

# Our Manchester Youth Offer Strategy 2020–2023



# **Our Manchester Youth Offer Strategy**

**2020–2023**

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## **1. Executive Member Foreword**

### **Councillor Luthfur Rahman, Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure**

Manchester has a fantastic range of youth, sports, leisure, arts, cultural and learning opportunities. These are, and always will be, part of the city's fabric and cultural identity, and are hugely important in increasing the quality of life for so many. Through these opportunities we must ensure that all young people can access our high-quality facilities, including our sport venues, art galleries, theatres, music venues and libraries.

Manchester City Council is committed to ensuring that young people have sufficient educational leisure-time activities to help improve their wellbeing, and their personal and social development. We also need to ensure young people have access to the information they need to make informed lifestyle choices and decisions to enable them to stay safe, healthy and happy and be successful.

We want to make Manchester the best city for young people to grow up, work and live. We will therefore continue to work with young people to make sure our city is cleaner and greener with less pollution. We'll promote opportunities to reduce, reuse and recycle, contributing towards reducing our carbon footprint, and working together with schools, youth groups, Manchester Youth Council and other organisations to tackle climate change and the impact it's having on future generations.

The voice of the city's young people is at the heart of everything we do, and we recognise that they are the future of Manchester. Our Skills For Life programme will ensure that young people are prepared for life and are engaged within democratic processes to influence policy and shape the city.

We love our city and all the facilities, spaces, people and things that make it great. Together with you, we want our young people to benefit from the fantastic youth offer we have in Manchester.

Working with all our partners in a collaborative manner is the only way to achieve our ambition to ensure Manchester is a thriving, progressive, safe and connected city, with highly skilled young people who have access to a high-quality youth, play, leisure and recreational offer.

I look forward to continuing to work with you all to make Manchester the best place for young people to play, relax, grow up and enter adulthood successfully.

## **2. Member of United Kingdom Youth Parliament and Manchester Youth Council Foreword**

Manchester Youth Council are part of the democratic voice of young people, and are the elected representatives of young people aged 11–18 in Manchester. We represent this amazing city we call home and are immensely proud of it. We are passionate about our heritage and want young people to celebrate our culture and diversity within our city.

We believe our strengths lie within our communities and networks, and that by working together we can make Manchester the very best city for young people to have a future in. We will work with young people to find out the issues important to them and help them develop the skills for life to empower them to make a change. We will use our voice to influence and make positive changes for our future, creating opportunities for young people to make a difference and shape Manchester. We'll embed skills for life and democracy into our work to empower and enable young people to be the best they can be.

Manchester Youth Council has an ambition to give every young person the skills to engage in democracy at a level that suits them. We want to ensure that our future is a positive one, creating opportunities for young people to have their say and be heard, shaping our city into a place where we want to grow, live, work and enjoy. We will work with Manchester City Council, schools, organisations, groups and all generations to work together to tackle the issues important to young people, and create a range of activities and pathways to listen, act and make change.

We will continue to develop strong working relationships with Manchester City Council and its partners to plan a better future for our city. This will include ensuring young people's voices are heard and influential with regard to climate change; supporting our city to become cleaner and greener with less pollution; and more opportunities to reuse, recycle and reduce our carbon footprint.

We are proud of our city, and together we will be the generation that inspires others to change and make a stand for our future.

## **3. Introduction**

Manchester is an internationally recognised and globally connected city. Vibrant, and culturally diverse with an economic dynamism fuelled by unprecedented levels of investment in new creative and technological industries, Manchester continues forward on its fantastic journey to become one of the most innovative, enterprising and pioneering cities in the world.

At the very core of Manchester's development, continued success and long-term prosperity are its young people. Manchester recognises that to be in the top rank of cities by 2025, young people are – and have to be – at the heart of this ambitious vision.

In Manchester, there are currently some 133,972 young people aged between 10 and 24.<sup>1</sup> This represents nearly 25% of the population, and mid-year projections estimate that the number of young people is increasing. Manchester is now widely recognised as one of the most attractive cities in the UK for young people to live, work and settle.

Manchester places great importance and emphasis on developing and growing an enriched youth offer outside of formal education: one that offers place, space and time for young people to have access to a variety of services and activities. The offer is underpinned by good-quality working practices and youth and play facilities for young people in both universal and targeted settings. These contribute powerfully to the development of young people's personal, social and economic development.

The shaping and co-ordination of Manchester's youth offer cannot be taken in isolation; it requires a robust, collaborative, co-productive and partnership approach with a range of sectors, organisations and groups. Non-exhaustively, these include the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE), Young Manchester (Manchester's youth and play charity), Manchester Active (Manchester's Sport and Leisure Trust), Community Safety Partnership, Greater Manchester Police, NHS/Health Services, cultural organisations, libraries, schools, colleges, and housing associations.

Most importantly, young people themselves are at the heart, ensuring that their voices are heard and influential, and that their needs are being met through multi-agency, strength-based approaches.

#### 4. Valuing Young People Strategy Achievements 2016–2019

The aspiration of the Valuing Young People Strategy was built upon improving outcomes across four pillars that focused on different aspects of young people's lives: My Life, My Future, My Voice, My Place. Some of the achievements of the previous strategy are listed in the table below.

<b>My Life</b>	<b>Description:</b> Communities that cater for the needs of young people
<b>Achievements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed and developed Manchester youth and play trust – Young Manchester</li> <li>• Over 60 VCSE Manchester-based organisations commissioned to deliver youth and play services</li> <li>• 19,000 children and young people participated in youth and play activities in 2018/19</li> <li>• Secured development of a new Youth Zone facility in east Manchester</li> <li>• Strong partnership and consortia development across the youth offer sector.</li> </ul>	
<b>My Future</b>	<b>Description:</b> Pathways towards economic independence

<sup>1</sup> Manchester City Council, *2017 Mid-Year Estimate*, Manchester, 2015

<b>Achievements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,895 young people participating in Duke of Edinburgh Award</li> <li>• Developed and launched Skills For Life programme in 2019.</li> </ul>	
<b>My Voice</b>	<b>Description:</b> Influencing and informing decisions that matter
<b>Achievements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manchester Youth Council campaigned and raised awareness of hate crime, knife crime and the environment</li> <li>• 24,000 young people voted in Manchester's Make Your Mark national UK Youth Parliament campaign in 2019.</li> </ul>	
<b>My Place</b>	<b>Description:</b> Belonging and having pride in Manchester
<b>Achievements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition and celebration of young people's achievements through the prestigious Youth Buzz Awards Ceremony</li> <li>• 7,000 young people involved in social-action projects</li> <li>• Developed strong community safety partnerships in addressing localised concerns to youth violence and antisocial behaviour</li> <li>• Collaborative working between key services and local youth providers to create young people-only spaces within our leisure facilities.</li> </ul>	

The Our Manchester Youth Offer Strategy replaces the Valuing Young People Strategy. Following consultation with young people, stakeholders, partners and practitioners, this strategy will describe the key themes, priorities and actions in addressing neighbourhood and citywide youth priorities over the next three years. It should be regarded as Manchester's commitment to young people aged 10 to 19, and up to age 25 for those with additional needs, such as children who are looked after, care leavers, young carers, and SEND.

The strategy will provide context for all stakeholders and partners responsible for developing and delivering Manchester's youth offer. It should be regarded as a guiding document for everyone involved in working towards making Manchester the very best city for young people to live, learn and prepare for their future.

## 5. Statutory Guidance

Local authorities have a statutory duty to 'secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people, and to make sure young people have a say in the local offer'. This is often referred to as the 'youth service duty'.<sup>2</sup>

This includes youth work and other provision that:

- Connects young people with their communities
- Offers young people opportunities in safe environments to take part in a wide range of activities

<sup>2</sup> Section 507B, Education Act 1996

- Supports the personal, social and economic development of young people
- Improves young people's physical and mental health, and emotional wellbeing
- Raises young people's aspirations, builds their resilience, and informs their decision-making.

The Government is reviewing the guidance that sets out the statutory duty placed on local authorities to provide appropriate local youth services. It is expected that the review will provide greater clarity of Government expectations, including the value added by good-quality youth work.

This strategy also embraces the recommendations outlined in the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs, which published its Youth Work Inquiry findings.<sup>3</sup> Its report highlighted the need to provide a positive commitment to our young people by encouraging the whole of society to invest in them, ensuring that they are fully included in decision-making and democratic processes.

## 6. Our vision

Ensure our young people have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and benefit from the economic prosperity of the city. They will contribute to, and benefit from, supportive and dynamic neighbourhoods with access to a wide range of youth, leisure, cultural and recreational opportunities.

Their voice and citizenship will continue to be placed at the heart of the city's current and future identity, recognising that our young people are the future of Manchester, economically, socially and culturally. They will come to define our city, and its relationship with the global community.

This vision supports and aligns with the high-level commitments, we wills and actions set out within the Our Manchester Strategy:

- Young people have a strong sense of citizenship and pride in the city.
- Young people improve their health and wellbeing and are more active.
- Young people are known to have a high quality of life, better green spaces, and access to world-class sport, leisure and culture provision.

## 7. Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy

The Our Manchester Strategy is one of the most ambitious strategies the city has ever developed.<sup>4</sup> It drives the vision forward for Manchester to be in the top rank of world-class cities by 2025. The Our Manchester Strategy has five key themes. The key strategic priorities are shown in the table below.

Our Manchester Strategy themes and priorities	Our Youth Offer Strategy themes and priorities
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<sup>3</sup> APPG on Youth Affairs, National Youth Agency, Youth Work Inquiry 2019, London

<sup>4</sup> Manchester City Council, Our Manchester Strategy, 2016, Manchester

<p><b>A Thriving and Sustainable City</b></p> <p>1) A Diverse, distinctive and well-connected economy, creating jobs and opportunities for all.</p> <p>2) Good support for businesses, both established and growing.</p> <p>3) A leading digital city, rich in culture.</p> <p>4) Making sure the workforce has the skills needed: we'll grow the economy, but with serious commitment to protect the environment and reduce the impact of climate change.</p>	<p><b>Thriving Young People</b></p> <p>1) Young people have opportunities to access a range of universal and targeted youth provision, which will contribute to their personal, social and economic wellbeing.</p> <p>2) Young people are inspired and have aspirations to achieve their full potential through effective leadership and co-ordination of the youth offer.</p> <p>3) Developing and strengthening local partnerships to create opportunities for our young people to learn, be active and have fun in their free time.</p>
<p><b>A Highly Skilled City</b></p> <p>1) All workers will earn a real Living Wage.</p> <p>2) School results will be above average in science, technology, maths, and digital and creative subjects.</p> <p>3) The next generation will be inspired by opportunities to upskill and succeed, and every young person will have a good work placement.</p> <p>4) People's skills will match the economy's needs, and clear pathways will help residents reach their full potential.</p> <p>5) Companies will develop and train staff through their working life, so there will be fewer people without qualifications.</p>	<p><b>Highly Skilled Young People</b></p> <p>1) Young people have opportunities to succeed in education, employment and training to raise aspirations, achieve and gain economic independence.</p> <p>2) Young people have access to youth offer provision within their neighbourhoods, providing opportunities to develop the life skills they need to be happy, healthy, safe and successful as identified through the Skills For Life approach.</p> <p>3) Young people will have access to Skills For Life through a youth offer that helps them develop the capabilities they need for learning, work and transitioning into adulthood.</p>
<p><b>A Progressive and Equitable City</b></p> <p>1) Everyone will have the same opportunities and life chances no matter where they were born or where they live.</p> <p>2) Health will improve, and residents will have the right care at the right place at the right time.</p> <p>3) Voluntary and community groups will find new ways to reach those as yet untouched by Manchester's success, to create resilient and vibrant communities.</p> <p>4) More young children will arrive at school ready to learn to get the best start in life.</p>	<p><b>Progressive and Resilient Young People</b></p> <p>1) Young people have opportunities that enable them to think progressively and build resilience underpinned by the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>2) Young people have access to good-quality youth offer provision within their neighbourhoods, which encourages a sense of belonging, develops their identity, and ensures their voices are heard.</p> <p>3) Ensure young people from the most disadvantaged and deprived neighbourhoods can access youth offer provision by reducing the barriers to participation.</p>
<p><b>A Liveable and Low-Carbon City</b></p> <p>1) We'll have a broad base of good jobs and diverse, good-quality housing in clean, safe, attractive and cohesive neighbourhoods.</p> <p>2) We'll be a cleaner, litter-free city, recycling more, with better-quality parks, green spaces and waterways.</p> <p>3) We'll invest in culture and sport – for residents' benefit and to increase the city's international attractiveness.</p> <p>4) Our artistic and creative community will benefit from more commissioning, production and performances.</p> <p>5) We will have more volunteering, and by 2050 we will be a 100% clean-energy city, encouraging a low-carbon culture, with our communities being protected from a changing climate.</p>	<p><b>Living Well, Healthy and Safe Young People</b></p> <p>1) Young people have opportunities to live, lead and enjoy safe, active, and healthy lives.</p> <p>2) Young people have access to services and activities that improve their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>3) Young people understand the impact they can make within their neighbourhoods and the wider community through participation in youth, sport and cultural activities.</p> <p>4) Young people have access to programmes that will enable them to explore sports, arts, and cultural events.</p>



A Connected City	Connected and Heard Young People
<p>1) An integrated, smart, clean transport network will reflect the city's changing shape and the way people move around.</p> <p>2) More cycling and walking, with the improved infrastructure and signage needed.</p> <p>3) The city will be at the centre of first-class networks – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.</p> <p>4) We'll create a framework for action as a 'digital city' and use digital technology to transform how we live in the city, eg. looking at how it could reduce energy bills and carbon emissions.</p>	<p>1) Ensure young people are listened to, valued and connected across their neighbourhoods and the city.</p> <p>2) Celebrate young people's achievements and successes across the city.</p> <p>3) Young people will inform continuous improvement and be involved in service design, delivery and governance.</p> <p>4) Young people will receive the support they need to participate, ensuring representation of the full diversity of local people, and those who may not otherwise have a voice.</p>

## 8. Links to other local strategies

Our Manchester Youth Offer Strategy is also underpinned and interlinked by several local strategies to ensure specific needs and priorities are being addressed in key areas of development for children and young people.

Key interlinked local strategies
<p><b>The Children and Young People's Plan 'Our Manchester, Our Children 2016–2020'</b> is a vision for 'building a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for children and young people'. It highlights the importance of children and young people having opportunities to take part in leisure and cultural activities, as well as the benefits of good social, emotional and mental wellbeing. It also recognises that children and young people need to feel that they have a voice and influence as active Manchester residents.</p>
<p><b>'Our Manchester is Young' Young Manchester Strategy 2019–2024</b> provides a framework for Young Manchester's strategic priorities and specific workstreams, through the commissioning, resourcing, capacity-building and championing of the VCSE youth and play sector.</p>
<p><b>Manchester's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2019–2028</b> communicates the long-term vision for increasing sport and physical activities across the city. It has an essential focus on young people's overall wellbeing and potential, helping them to enjoy being active and healthy.</p>
<p><b>Manchester's Promoting Inclusion and Preventing Exclusion Strategy: 'Supporting our Young People to Thrive 2019–2022'</b> sets out a clear framework for reducing the expulsion of children and young people from education, ensuring all Manchester's early years settings, schools and post-16 providers are inclusive and able to meet the needs of their local communities.</p>
<p><b>The Manchester Work and Skills Strategy 2015–2020</b> highlights how young people will be better equipped to compete within the local labour market, stressing the importance of sustainable and healthy work with opportunities for progression.</p>
<p><b>Manchester Community Safety Strategy Partnership: Our Strategy 2018–2021</b> outlines Manchester's community safety priorities. These include 'keeping children and young people safe' from a range of issues, such as criminal exploitation, youth violence, knife crime, substance misuse, and antisocial behaviour.</p>
<p><b>Manchester Outdoor Learning and Adventurous Activity Strategy for Children, Young People and their Families 2017–2020</b> describes how young people can access the existing wealth of opportunities and participate in outdoor learning and adventurous activities in Manchester that enable them to have fun, stay healthy and improve their long-term outcomes.</p>

Other related strategies that impact or influence services and provision for young people include:

- Manchester NEET Reduction Plan 2017–2020
- Greater Manchester Children and Young People’s Plan 2019–2022
- Manchester Early Help Strategy 2018–2021
- Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017–2022
- Manchester Young Carers’ Strategy 2017–2019.

## 9. Defining our youth offer

- **Our key underpinning principles, values and objectives**

This strategy, Manchester City Council and its partners fully embrace the United Nations Convention On The Rights Of The Child.<sup>5</sup> The convention articulates a number of rights that cover all aspects of a child’s life, and sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to, including the right to:

- Be heard and involved in all decisions affecting them – Article 12
- Access and participate in a wide range of leisure, play and cultural activities – Article 31
- Be protected from exploitation – Articles 32–37
- Be underpinned by non-discriminatory but fully inclusive behaviours and practices – Article 2.

This strategy is also built upon a number of core principles and values, which are at the heart of our approach in delivering the strategy, confirming our integrity and commitment to young people in Manchester.

Principles and values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Partnership:</b> This strategy can only be delivered with strong, meaningful partnerships that are realised by young people themselves, as well as all those who are responsible for commissioning, producing and delivering services to young people.</li><li>● <b>Rights and responsibilities:</b> Young people will know and understand their rights and responsibilities, including how partners and stakeholders design and deliver services for young people.</li><li>● <b>Empowerment:</b> Young people are continually empowered to ensure their voices are at the core of influencing decision-making processes in all aspects of their lives and communities.</li><li>● <b>Support:</b> The most vulnerable of young people will be assured additional help and support, ensuring that the services provided are inclusive, accessible, of a high standard and outcome-focused.</li></ul>

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<sup>5</sup> Unicef, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, January 2020

- **Safety:** It is our collective duty and responsibility to ensure all our young people are supported to be safe in our city, across their neighbourhoods, within the home, and when they access services.
- **Equality:** Ensure that all universal services are accessible to all young people and that everyone receives the same quality of service.
- **Diversity:** We champion and celebrate diversity and personal choice, robustly challenging inequality and discrimination in any form.
- **Communication:** The core element of communication is respect for young people, instilling them with the knowledge that they will be listened to, and – importantly – ensuring their voices are influencing the decisions that concern them.
- **Quality:** Ensure good-quality working practices, and good-quality youth and play work practice where appropriate. Professional high standards of working practice are recognised as an essential principle in the delivery of this strategy.
- **Pride:** Proud and passionate about our young people in Manchester.

### • **Manchester City Council Youth Strategy Objectives**

Manchester City Council is committed to working alongside our internal and external partners to ensure that young people have the best opportunities to achieve their full potential. We will focus on providing the following:

Youth Strategy Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Young people's voice:</b> develop meaningful, appropriate and effective pathways for young people to be involved in decision-making processes, ensuring their voice is at the heart of all we do and embedded by partners and across all services.</li> <li>• <b>Leadership and guidance:</b> provide leadership, information, advice and guidance for the youth and play sector around funding, policy, procedure, and safe working practices; ensure that we all work effectively to provide the best opportunities for young people.</li> <li>• <b>Championing:</b> powerfully advocate the voice of the youth and play sector, our partner network and young people across the city, at local, regional and national levels.</li> <li>• <b>Collaboration:</b> bringing the youth and play sector together to ensure good-quality provision for young people. We will collaborate with our partners across the sector, as well as Leisure, Culture, Health, Crime and Disorder, and Early Help, to ensure our provisions are complementary and our resources evenly spread.</li> <li>• <b>Commissioning:</b> secure and maximise the financial resources for youth and play provision across the city, ensuring value for money through effective and appropriate co-productive and collaborative measures.</li> </ul>

### • **Our current youth offer**

The broad programme of youth, play, leisure, recreational and cultural activities catering for young people is collectively referred to as the universal ‘youth offer’.

In addition, a number of organisations within the scope of the youth offer provide specialist or targeted services that support young people identified within protected groups and those with specific needs, such as LGBT, mental health, SEND, and young offenders. This type of provision is referred to as ‘targeted services or support’.

A significant number of universal and targeted services and projects for young people are being delivered across the city by a wide range of partners, including Manchester City Council, youth and play providers, sport and leisure services, health service providers, schools, colleges, housing associations, and the commercial sector.

Universal services	Targeted services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth provision</li> <li>• Play provision</li> <li>• Sports and leisure services</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Museums</li> <li>• Art galleries</li> <li>• Theatres</li> <li>• Parks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted youth support</li> <li>• SEND1 services</li> <li>• Mental health services</li> <li>• Careers and education support</li> <li>• LGBTQ services</li> <li>• Young carers support services</li> <li>• Early Help services</li> <li>• Substance misuse services.</li> </ul>

It is important to recognise that many universal services have proactively adapted and developed their services to include targeted support within their settings.

As well as providing an inclusive safe space for young people to meet and have fun, the city’s youth offer plays a key role in enabling children and young people to develop essential skills for life. This contributes to improving their life chances and aids transition to adult life, enabling them to engage meaningfully within their communities and wider society.

Manchester City Council takes the strategic lead to work with young people, the youth and play sector and other agencies to determine the mix of open-access, targeted, preventative and specialist provision needed to meet local needs. This includes how youth-offer services are best integrated to enrich the offer for young people.

### - **Partnerships**

This strategy recognises the importance of partnerships and the key role they play in shaping Manchester’s youth offer. Using the principles, values and behaviours of the Our Manchester approach, the Council has strong internal and external partnerships across a number of service areas, including leisure, culture, libraries, education, and crime and disorder. These partnerships ensure we are maximising the potential of

the Council and the VCSE sector to enhance the youth offer. We highly value the relationships we have built across the sector, as it enables us to ensure that young people, wherever they are, have access to a good-quality youth offer.

To ensure funding, resources and services are delivered and co-ordinated in the most effective way for young people, we have a number of key strategic partners that shape and co-ordinate the universal and targeted youth offer.

<b>VCSE youth and play providers</b>	Includes a range of voluntary and community-based organisations that deliver a wide variety of youth and play services across Manchester. These include youth clubs, play schemes, sports clubs and targeted services, such as mental health and LGBT provision.
<b>Young Manchester</b>	Young Manchester is a charity that co-ordinates resources and investment across the city to enable our VCSE youth and play sector providers to deliver a range of youth and play provision to Manchester's children and young people.
<b>Youth hubs</b>	Manchester Youth Zone, Millennium Powerhouse and the Lifestyle Centre located in the north, central and south areas of Manchester respectively, are youth hubs that offer a range of youth provision and services. They work closely with the Council to offer leadership and co-ordination across the youth sector. A brand-new youth zone has also been built in the Gorton ward of east Manchester; this opened in April 2020.
<b>Manchester Active</b>	Manchester's sport and leisure trust manage, co-ordinate and deliver a range of sport and leisure facilities and activities across the city, which includes Sportcity in east Manchester.
<b>Community safety</b>	The Community Safety Team implement local crime reduction strategies and work to improve safety in Manchester's neighbourhoods and communities. They work very closely with youth practitioners and organisations to address specific youth-related crime and disorder issues.
<b>Cultural Services</b>	Cultural Services shape, co-ordinate and commission a range of Manchester-based culture and arts organisations, such as the Contact Theatre, the National Football Museum, and Manchester Art Gallery, and are an integral partner in developing wider youth-offer services and opportunities.
<b>Manchester Libraries</b>	Manchester Libraries manage and co-ordinate 22 libraries across the city, including Central Library. They offer a range of services and activities for children and young people, such as multimedia provision and play groups. Libraries also work in partnership with several VCSE youth providers to offer youth-club activities.

## 10. Our youth offer themes and actions

Manchester's youth offer is essential in helping young people develop the confidence and resilience to improve their life chances, transition to contributory and productive adulthood, and engage meaningfully with their communities and wider society.

It aims to ensure that young people can access Manchester's high-quality, world-class facilities, including our youth, play and sport venues, art galleries, museums, theatres, music venues and libraries. To do this, the Council and its partners have a clear role in ensuring barriers to participation are removed, to ensure all young people – particularly those from the most disadvantaged and deprived wards in the city – can, and are, accessing provision.

Alongside access to enrichment activities, it's also imperative that young people have the appropriate support to access the information they need to make informed life choices and decisions that enable them to stay safe, active and healthy. This includes young people being instrumental in leading and shaping how they receive this information, building on their experience and skills in the use of technology and digital platforms.

The section below outlines the actions we will undertake to ensure that we're successful in delivering young people's youth-offer strategic priorities.

### **Theme 1: Thriving Young People**

Over the past decade, Manchester has seen an increase of children and young people living in Manchester, as more families with children choose to live and work in the city. Increases in youth population, a decade of austerity, and increases in child poverty have all created greater demand and pressure for additional resources and investment in associated youth-offer provision, such as youth, play, leisure, sports and cultural services.

To support young people to grow and thrive in Manchester, it is imperative that a good-quality youth offer is developed and recognised as essential in the development of and the raising of children's and young people's quality of life. A good-quality youth offer that aims to support young people to thrive, means we need to continue to develop creative and innovative ways to ensure young people continue to have access to safe places and spaces to meet their friends. They also need to access an enriched programme of leisure, sports and cultural activities that complements and contributes to the development of knowledge, skills, health and attitudes that ultimately prepare them for their future.

#### **Theme 1: Thriving Young People**

Manchester City Council, alongside the youth-and-play sector, partners and communities, will:

1. Shape and influence the universal youth offer in all neighbourhoods, reducing barriers to participation.
2. Explore the use of community venues, such as schools, libraries, and leisure facilities for youth provision.
3. Collaborate with partners to develop an enriched universal and targeted youth offer.
4. Provide leadership and co-ordination for the youth-and-play sector to ensure provision and

services are shaped and co-ordinated in a manner that prioritises the needs of young people across Manchester.

5. Continue to strengthen local partnerships to create further opportunities, maximising investment and resources for our young people.
6. Research and analyse young people's needs, trends and gaps in provision, to inform decisions about future youth-offer design and delivery across the city.
7. Use digital and online platforms to publicise and promote the youth offer, to ensure young people are aware of available provision.

## **Theme 2: Highly Skilled Young People**

Preparing young people for adulthood with broad horizons and realising aspirations is essential. This begins at an early age, with schools, colleges, parents, carers and employers all playing a critical role in preparing young people for the world of work. Ensuring young people have the information, advice, guidance, employability skills, resilience, and independent learning skills is vital for young people to lead productive and successful lives.

Youth unemployment in Manchester has improved: in the year August 2017–2018 there was a 7.9% decline in the number of young people aged 16–24 claiming out-of-work benefits.<sup>6</sup> Despite this, there are a significant number of young people who are unknown in regard to their EET status, with 5.6% of young people aged 16–17 not identified as being NEET or EET, which could reflect long-term skill issues that may need to be addressed.

Manchester's youth offer will continue to play a significant role in helping young people to shape the skills and experiences that complement the established formal approaches to gaining skills, experience and becoming work-ready.

Access to quality youth, play, sport, leisure and the arts all have the potential to offer young people a wide variety of alternative experiences, skills, attributes and qualifications. This is often achieved through approaches based upon the positive relationships developed through voluntary engagement between service providers and the young people themselves. This approach contributes to enhancing aspects of adolescent development, such as learning life skills.

This is demonstrated with our Skills For Life programme, which youth organisations and schools will aim to adopt within their service delivery and curriculum to encourage all young people to develop the necessary communication, teamwork, problem-solving, self-management and self-belief skills which will support the development of their personal, social and emotional intelligence for reaching and sustaining economic independence.

## **Theme 2: Highly Skilled Young People**

Manchester City Council, alongside the youth-and-play sector, partners and communities,

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<sup>6</sup> DWP, Total Out-Of-Work Benefit Claimants, 2019

will:

1. Create youth-offer opportunities that support young people to succeed in education and employment.
2. Work with youth-offer service providers to embed the Skills For Life programme across youth-offer service delivery plans.
3. Ensure young people have access to youth-offer provision within their neighbourhoods, which provides opportunities to develop the Skills For Life they need to succeed.
4. Adopt a neighbourhood focus to developing youth-offer provision that enables young people to prosper from the regeneration and economic growth of local communities.
5. Champion the development and promotion of volunteering opportunities for young people to make positive contributions, alongside developing new skills and gaining experience.

### **Theme 3: Progressive and Resilient Young People**

Young people today, like no other generation before, are living within an increasingly more complex and challenging environment to make positive choices about their future. With rising levels of mental ill health and increasing societal division across class, gender, sexuality, race and religious lines, our young people need to build the necessary resilience to navigate, challenge and recover from a range of issues. These issues include exploitation, extremism, bullying, racism and discrimination, as well as other societal issues and complexities such as poverty and family disruption.

Resilience is the ability to 'bounce back' from adversity, and a strong youth offer should have the necessary activities and behaviours built within its effective delivery practices that increase and build resilience in young people to face and overcome adversity.

Youth-offer practice such as play and youth work is built upon the core principles of inclusivity, equality, diversity, respect and empowerment. These fundamental principles are essential to a young person's character development and are at the base of creating an equitable, broadminded and non-discriminatory society where young people can thrive regardless of differences. Youth work develops young people's self-esteem, personal identity, and respect for themselves and others.

Youth-and-play work has an invaluable impact on the development of resilience in young people, and both sectors in Manchester have a long-standing, creative tradition in designing and applying a variety of projects, activities and techniques that address and tackle issue-based concerns. This work contributes significantly towards helping young people to develop emotional awareness, empathy, self-efficacy and critical thinking; it also reduces impulsivity, supports positive character-building, and ultimately prepares young people to tackle and overcome adversity.

### **Theme 3: Progressive and Resilient Young People**



Manchester City Council, alongside the youth-and-play sector, partners and communities, will:

1. Champion and promote equal opportunity and life chances for young people, regardless of nationality, race, gender, sexuality, religion, belief, and other protected characteristics.
2. Develop innovative ways of delivering targeted services that are more efficient, better value and achieve better outcomes for young people.
3. Develop opportunities that challenge young people to think progressively and understand and uphold the principles of equality and diversity.
4. Promote a culture within which young people's opinions and contributions are recognised, valued and acted upon by wider society.
5. Ensure access to good-quality youth-and-play provision within neighbourhoods, so that young people feel a sense of belonging, develop their identity, and have their voices heard.

#### **Theme 4: Living Well; Healthy and Safe Young People**

Maximising the safety of young people and supporting the development of good physical and mental health is essential in helping young people to develop the necessary behaviours to go on and lead healthy and active lifestyles.

Tackling poor mental health, childhood obesity and physical inactivity in young people is paramount. If left to persist into adulthood, the implications can lead to long-term serious health problems that become entrenched and challenging to treat. In Manchester, these and other health-related issues still raise deep concerns in relation to a young person's development and the detrimental effects they can have on their future and life choices.

The percentage of 10 and 11-year-olds with excess weight in Manchester is greater than the national average: 40.3% of year 6 pupils have excess weight compared to the national average of 34.2%.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, a 2018 survey of 208 Manchester schoolchildren aged 5–16 found only 7.9% were active every day for 60 minutes or more.<sup>8</sup> Physical inactivity, alongside negative habits such as smoking, are major factors towards developing long-term negative behaviours into adulthood, including chronic health conditions, which often have a detrimental impact on quality of life.

Young people's mental health is also a major issue, and over half of mental health problems develop in people before the age 14. This rises to 75% of all people developing mental health disorders by the age of 18.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, mental health is developed in early life and patterns are set for the future. It is therefore imperative that young people have the best opportunities to develop good mental health that will transcend into adulthood.

Wider determinants of health, such as poverty and deprivation, are problematic, and Manchester continues to experience high levels of child poverty compared to other

<sup>7</sup> House of Commons, Obesity Statistics, 2019, Carl Baker, London

<sup>8</sup> Manchester City Council, Active Lives Children and Young People Survey, 2018, Manchester

<sup>9</sup> Manchester City Council, Manchester Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2016, Manchester

local authority areas, with 45.4% of children in the city living in poverty after housing costs.<sup>10</sup> Poverty and deprivation are significant factors that can often lead to a number of risk factors and behaviours in children and young people; these include, but are not limited to, lack in educational attainment, unemployment and long-term worklessness, and increasing risk-taking behaviour, including substance misuse, and gang and youth violence.

Ensuring young people in Manchester are safe is a major concern for all practitioners. Major issues such as youth violence, knife crime, sexual and criminal exploitation, online grooming and County Lines, continue to affect a number of young people across the city, with knife crime seeing a significant growth in Manchester between 2016 and 2018.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, substance misuse continues to be problematic, and there are increases in the use of psychoactive substances and prescription drug abuse and their procurement from often illegal online sources.

Manchester's youth offer takes seriously the health and wellbeing of children and young people. The youth offer in Manchester has over many years provided a range of activities and opportunities that seek to contribute to and develop young people's health and wellbeing. This is achieved through a mixture of universal and targeted service-delivery approaches and cuts across a range of services. These include sports and physical activity, youth-and-play club activities, diversionary activity, and non-formal/vocational education and specific services concerning substance misuse and mental health. Youth provision in Manchester will continue to prioritise wellbeing, and make certain that young people are given the best opportunities to grow up healthy, happy and safe.

#### **Theme 4: Living Well; Healthy and Safe Young People**

Manchester City Council, alongside the youth-and-play sector, partners and communities will:

1. Continually assess the risks and trends associated with young people's lifestyle choices and implement appropriate safeguarding measures.
2. Work with partners to plan, develop and deliver a range of interventions, projects and activities that guide and support young people in making positive lifestyle choices.
3. Facilitate neighbourhood partnership meetings in order to create opportunities for young people to live, lead and enjoy safe, active, and healthy lives.
4. Work with youth-offer providers to increase promotion and participation in activities and positive experiences that improve physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

#### **Theme 5: Connected and Heard Young People:**

<sup>10</sup> Ending Child Poverty, Regional Estimates 2017

<sup>11</sup> Greater Manchester Police, Business Intelligence, 2019

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), establishes the right of all children and young people to freely express their views and be heard on all matters that concern them, ensuring their voice and opinions are influencing the decision-making processes taken on their behalf by adults and those that represent them.<sup>12</sup>

This is now embodied in UK legislation with engagement and widening participation with young people being recognised and accepted as essential policy and practice, with the DfE in 2012 issuing statutory guidance for local authorities under Article 507B of the Education Act. This guidance places a specific requirement on local authorities to take the necessary action to ascertain the views of young people and take them into account when making decisions on services and activities for them.

In Manchester, we take the development and strengthening the voice of children and young people seriously. The Council, its partners and education settings have developed frameworks and structures that enable young people at neighbourhood, ward, and citywide levels to represent their view across a broad range of issues, initiatives, service design and delivery. Manchester Youth Council and its affiliates continue to represent young people across local, regional and national levels. In addition to understanding and engaging in democratic processes, such as the national Make Your Mark Campaign, the Youth Council has engaged young people in a variety of consultations, campaigns and decision-making exercises.

Manchester's youth-offer providers are fully committed to establishing participation and engagement practice within their service planning and delivery models.

#### **Theme 5: Connected and Heard Young People**

Manchester City Council, alongside the youth-and-play sector, partners and communities will:

1. Celebrate the diversity and talent of Manchester's young people.
2. Work alongside young people and partners to develop new ways of communication that ensure the voice of young people.
3. Design and deliver campaigns that promote community cohesion, pride and belonging, as well as challenge negative perceptions of young people.
4. Develop mechanisms and structures that enable young people to actively participate in the decisions that impact on their lives and their communities.
5. Work with partners to champion and foster opportunities and activities that create a strong sense of citizenship and pride in the city.
6. Ensure young people have the skills, knowledge and confidence to get involved with decision-making.

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<sup>12</sup> Unicef, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, January 2020

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| <p>7. Work innovatively to increase the membership of Manchester Youth Council to ensure all young people have the opportunity to participate, be heard and influence decision-making processes.</p> |
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## **11. Outcomes and Success Measures**

The outcomes from the Our Manchester Youth Offer Strategy will be measured in accordance with the Our Manchester Strategy. These will be tracked against the following high-level measures:

1. The number of youth-offer providers commissioned via the Council and/or Young Manchester.
2. The number of young people engaging in commissioned youth-and-play provision.
3. Development of a robust outcomes framework to measure impact, outcomes and return on investment.
4. The number of youth organisations and services embedding Skills For Life throughout their provision.
5. The number of youth-offer providers embedding participation and engagement practice.

## **12. Delivery and Governance**

The successful delivery of this strategy will require collective effort by a number of different stakeholders.

The strategy will be achieved by:

- Working with a wide range of young people, partners and stakeholders
- Changes to the Youth Strategy and Engagement team which will reflect our commitment to providing young people with access to opportunities where they live, as well as, ensuring their voices are heard
- Providing training and development within the youth and play sector
- Using data, research, intelligence and needs analysis to target resources where they are most needed
- Ensuring quality assurance and monitoring processes are in place
- Building capacity within organisations across the youth and play sector
- Communicating our progress, successes and learning
- Providing inclusive, accessible and relevant opportunities for young people to participate and engage in the democratic process and the decisions that will concern them

Formal progress reporting on the implementation of the strategy (including a metrics and outcomes framework) will be assessed and measured through Manchester Youth Council. Detailed reports will also be monitored and evaluated at other relevant executive, scrutiny, directorate and board meetings, such as the City

Council public meetings, Neighbourhoods Directorate meetings, Children and Young People's Board, Our Manchester Forum and sector partnerships and forums.

- **Manchester Youth Board**

A strategic board chaired by the Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure made up by strategic leads from within the City Council. The board will oversee the implementation of the Our Manchester Youth Offer Strategy and monitor the impact and outcomes from service delivery.

- **Youth Partnership Board**

In line with the new Government announcements on Youth Services, we will work closely with Young Manchester and the sector to create a youth partnership board. The board will jointly develop, implement and evaluate an action plan to work toward shared outcomes that fulfil the strategy.

### **13. Conclusion**

#### **Fiona Worrall: Strategic Director – Neighbourhoods**

The Our Manchester Youth Offer is the city's multi-sector strategic framework jointly owned by Manchester City Council, its partners and stakeholders. All of whom are responsible for making sure our young people have access to a high quality youth offer which meets their needs, and directly contributes to enabling young people to grow into responsible, independent and successful adults.

Manchester has a strong and committed sector which includes a range of youth, play, leisure, arts, and cultural organisations. These organisations work creatively, diligently and resourcefully to provide neighbourhood and city-wide services that enable our young people to engage in positive youth activities in the places where they live. These services are also key to the approach developing in the city which is bringing key universal and statutory services closer together to improve the offer and outcomes for the people who live in our places.

To achieve the vision and themes of the Our Manchester Youth Offer Strategy 2020-2023, Manchester City Council recognises that key partners, and young people have an integral part to play in ensuring its success. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership to ensure young people have opportunities to access activities which enable their positive transition to adulthood.



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