

Review of the 2019-2022 Greater Manchester Children and Young People's Plan

**GREATER
MANCHESTER**
DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY FOR OUR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



Introduction

The development of the Greater Manchester Children & Young People's Plan (2019 – 2022) (GM CYP plan) represented an important milestone in Greater Manchester's approach to supporting children and young people in the region.

Whilst there were examples of collaboration between Greater Manchester organisations on children and young people issues prior to its development, and a health-focused Greater Manchester-level children and young people's framework already in existence, the GM CYP plan represented the first truly cross-organisation document setting out shared ambitions to improve the lives of children and young people at a city-region level. The plan's overall purpose was framed as follows:

'Our vision is to make Greater Manchester one of the best places in the world to grow up, get on and grow old. This means a place where all children have the best start in life and young people grow up inspired to exceed expectations. Our ambition is that every child in Greater Manchester has the skills, opportunities and aspirations necessary to negotiate early childhood, primary and secondary school, and education and employment.'

This report provides an overview of the significant progress that has been made over the course of the three-year Plan, through reference to key activities in respect of six of the plan's main theme priority areas: school readiness; children in care; care leavers; mental health of children and young people; complex safeguarding; and finally our children's social care innovation programme.

Background

The development of the plan came at an important time for Greater Manchester's work with children and young people. In 2018, central government made an investment of £7.43m in a Greater Manchester-level transformation programme focused on the spread and scale of innovative practice models across the city-region, children in care sufficiency, and strengthening the support available for care-experienced young people in the city-region.

With increasing recognition nationally and locally of the value to be gained from taking a city-regional approach to areas of work focused on children and young people, a Greater Manchester Children's Board was established.

The Board - made up of lead elected members with responsibility for children and young people in their districts, Directors of Children's Services and representatives from strategic partners including Greater Manchester Police, health and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) - was given the responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the plan and the resources allocated to support the work. The make-up of the Greater Manchester Children's Board sought to mirror the approach to delivering the plan, with a focus on people and place as opposed to organisations or functions, and particular emphasis on shared accountability, leadership and collaboration.



Approach

The GM CYP plan was organised around seven priority areas that broadly recognised a life-course approach, in line with the Greater Manchester Strategy of the time. It captured a mix of work already underway and planned activity, with programme management and research resources organised around these priorities, and leadership for individual priorities provided by Directors of Children's Services.

To provide consistency across the document, for each priority the plan described the current state, the changes we planned to make, how we would deliver the changes (delivery strategy), the future intended state and the key measures of success. This approach has enabled Greater Manchester to track progress across the various priorities and determine the extent to which our aims have been achieved.

The plan was produced shortly after the publication of the Greater Manchester Public Service Model white paper, which set out a shared vision and operating model for public service delivery.

Whilst this model continues to evolve, the principles and features described in the model - including a focus on early intervention and prevention, delivery at a neighbourhood level and the adoption of strength and asset-based approaches across the workforce - continue to provide an important foundation for Greater Manchester's work with children, young people and families in the city-region.

Context

Of course, the national and local context has changed significantly since the GM CYP plan was drafted 2019. Within less than 12 months of the plan's publication, the Covid-19 pandemic began, which has had a significant impact on our children and young people, particularly in relation to their attendance at school and their mental health, physical health and wellbeing. Not only has this affected the lives of children, young people and families, but it also saw public services shift many of their resources to respond to the crisis, including those supporting the Greater Manchester children's priorities.

For example, with particular respect to the physical health priorities led by the GM Health & Social Care partnership (focused on preventing conditions such as obesity and reducing avoidable admissions for CYP with conditions such as asthma) many resources were directed to respond to Covid-19. Despite these challenges the programme has

successfully established a Complications due to Excess Weight (CEW) clinic for GM children; successfully applied to NHSE to pilot an integrated approach to healthy weight; spread and adopted a "digibete" app to support diabetes management in children; established a children and young peoples' ambulance transfer service; and standardised clinical pathways in children's community nursing teams to support care in the community.

It is therefore testament to the hard work of both the professionals across the city-region and the resilience of our children and young people that Greater Manchester has seen excellent progress across many of the priorities in the plan.

This does not ignore that fact that there are areas where, like other parts of the country, Covid-19 has taken us a step back in relation to what we think is important, most notably (for example) around levels of school readiness and waiting times and demand for health services. In many ways the value of producing this report is that it gives pause for reflection on the impact of our work in improving the lives of children and young people and the added value of taking a Greater Manchester approach whilst still acknowledging the statutory responsibilities of individual organisations. This is particularly important as Greater Manchester considers where we need to focus our efforts over the next few years.

School Readiness and Early Years

Developing a Greater Manchester Early Years Workforce Competency Framework

As part of the wider Greater Manchester School Readiness programme, significant work has been undertaken to invest in our early years workforce to ensure they have the right skills and competencies to help children achieve their potential.

The programme is delivering on the collective vision to create a multi-agency workforce competency framework for all those working and volunteering across health, local government, the VCSE sector and early years settings in Greater Manchester. The framework identifies a set of core skills, knowledge, abilities and characteristics to enable successful working across a place-based system and support children to thrive.

The early years workforce is varied and comprises a diverse range of professionals who are critical to the delivery of the Greater Manchester Early Years Delivery Model.

The ability to work in a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary context is a crucial skill to ensure effective working with wider services that support children, their parents and the wider family. This may include early help, housing, mental health and adult social services.

However, pre-existing workforce challenges across the early years workforce have been intensified by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on recruitment, retention, staff wellbeing and morale, workloads and the support needs of children and families. The Greater Manchester Early Years Workforce Competency Framework is a key enabler to deliver the ambition of a strong, resilient workforce, grounded in relation practice and confident in their knowledge of early years child development and the impact of the pandemic on children and families.

The framework enables practitioners to undertake a self-assessment of their competencies against a number of thematic components; it is completed digitally, and a summary report is generated to help with identifying areas for development.

The framework will also support employers and policy makers by providing high quality insights into workforce skills gaps which will enable more effective commissioning and use of resources to support workforce development. It also provides a clear set of standards to support the curriculum design of pre and post qualifying training programmes.

The framework has been co-designed through engaging and collaborating with multi-agency partners right from the start. It will be launched from early 2023 but is already beginning to influence key workforce priorities that support Covid recovery and national and local policy initiatives.

“ It’s great that the development of the competency framework has included VCSE input. VCSE staff and volunteers are a vital part of the workforce across Greater Manchester and have a great deal to offer to support children and families in the early years.

Homestart CEO

MMU Short Course Pilot

As one of only a handful of institutions working with the government, Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) is trailblazing a new way of accessing university study. The Lifelong Loan Entitlement allows students to divide degree level study into manageable 12-week short courses. GMCA has worked with MMU to design a certified pathway in early years practice, which supports early years practitioners with developing skills aligned to the competency framework, achieving a qualification equivalent to the first year of an undergraduate degree. It represents a joined-up approach between employers and training providers towards career development and progression.

Skills for Growth programme – Early Education Development Programme

The framework has informed the design of a £1.5m professional development programme, commissioned through the Greater Manchester Skills for Growth programme, aimed at supporting the workforce in childcare and early education settings. The programme's learning outcomes are aligned to key competencies within the framework and seek to improve practitioner understanding of supporting child development and learning from birth to five years, including the importance of high-quality interactions, effective engagement with families and the role of early identification and intervention.

Development of Family Hubs and Start for Life offer

The framework will support the wider children's workforce with transitioning to more integrated multi-agency working to deliver on the Best Start for Life priorities and the development of Family Hubs network.

“ This framework will help to develop mutual respect amongst EY colleagues. There will be less hierarchy and more recognition for one another's roles no matter what you do.

Stockport early years practitioner



Children in Care

GM Children in Care - Commissioning For Sufficiency

The inaugural Greater Manchester Children's Sufficiency Strategy was launched in late 2020 and charted the challenges faced by local authorities across the city-region when trying to find the right placement for a child or young person at the right time.

The strategy was launched in the context of an increasing proportion of children and young people in care being placed in residential and at distance from Greater Manchester. As well as the implications this can have for the experiences and outcomes of children and young people, it was also a source of high cost to the public purse. At June 2020, Greater Manchester's local authorities' collective annual expenditure on independent residential placements was over £80m, which was eight per cent more than at the same time in the previous year.

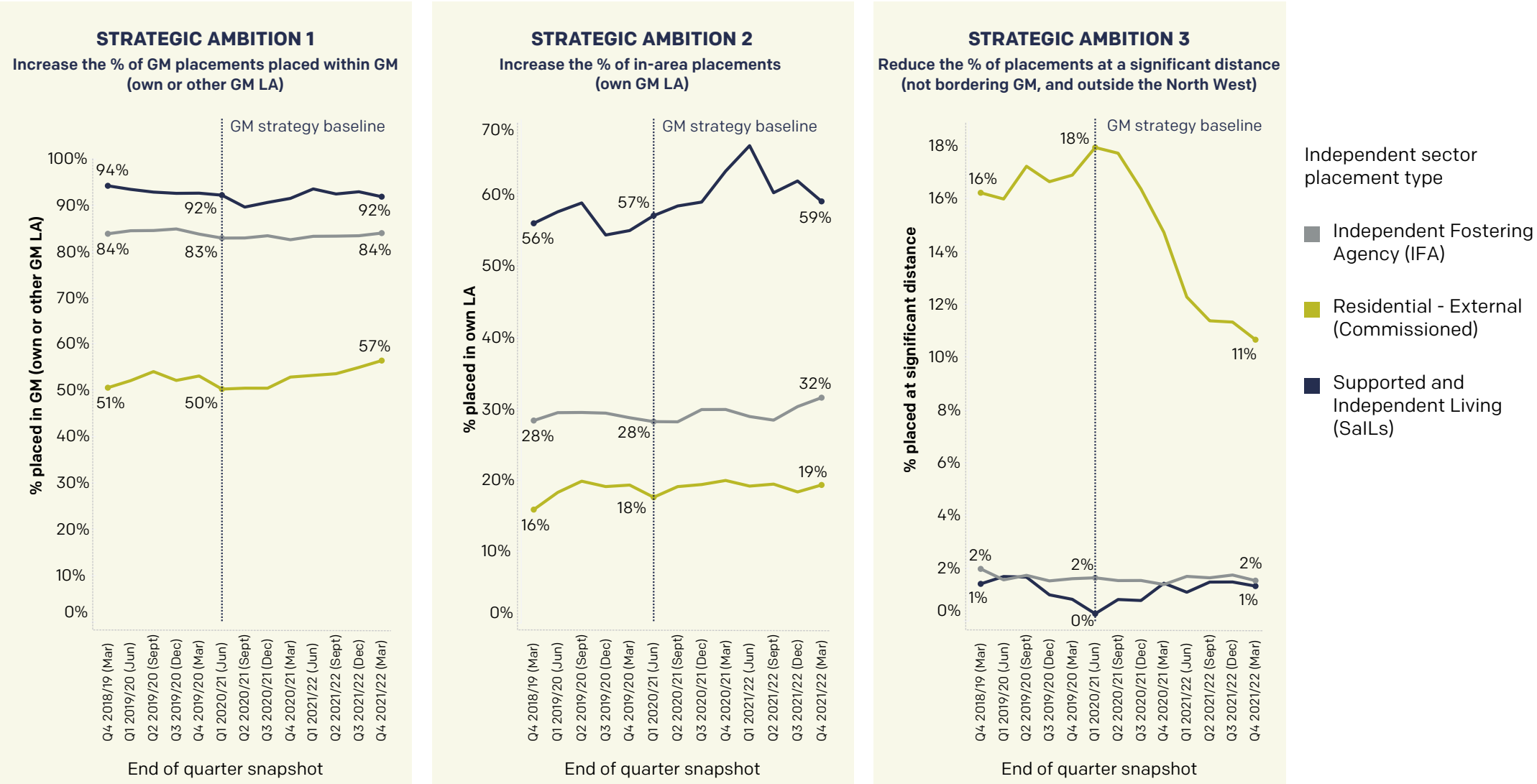
Turning the curve

Whilst there is still a long way to go, the collective efforts across the ten local authorities, supported through GMCA's coordination efforts, have for the first time in several years helped to turn the curve in the right direction.



**We have seen improved
performance in all three of
the place based Sufficiency
Strategic Ambitions.**

Of the four Greater Manchester Sufficiency Strategic Ambitions, we are delighted to report overall improvements in the first three, as evidenced below:



✓ **Six points more** children and young people placed in residential care are now **within Greater Manchester**

✓ **More** children and young people placed in their home local authority area across residential, fostering and Supported Accommodation and Independent Living Services (SAILS) placements

✓ **Seven points fewer** children and young people placed in residential care are now **at a significant distance** from Greater Manchester

Work still to do – foster care

The final Greater Manchester Sufficiency Strategic Ambition, was to increase the number of foster carers in the region and whilst this has not progressed as hoped, there are two major interventions due to be launched in 2023 that should help to remedy this:

1.

A major Greater Manchester-wide foster carer recruitment campaign will launch in the first quarter of 2023, including the creation of a Greater Manchester foster carer recruitment website and back-office Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) system that will revolutionise the customer journey for prospective foster care applicants.
2.

A shared Greater Manchester Foster Carer Enquiry Hub will be launched to synergise with the foster carer recruitment campaign timeline. This will secure best value and highest levels of customer service for local authorities through collaborative endeavours.



Greater Manchester sufficiency programme

The improvement programme was underpinned by four main projects, selected by local authorities to proceed to delivery. Projects two and four are nearing completion, with one and three well underway:

1. Create Supply – Residential Care

Develop, finance and structure major capital projects to rebuild ‘influenceable’ supply, either local authority run or through private partnerships or the creation of third sector subsidiaries.

2. Growth Partnerships

Establish local and regional ways that enable local authorities to better encourage growth of high quality providers in Greater Manchester, including priming the third sector to develop new services in the city-region.

3. Create Supply – Residential Care

The proposal is to explore ways to commission ‘soft block’ purchases between two or more local authorities in order to ring-fence capacity and give local authorities a more strategic contractual partnership.

4. GM First Policy

Create a strategic forum for Greater Manchester-wide sufficiency, consultation and market management with the independent sector..

In addition, the following have also been established to set a secure foundation to help sustain the positive progress made across this programme in the last two years:

GM Children's Sufficiency Observatory

GM Sufficiency Partnership Board

GM Communities of Practice across Commissioning, Foster Care and Placements

Room Makers - Foster Carer Home Renovation Scheme

LA Fostering - Recruitment, Retention and Utilisation Data Dashboard

Children Looked After Sufficiency Planning Tool (CLASP)

All of this work, combined with excellent collaborative efforts from the ten local authorities, has helped drive improvements in sufficiency across Greater Manchester. As we move into developing the new Greater Manchester Sufficiency Strategy, due to launch in January 2023, we intend to consolidate this upwards trend and create even further opportunities for our children and young people. As the programme progresses, the GM Children's Sufficiency [Observatory](#) will be updated with further information.

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Care Leavers

Doing things differently for care leavers in Greater Manchester

The Greater Manchester Care Leaver Guarantee was launched in November 2019 with over 200 care leavers, senior officers, politicians, local business and the community and voluntary sector.

Greater Manchester's guarantee aims to ensure that all our care leavers can:

- 1.** Be better prepared and supported to live independently.
- 2.** Have improved access to education, employment and training.
- 3.** Experience stability in their lives and feel safe and secure.
- 4.** Receive improved access to health support.
- 5.** Achieve financial stability.

A supporting 'common offer' from the 10 local authorities provides a first home grant, exemption from council tax, maintenance allowances and a pledge that no care leaver will be made intentionally homeless. Health commissioners made prescriptions free to care leavers in 2019. A GM Mental Health Steering Group established in early 2022 is now developing proposals to improve the mental health and well-being offer to Care Leavers.



Unique approach across the city-region to subsidise public transport so that our care experienced young people can reach opportunities and stay connected.

The Greater Manchester Care Leaver Guarantee includes a free bus pass for care leavers up to the age of 21 with approximately 600 active passes in March 2022. Branded as "Our Pass", we see this as a continuing vital element of the Greater Manchester response to promote access and reduce social isolation.

"I have requested bus passes for a variety of young people. Some young mothers who use the passes to attend necessary appointments for their babies and young children. An absent father who uses the pass to engage in contact visits for his son and who is going to use it to engage in future employment opportunities." *(Personal Advisor)*

"I have applied for passes for young people who attend university. This has helped them to remain in education. I have a few Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who use the passes to attend necessary appointments to help them gain their remain to leave status and then to look for education and employment opportunities to improve their lives." *(Personal Advisor)*

A major housing provider pledge to increase housing supply and provide practical support to young people transitioning to independent living.

Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP) – a unique partnership of 27 housing organisations who own and manage over 250,000 affordable homes in the area – have signed a pledge that commits each housing provider to offer quality and stable housing to care leavers, in addition to employment and skills opportunities plus peer mentoring. This has increased housing supply and cross border collaboration, whilst also supporting young people gain the skills they need to look after their homes, cook, budget and connect with the community. Ninety per cent of accommodation for Greater Manchester care leavers is judged safe, secure and affordable – continuing a position where Greater Manchester outcomes in this area outperform elsewhere in the country. Further support over the next three years is ensured through the rollout of eight National House Project schemes, which will work with up to 60 young people each year.

Colleges and universities in Greater Manchester leading the way in supporting care leavers into and through higher education.

GM Higher, a network of universities and colleges in the city-region, works collaboratively with the 10 local authorities through the Greater Manchester Care Experienced Education network (CEEN) to support the progression of care leavers into and through higher education. Every local authority in Greater Manchester has signed up to a common aim that at least 10% of their care leavers aged 18-21 in 2024/25 have progressed to higher education (studies beyond A-Level). This builds on strong and improving outcomes in this area already, as reflected in most recent stats which show that seven per cent of Greater Manchester's care leavers progress to higher education (higher than the 5.6% national average).

Eight establishments (four colleges and four universities) were amongst the first in the country to be awarded the National Network for the Education of Care Leaver (NNECL) quality mark – demonstrating their support for the inclusion and success of care-experienced students.

An innovative partnership with Virgin Media O2 to improve digital inclusion for care leavers and development of a Greater Manchester Care Leaver App with digital agency FocusGov.

A digital offer to support care leavers providing digital data, devices and a skills programme has been successfully piloted in Salford and will now be made available across Greater Manchester. The offer will have a holistic support model to incorporate training on digital literacy: digital support to enable technical, social, health and wellbeing, training and life opportunities.

A Greater Manchester Care Leaver App will promote the initiatives and entitlements available - providing access to information and advice, in multiple languages, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The app will include a directory of local services, a feed of regional apprenticeship and wider work opportunities, and promotional material on local events and activities across the city region. Young people and staff from the Local Authority leaving care teams have already been involved in co-producing the app, which launched during National Care Leavers Week in late October 2022.

Mental health of children and young people

Mental Health in Education Programme

We have made excellent progress in mobilising Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) across Greater Manchester. A key strength of our local approach has been a commitment to a “blended” staffing model (NHS/VCSE) that enables a broader therapeutic offer and greater connectivity into community support. Our innovative approach to staffing and recruitment has contributed substantially to Greater Manchester’s success in creating 22 MHSTs to date, overcoming mobilisation obstacles seen in many other areas.

The Greater Manchester blended model of MHSTs has increased the scope of our teams to work into special schools, Pupil Referral Units and colleges, and with more complex children and young people. Salford’s ‘Thrive in Education’ team, for example, has drawn on community partnerships and assets to provide bespoke support for children with high levels of special educational needs transitioning to secondary school; children from the travelling community moving into new areas; and those from the Orthodox Jewish community.

Alongside our schools programme, we have invested significantly in a powerful three-year collaboration with the GM Association of Colleges, with 11 FE institutions now working towards becoming trauma-informed organisations. This will ensure thousands of college staff are trained in trauma-informed practice, and an unprecedented shift in organisational culture, ethos and practice.

Greater Manchester Children and Young People’s Mental Health Transformation Programme

In Greater Manchester we recognise that the children and young people mental health pathway includes a spectrum of services, running from advice and signposting services for those experiencing low wellbeing, through to intensive support for those experiencing severe and enduring clinical illness.

Our transformation programme in Greater Manchester has sought to “build out” broader parts of the children and young people mental health pathway. Our touchstone is the THRIVE framework. This emphasises the value of building on individual and community strengths, and places children, young people and their families as equal partners in the delivery of support, help and care.



The Greater Manchester I-THRIVE Hub

All Greater Manchester localities have engaged in implementing a UK-leading THRIVE Framework for system change. This has included mapping system resources, delivering training, supporting workforce wellbeing, and developing existing and new pathways/ services and systems in line with THRIVE principles.

“ When I first got told about counselling, I thought it'd be a joke but it has been one of the most helpful things in my life.

“ I have more understanding of why I feel how I do and what might have been causing it.

Greater Manchester's commitment to I-THRIVE, now in its fourth year, has enabled cross-sector cultural change and system shift to happen top-to-bottom through individual organisations and across partnerships in a sustainable way: the development of shared values, culture, language and practice standards across health, education, VCSE and local authority systems.

This work is happening at scale, and extending significantly beyond the NHS and those in mental health-focused roles: over 600 professionals from across the Greater Manchester system have been trained through the “THRIVE Academy”, and more than 350 professionals have been involved in innovative community of practice events.

Our I-THRIVE work continues to develop and evolve. As the programme is looking to broaden the mental health offer, there is a commitment to better understand the evidence base around arts-based mental health interventions (or 'creative health') with CAMHS teams and creative providers.

Perinatal and Parent-Infant Mental Health

Work under the GM CYP plan has prioritised a whole-system approach, resulting in a unique model that makes best use of assets in our system and ensures a greater reach to women, infants and families in Greater Manchester than other parts of the country. The model, built at pace (all within the last four years) now comprises: a specialist perinatal community mental health team; parent-infant mental health teams in each locality; prioritised access for new parents across all Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) teams, Home Start third sector offers in all areas; and a Greater Manchester “Dad Matters” offer providing mental health support for partners.

Our model continues to develop and mature, with prioritised investment into the specialist perinatal community teams, and expansion of the psychological offer planned in 22/23. This is being developed in conjunction with Parent-Infant Mental Health services and connected to the Best Start for Life/ Family hub funding opportunities in Greater Manchester. There will also be expansion of our maternal mental health service across Greater Manchester, which works with women who have experienced trauma connected to the perinatal period.

“ We've seen increased engagement in the children's mental health agenda, in a solution-finding way, from a variety of agencies. There has been a decrease in adversarial relationships and a move towards considering true integrated working.

Comment on I-THRIVE from a locality practitioner

Crisis Care Pathway

Our crisis care programme, established in 2019, has been designed with stakeholders from across the system. As well as developing existing services, new services have been co-produced to support assessment and brief intervention in acute and community settings. Home intensive treatment teams have been implemented across two thirds of localities, with the remaining teams going live in 2022/23. Work is ongoing to develop an all-age 24/7 Single Point of Contact via NHS111 and a whole-system response to crisis in eating disorders.

This is translating into excellent outcomes. Our rapid-response teams, which receive c1,300 referrals each year, have been estimated to be preventing up to 150 inpatient paediatric admissions per annum (along with 500+ A&E attendances). This should be seen in the context of a continuing trend of CYP attending emergency departments and / or being admitted to acute paediatric wards across GM. The programme has also streamlined and regulated the point of admission to hospital, which in the long-term will lead to more appropriate referrals, more predictable occupancy, and a better service for those who most need it.

Since the operationalisation of Greater Manchester's Assessment and In-reach Centre in early 2018, there have been increases in the number of requests for assessment (29% more referrals in the most recent six months of data reviewed), but over the same period a 15% reduction in the rate of conversion to admission.

The programme continues to innovate and find solutions to intractable issues. For example, a trailblazing escalation framework, co-produced by health and social care partners, demonstrates our recent commitment to whole system working across the Integrated Care System - removing organisational and professional boundaries to support the best interests of young people in crisis.

“ I used to be at my worst but having these sessions have helped me feel good about myself, confidence, knowing I'm never alone.

Children
and young
people **CRISIS CARE
PATHWAY**



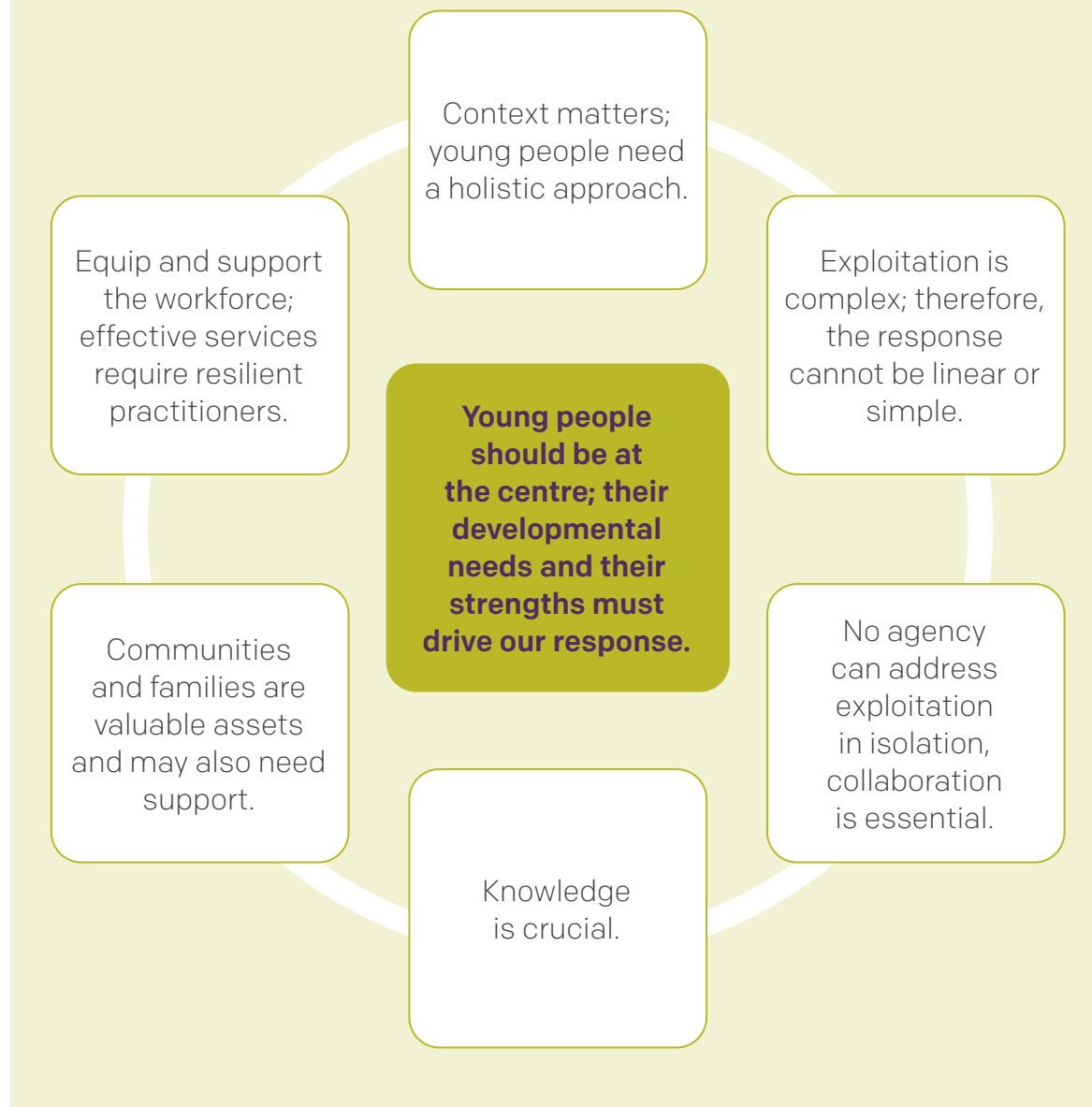
Complex safeguarding

Greater Manchester definition:

Complex safeguarding is criminal activity (often organised), or behaviour associated to criminality, involving children and young adults (often vulnerable) where there is exploitation and/or a clear or implied safeguarding concern.

- The Greater Manchester Complex Safeguarding Hub (GMCSH) supports the continuous practice development of the 10 multi-agency Complex Safeguarding Teams that are based in the 10 boroughs of Greater Manchester, using evidence-based approaches and research
- Quality assurance is provided through a multi-agency peer review process and with key partners. Information and insights are gathered to identify emerging issues and harms, and to implement trauma informed responses
- Teams provide trauma-informed support to young people who are known to have been or are at risk of being exploited through Trusted Relationship Psychologists based within the teams. They also support families through dedicated parenting workers and prosecute and disrupt offenders
- The Achieving Change Together model is an innovative approach to engaging with young people who are at risk of exploitation. ACT workers are based within the Complex Safeguarding Teams and use strengths-based approaches to build trusted relationships with young people and support their ambitions

GM complex safeguarding seven principles



GM practice achievements

Multi-agency peer reviews

Quality assures practice against the seven Greater Manchester complex safeguarding principles.

Working to Increase Safety in Exploitation (WISE)

A co-designed evidence-based, child-centred approach to assessing risk and harm focusing on strengths, safety, stability, and aspirations.

Complex Safeguarding Insights and Impact Framework

Supports practice development in a clear, agreed evidence-based framework to understand trends and outcomes for children and young people.

2021/22 annual outcomes



Education, training and employment

Where applicable, 71% of children and young people had re-engaged with education, training and employment.



Stable living arrangements

88% were deemed to have a stable living arrangement (accommodation setting).



Trusted Relationships

84% were reported to have formed at least one trusted relationship during the time they were with the Complex Safeguarding Team.

'Spreading and Scaling' of Children's Social Care Innovation

Greater Manchester's Targeted Innovation and Reform Programme used £5.2m pump-priming investment from the Department of Education to embark upon a **unique exercise in 'spreading and scaling' children's social care innovation across the city region.**

At the end of the programme, **25 projects were in operation, compared to the four projects in 2018 when the programme started** – at least one project in delivery or at the very end of the design phase in every authority in Greater Manchester.

The **four interventions at the heart of the programme were each evaluated and shown to deliver better outcomes for children and families, along with substantial savings to the public purse.**

A dedicated systems learning exercise also highlighted a number of wider "ripple effects" from the programme:

- Practitioner advocacy for individual children and young people
- Practitioners championing ways of working with colleagues
- Championing of values in the wider organisation
- Wider use of reflective spaces and communities of learning

Achieving Change Together

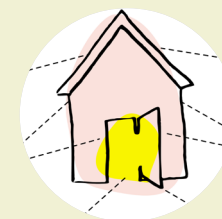


A strengths-, relationships- and evidence-based model for working with young people at risk of exploitation. Originally developed in Rochdale and Wigan.

Local evaluation found strong evidence that ACT's intensive, trauma-informed support promoted stability and reduced risk in relation to 95 vulnerable adolescents supported across five localities over 21 months.

The intervention resulted in £3m cost avoidance through placement expenditure avoided, and £1m-equivalent demand reduction in reduced missing from home episodes. Overall financial return on investment (ROI) was £2.70 for every £1 invested.

No Wrong Door (NWD)



An approach developed by North Yorkshire County Council that works with adolescents who are in care or on the edge of care.

Cost avoidance resulted from a reduction in external residential placements in three out of four localities who adopted and adapted NWD. Local evaluation showed good evidence that £3m invested overall was effectively 'repaid'.

Case review analysis in one locality found 10 cases held at edge of care over 10 months (likely residential care placement without intervention) and 31 instances of placement breakdown prevented.

Improvements in mental health and wellbeing was estimated to save £13,000 per case.

Stockport Family Team Around The School



A model that places skilled and motivated early help practitioners alongside link social workers, school nurses, and other local partners within the community, to work with whole families as need arises.

Stockport Family Team Around the School applies early help strategies in the school setting, reducing referrals into children's social care and specialist services.

£1.5m invested across three localities was fully 'repaid' through reductions or stabilisations in children in need episodes (valued at £1,700 per case saved).

Salford Strengthening Families



An intensive specialist programme which aims to reduce the number of children going into care and prevent mothers from getting into the cycle of repeat removals.

Independent evaluation by the University of Essex found that 84% of pregnant mothers supported by the programme were supported to keep their child, where previous children had been taken into care. This saved £1m to the local authority, also achieving a reduction in domestic abuse and substance misuse in two-thirds of cases.

An illustrative case study with one family has demonstrated positive outcomes for mum, dad and child and that the intervention saved the public purse in the region of £100k.

The approaches used in these innovations had a number of common features, as they were all:

- Relational, focusing on working in partnership with the children, young people and families they are supporting, and with their wider relationships and networks
- Strengths-based, using tools and approaches that develop strengths
- Focusing on what matters to those they are working with and taking into account their lived experience
- Trauma-informed, taking account of the emotional and behavioural impact of trauma on parents, as well as children and young people.

What next?

Ways of working

Developing the Greater Manchester Children and Young People's Plan (2019-2022) has provided real impetus to the Greater Manchester-level work around children and young people and has helped strengthen the sense of shared ambition across organisations. Most importantly, despite the challenges of the last few years we have seen positive outcomes and improved experience for Greater Manchester children and young people across a number of work areas.

A great deal has been learned, both in terms of how Greater Manchester works as a system to add maximum value to the work of local authorities and partners at a local level, but also how we can strengthen elements of the way the programme functions. For example, steps have been taken to hardwire our shared leadership and partnership working at a strategic level, particularly in connecting to the Integrated Care System. New arrangements to support delivery that aim to involve a wider range of organisations and perspectives have also been implemented, in the form of multi-agency 'Delivery Hubs'.

Greater Manchester has stepped up our collective commitment to incorporating the voice of children and young people and co-producing solutions. An excellent example of this is our #Beewell programme which has seen us engage with over 40,000 young people (approximately 60% of all young people in Year 8 and Year 10 in the city-region) around issues around wellbeing and connecting directly into their experience of growing up in their neighbourhood. A system response is now delivering positive change in all its communities, with young people at the front and centre.

The way data and intelligence are being used to provide analysis into the effectiveness of different Greater Manchester programmes of work has been strengthened in recent years, with 'deep dive' insights reports into key areas of work (including children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and children and young people's mental health) helping organisations to challenge themselves around progress and impact. Alongside the intelligence we gather from children and young people, we are arguably as well connected into the hopes and aspirations of our children and young people as we have ever been.

Greater Manchester has demonstrated it can test and evaluate different innovative models and spread across the city-region. Likewise, it can take elements of transformation work and embed it as 'business as usual', supported by joint funding arrangements and aligned resources – Greater Manchester's work around complex safeguarding being a prime example of this.



Future priorities

Over the last few months consideration has turned to short-and medium-term priorities for Greater Manchester's children and young people.

These priorities have been shaped through consideration of a number of factors. First and foremost, we have stepped up our collective commitment to incorporating the voice of children and young people, and listening to what children and young people are telling us is most important to them. As such, we are working closely with the GM Youth Combined Authority and affiliated networks to ensure four themes are prevalent within all our work: physical & mental health; equity; recovery from Covid; and the climate emergency. In addition, we are working towards the adoption of a framework that will set the standard for how we engage children and young people across our different programmes of work.

Our wider priorities have been shaped through consideration of a range of other factors, including: the pressures facing public services; our plans in response to the impact of Covid and the rising cost of living; and the significant policy developments at a national level - notably the independent review of children's social care, the education white paper, and the children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities green paper.

Furthermore, partnership working with health colleagues in NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care has revitalised and strengthened the opportunities we have to improve the physical, mental and population health needs of children.

In light of all of the above, it is anticipated that the following priorities will form part of the next iteration of the GM CYP plan:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Family help including family hubs
- Speech, language and communication
- Long-term conditions including asthma and healthy weight
- Support for adolescents
- Workforce recruitment and retention
- Children in care sufficiency
- Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

