



Greater
Manchester

**poverty
commission**

“You can’t think about the future. You think about survival from week to week.” Rochdale resident

Recommendations Report
January, 2013

Foreword

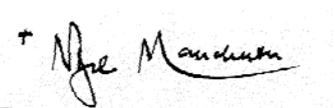
I have always believed that society has a responsibility to help people out of poverty and I have publicly called for the most vulnerable to be protected from the worst effects of the hard economic times we live in. I was, therefore, very pleased when some local Members of Parliament told me of their plans for a Commission to look at poverty within Greater Manchester. And it was a privilege when they asked if I would be the independent chair of that Commission.

It has though been an even greater privilege to listen, along with my fellow Commissioners, to people from every part of Greater Manchester who came to tell us their stories. With courage and honesty, they have told us about the human truth that lies behind the statistics. We have been deeply moved by what we heard. I speak for the whole Commission when I offer my heartfelt thanks to those who spoke to us.

This is the Recommendations Report which draws out the key recommendations we consider necessary based on the evidence presented to us. A comprehensive analysis of that evidence, prepared by our research partners at the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, is presented in a separate report.

We have called for action not just by politicians but by every sector: public, private and voluntary and community. We have challenged ourselves to play our part. Working together, we can reduce levels of poverty in Greater Manchester; we can give people better quality of life and greater opportunities; we can help people to rediscover their self esteem and to aspire to a better future.

Let's do it.



Rt. Revd Nigel McCulloch, Bishop of Manchester
Chair of the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission

“Poverty is about boredom. It is groundhog day of poverty, the monotony of routine without variety of options”

Extract from testimony given to the Commission



Contents

- 2 Foreword
- 4 About the Commission
- 5 What is poverty ? The Greater Manchester context
- 6 Case studies

Recommendations

- 8 Fuel, finance and food
- 10 Access to services
- 12 Jobs and growth
- 14 Maintaining momentum for action on poverty

- 16 Greater Manchester key facts & figures
- 18 The Commissioners
- 20 Credits and further details



Full report availability

The full detailed Research Report and this shorter version are available to download from:
www.povertymanchester.org or www.manchester.anglican.org/church-society

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About the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission

The Greater Manchester Poverty Commission was established by a number of Greater Manchester's MPs to identify the key components of poverty within the sub-region and identify practical solutions that can improve the lives of those residents that live in poverty.

Chaired by the Bishop of Manchester, the Commission included representation from the public, private and voluntary sectors, with expertise in areas including: advice and welfare; housing; business; and the media. Details of the Commissioners can be found on page 18 of this report.

The Commission has undertaken an ambitious programme of evidence gathering to fully understand the extent of poverty and the experiences of residents that suffer from its effects.

Gaining evidence from residents, organisations and groups across the sub-region, and the collation of statistical data, the Poverty Commission has sought to gain evidence to answer the following questions:

- What does poverty mean to you?
- What, if anything, has changed for you to be in your current situation?
- What is it like to be in poverty?
- What are the barriers and obstacles that keep individuals in poverty?
- What would need to change to alleviate poverty?



What is poverty?

Poverty is complex and difficult to define as it affects people's lives in a wide variety of ways. Living standards and income levels typically increase over time; however this does not mean poverty no longer exists in society today. Given the fluid nature of poverty, the most commonly used definitions, to define and measure poverty, are relative in nature.

The importance of the relative nature of poverty is reflected by accepted measures of poverty in the UK which use a relative income measure; this measure uses each household's income, adjusted for family size, compared to the median (middle) income.

Households are defined as being in poverty if they have less than 60% of the median income; this approach is the agreed international measure used throughout the European Union. The poverty line therefore varies between countries to reflect the differing costs and expectations within each country.

The extent and geographical nature of poverty within Greater Manchester are explored within this report and are clearly important factors in understanding poverty and in seeking to tackle it.

Testimonies provided to the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission show that, despite an internationally accepted statistical definition of poverty being in place, the understanding of people experiencing poverty is wide ranging and often too personal to capture in one statement. The testimonies provided by residents were very specific to their personal situation, but there are several recurring themes which emerge. These are presented below.

Poverty is having a lack of choice

Not being able to choose what you eat, where you live, what you buy, or where you go. A lack of options leads to frustration or boredom.

Poverty is all encompassing

Poverty is evidently more than the suffering caused through the lack of basic requirements, such as food, clothing and housing; it is also the social isolation and feelings of shame which come as a result. Boredom, misery, fear, lack of choice, insecurity, lack of control, and lack of dignity can culminate in a downward spiral which is difficult to reverse.

Poverty is characterised by insecurity and a lack of control

People living in poverty do not have the resources to cope with an unexpected event (e.g. meeting the demands of a bill or unexpected expense, a change in benefits or ill health). People talked of their vulnerability. Many on benefits are fearful that these will change; this is particularly prevalent at the moment due to the changes to the welfare reform agenda and their potential impacts upon the lives of residents.

Poverty is characterised by fear, anxiety and uncertainty

Feelings of fear and uncertainty can lead to depression and mental ill health, factors that were frequently mentioned by those living in poverty. Poor mental health or low self-esteem can aggravate poverty as people lose their social networks and the ability to seek help, find work or have an active lifestyle. A lack of dignity, self-worth and feeling stigmatised were common to all the testimonies given by people living in poverty.

The Greater Manchester context

Greater Manchester is home to 2.7 million residents and 1.2 million jobs; it is therefore one of the key economic centres in the North of England. The City of Manchester is the main economic centre of the sub-region and is considered to be an economic success story.

Despite the economic success of the sub-region, levels of poverty and disadvantage remain a key challenge as economic growth has not benefited those areas and residents that need it the most. This is borne out in a wide range of social and economic indicators.

Three of the ten local authority districts in Greater Manchester (Manchester, Salford and Rochdale) are ranked within the top 10% most deprived nationally, meaning 23% of the sub-regional population live in the 10% most deprived areas.

Levels of unemployment and economic inactivity are amongst the highest nationally, with over 15% of working age residents claiming an out of work benefit. High levels of deprivation and worklessness mean future generations of Greater Manchester residents are more likely to experience poor health, education and employment outcomes, creating a cycle of deprivation and poverty within the sub-region.

It is this disconnect between economic growth and progress on social issues that provides the context for the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission's work. The economic recession has added to the scale of the challenge and makes the Poverty Commission's findings even more timely.

Case studies

Case study – Sarah

Sarah moved to Oldham as a child in the 1960s where she lived with her family on the Shaw Road Estate, which was seen as a good place to live. She was an only child and her parents sent her to ballet school; she was educated at a convent and then at Loreto College. Her family were poor and she had a limited diet of omelette and chips. They did not have a car and walked everywhere, usually in the rain.

When her father was in his 40s he developed dementia and became violent. Sarah's home life became unbearable and she felt the NHS failed to help her family because they were poor. They were locked in and their neighbours would not help them.

Other children would throw stones at her because she wore a different school uniform. Unemployment hit the estate and people's hearts hardened; the sense of community solidarity fell apart. There were no more children's parties because there was nothing to share; people lost their dignity.

Sarah went on to do A Levels at Oldham College. Although many students from the Shaw Road Estate had aspirations for their futures and took A levels, most did not achieve the standard required to get a university place or leave Oldham for better opportunities. But with her Loreto background, the encouragement of her mother and the support of Oldham Council, Sarah achieved a place to study dance at the Rambert Academy in London.

She had elocution lessons to help her fit in but never felt the same as the other students because she hadn't read 'their' books and didn't understand 'their rules'. She rented a room with a wealthy family but she always felt different to them. She rarely returned to Oldham during this time.

Sarah's father was taken into care and then her mother became ill too. She was misdiagnosed and died but Sarah, who was at university at the time, didn't find out until she called her mother to see how she was. Sarah returned to sort out her parents' house; it was winter and the pipes had burst, her father was ill in hospital and she only had one friend from university who she could turn to for help.

After her mother's death, Sarah suffered temporary sight loss that led to an MS scare. She has also suffered from depression and had counselling but her mental health is better now.

She recognises that her education in London was important in teaching her about the arts and broadening her horizon, and she wants her own children to have the same. She only recently realised that she is no longer poor but stills feels the stigma of poverty. Despite her success, she feels like a fake and a fraud, and that her opinions don't matter as much as other people's.

She says she feels as though she 'stinks of poverty'.

Former Oldham resident



Case studies

Case study – Paul

Paul used to be a truck driver, travelling all over Europe, but he now suffers from various illnesses which mean he can't walk more than thirty yards. He receives Disability Living Allowance and has a car, without which he would be housebound.

Paul currently lives in a two bedroom property; his children sometimes stay with him and help him around the house and with his personal needs. He is devastated, that due to the imminent Housing Reform Act, he will have to move to a one bedroom property and there will no longer be space for his children to stay over.

Paul says he feels very vulnerable and frightened which makes his illnesses worse. He says 'I don't feel like a person anymore'. It is very unlikely that there will be a one bedroom property available in the same area so Paul will have to move away from his community.

He is very concerned that the housing benefit reform is destroying communities and will cause individuals to become isolated and lose their self-worth. Paul is terrified of being evicted and feels that people like him are 'such easy targets'.

Paul is currently part of a community association which has recently won a bid to take over and run the local community centre. He thinks running events for themselves will increase people's self-esteem.

He talks about how neighbours help and support each other, and that the community centre builds relationships and increases self-worth. However, the housing reform means that Paul will most probably have to leave the area and will no longer be able to run the community centre.

Bolton resident



Fuel, finance and food

Recommendations 2.1



“ I nearly froze to death last winter. My house was that cold I literally had icicles on the thingy. I begged the gas board to come and put some electric on, this was at Christmas, and they wouldn't.”

Extract from testimony given to the Commission

1. Promote initiatives designed to reduce energy bills across Greater Manchester

A range of initiatives are available across the sub-region to reduce energy bills that should either be further promoted or expanded. These include:

- promotion of existing energy initiatives such as free insulation available via energy providers; the Oldham Energy Co-operative and warm home discounts;
- Greater Manchester local authorities and Housing Associations should also assess the feasibility of becoming an affordable energy provider.

2. Increase access to affordable finance and financial support services to improve financial literacy

Debt is both a cause and a consequence of poverty. Levels of personal debt are high and short term high interest lending routes are increasingly used to cover general living costs. As a result, there is a need to provide integrated financial support and planning. It is therefore recommended that:

- further promotion and expansion of Credit Unions and resources such as ‘jam jar’ accounts should take place. This could include promotion of Credit Unions in community centres and workplaces;
- housing associations and local authorities in Greater Manchester should assess the viability of developing their own doorstep lending scheme, such as ‘My Home Finance’ – a national model that City West Housing is currently considering;
- Greater Manchester, together with the Liverpool, York and Newcastle Fairness Commissions should lobby for legislation that restricts the operations of high interest loan providers on the high street and online and for more affordable credit to be released by banks.

“The easy option is junk food, you know microwaveable meals, they are cheap and convenient. If you don’t have the money the only thing you have got is the cheaper option.”

Extract from testimony given to the Commission

3. Create a coordinated and sustainable approach to tackling food poverty

Evidence submitted to the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission suggests food poverty is increasing, leading to a rise in the number of food banks and demand for their services. The need for food banks is unacceptable, although the work they do is welcome and clearly much needed; therefore a more sustainable approach to tackling food poverty is required. It is recommended that:

- social enterprise models that divert food waste and bulk buy food should be expanded and coordinated in an effort to reduce the need for food banks. Such models should also provide training opportunities and educational sessions regarding utilising food, sustainability and eating on a budget;
- the growing number of food banks in Greater Manchester should be coordinated to ensure they are meeting need as effectively as possible. Therefore a network of Greater Manchester food banks should be developed to identify priority areas and people in need within the sub-region.

4. Increase access to affordable fresh fruit and vegetables

A common response to living in poverty is to reduce spending on fresh and healthy food. At the same time, past research in Greater Manchester has highlighted concerns regarding ‘fresh food deserts’. It is recommended that :

- the viability of expanding the delivery of fresh fruit and vegetables to food deserts is tested, using a social enterprise model such as Herbie (<http://www.merci.org.uk/herbie>).



Access to services

Recommendations 2.2



“A friend had a stroke and had to pay his own costs to get to Bolton Hospital. People cannot afford to get to their appointments in Manchester or Bolton.”

Extract from testimony given to the Commission

5. Explore ways of providing free public transport for residents in poverty

Evidence submitted to the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission highlighted how the cost of public transport is prohibitive, and restricts access to public services, supermarkets and employment for individuals that lack personal transport. The effects of being unable to access public transport are wide ranging, resulting in families being unable to access appointments with public agencies, shops selling affordable fresh fruit and vegetables, and employment and training opportunities.

National proposals are emerging to provide unemployed residents with free transport. The Greater Manchester Poverty Commission welcomes this move but feels further action is needed locally. As a result, the feasibility of offering a free public transport pass in Greater Manchester for residents living in poverty should be assessed as a way of increasing access to services. The eligibility criteria for such a benefit could be the receipt of any means tested benefit and young people undertaking apprenticeships.

6. Reduce digital exclusion by providing subsidised broadband and increasing the provision of free ICT literacy training

Digital exclusion is both a cause and a consequence of poverty and is increasingly important as public service providers shift their services online while facilities such as libraries, which offer public access to the internet, are closing. A lack of web access creates barriers to information, advice, and the most affordable energy tariffs, therefore playing a role in fuel poverty. The predominantly online approach to managing future benefit payments via Universal Credit will only increase the importance of reducing digital exclusion. Therefore:

- local authorities and housing associations in Greater Manchester should seek to provide subsidised broadband in homes and increase the provision of free ICT training to ensure residents have the skills to access the internet;
- social enterprise activity within Greater Manchester that recycles and repairs IT equipment should be supported, coordinated and expanded to provide low cost IT equipment to communities and residents;
- authorities should ensure public access to IT equipment and the internet is sustained where facilities such as libraries are closed. This could include relocating these facilities to the reception areas of other public buildings.

7. Review the supply and demand of free legal advice services in Greater Manchester

Evidence provided to the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission points towards a dramatic rise in demand for free legal advice services, resulting from the changes to the welfare reform agenda and the difficult economic climate. Legal Aid is being withdrawn from many areas of advice meaning demand is increasing while supply of advice services is reducing. It is therefore recommended that:

- a review of community legal advice is undertaken to optimise free legal advice, assessing whether the scale, geography and form of provision is sufficient to meet future levels of demand;
- the sub-region's higher education providers are approached to provide pro-bono advice to help address the shortfall in free legal advice.



8. Improve the availability of quality childcare provision across the sub-region

The availability of quality and affordable childcare is a key barrier to work nationally. The sub-region is reported to have an undersupply of good quality nursery provision that is both affordable and flexible enough to match working patterns. Greater Manchester should therefore explore the viability of increasing the availability of affordable and quality childcare across the sub-region, potentially using the Greater Manchester City Deal as a mechanism for doing this.



9. All public services in Greater Manchester should be 'poverty proofed'

Both the personal testimonies and evidence submitted to the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission suggest that living in poverty is often a fluid and fast moving experience. Residents expressed frustrations with having to deal with multiple public service providers concurrently, meaning they cannot react as fast as an individual's circumstances change. Services were also felt to be un-coordinated or acting in a way that compounds experiences of poverty. It is therefore recommended that:

- all public services and strategies should be 'poverty proofed' and work towards a 'no wrong door' approach to public services. This includes assessing services in terms of how they support and target those most in need, and whether the views of families have been considered within service design.



10. Improve the planning and coordination of voluntary sector services to tackle poverty

Third sector (voluntary, community and faith groups) delivery at a community level, and the presence of effective local relationships (social capital), were reported to help alleviate the effects of poverty and disadvantage for residents in Greater Manchester. There is therefore a need to build voluntary and community sector capacity to strategically address poverty and ensure that, wherever possible, social capital is developed at a community level.

Recommendations 2.3

11. Develop a Greater Manchester Living Wage campaign

Employment has traditionally been seen as the best route out of poverty and a way of tackling social inequality; however there is now increasing recognition that entering employment does not always alleviate poverty, but results in a shift from out of work to in work poverty.

The scale of in work poverty is highlighted by figures from the Department for Work and Pensions, which show that nationally 61% of children experiencing poverty live in households where at least one adult is working. Estimates in Greater Manchester suggest that almost 140,000 residents in employment (12%) earn an hourly rate of less than the Living Wage. The vast majority of these residents work in part time employment. It is therefore recommended that:

- a Greater Manchester Living Wage* campaign is implemented to promote the adoption of a Living Wage of £7.45 per hour. This should be encouraged throughout the public sector, taking into account the current economic conditions and building on the practices already developed by organisations such as Oldham Council and Manchester City Council.
- The Living Wage should also be promoted within the private sector whilst recognising the prevailing economic conditions and the potential challenges this causes for SMEs. The Greater Manchester Living Wage campaign should seek to ensure the minimum wage is enforced in cases where the Living Wage is felt to be unaffordable to an employer.

*The Living Wage

The Living Wage is a national campaign, promoted by the Living Wage Foundation, which sets an annual Living Wage rate for London and the rest of the UK. In 2012, these rates stand at £8.55 and £7.45 respectively.

“Two of the boys work. They struggle; they have kids of their own. They work all the hours God sends just to try to keep their heads above water. They barely survive.”

Extract from testimony given to the Commission



12. Build upon and maximise the Greater Manchester City Deal to increase the benefits disadvantaged communities experience from economic growth

City Deals have recently been announced for England's Core Cities and urban areas with the potential for growth, offering greater powers and flexibility to drive local economic growth. City Deals take a top down approach to economic development and thus have little focus upon social issues and alleviating poverty. It is therefore recommended that:

- agencies within Greater Manchester ensure the benefits of the City Deal are felt within the sub-region's deprived communities and by those residents living in poverty;
- going further, the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) should approach central government to develop a Social City Deal, providing the sub-region with the flexibility to take greater control of the welfare agenda and apprenticeships locally. This would mean locally developed solutions that highlight the spatial nature of poverty could be created to tackle worklessness and developing new models to invest in affordable and flexible childcare. Such an approach would build upon the importance of early year's provision as acknowledged in the Greater Manchester Strategy.

13. Ensure all strategies within the sub-region designed to promote growth also have realistic plans for addressing poverty

As stated above, the Greater Manchester economy is considered to be an economic success story due to the growth in investment and jobs experienced since the mid 1990s. However, as the evidence in the research strand suggests, long term and deep rooted poverty blights the sub-region due to a disconnect existing between economic growth and the alleviation of poverty. It is therefore recommended that:

- all strategies for growth and economic development within the sub-region are designed to ensure future levels of growth provide benefits for all sections of the Greater Manchester population.



"I could no longer earn enough to keep the house going. I never turned down work but I could not make enough. We ended up skint and in the poverty trap. There was no way out."

Extract from testimony given to the Commission

Maintaining momentum for action on poverty

Recommendations 2.4



14. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority should take forward the work of the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission by establishing a Poverty Action Group

The establishment of a Poverty Action Group should seek to further develop the momentum established by the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission.

A dynamic group of driven leaders is required to take the recommendations forward, one that can convene an active network of cross sector representatives that can combine and join up responses across service providers to target and pilot action at the areas most in need.

The Group's responsibilities could include: sharing good practice related to tackling poverty; promoting a Greater Manchester Living Wage; ensuring public services and their strategies are poverty proofed; taking a lead on developing a Greater Manchester Poverty Index; and ensuring issues related to poverty are embedded within new health structures within the sub-region.

In addition, it is recommended that the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission continues to meet on a six monthly basis to review and challenge the progress made against these actions.



15. Develop a neighbourhood level Greater Manchester Poverty Index

The research strand of the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission has pulled together a significant amount of data related to wide ranging themes. This process has identified a lack of data related to issues such as fuel poverty and transport accessibility for small geographical areas. The evidence base is also reliant upon national datasets, such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation, that are increasingly out of date. A Greater Manchester Poverty Index should seek to draw together data at a neighbourhood level from service providers to develop an up-to-date and detailed profile of poverty and deprivation across the sub-region for use in service planning.

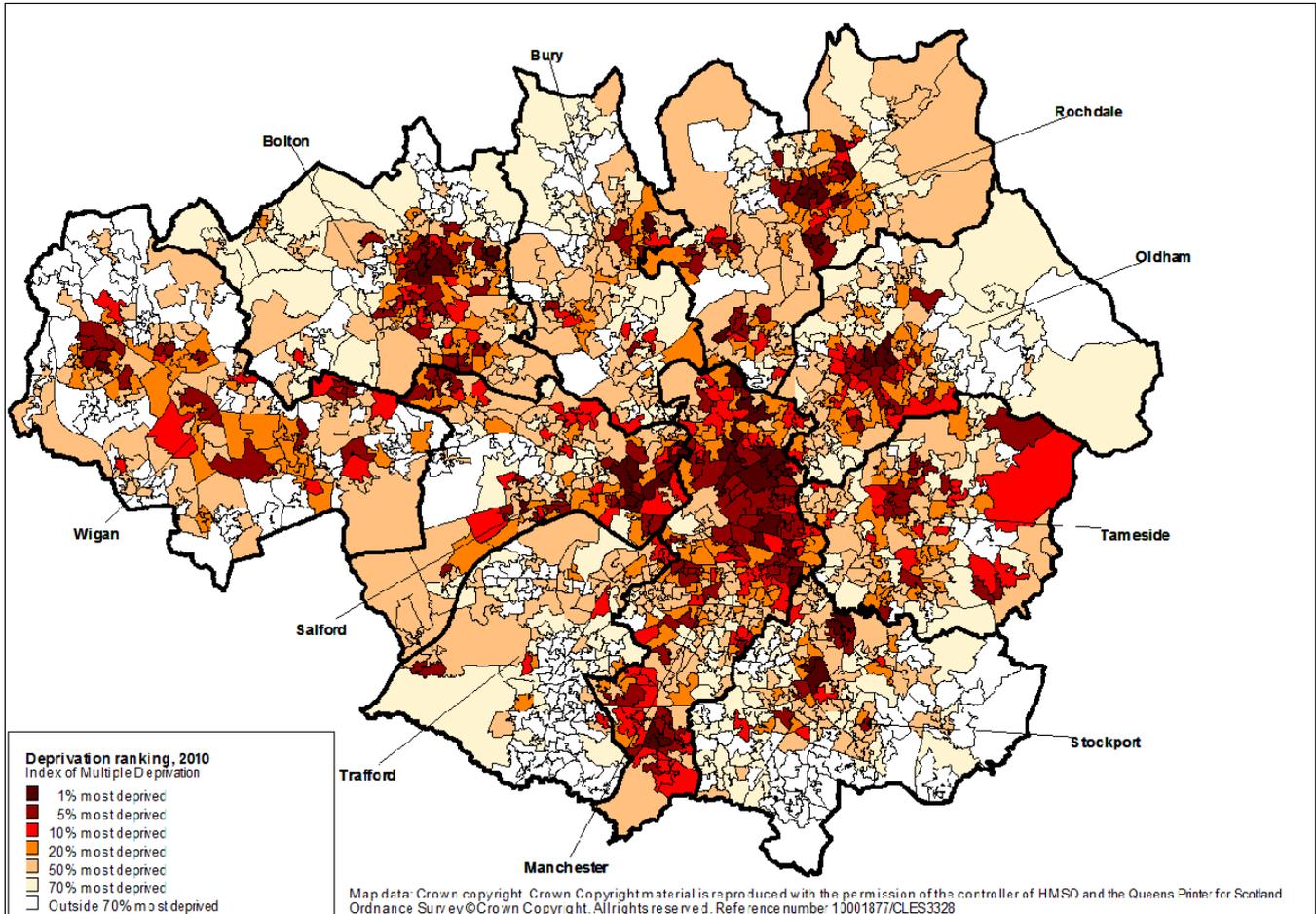
16. Join forces with the Fairness Commissions in Liverpool, York, Newcastle and London to campaign and lobby on common issues

The Poverty Action Group should seek to develop joint campaigning and lobbying of the government on key poverty issues which can only be addressed through primary legislation. Joining forces with Fairness Commissions in Liverpool, York and Newcastle could focus upon promoting the case to national government for greater control of welfare budgets within the North of England. Other issues that provide the opportunity for joint lobbying are the abolition of zero hour employment contracts, or legislation to restrict the operations of high interest loan providers on the high streets and online.



Greater Manchester key facts & figures*

The geography of deprivation in Greater Manchester



Over one in five residents live in the 10% most deprived areas nationally.

Almost 270,000 residents are workless with incomes dependent on state benefits.

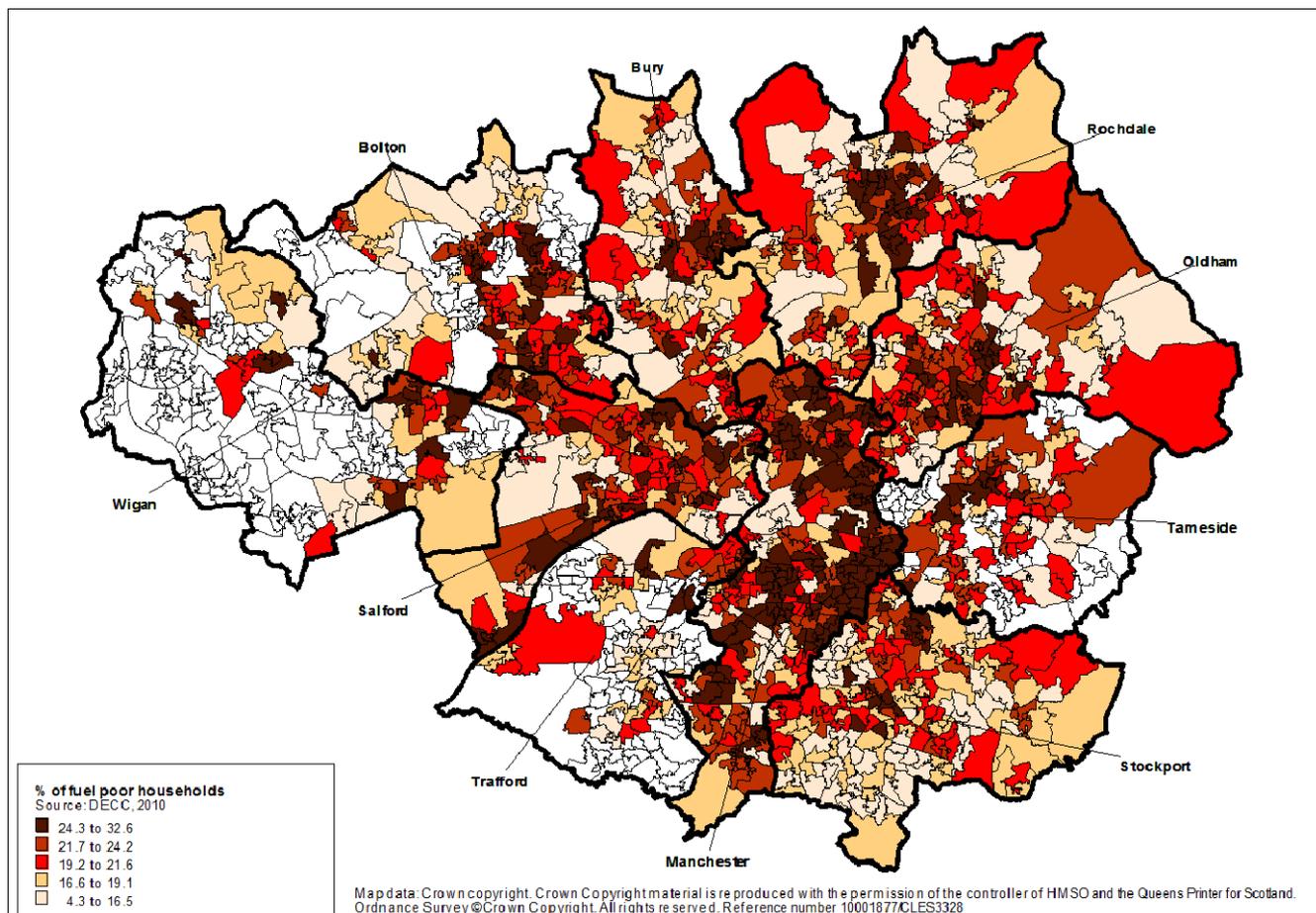
An estimated 137,000 residents are in work but earn less than a Living Wage.

Scale of worklessness across Greater Manchester

	Number of people	%
Bolton	26,880	15.9
Bury	15,790	13.4
Manchester	62,160	17.2
Oldham	23,190	16.8
Rochdale	24,320	18.5
Salford	27,100	17.6
Stockport	20,000	11.1
Tameside	23,070	16.5
Trafford	15,000	10.8
Wigan	30,790	15.5
Greater Manchester	268,310	15.5

*The full detailed Research Report is available to download from: www.povertymanchester.org

The geography of fuel poor households in Greater Manchester



Highest and lowest concentrations of child poverty (all children) in Greater Manchester districts, 2010

It is estimated that 91,000 children live in severe poverty.

20% of households (over 220,100) are considered to be experiencing fuel poverty.

307,500 families are in receipt of tax credits with 502,300 children benefitting from tax credit support.

District	Area	% of all children
Bolton	Farnworth	36.4%
	Bromley Cross	5.3%
Bury	East	29.3%
	Tottington	5.7%
Manchester	Moss Side	54.1%
	Didsbury West	8.8%
Oldham	Coldhurst	47.2%
	Saddleworth South	4.2%
Rochdale	Central Rochdale	41.1%
	Norden	5.0%
Salford	Irwell Riverside	51.3%
	Worsley	2.8%
Stockport	Brinnington & Central	43.3%
	Bramhall South	2.7%
Tameside	St Peter's	34.4%
	Denton West	10.3%
Trafford	Bucklow St Martins	36.9%
	Timperley	2.5%
Wigan	Ince	35.1%
	Winstanley	4.1%

The Commissioners



Alan Manning

North West Regional Secretary of the TUC and is the senior representative of the TUC in the region. He currently represents the TUC on a number of bodies including the Regional Leaders Board and European Programme Bodies in the NW, UK and at European level. He is proud to have been a founder member of the Board of the North West Development Agency. He was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Science by Salford University in 2005 and was made an honorary Master of the Open University in 2008.



Dr Alison Giles

Chief executive of Our Life, working with clients from the NHS, local government and housing sectors to engage and empower communities and individuals to take action on issues to support their wellbeing and health.



Allison Foreman

Project Coordinator for Greater Manchester Pay and Employment Rights Advice Service, an organisation that works to improve the pay and working conditions of low paid workers through the provision of information, legal advice, specialist projects and campaigns.



Rt. Hon Baroness Beverley Hughes

A Labour Life Peer and Shadow Minister for Children and Families. She is also currently Strategic Policy Advisor to the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. From 1997 to 2010 she was MP for Stretford and Urmston and held a number of posts as Minister of State in Government. Her earlier career was as a Senior Lecturer and Head of Department of Social Policy at Manchester University.



Clive Memmott

Chief Executive of Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. He qualified as a lawyer before a successful career in both the private and public sectors. Clive is an Honorary Research Fellow of Lancaster University Management School. Clive is a director of Enworks and a Trustee of the National Football Museum.



Colin Barson

Chief Executive of Voluntary and Community Action Trafford. Colin has a background in academic research and teaching. In 2000 he established a voluntary and community sector infrastructure agency in Trafford. A director of Trafford Law Centre, Colin also sits on a number of community and cross-sector partnership bodies.



Councillor Paul Murphy

Chairman of Greater Manchester Police Authority from June 2007 to 2012. Paul has lived in Moston in north Manchester all his life and has been a local ward Manchester City Councillor for the area for 16 years. He has also been a member of the cabinet of Manchester City Council.



Jon Lord OBE

Chief Executive of Bolton at Home. After initially working as a Funeral Director, Jon started working in housing in 1987. He became a Chief Officer in Bolton Council in 2001. Bolton at Home, a Housing and Regeneration company, delivers services focused on community support, financial inclusion and work/training advice in some of the most deprived wards in the country.



Professor Eileen Fairhurst

Chairman of NHS Greater Manchester and Professor in Public Health at the University of Salford. Eileen has an Honorary D.Sc. from the University of Salford and is a Founder Fellow of the British Society of Gerontology. Currently she is Vice Chair of Partners in Salford, the Local Strategic Partnership. Prior to her current appointment, she chaired Salford Primary Care Trust.



Imam Muhammad Irfan Faizi Chishti MBE

After graduating in law, Irfan embarked on a 7 year path of higher education specialising in theology and language. He trained professionally as a secondary teacher of Religious Education. Imam Irfan is very active in Inter faith work and is currently the Chair of the Multifaith Partnership in Rochdale. He works as a Community Cohesion Advisor in an Oldham school.



Phil Lowthian

District Manager for Greater Manchester Central and Cheshire Jobcentre Plus. A “born and bred” Mancunian, Phil is proud to lead over 1300 staff across a network of 26 Jobcentres. A part-trained accountant and Politics graduate, Phil has over 30 years experience of working in the fields of employment and skills, national and regional policy, and support service roles, but mainly in operational management across the North West. He has a career-long interest in ensuring welfare and work to support people to transform their lives and that of their families.



Melanie Bryan OBE

A multi-award winning social entrepreneur, Melanie has a portfolio of social enterprises. Passionate about making a positive difference, Melanie donates a substantial amount of her personal time to undertake a number of pro-bono roles each of which helps to address a social issue.



Jawahir Mohamed

Jawahir is a community development worker with Greater Manchester Somali Senior Citizens Care. She also chairs the Stay Active Womens' Group and works as a parenting group leader with Family Action.



Paul Horrocks

Paul was the Editor in Chief of the Manchester Evening News for over 12 years and worked in the media for nearly 40 years. A former president of the UK Society of Editors, he now runs his own PR consultancy. He was the chairman of Bury NHS Primary Care Trust for two years and is now a non-executive on the Greater Manchester NHS Primary Care Trust and vice chairman of Bury clinical commissioning group. Paul is a member of the fundraising board for the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, a director of The Tatton Charitable Trust and a patron of Bury Hospice.



Kate Green

MP for Stretford and Urmston. She is currently shadow spokesperson for Equalities. Prior to her election Kate was Chief Executive of the Child Poverty Action Group, and before that Director of the National Council for One Parent Families (now Gingerbread). She is a long standing campaigner against poverty and inequality and chairs the all-party parliamentary group on poverty. Kate was previously Chair of the London Child Poverty Commission, reporting to the Mayor of London and local councillors.



Rt. Revd Nigel McCulloch

Bishop of Manchester. He began his ministry in the 1960s on an overspill estate for ex-Liverpool residents. Prior to coming to Manchester, he was Bishop of Wakefield - where he was involved in supporting mining communities after the pit closures. Bishop Nigel has been a member of the House of Lords since 1997. Currently he chairs the national Council of Christians and Jews. He is deputy Chair of Governors at Bolton University. He chairs the Greater Manchester Faith Community Leaders, and is a member (with Councillor Murphy) of the Manchester Board.



Credits and further details

The Commission would like to thank the following organisations for their support to the work of the Commission:

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Research partner

Centre for Local Economic Strategies

Delivery partners

Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation
Church Action on Poverty
The Diocese of Manchester

Full report availability

The full detailed Research Report and this shorter version are available to download from:
www.povertymanchester.org or www.manchester.anglican.org/church-society

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