peers. This highlights the extent in which the poverty and the circumstances around poverty are entrenched for some of the city's long term residents and in certain neighbourhoods.

Children leaving the care system are also more vulnerable, as are those who lack strong and supportive parenting which can affect a child's development, education and social and emotional skills, leaving them at higher risk of poverty as they grow up.

Financial cost of poverty to the UK

¹⁸ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) *We can solve poverty in the UK*

“Poverty is slowing productivity, hindering economic growth and reducing tax revenues.”¹⁹

Poverty not only causes harm to those who experience it but it also causes widespread damage to society, has massive public service cost implications and has a negative impact on the economy.

The JRF has estimated the cost of poverty to the public purse. In addition to the means-tested benefits and tax credits paid to those on low incomes, the JRF found that a further £78 billion (4% of GDP or 1/5 of public spending) is spent per year in the UK on compensating for the damage poverty brings to people’s lives and to society. This includes the additional demands on services such as health and social care, education, crime and housing, as well as lost tax revenues from those who lose out on earnings as adults.²⁰

For the wider economy, the effects include:

- Lower productivity
- Under-used skills
- Uneven economic growth across the country
- Lost spending and investment

6.3 What we know - Manchester

“There remain significant areas of deprivation across the city where outcomes for people are poor and life is a struggle. This needs sustained action by many different agencies and the communities themselves to help lift people out of poverty and improve the areas in which they live.”²¹

Mapping poverty data

Manchester City Council’s Performance and Intelligence team undertook a thorough review of available data on the spatial distribution of poverty, and other related issues across the city. This includes the analysis in Appendix 1 and a ward comparison table in Appendix 1a.

The analysis highlighted deep concentrations of family poverty in certain geographic locations and that a place-based approach in these areas is required to help lift families out of poverty. As Figure 3 (below) shows, areas requiring particular focus are: the area to the north-east of the city centre comprising Harpurhey, Miles Platting and Newton Heath; the majority of Moss Side; parts of Gorton, Old Moat and Burnage; and the neighbourhoods which make up the former Benchill ward in Wythenshawe.

These neighbourhoods correlate with the areas of the city where there are relatively large numbers of residents claiming benefits long-term e.g. Employment Support Allowance who have been negatively affected by welfare reforms, where social housing properties are affected by under-occupancy and private rented properties

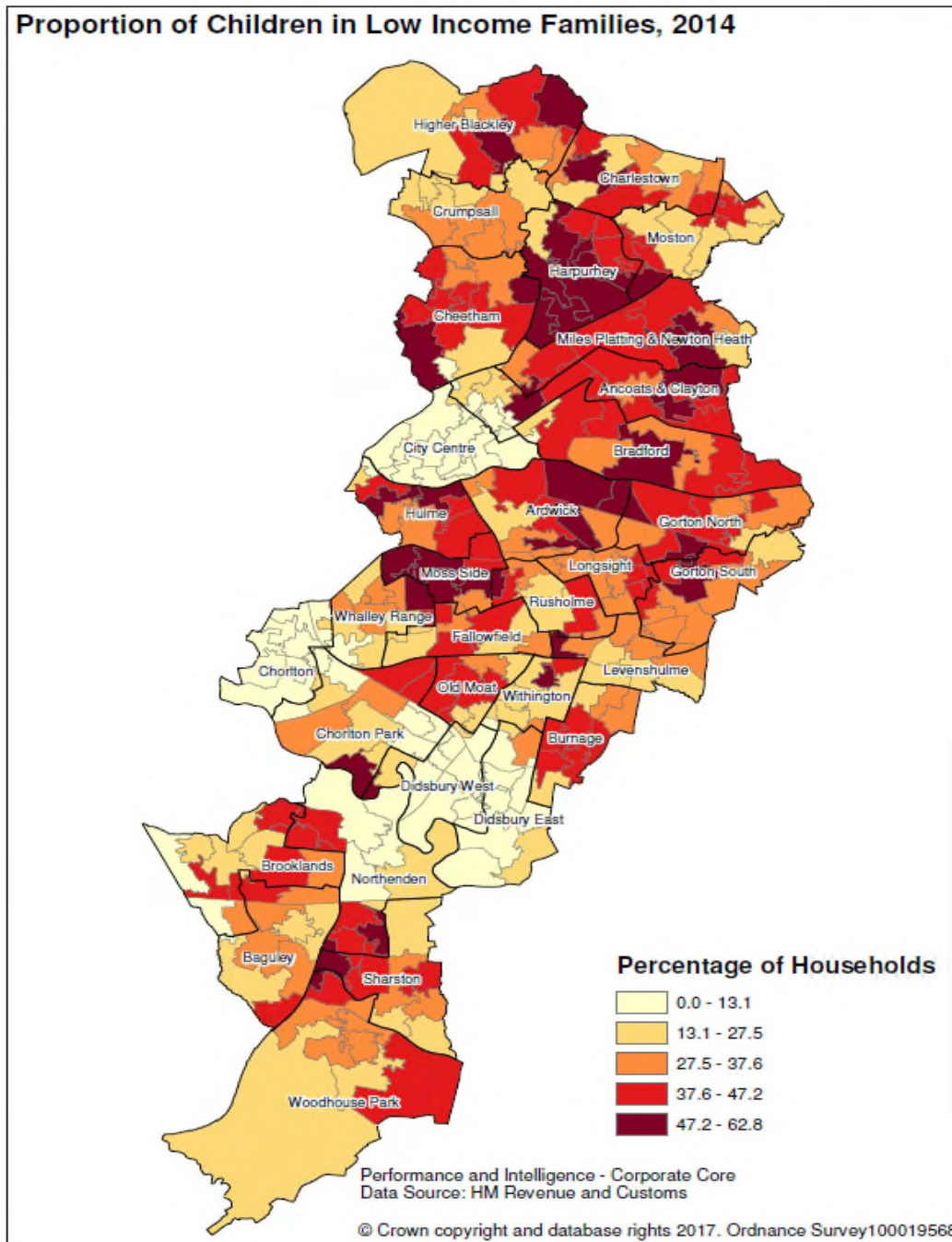
¹⁹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) *Counting the Cost of UK Poverty*

²⁰ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) *Counting the Cost of UK Poverty*

²¹ Manchester City Council (2016) *Our Manchester: The Manchester Strategy 2016-2025*

are affected by the benefit cap. There is also a strong correlation with other issues such as low school attainment, challenges for neighbourhood management, and domestic violence and abuse.

Figure 3: Proportion of children under 16 in low income families by neighbourhood



Analysis in Appendix 2 reveals some stark inequalities between different wards of the city. Examples include:

- 3.95% of babies are born underweight in Whalley Range compared to 10.22% in Ardwick

- 4.7% of children born in Didsbury West are registered by a lone parent compared to 42% in Miles Platting and Newton Heath
- 6% of children in Chorlton live in low income families compared to 45.9% in Harpurhey
- 88% of children in Didsbury West achieve 5 A*-C GCSE's compared to 35% in Harpurhey
- Life expectancy of those born in Didsbury is 80 compared to 72 in Miles Platting and Newton Heath

It should also be noted that the child population is not distributed equally across the city; wards such as Moss Side, Cheetham, Longsight and Rusholme have an above-average number of children within each household, including many from Black and Asian minority ethnic groups. The increasingly younger population in many areas of the city has also resulted in an increasing number of children entering the school system and this current trend is set to continue until at least 2018.

Health

'Health' is defined as a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing²², and is influenced by a range of factors including lifestyles, community networks, living and working conditions, and socio-economic and environmental conditions²³.

The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age are referred to as 'social determinants' of health and wellbeing – they include neighbourhoods, housing, early years support and education, employment and working conditions, transport, the environment, and access to essentials such as food and fuel. There is a clear and well-established link between socio-economic deprivation and poor health. On average, people living in the poorest neighbourhoods in England will die seven years earlier than people living in the richest neighbourhoods, and will spend seventeen more of those years with a disability²⁴.

The health of people in Manchester is generally worse than the England average. The latest data for the period 2013-15 shows that life expectancy at birth for men in Manchester was 75.6 years (compared to 79.5 years for England), for women it was 79.8 years (compared to 83.21 for England). Within Manchester, boys born in the least deprived parts of the city can expect to live 7.4 years longer than those born in the most deprived parts; for girls, the gap is 5.1 years²⁵.

Mortality in infancy (aged under 1 year, including perinatal mortality i.e. first 7 days) and childhood (age 1-17 years) is higher in Manchester than in England and the North West. Manchester's infant mortality rate is 5.1 per 1,000 live births (England = 3.9 per 1,000, North West = 4.2 per 1,000), and the child mortality rate for the city is 16.6 per 100,000 (England = 12.0 per 100,000, North West = 13.1 per 100,000)²⁶.

²² World Health Organisation (2006) *Constitution of the World Health Organisation*

²³ Dahlgren and Whitehead (1992) *European strategies for tackling social inequalities in health Organisation*

²⁴ Marmot Review (2010) *Fair society healthy lives*

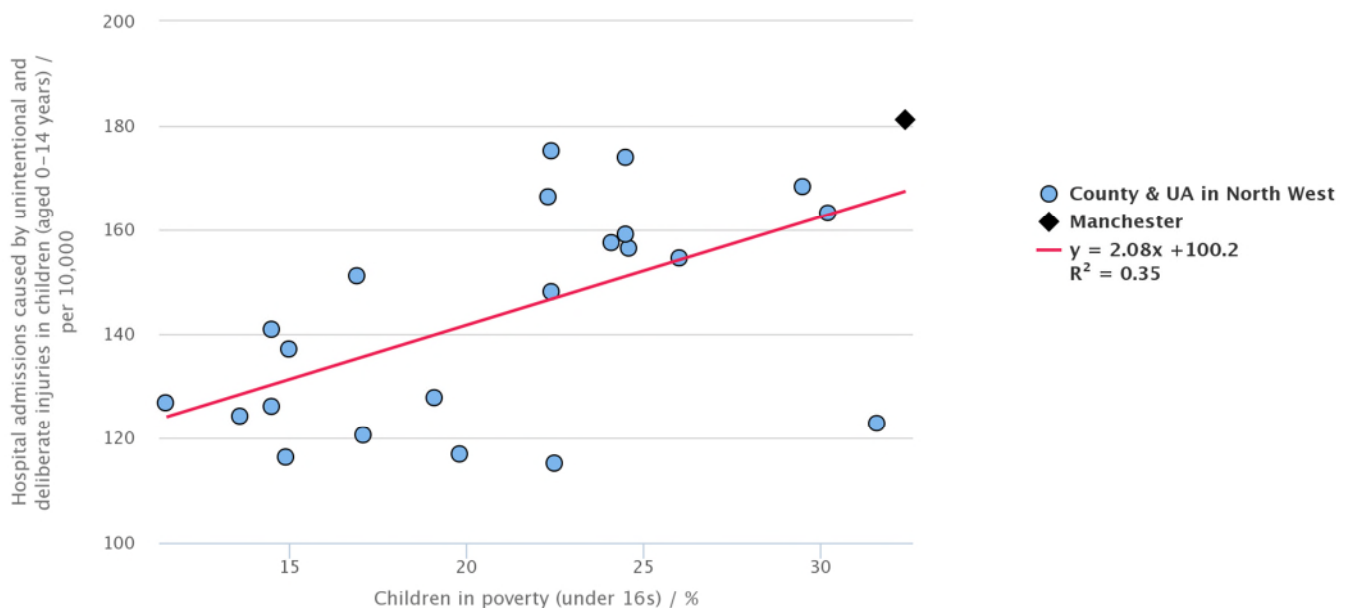
²⁵ Public Health England (2016) *Health profiles*

²⁶ Public Health England (2016) *Health profiles*

Living in poverty has immediate consequences for children’s mental health, engagement with education, and their family life. Children living in low-income households are nearly three times as likely to suffer mental health problems as their more affluent peers. Poverty can make good family functioning and strong parent-child relationships more difficult, impacting on children’s development and wellbeing. Children growing up in poverty are more likely to suffer from low self-esteem and to be socially isolated²⁷.

Children born into poor families are more likely to be born prematurely, have low birth weights and die in their first year of life, and have a higher rate of accidents and accidental death. Children living in poverty are more likely to be absent from school due to illness, to be hospitalised and to report a long-standing illness. Figure 4 (below) illustrates the correlation (relationship) between poverty in children aged under 16 and the rate of hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in children aged 0-14 years within the North West region. Manchester (highlighted as a black diamond) stands out by virtue of the fact that children living in the city experience both high levels of poverty and high rates of hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries.

Figure 4: Correlation between child poverty and hospital admissions



Poverty has longer term effects as children in the poorest households are more likely to suffer poor physical and mental health in adulthood, and are at increased risk of severe, long-term and life-limiting illness²⁸.

Specific health issues:

The relationship between income and health is complex. For every incremental increase in income, there is an associated higher level of good health. There are

²⁷ Children’s Society (2013) *A good childhood for every child*

²⁸ Children’s Society (2013) *A good childhood for every child*

complex chains of exposures and pathways between income and health across the lifecourse. The relationship between money and health is inter-generational and bi-directional – e.g. parents' income influences children's health and children's health influences their later earning capacity and hence income²⁹.

Housing: Poor housing conditions such as overcrowding, damp, indoor pollutants and cold can affect physical and mental health. Children living in bad quality housing are disproportionately more likely to suffer from poorer general health - particularly respiratory health and asthma. Other physical illnesses linked to poor housing include eczema, hypothermia and heart disease. Poor housing conditions and insecurity of tenure can also cause stress and other mental health issues³⁰.

Food poverty: An affordable, nutritious diet is a prerequisite for health. Poor diet is a risk factor for the UK's major killers which are cancer, coronary heart disease (CHD) and diabetes. Food poverty is inextricably linked with wider socio-economic deprivation. In children, poor diet contributes to low birthweight, increased childhood morbidity and mortality, and increased dental caries. The number of hospital admissions for malnutrition in England doubled between 2008/09 and 2012/13. The drivers of food poverty are complex - they include the affordability, availability and accessibility of food, and whether individuals are able to consume an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food for health³¹.

Fuel poverty: The health and wellbeing impacts for children affected by fuel poverty can be seen across the age range and include: low weight gain in infants under three years old, increased likelihood of presenting to health services and hospitals in the child's first three years of life, increased likelihood of children experiencing symptoms of respiratory problems and developing asthma, increased risk of multiple mental health problems and risk-taking behaviour in young people³². A map showing the distribution of fuel poverty in Manchester is included in Appendix 1.

Mental health: Living on a low income causes stress. Furthermore, people in disadvantaged situations may have less support to draw on to help them cope with difficult circumstances. Feelings of lower status than others in society because of less money make people feel distressed, and in some cases can cause biochemical changes in the body; when experienced repeatedly these can cause damage to physiological systems and hence lead to poor health³³.

Oral health: Whilst children's oral health has improved over the last 20 years, almost 1/3 of 5 year olds in England have experienced tooth decay, and dental decay is the top cause of childhood hospital admission for 5-9 year olds. Significant inequalities in oral health continue to exist with children in deprived communities having poorer oral health than those living in affluent communities. Poor oral health can impact on school attendance and affect children and young people's ability to sleep, eat, speak,

²⁹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2014) *How does money influence health?*

³⁰ NatCen Social Research (2013) *People living in bad housing - numbers and health impacts*

³¹ Faculty of Public Health (2013) *Response to the All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger and Food Poverty in Britain*

³² UK Health Forum (2014) *How to improve health and wellbeing through action on affordable warmth*

³³ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2014) *How does money influence health?*

play and socialise with other children. Other impacts include pain, infections, poor diet, and impaired nutrition and growth.

Smoking: Manchester has the highest rates of smoking attributable deaths in England³⁴. The percentage of adults who smoke in Manchester is, on average, 22.7%³⁵, but we know that in some communities it is much higher than this. Ironically, despite the costs associated with smoking, it is widely accepted that smoking prevalence is inversely related to income and that people who live in areas of high deprivation will also find it much more difficult to stop smoking when they do try. The reasons are complex, but the consequences impact heavily on the health and income of families. The NHS estimates that based on current cigarette prices, someone who smokes 20 cigarettes a day would spend around £250 a month, or £3000 a year on smoking.

Welfare Reform

*'Huge cuts to welfare budgets which will impact on the most vulnerable Manchester residents.'*³⁶

National government are in the process of making significant changes to the benefits system, which are impacting on low-income families across the country. A major part of this is the move to Universal Credit (UC), which is bringing together out of work benefits, housing costs and in-work credits. UC was introduced to Manchester in 2013, and is currently open to new benefit claimants. Current indications are that all existing benefit claimants will be transferred to UC by 2022. One of the main aims of UC was to make work pay, allowing claimants to move in and out of work, and increase/ decrease their hours, with UC adjusting to make up their monthly income. This flexibility has advantages, particularly for those with uncertain hours or other commitments such as childcare, and can encourage people to take the first step into employment. However, the government has recently announced changes to the in-work allowances from April 2017 which will reduce the monthly income for the majority of claimants and could affect the incentive to move into work. In addition, social housing providers have reported problems with rent arrears for UC-claiming tenants, since UC is paid monthly and directly to the claimant, causing ongoing financial issues for some households.

The Benefit Cap limits the total benefits income that certain claimants can receive. The cap was first implemented in 2013, when almost 300 Manchester households were affected. The value of the cap has since been lowered and the cap will be implemented for almost 1400 households in Manchester between November 2016 and January 2017, with some of these households seeing an additional reduction on top of the first cap (this figure does not include UC claimants, as the DWP has not shared information on these). 1,347 of the affected households have children, and the total number of children affected is 4,908. Over half of the affected households are expected to lose at least £50 per week, a significant cut for those already on low incomes.

³⁴ Public Health England (2017) *Local Tobacco Control Profile*

³⁵ Public Health England (2015) *Annual Population Survey*

³⁶ Quote from consultation (2016) *Our Manchester: The Manchester Strategy 2016-2025*

A variety of reforms have also been implemented to Housing Benefit (social housing) and Local Housing Allowance (private rented housing) which have impacted on claimants' incomes and housing options. The under-occupancy rules (sometimes known as the 'bedroom tax') introduced in 2013 mean that claimants in social housing can only claim for the number of bedrooms that they are judged to need, with any 'spare' rooms leading to a reduction in their benefit. The majority of those affected in Manchester have not moved to smaller homes - part of this is likely to be due to the shortage of appropriate housing - suggesting that households are paying the difference out of other income, or are reliant on temporary discretionary funds. Private sector housing options for Local Housing Allowance claimants have also been restricted as the maximum value of LHA was reduced in 2011 to 30% (down from 50%) of the local market rental value. The impact of this reduction is a lack of access to private rented housing in much of the city for residents dependent on housing benefit and an increased concentration in poorer quality private rented sector properties in lower income parts of the city.

Working age benefits (all out of work benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance, Housing Benefit and tax credits) will see no cost of living rise for 4 years from April 2016. Any third and subsequent children born after April 2017 will not be considered in assessments for Tax Credits and UC, and a restriction will be placed on Housing Benefit so that assessment is only based on two children. In addition, from May 2016, the Family Premium has been removed from Housing Benefit assessments for new claims with dependants, or where the first child is born from May onwards. Those starting a family after April 2017 will also no longer be eligible for the Family Element in tax credits. The equivalent in UC, known as the first child premium, will not be available for new claims after April 2017.

Impacts of welfare reform and austerity on children

Between March 2014 and July 2015, Professor Ruth Lupton, with colleagues from the University of Manchester, conducted a qualitative research study into the impacts of the 'bedroom tax'.³⁷ The study found that the 'bedroom tax' was not only contributing to significant hardship among low-income families in Manchester, but could also be negating the effects of other national government policies intended to support child wellbeing and educational achievement.

Key findings of the research included:

- The bedroom tax was just one of a raft of benefit changes affecting income.
- Parents were trying to save money by cutting back on basics such as food, school uniforms, coats, heating and other essentials.
- Material hardship was adversely affecting children's ability to learn, at school and in the home. Hungry children found it harder to concentrate, sometimes leading to disruption in the classroom.

³⁷ *The Impacts of the 'Bedroom Tax' on Children and Their Education. A Study in the City of Manchester* by Jo Bragg, Erica Burman, Anat Greenstein, Terry Hanley, Afroditi Kalambouka, Ruth Lupton, Lauren McCoy, Kate Sapin and Laura Winter (Manchester Institute of Education, University of Manchester October 2015)

- Sharing of bedrooms by children under 16 was leaving children without a quiet place for homework and with their sleep disturbed by siblings.
- Schools and community groups had responded by reallocating finances and staffing to provide clothing, meals and advice.
- Pupil Premium funding, intended to help overcome barriers to learning among children from low-income families, had been used to extend breakfast clubs and one school had opened its own account with a shoe shop.
- Most of the parents were trying to alleviate hardship through paid employment but many were having difficulty finding work due to age, ill health, lack of qualifications or caring responsibilities.
- A number of parents in the study expressed shame and embarrassment at having to use food banks and claim benefits. Community organisations were keen to find ways of providing support without families feeling stigmatised by 'handouts' or 'charity'.

Further local research into the impact of austerity measures on children has been undertaken by Dr Sarah M Hall, Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Manchester. She conducted an ethnographic research project during 2012-2015, looking at the lived experiences of six families in Greater Manchester, at a time of austerity. The key conclusions and recommendations from the report were as follows:

- Access to financial education and advice is urgently needed, but must come from trusted sources in order to be absorbed and put into effect. This may necessitate familial financial education.
- The impacts of poverty and austerity are cross-generational. Getting by requires the support of multiple generations, and is spread over the life course. Support therefore needs to be targeted at families and connected personal networks, and not individuals and households.
- The gendered burden of poverty needs to be addressed. This is especially the case for child and social care in families and communities, and the burden of seeking paid work. Universal Credit and cuts to Child Tax Credits will have a deeper impact on female family members.
- Poverty and austerity overlap, but are not the same. Austerity cuts in GM have exacerbated already precarious conditions for families, but they also have an impact on those in more comfortable financial situations, who are giving more time, energy and resources to fill the gap created by these cuts.

Fuel Poverty

Fuel Poverty is driven primarily by the interplay of: household income, the cost of energy and the energy efficiency of the home. Under the 'Low Income High Cost' definition of fuel poverty, a household is considered to be fuel poor where they have fuel costs that are above the national median and, were they to spend that amount on their fuel bills, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

Manchester has above average levels of fuel poverty and the highest rate of incidence across Greater Manchester. More than 32,000 (15.9%) households are unable to afford to heat and power their homes to the level necessary for good health

and wellbeing³⁸. There are significant variations across the city, with a concentration of homes in fuel poverty in central Manchester and parts of north Manchester. The highest rates according to 2014 government statistics are in Moss Side, Gorton South, Harpurhey, Longsight, Rusholme and Withington where some wards have over 41% of households living in fuel poverty.

For low-income households privately renting, high fuel bills can mean having to decide between heating or eating. In Manchester more than a quarter (28.4%) rent from a private landlord or letting agency³⁹. Evidence points to the fact that the privately rented properties tend to be the least energy efficient and contain the highest number of fuel poor households. This can be seen to be the case in areas of Manchester such as Longsight, Levenshulme and Cheetham. There are still a multitude of pre-war properties across Manchester owned by private landlords that require solid wall insulation, which is expensive to install.

The effects of fuel poverty on children include: not having breakfast before school or warm healthy meals later in the day; not being able to shower or have their clothes washed properly; being unable to concentrate on homework in a cold home and therefore falling behind; and being bullied by other children.

6.4 Working Group

A Working Group of professionals was established in January 2016 to lead the development of the new Manchester Family Poverty Strategy. The Group has met monthly and comprises Manchester City Council officers from; Children's Services; Performance and Intelligence; Work and Skills; Public Health; Policy Partnerships and Research; and Reform and Innovation. Key external organisations have also been invited to contribute including the University of Manchester, Wythenshawe Community Housing Group; CLES and Manchester Metropolitan University. A number of workshops have been held to help guide the development of the Strategy.

6.5 Interviews with Anchor Institutions

As part of its membership arrangement with Manchester City Council, CLES were commissioned to write a think-piece on the potential direction and focus of a new Family Poverty Strategy for the city. This piece highlighted the importance of the involvement of local anchor institutions in securing a link between the city's growth and the economic prosperity of its residents. There are a number of emerging opportunities within this area, especially within the health agenda such as the establishment of the Manchester Health and Core Commission, and the single hospital trust.

Characteristics of these anchor institutions include:

- They are of large scale, employing significant workforces;
- They have significant levels of spend through procurement and other processes;

³⁸ NEA Profiling Report for Manchester City Council 2014

³⁹ NEA Profiling Report for Manchester City Council 2014

- They have fixed assets, are embedded in the locality and unlikely to leave.

There are already a number of excellent examples of anchor institutions working collaboratively to address poverty. In 2014, 25 Housing Providers in Greater Manchester signed up to five pledges which set out how they will take forward the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission recommendations. They include: improving financial and digital inclusion; tackling food and fuel poverty; and paying the living wage.

CLES were commissioned to follow up their think-piece with a series of interviews with key anchor institutions in the city, in order to understand what these organisations are already doing to address poverty and its effects locally. Six of these interviews took place with the following organisations:

- University of Manchester
- Manchester Growth Company
- Northwards Housing
- Kellogg's
- One Manchester
- Transport for Greater Manchester

CLES have shared their findings from these interviews which indicate that anchors in Manchester work to address poverty and its effects in two main ways:

- by providing **employment opportunities** for those living in areas of deprivation; and
- by **delivering specific projects** that focus on tackling particular effects of poverty.

CLES's key findings from the six interviews are provided in Appendix 3. An Anchor Institution Statement has been developed (see Appendix 3a) which have been shared with Anchor Institutions in Manchester and via the Our Manchester Forum. There is also work underway at a Greater Manchester level and this needs to be joined up to the Manchester ask.

6.6 Strength based conversations

Ethnographic research: Conversations and analysis of findings

In line with the new 'Our Manchester' approach, which was emerging at the time that work on the new Strategy began, the Working Group agreed that desk-based research and expert views needed to be complemented by hearing directly from residents about their experience of living in poverty. Triangulating these different datasets through the agreed mixed methods approach would help to strengthen the rigour and validity of the research and shape the goals and remit of the new strategy.

A communications plan was developed in order to guide a two month period of qualitative ethnographic research, during which Working Group members and colleagues organised a range of conversations with residents across the city. As this was a new way of working for many of the Working Group, bespoke training sessions

were developed and delivered and a range of engagement tools were designed to support the conversations, based on the Reform and Innovation Team's experiences of previous engagement work, particularly from the Real Benchill project.

During September and October 2016, 25 officers spoke with over 120 residents, focusing on areas of the city with the highest levels of child poverty and engaging with particular groups who were thought to be more likely than others to be vulnerable to the effects of poverty (for example unemployed people attending work clubs and people referred to food banks).

The engagements took a number of different formats including semi-structured 1:1 interviews, group discussions, informal conversations and written responses. In most of the interactions, officers took the role of a non-participating observer. Through the training and engagement tools provided, officers were encouraged to keep an open mind, set aside any assumptions and allow residents time to voice their opinions and talk about their experiences in an informal, non-threatening interaction.

A strengths-based approach was taken, in order to draw out the positive assets that help people in Manchester to be resilient to poverty and its effects, whilst not shying away from the deep problems encountered by many of those experiencing poverty. Conversations were based around two main questions:

- What's great about bringing up a family in Manchester?
- What could be better?

Further information was then sought through the use of additional questions such as:

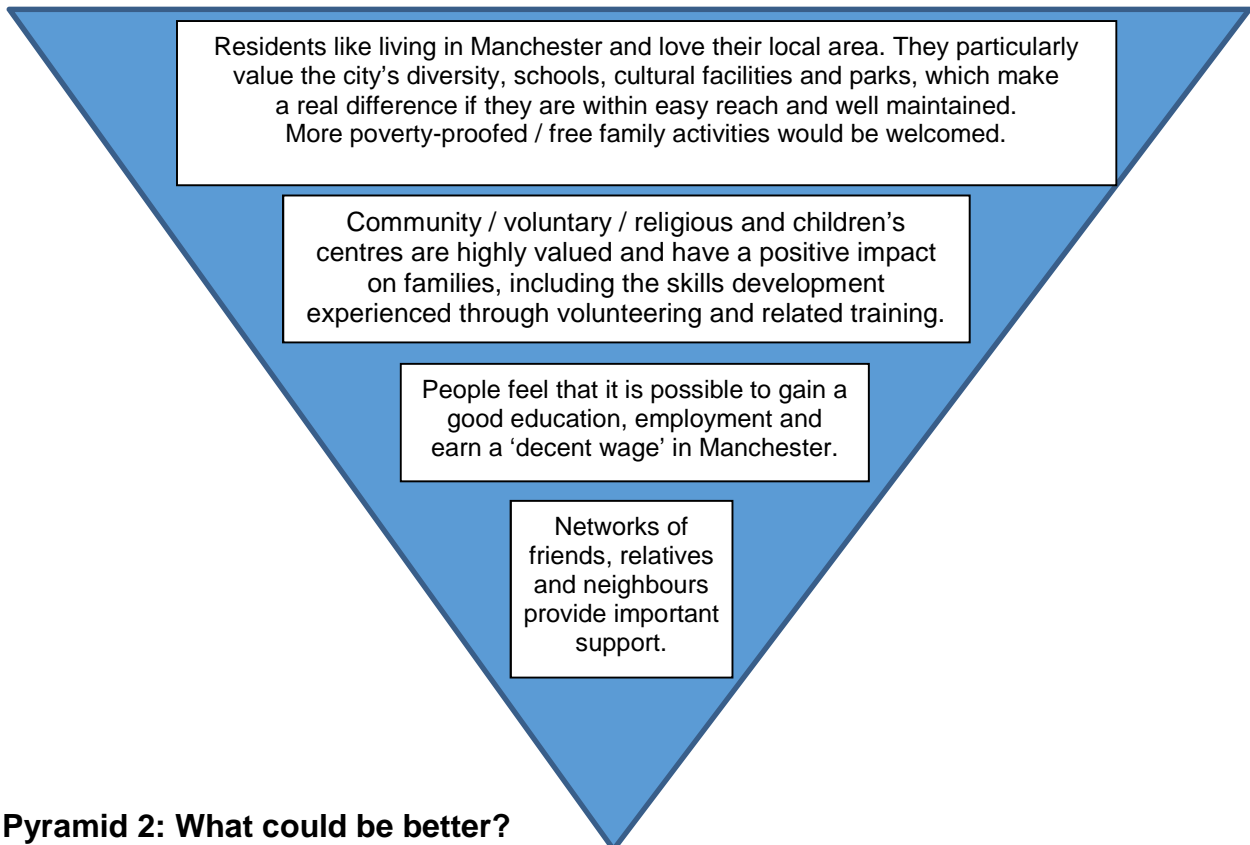
- How does your neighbourhood help your children and family achieve their potential?
- What makes a difference to your family?
- What do you do when times are tough?
- What is your dream for you and your family's future?

Resident responses and comments were written up by officers and submitted to the Council's Policy, Partnerships and Research Team for collation. Early Help Assessments, which also follow the two main questions above, were submitted by the Woodville Centre, along with referral stories from the Central Manchester Food Bank's clients.

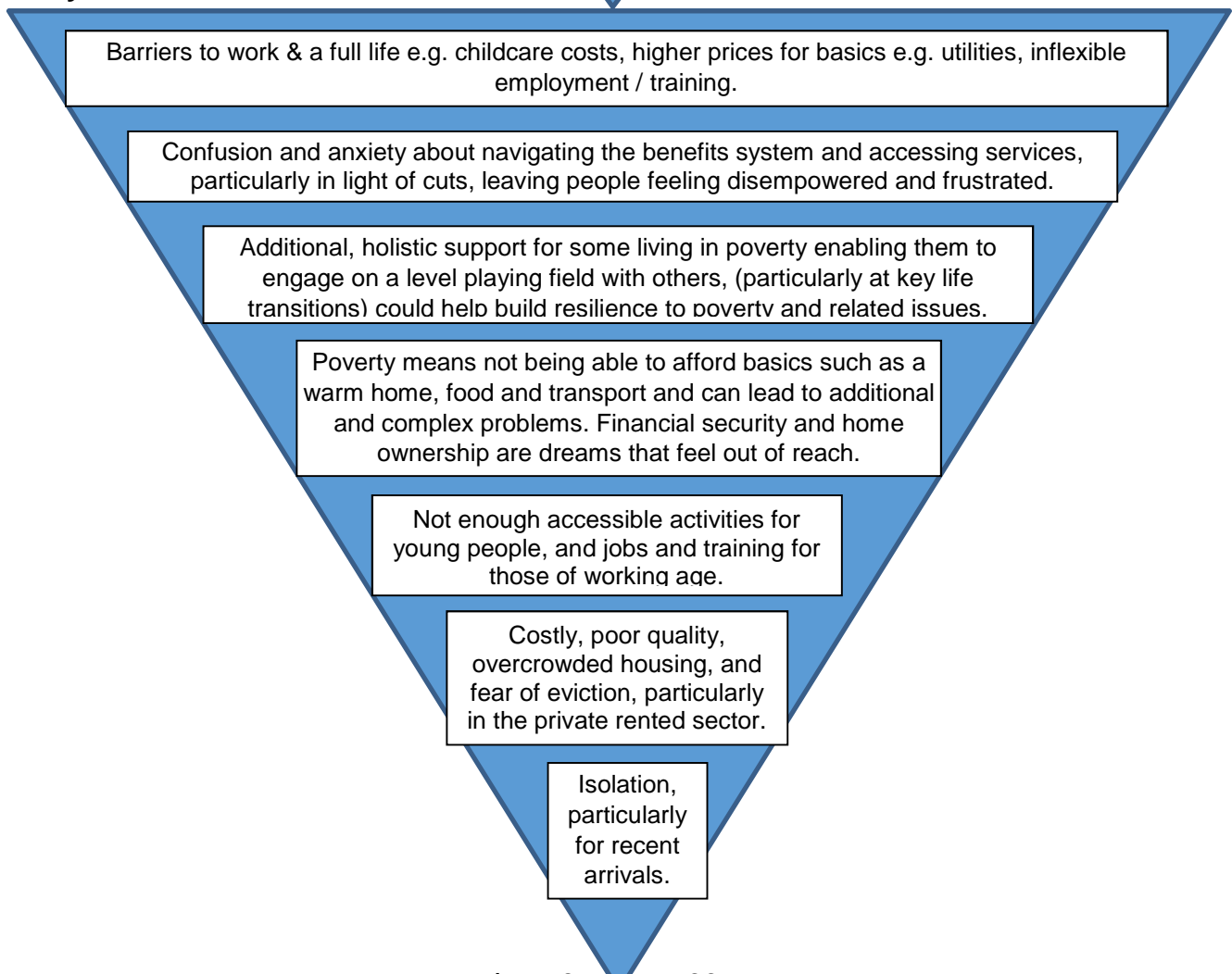
Guided by the Council's Strategic Lead for Evidence, an in-depth thematic analysis was undertaken, through which similar comments were coded and grouped together in order to identify key emergent themes. Using grounded theory, the themes were ranked, according to the frequency with which they were mentioned by residents, and separated into two categories based on the two main questions above: 'What's great about bringing up a family in Manchester?' and 'What could be better?'.

The results are displayed in the two inverted pyramids below, with the most frequently mentioned themes at the widest part of the pyramids, and the least frequently cited at the narrowest points.

Pyramid 1: What's great about bringing up a family in Manchester?



Pyramid 2: What could be better?



Engagements with young people and children

In addition to capturing adults' perspectives, officers worked with three external organisations that were already well engaged with young people in Manchester, in order to listen to younger viewpoints.

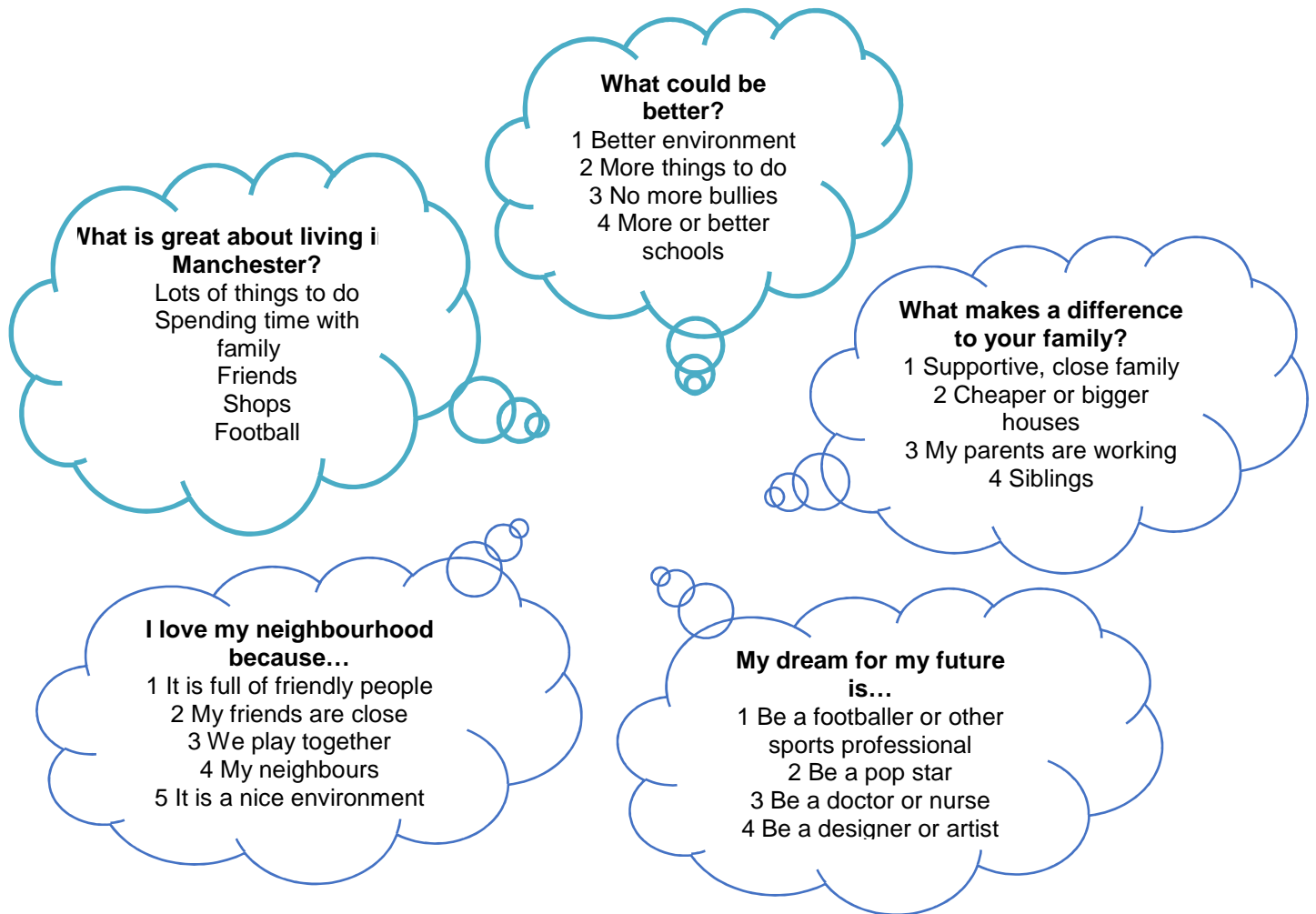
- **Manchester City Football Club: school children**

City in the Community asked Year 5 schoolchildren, who were taking part in engagement sessions, to complete 'thought bubble' templates which asked child-friendly versions of the key research questions cited earlier. 96 responses were collected from four Manchester schools:

- Seymour Road Academy, Ancoats and Clayton
- Briscoe Lane Academy, Miles Platting and Newton Heath
- Ashbury Meadow Primary School, Bradford
- Higher Openshaw Community School, Bradford

The comments were grouped thematically and ranked in order of frequency. The diagram below shows the top responses, with the number 1 in each thought bubble being the most common response to each question.

Figure 5: Top responses from four Manchester primary schools



The children's comments included:

"We all look after each other. We always share and have fun."

"Everyone is kind. We play together in the park, we talk to each other."

"It feels like you are never alone, you always have company in Manchester, people always play with you."

"Manchester makes a difference to my family because I became smarter and healthier"

"Wherever you go you are safe, sure there's a few bad people in my neighbourhood but it's still a nice community."

"We have lots of nice people and they feel like family no matter if old or young."

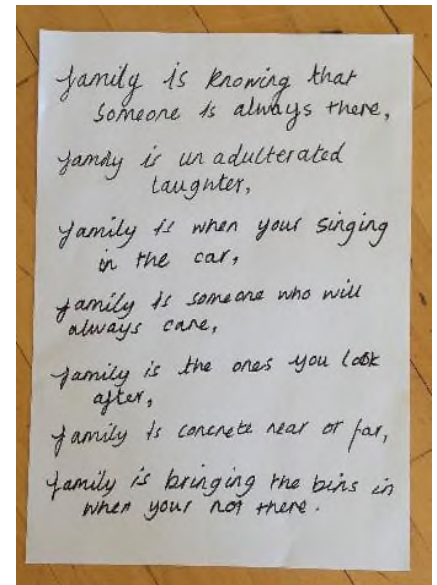
- **Contact Theatre: teenagers and young adults**

Contact Theatre's Creative Experts delivered a day of facilitated conversations as part of their 'What's Happening for the Young?' (WHY?) Festival; a collaboration with The South Bank Centre, inspired by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Contact found that many of the younger people at the Festival initially seemed reluctant to talk about their family. However, once the facilitators said that they meant

'family' in its broadest sense (i.e. not necessarily just a traditional two parents and two children household) they opened up and were happy to talk. Contact felt that this reflected the variety of family units that live in Manchester today. The closest and most supportive family relationships were not always with people's closest relatives.

*"Many people are incredibly positive about their families and what family means to them. We got a deep sense of community throughout Manchester and a pride that came from being a part of this city. In one of the poems family was described as 'concrete'. Something solid, that can be relied upon. I found only one person that didn't share this opinion of family. Most were particularly keen to stress that family can take many forms, and this was something they regarded with pride and as a source of strength."*⁴⁰



People reacted positively to the fact that the Council was interested in hearing their views. They said that it was important for people to be consulted, that close connections needed to be maintained with communities, and that those consulted should be told about what has been done as a result of their input. Instead of just identifying problems, the Council should act on them and be seen to be making a difference. People felt that the Council should shout more about all the good work they are doing in communities.

Manchester's cultural offer was mentioned repeatedly as a clear positive of life in the city; how much there is to do, the opportunities for creative exploration, and how there is access to museums, green spaces, parks, events, galleries and theatres. The diversity of the population, and the many free events that brought people together and harnessed a real sense of community spirit, were also key positives. The city's colleges and universities and the connections that schools made to their wider community were mentioned as helping people reach their potential. Thriving online communities also helped to offer a wider sense of community and connection.

Many people were fearful about the future, with Brexit, insecure work and financial worries mentioned. Several said that they were 'overworked and underpaid'. Some expressed concern about their family and friends potentially 'falling over the edge' both in terms of financial security and mental health. People said that they generally had enough money for the most essential things, such as food and a safe, warm home, but they wished that there was a bit more money available for treats and special occasions. They also called for: cheaper public transport (particularly the Metrolink which was seen as prohibitively expensive); better health services for young people (particularly mental health support); cheaper housing; more attention to those living in poverty and help to enable them to build better lives; and a cleaner city.

Despite these concerns, Contact found that there was a 'can do' and 'let's go' feel to their conversations. Dreams for the future that people expressed included: being

⁴⁰ Contact Theatre (2016), Creative Experts, Final Report

safe, healthy and happy; for there to be enough opportunities; and to earn enough money to see the world. Talking to others, having a laugh, making connections, spending time as a family in accessible safe public spaces, and having support from public services and from family (whatever shape that family might take) were identified as helping people to cope with problems that might occur. Interestingly, a young man who was a refugee commented that, despite living in what he described as a rough area, he feels safe and secure because of the family he is housed with.

“Even when those who we spoke too were thinking of the negative side to Manchester life, it was spoken about in a way that people were keen to do something about it. Many indicated that they simply wanted some guidance and support from Manchester City Council. The rest they will do themselves.”

⁴¹

- **Z-arts: young children and their parents**

Two days of drop-in engagements for children and families were delivered by Z-arts in the café and foyer space at their arts centre in Hulme. Parents were encouraged to talk with their children in order to provide collective answers to the key research questions cited earlier. A thorough thematic analysis is now being undertaken of the findings. From an initial study of the results, the following recurrent themes are emerging:

- Manchester’s diversity, cultural institutions and strong communities were the best things about living in the city.
- Their local area’s schools, community centres, libraries and parks were the key things that helped children and families reach their potential.
- The things that made the most difference to their families were opportunities for children, good education, free activities for families and good public services.
- In response to the question ‘what could be better?’ families cited: cleaner and safer green spaces; more school places; cheaper transport; improved waste services and recycling.
- Looking to the future, families wanted to be happy, health, achieve a good education, have good opportunities and live in secure housing.

Comments included:

“Community centres, places like Z-arts, make it so much easier for me as a mother to help my children to develop.”

“Make sure everyone in Manchester automatically is aware of all services relevant to their age and circumstances.”

“[What makes a difference?] Free activities and services. Knowing lots of different people. Having community. Supportive arts and adult education. Most institutions very welcoming of children.”

7. Appendices

- 1. PRI Data pack

⁴¹ Contact Theatre (2016), Creative Experts, Final Report

- 1a. Ward comparison
- Footprints of Poverty
- 3. CLES Anchor Institution summary
- 3a. Anchor Institution statement