Making Manchester Fairer: Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023-2027

Title page

Foreword

Cllr Bev Craig, Leader, Manchester City Council

Manchester is a place that is thriving and growing, with a proud history of working together to fight inequality to build a fairer city.

Our city has enjoyed many successes over recent years. However, we know that despite our good progress, poverty remains one of the most significant challenges we face. In one of the world's richest countries, we must work to eradicate poverty.

Manchester City Council is deeply committed to improving the lives of Manchester's residents. We know the profound effect poverty has on people – it impacts everything from life expectancy to employment opportunities. Too many people are struggling, and this has been magnified by the current context of rising costs of essentials like food and energy bills.

This Anti-Poverty strategy draws upon evidence from residents, organisations, and national research to produce evidenced based recommendations to tackle poverty, its causes, and consequences.

We've seen that recent economic challenges have exasperated longstanding inequalities which has had a disproportionate impact on some communities. We are determined to make Manchester a place where anyone, regardless of their background or the neighbourhood they grew up in, can lead a healthy and successful life in which they can reach their full potential.

We recognise that no one person or organisation holds all the levers to address poverty. It is now more important than ever that we work together across our city to take tangible actions to tackle poverty. We all have a shared responsibility to ensure that no one gets left behind.

Cllr Joanna Midgley, Deputy Leader and lead for reducing poverty and tackling inequalities

As Deputy Leader with Executive Member responsibility for Reducing Poverty and Tackling Inequalities, I look forward to working in collaboration with partners across the city to deliver this strategy.

Our city has a strong track record of successful partnership working. This has been demonstrated in our delivery of the previous Family Poverty Strategy. Despite the difficulties experienced in recent years, we have continued to work together to tirelessly improve the quality of life for Manchester's residents.

The Anti-Poverty strategy outlines our ambitious priorities to take the city in the right direct over the next 5 years by collectively taking action to prevent residents experiencing poverty, making life easier for people experiencing poverty, and raising household incomes so residents of all ages can move out of poverty.

Residents and partner organisations have been instrumental in shaping and developing this Strategy. Through continuing this partnership approach, we will deliver against our priorities and continue to take a responsive and reactive approach to tackling poverty in Manchester.

Introduction

We want to work together to tackle poverty in Manchester.

Manchester is a growing and thriving city that has enjoyed many successes, however we know that despite our achievements there are still too many people in our city who experience and are affected by poverty. This Anti-Poverty Strategy has been created with the help of people and organisations in Manchester, so that we can work together to make it less likely that people will experience poverty, and to help people more effectively and appropriately if they do experience poverty.

This strategy sets out the priorities we are going to focus on, the actions we will take and the information that we will use to know if we are making a difference. It also shows how this strategy fits with Manchester's strategic objectives, and the connections to other areas of work that will support the work we do on poverty.

Most importantly, by adopting this strategy we are making it clear that poverty is unacceptable and is incompatible with our vision for the city. Collectively, we are committed to doing everything that is within our power to reduce and eliminate poverty in Manchester.

Context

This strategy has been written at a time of worsening economic conditions, with the impacts of Brexit, COVID-19 and the war Ukraine all playing a part in creating a cost-of-living crisis that has seen household costs and the demand for support and services rapidly increase. Pressure on food, energy and housing costs have been particularly significant and consumer price index inflation is at its highest level for decades. It is expected that in the short term the problem of poverty may well get worse, and that ultimately our control over some of the causes of poverty are limited. However, this strategy is a medium-term plan which should look beyond tied to the circumstances of the day.

There are also opportunities that we need to take advantage of. Manchester enjoys a dynamic and growing economy that is generating the sills and employment opportunities that can play a role in increasing incomes and reducing poverty. We have a diverse and committed system of support for residents who experience poverty, with organisations who provide tailored and supportive services for those most in need. We also have a renewed focus across all our work of creating a city that is fairer and more equitable for our residents.

At the same time Manchester is facing two other major challenges. Firstly, the challenge of a changing climate. In 2019, Manchester City Council declared a climate emergency and the city has set an ambitious target to become zero carbon by 2038. We must make sure that the transition to a zero-carbon economy happens in a way that is just and fair. Secondly, the challenges of inequality and inequity. Manchester is working to develop a more inclusive and more equitable economy that benefits our residents regardless of who they are, and we will work harder to support people who experience disadvantage to benefit from our growth.

Our Manchester

The Our Manchester Strategy 2016-2025 provides the overall strategic direction for the city. It sets the framework for all our actions to ensure we are contributing towards meeting that priorities that Manchester people agreed are important to them. As a citywide strategy, this Anti-Poverty Strategy will directly support the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy priority "*We will strive to create a*

truly equal and inclusive city, where everyone can thrive at all stages of their life, and quickly and easily reach support to get back on track when needed" and its cross-cutting priority of improving equality in the city. However, work to tackle poverty is cross-cutting and will contribute to all Our Manchester themes and priorities.

Making Manchester Fairer

Professor Sir Michael Marmot's report, Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester: Health Equity and Dignified Lives, sets out systemic and structural inequalities and the wider social determinants of health impacting life outcomes in Greater Manchester. At a Manchester level, a multi-agency group has developed the Making Manchester Fairer Action Plan which sets out how Manchester will respond to the recommendations by adopting a whole system approach to addressing health inequalities across the five-year period 2022-27. The plan shows that tackling poverty and debt is one of the most significant routes to improving health outcomes in Manchester.

The actions proposed in the Making Manchester Fairer Action Plan are included and developed further in this strategy. The Anti-Poverty Strategy forms the foundation of delivery against the Making Manchester Fairer Action Plan priority to reduce poverty.

The Cost-of-Living Crisis

At the time of writing, high inflation and stagnant wages has led to a cost-of-living crisis, resulting in large increases in the cost of housing, energy, food and other essential goods and services. Manchester is responding to the cost-of-living crisis with our partners to make sure that the most severely affected residents are supported. These measures are intended as a short-term response to the crisis, and while this strategy commits us to maintaining this type of support where it is needed, it is intended as a medium-longer term plan for tackling poverty in the city.

Poverty in Manchester

Poverty in Manchester remains a significant and engrained problem that is the product of complex and inter-connected issues. This section shows what we know about poverty in the city and how we define and think about poverty. It also looks at some of the data we have about poverty.

Defining Poverty

There is no single definition of poverty. Poverty can be experienced differently by different people, and its exact nature can depend on individual circumstances. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has agreed a broad definition of poverty as "*When a person's resources (mainly their material resources) are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs (including social participation)*". This definition is useful because it recognises the difference in individual circumstances.

People in Manchester have told us that for them, poverty can mean one or more things:

- Being unable to afford the basics of food, warmth and shelter or to be able to keep clean
- Being unable to adequately care for dependents
- Being constantly or persistently worried about money
- Feeling like there is no way to improve your life or to progress
- Lacking hope in the future or feeling that it is impossible to make a change.

We also know that some people who meet the definition of being in poverty do not always recognise themselves as being in this position, sometimes because it is just what they are used to, and sometimes because of the shame or stigma that can be associated with poverty.

There are also qualitative definitions of poverty. These are used by organisations which measure and report on poverty and are the closest we have to a standard definition. They are based on household incomes and include:

- Household income less than 60% of the national median (after housing costs)
- Household income less than 40% of the national median (known as deep poverty)

Poverty Myths (Credit: Mr Carl Emery, University of Manchester)

We also recognise that people's understanding of poverty can often be prejudiced and based on "myths", and that in tacking poverty we need to make sure that we dispel these myths to avoid prejudicing the action that we take. Myths about poverty include:

- The bootstraps myth – that anyone can pull themselves out of poverty if they just work hard enough.
- The individual faults myth – that those who experience poverty are lazy and/or irresponsible, and therefore deserve to be in poverty.
- The educability myth – that children experiencing poverty are innately less intelligent or less school ready.
- The culture of poverty myth – that people who experience poverty share common beliefs, values and behaviours.
- The intergenerational worklessness myth – that there are families where multiple generations don't work and don't want to work.

In reality,the causes of poverty are socio-economic, and we cannot make assumptions or judgements about people who experience it.

Poverty in Manchester

Poverty in Manchester is mainly caused by worklessness and benefit dependency. However, we know that there are also other important contributing factors. These include:

- Unemployment and worklessness – as of October 2022 around 76,000 people in Manchester are claiming Universal Credit, of whom 49,000 are not in employment.
- Low paid and insecure work – around 28,000 people in employment are also claiming Universal Credit, many of these will work part-time, earn below the Living Wage or move in and out of work
- Relatively lower household incomes (including benefits and pensions) - average household income in Manchester is about X compared to a national average of Y.
- Increasing household costs – inflation has hit record highs and has most affected people who were already struggling. Consumer Price Index inflation was 9.6% in the 12 months to October 2022.
- Changes to the welfare system – the support available to people has reduced in the last ten years and the value of benefits has declined. The basic rate of unemployment benefits is now at a 35-year low in real terms. Together with wider cuts to public services, this means that there is less help to prevent people from going into crisis, as well as less help when they are in crisis.

- Changes in the labour market – while some good progress has been made on this issue of low pay, insecure work and low hours worked remain problems that affect some people.

We also know that poverty in Manchester is distributed unevenly, with certain groups and communities likely to be disproportionately affected. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Communities experiencing racial inequalities, particularly black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani residents
- Women
- Disabled people
- Older people
- Children and young people
- Residents in certain spatial areas, particularly north Manchester, east Manchester and Wythenshawe.

Intersectionality, or the connection between different social and demographics categories, is also significant when talking about poverty. For example, we know that children and young people from ethic minority backgrounds are more likely to experience poverty. Our responses to poverty will account for these characteristics and be designed appropriately.

The Impact of Poverty

The way that poverty affects people can be very profound, touching on all aspects of their lives. While the exact nature of people's experience is highly individual, we know that people who experience poverty of a sustained period of time can have several adverse consequences:

- Poor mental health – particularly stress, anxiety and depression caused by worrying about money and how to meet basic needs.
- Poor physical health – health problems associated with poor or insufficient nutrition, living in cold or damp homes, being unable to exercise regularly or participate in activities. Overall reduced life expectancy and healthy life expectancy
- Reduced educational attainment – children and young people experiencing poverty are likely to fall behind their peers. The gap widens the longer that the child or young person is in poverty. Education attainment significantly affects life chances on completion of mandatory education, and there is a persistent earnings gap between children eligible for free school meals and other children.
- Reduced neighbourhood resilience – neighbourhoods with high concentrations of people on low incomes are generally less resilient, frequently lacking the services and infrastructure found in higher income neighbourhoods. High concentrations of people on low income can also place greater demand on local services that may result in lower quality of provision.
- Persistent gap in earnings between those who have experienced poverty in childhood and those who have not.

What's more, people who are already vulnerable, mainly those in the communities describe above, will be more affected by these consequences than their peers. Intersectionality plays an important role, for example older people experiencing poverty will likely face a greater impact on their physical health than younger people.

What we're already doing

It is important to remember that we are not starting from scratch and that there is already a great deal of work taking place in Manchester to tackle poverty. This work ranges in scale from hyper-local projects undertaken by very small organisations or even individuals, all the way up to city-wide programmes of investment in services. All of it is important, and learning from these experiences has laid the groundwork for this strategy.

Short case studies to insert:

- Cheetham Hill Advice
- Resident (debt)
- Resident (employment)
- Foodbank
- Barlow Moor Community Association

There is also a lot of work underway that is fundamentally important to tackling poverty, even if it is not explicitly or only aimed at people who experience poverty. Examples include:

Skills, employment and training – Manchester, through its Work and Skills Strategy, already has an ecosystem of learning, training and employment providers working together to help more residents find more secure and better paid work, which is one of the most important routes out of poverty.

Housing and homelessness – we recognise that the cost of housing is an important issue in Manchester that overlaps with poverty. Through our Housing strategy we have committed to building 10,000 new affordable homes in the city, and through our homelessness strategy we have committed to making homelessness as rare and as brief as possible.

Transport – the cost of transport is another important issue and is a barrier to people on lower incomes. Through work underway at a Greater Manchester level and through the City Centre Transport Strategy, we are working to reduce public transports costs and make routes and services more joined up to enable people to access services and opportunities across the city.

Environment – we have a commitment to becoming a zero-carbon city by 2038 and recognise that this target has benefits for people on low incomes but only if we can make sure that the transition to a zero-carbon economy is fair and equitable. Manchester's Climate Change Action Plan will drive some of the changes that we need to see to help make people's homes warmer and more efficient, therefore reducing household costs as well as saving carbon.

Vision

Our vision is that the whole of Manchester will work together to reduce poverty and lessen the impact of poverty on our residents.

This is our vision because we recognise that tackling and ending poverty requires a coordinated and whole system approach, where individuals and organisations act as allies and advocates for people who are the most in need.

Principles

In delivering this strategy, we have agreed a set of principles that everyone working to tackle poverty in Manchester can adopt so that we can be sure we are working together effectively towards our shared goal.

These principles are:

Proportionate universalism – The action that we take must be universal but must also be adjusted to a scale and intensity that is required according to the needs of particular people or communities.

Nothing about us without us – We will include people with lived experience of poverty in the decision-making processes that affect them.

Working together – Organisations working to tackle poverty will work together towards the same shared goal. No matter where people come to for help, they will always be provided with the right support in way that is compassionate and appropriate for their needs.

Breaking the feedback loop – we will avoid sustaining and reinforcing a system of support that ultimately, we don't want to exist. We will collectively endeavour to enable people to support themselves and make decisions about their own lives.

The action we will take

The actions we are going to take over this five-year strategy are divided into four themes and thirteen priorities. Themes 1-3 show are about how we directly support people in Manchester, while theme 4 is about how we can improve the way that the support system operates.

These actions will not all happen at once but will be sequenced over the life of the strategy and in line with the work undertaken as part of the Making Manchester Fairer Action Plan. Some actions will need significant development to achieve, whereas others are smaller changes that we should be able to make more quickly. They will all need to be delivered by a range of partners, not just by the city council, and in a way that responds to the needs of our residents.

Theme 1: Preventing Poverty

The priorities in this theme are about the things that we can do to prevent residents experiencing poverty.

Preventing poverty means identifying those people who are most at risk and connecting them to the right support before they reach crisis. It means that when people ask for help, they get it, but also that people working in front line services are able to spot the signs that someone is struggling and have the confidence and expertise to offer support. Preventing poverty also means working to reduce household's and families' costs and increasing access to advice and support services, as well as those early intervention services that can help people manage smaller pressures that can build up to become more serious problems. At the same time, we can look at the way public services operate to make sure that we don't push more people into poverty through the inappropriate use of fines or charges, especially where residents are already seeking professional help.

By focusing on prevention, we can reduce the number of people who fall into poverty and reduce demand on the services that support people.

Priority 1.1 Identify residents at risk of poverty and connect them to help and support that is tailored to their needs

- We will use data to identify the places and communities that have the highest concentrations of poverty so we can design and target interventions appropriately, focusing our response on the neighbourhoods and households who need it most.

- We will design and run information campaigns that target these places and communities to encourage people to ask for support before they reach crisis.
- We will develop and roll out training for front line staff in public and voluntary services to help them identify when someone may be at risk of poverty and how to support them.
- We will reduce the stigma associated with accessing help by considering how support is branded and advertised, the process through which support is given and who is providing the help.
- We will target additional resource investment at VCSE organisations to work on prevention activity in the areas of greatest need.

Priority 1.2 Help residents on low incomes to manage their household expenditure and reduce debt

- We will promote and ensure access to more affordable forms of credit for Manchester residents, including the use of credit unions and salary finance schemes, and make this offer more consistent across the city.
- We will continue to take preventative and enforcement action against those who seek to profit from illegal money lending
- We will improve access to and take up of good quality affordable childcare so that it is not a barrier to employment, particularly for women.
- We will target home energy efficiency and retrofit activity at the lowest income households first and work with advice providers to make sure that people have access to resources to help them manage their energy usage.
- We will test and embrace digital innovations to deliver smart energy systems that work for low income and vulnerable consumers.
- We will ensure adoption of more demanding Energy Performance Certificate standards in selective licencing areas, in line with national standards.
- We will work with schools, colleges, adult education providers and financial institutions to ensure that young people and adults can access help with budgeting and can make informed choices about affordable credit and dealing with debt.
- We will build on work to "poverty proof" the school day, ensuring that all Manchester schools are included and in particular, work to reduce the cost of school uniforms.

Priority 1.3 Avoid taking action that will push residents into poverty or debt

- Encourage residents who are experiencing hardship to contact the Council Tax Service at the earliest possible time so that the Council can support them to establish a sustainable payment plan, and proactively approach people who are in arrears to connect them to appropriate support.
- Review public sector organisations' approach to charges and debt recovery processes to make sure we are effectively supporting residents to access support and avoiding taking action that will make their situation worse.
- Connect residents who approach public services and who are experiencing debt to appropriate wrap around support.

Priority 1.4 Connect residents who are working to better paid and more secure employment.

- We will increase the number of Manchester employers who have signed up to the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter

- We will sustain and increase the number of employers in Manchester paying and the number of Manchester residents being paid the real living wage, as well as promoting its benefits.

Theme 2: Mitigating Poverty

The priorities in this theme are about trying to make life easier for people who are experiencing poverty and making sure that their basic needs are met.

Mitigating poverty means making sure that people don't go without food, warmth, shelter and that they are able to stay in good health. This means continuing some of the good work already underway in the city but making sure that there is capacity in the system to respond to increasing demands on services. It also means making sure that people are accessing the full range of help and support available.

Mitigating poverty also means making sure that people are not prevented from playing a part in the life of the city and accessing the opportunities that most people take for granted. It means that we need to consider how people experiencing poverty can still access the city's culture and leisure offer, how people are supported to have full access to information to help them to make decisions for themselves and those around them and how we can help people maintain their dignity and quality of life.

By mitigating against the impact of poverty we can help people maintain their health, wellbeing and independence so that they can be in a better position get out and stay out of poverty.

Priority 2.1 Make sure everyone has access to appropriate and good quality, accessible advice

- We will expand access to advice about finance in different settings, including community settings, schools, health services and workplaces and use of the money advice referral tool.
- We will increase access to debt advice and debt management services as part of the wider advice offer, making sure that people can consolidate debts and move to more affordable forms of credit.
- We will work with advice providers to increase the availability of in-person advice in areas of the city where this is not available.
- We will provide support to residents who are digitally excluded to access advice online and to support them to be able to find information online through the provision of training, appropriate devices and affordable connectivity.
- We will work with advice providers to create, maintain and distribute a single source of information for practitioners in all sectors to access up to date information regarding poverty and the services that can be accessed to help support people experiencing poverty, including those services that are specific to certain communities or spatial areas.
- We will work with schools to ensure that they have a single point of contact for issues related to poverty and that this person is connected into the wider network of anti-poverty work in Manchester.
- We will make sure that advice information is available in accessible formats and languages.
- We will provide support to residents who are digitally excluded to access advice online through the provision of training, devices and internet access.

Priority 2.2 Meet people's basic needs of food, warmth, shelter, health & hygiene.

- We will work with Manchester Food Board to support and maintain a strong eco-system of food provision giving access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food for residents who are food insecure via the Our Manchester Food Partnership.
- We will work with energy companies to ensure that residents on low incomes are receiving all of the support they are entitled to, alongside any discretionary schemes, and help publicise the support that is available.
- We will work to ensure that people in crisis are able to maintain their own home and reduce the risk of homelessness, especially in the private rented sector.
- We will work with Manchester Local Care Organisation to target mental health support in areas where poverty and debt has a significant impact on residents' mental health.
- We will work to ensure access to personal hygiene products and reduce period poverty
- We will support the continuing operation of our cost-of-living crisis response for as long as it is needed, including the Cost-of-Living Helpline.

Priority 2.3 Ensure access to culture and leisure opportunities to help people experiencing poverty have a good quality of life.

- We will maintain free-school holiday provision and work to provide greater certainty of funding that allows schools to confirm provision with parents in advance.
- We will work with Manchester's cultural organisations to design and promote activity that is accessible to everyone, regardless of their income.

Priority 2.4 Make sure that the support available treats people with dignity, is respectful of their needs and operates in a way that is best for them.

- We will pause enforcement action taken against residents for non-payment of fines or other charges when they are accessing professional help or support.
- Where residents make contact with Manchester City Council or other public bodies because they are struggling to pay rent, Council Tax or other charges, we will use that opportunity to connect them to the most appropriate support services
- We will review support services and commit to moving towards a cash first approach to support where it is feasible and appropriate.
- We will implement the Algorithmic Transparency Standard so we can make sure that algorithmic decision making does not unfairly penalise people on low incomes and encourage our partners to do the same.

Call out box: Algorithmic Transparency Standard

Algorithms are sets of rules applied to data in order to find patterns, solve problems, or make predictions. Local government and other organisations collect, store, and analyse large amounts of data, and they increasingly use algorithms to support decision-making. The use of algorithms brings opportunities to make services more efficient, tailor services to individual users, and reveal new insights about social problems based on robust evidence. However, algorithmic decision-making also brings risks, such as violations of privacy, discrimination, or bias against certain people or groups. Research increasingly shows that algorithmic decision-making can disproportionately penalise the poor and communities experiencing racial inequalities. The use of algorithms to assist or replace human decision-making also puts more distance between people and the decisions that impact their lives, making it harder to challenge those decisions. The UK Algorithmic Transparency Standard is a

national framework to enable the public sector to share information on the use of algorithmic tools with the public and other stakeholders, like regulators and researchers. It sets out an expectation that public sector organisations will make it known when they are using algorithms and what those algorithms do, so they can be subjected to public debate. The standard also opens the door to the future use of additional scrutiny tools, such as algorithmic audits and impact assessments, which might help to identify and mitigate the risks and harms associated with algorithmic decision-making.

Theme 3: Pathways out of Poverty

The priority in this theme is about raising people's incomes so they can move out of poverty.

A pathway out of poverty will be different for different people, and therefore responses need to be tailored to the needs of Manchester's diverse communities. We are lucky to already have organisations in Manchester who are experts at working with specific groups, whether they are young, old, disabled, neurodiverse, white or non-white or live in a certain part of the city. These organisations can help is making sure our response reaches the people who need it most.

Pathways out of poverty will look different for different people, so it will be necessary to design specific pieces of work that focus on our most vulnerable residents, working with the organisations that are best placed to reach them.

This theme is also reliant on Preventing Poverty and Mitigating Poverty, particularly access to advice and support, to make sure people get the help they need.

Priority 3.1 Help residents on low incomes to maximise their household income.

- We will help move low-income residents who are able to work towards and into better paid, higher quality and more secure employment, working with the health system and other services to provide wrap-around support.
- We will make sure that all public bodies are explicit about using social value to create education, skills, employment and training opportunities for residents living in poverty.
- We will support our residents to access the full range of additional income to which they are entitled, including benefits.
- We will work with community partnerships and trusted organisations to provide tailored support to communities which are more likely to be experiencing poverty, for example NRPF, ethnic minorities and residents with long term health conditions or disabilities, elderly people, large families, etc, which are delivered through community settings and outreach.

Theme 4: Inclusive and effective delivery

Inclusive and effective delivery is about improving the way that the ecosystem of people and organisations supporting people in poverty operates.

Fundamentally, this means including people with lived experience of poverty in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. It means that their voice should be heard and listened to and affect the way in which services are delivered.

It is also about making the system work more effectively together, both by finding the resource we need to sustain and increase the work already taking place, and finding ways in which to resource new areas of work or do things differently.

Priority 4.1 We will make sure that people with lived experience of poverty have a voice in anti-poverty work.

- We will set up and Anti-Poverty Reference Group made up of people who are, by experience or profession, experts in poverty and who can act as a critical friend in the delivery of this strategy.
- We will use the Making Manchester Fairer Network to hold regular events that bring together professionals working on the anti-poverty agenda alongside residents who experience poverty to connect, share information, learning and best practice and work together on shared priorities.
- We will work with relevant support organisations to ensure tailored support for groups most affected by poverty, such as communities experiencing racial inequalities and disabled people.
- We will embed the socio-economic duty in decision making of public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

Priority 4.2 We will find new ways of funding and resourcing anti-poverty work in Manchester

- We will review existing grant funding streams to see if it can be reconfigured to better support anti-poverty work and provide greater certainty of funding for organisations working to alleviate poverty.
- We will seek to bring in funding contributions from private sector organisations and philanthropic giving to help resource anti-poverty work.
- We will make better use of social value commitments to contribute additional resource to anti-poverty work.
- We will create an anti-poverty "virtual team" from MCC and our partners to deliver this strategy.
- We will find opportunities to reconfigure existing volunteering programmes and community payback schemes to better support anti-poverty work.

Priority 4.3 We will use data to help understand poverty in Manchester and to design and target interventions accordingly, making sure that we consider inequalities and inequity in how poverty is experienced.

- We will create and maintain a list of relevant indicators and other data products that can be shared with people and organisations working to tackle poverty in Manchester.
- We will develop targeted and bespoke programmes of activity that focus on particular residents who are the most vulnerable:
  - Women
  - Children and young people
  - Older people
  - Communities experiencing racial inequalities
  - Disabled people
  - People experiencing mental health conditions
  - Areas with the highest concentrations of poverty

How we will deliver it

Lifting low-income households out of poverty and debt is one of the eight themes of the Making Manchester Fairer Action Plan. Given the strategic relationship between poverty and health inequalities, the Manchester Anti-Poverty Strategy will sit under the Making Manchester Fairer Plan

and will support the delivery of these priority actions, along with other key actions identified through the development of the Strategy.

Delivery of the actions in this strategy will be undertaken by partnership working and collaboration between Manchester's Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations and public sector institutions with the support of the city's private sector. Actions will be sequenced in line with the wider Making Manchester Fairer Action Plan to ensure that they happen at the right time and maximise their impact.

The strategy will be led by a Making Manchester Fairer and Anti-Poverty Programme Management Team made up of council officers and our partners. Delivery will ultimately be accountable to the Making Manchester Fairer Programme Board.

As part of work to ensure we are fully involving residents with lived experience of poverty in the delivery of this strategy, we will establish two new groups:

1. A **Making Manchester Fairer Network** that brings together partners and stakeholders with an interest in MMF and which can feed into all levels of governance on MMF.
2. An **Anti-Poverty Reference Group** made up of experts, by experience or profession, who can act as critical friends to the delivery of the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

Outcomes, measures and indicators

Measuring poverty is difficult and there is no reliable data available that gives us an accurate overall picture of the number of people in Manchester who are living in poverty at any point in time. At the same time, we know that the economic conditions described at the start of this report mean that poverty is likely to get worse before it gets better.

However, we do have data available to us that is useful in several ways:

- Data can tell us about the risk of people experiencing poverty. We can use information that includes housing costs, pay, or people accessing debt advice to give us an overall picture of how much external conditions are likely to drive demand and where risk lies.
- Data can tell us about the volume of people accessing certain services, such as council tax support or welfare assistance schemes that can help us understand the scale of overall demand at the present time.
- Data from individual services can tell us about who is accessing services and therefore design responses according to their needs.

Because of the difficulties with data, to measure the success of this strategy we will do two things:

1. Collect and collate data from service providers in Manchester, including the City Council, to understand the level of demand on their services and track changes in this demand over time.
2. Evaluate the impact of individual actions and projects, in line with the methods developed through Making Manchester Fairer, to make judgements about their success.

We will know we have been successful when our evaluation of individual activities shows that they have made a positive difference to people's lives and when demand on MCC and our partners services reduces. This will be backed up in the longer term by changes in more longitudinal data.

Some of the measures that we may use include:

Indicator	Baseline	Date last released	Frequency of releases
Number of children living in relative poverty before housing costs (DWP)	44,734	March 2022	Annual
Number of children living in absolute poverty before housing costs (DWP)	35,751	March 2022	Annual
Number of children eligible for free school meals (School Census)	38,584	May 2022	Triannual
Average amount of debt of those who seek debt advice (GMPA Poverty Monitor)	£3,347	February 2022	Annual
People in employment who are approaching Citizens Advice for debt advice (GMPA Poverty Monitor)	28%	February 2022	Annual
People seeking debt advice who have previously taken out payday loans (GMPA Poverty Monitor)	1.60%	February 2022	Annual
People who are seeking debt advice that have been subject to debt enforcement (GMPA Poverty Monitor)	3.10%	February 2022	Annual
Volume of unsecured personal loans (GMPA Poverty Monitor)	140 / 3.06%	February 2022	Annual
Households in fuel poverty (UKGOV)	44,864	April 2022	Annual
Fuel insecurity by lower super output area (UKGOV)	Maps created.	April 2022	Annual
People accessing financial support from United Utilities (GMPA Poverty Monitor)	30,180	April 2022	Annual
Proportion of households experiencing food insecurity (GMPA Poverty Monitor)	17.20%	January 2021	
Difference between average rent vs local housing allowance rates (Various public and private data sources)	£197.00	November 2022	Quarterly
Lower quartile monthly gross pay vs lower quartile monthly rent (Various public and private data sources)	40% / 48%	April 2022	Annual
People on National Living Wage (NLW)/ National Minimum Wage (NMW) (GMPA Poverty Monitor)	16,600 / 5.6%	March 2021	Annual
Unemployment rates (NOMIS)	6.3%	November 2022	Quarterly
Changes in gross average pay since 2007 (ASHE)	3,965	December 2022	Annual
Proportion of Manchester Residents paid less than the Real Living Wage	23.1%	April 2022	Annual
Number of people paid less than the Real Living Wage	40,000	April 2022	Annual

Out of work claimants as a proportion of 16 – 64 year old population (DWP/NOMIS)	5.8%	November 2022	Monthly
Number of universal credit out of work claimants (DWP/NOMIS)	48,043	November 2022	Monthly
Number of people receiving council tax support (MCC)	48,573	October 2022	Monthly
Number of people claiming Housing Benefits (DWP)	31,821	November 2022	Quarterly
Housing element of Universal Credit claimants (DWP)	41,341	November 2022	Quarterly
Residents claiming health-related unemployment benefits (DWP)	19,553	November 2022	Quarterly
Ratio of house price to earnings (ONS)	7.6	April 2022	Annual
Proportion of employed in non-permanent employment (NOMIS)	5.5%	November 2022	Annual

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- Family Poverty Core Group
- GM Poverty Action
- Manchester Poverty Truth Commission
- Public Health & Making Manchester Team
- The University of Manchester
- Trussell Trust