

STRATEGY

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Tackling Inequalities in Greater Manchester

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, tackling inequalities was a recognized priority within Greater Manchester. These inequalities that exist between Greater Manchester and the rest of the country, between localities in Greater Manchester, within localities and across specific groups within our population.

The Covid-19 pandemic has served to amplify and exacerbate these inequalities and two recent Greater Manchester reports have sought to quantify the scale of the challenge and propose potential solutions. The reports make for necessarily uncomfortable reading and should serve as a call to action to both those who provide services to the public and to citizens themselves.

The Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission: was established in October 2020 to influence the city-regional recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, providing expert opinion, evidence and guidance as Greater Manchester's economy and society reshapes over the coming months and years. Chaired by Professor Kate Pickett of the University of York, and involving prominent economists, social scientists and community activists, the Commission provided a deep dive, rapid research into the structural inequalities which exist in Greater Manchester, engaging across communities, public and business stakeholders, carrying out research, and gathering ideas, on inequalities associated with health, education, employment, and skills; structural racism; future economic strategy, and the powers that Greater Manchester has to tackle these issues.

The Inequalities Commission looked at the causes of intersecting and interacting inequalities, not simply through the lens of individual communities of identity or issues in isolation but seeking to understand the common drivers of **all** these inequalities. Their report, published in March 2021, describes the concept of proportionate universalism; how Greater Manchester must ensure that everyone has access to the basics for a good life – no matter who they are or where they live – and target resources at the people and places within Greater Manchester who face the greatest barriers to living good lives knowing that when inequalities are reduced, everyone will benefit.

The recommendations in the Inequalities Commission's report cover five areas:

- i. *The Essential Pivot* – putting wellbeing and equality at the heart of our strategies and actions
- ii. *People Power* – putting more power in the hands of the people of Greater Manchester
- iii. *Good jobs, decent pay* – providing good employment, paying the Real Living Wage, and creating skills opportunities

- iv. *Building wealth* – spreading wealth, asset holding and the benefits from these within and between communities
- v. *Services for a good life* – facilitating a move towards universal basic services

The Greater Manchester Build Back Fairer: review was completed and published in July 2021 as a partnership between Greater Manchester, the Institute of Health Equity and Professor Sir Michael Marmot and to signify the establishment of Greater Manchester as a Marmot City Region. The report found that prior to the coronavirus pandemic health inequalities in Greater Manchester were already widening, health improvement was stagnating, and that this was amplified and accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 mortality rates are 25% higher in Greater Manchester than in England as a whole; Covid-19 mortality rates are highly unequal within the city region – 2.3 times higher in the most deprived decile than the least, a gap than is wider than in the rest of England.

The report described how a focus on the social determinants of health (those factors outside health care that affect health) is fundamental to Covid-19 recovery and achieving a permanent reduction in health inequalities. It provides a proposed Build Back Fairer Framework to underpin the approach to post Covid-19 recovery which is built around 6 key themes:

- i. *Communities and Places* – including by redistributing existing resources / assets and seeking greater investment from business and central government.
- ii. *Housing, Transport, and the Environment* – including by developing ‘healthy living’ standards for housing, environment, and employment.
- iii. *Early years, Children and Young People* – including by prioritising future generations
- iv. *Income, Poverty and Debt* – including by developing a minimum income level for healthy living, specific to the cost of living healthily in Greater Manchester.
- v. *Work and Unemployment* – including by seeing a stronger role for business in achieving social goals, including reducing health and social inequalities
- vi. *Public Health* – including by providing a guaranteed offer of universal access to public health / wider public services

In addition, the report makes the case for the GM system to adopt a series of ‘Marmot Beacon Indicators’ as measures of the extent to which the system is addressing the factors which impact upon levels of inequality and to identify areas where additional focus is required.

Download the Reports:

Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission – [Independent Inequalities Commission - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/independent-inequalities-commission)

Build Back Fairer - [Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester: Health Equity and Dignified Lives - IHE \(instituteoftheequity.org\)](https://www.instituteoftheequity.org/build-back-fairer)

For further information contact:

Anne Lythgoe

Principal, VCSE Accord Implementation - GMCA

Anne.Lythgoe@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk | www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

David Boulger

Head of Population Health Transformation - Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership

david.boulger@nhs.net | www.gmhsc.org.uk