

# Chapter 1: Overview and summary

## Impacts of COVID-19

Along with the rest of the world, Manchester faced the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 health pandemic in 2020. It was a crisis unlike any other, which came at a time when we were already facing uncertainties about the UK's exit from the European Union (Brexit), changes to our global trading relationships, and the urgent need to tackle climate change. Alongside the significant health challenges came an increase in unemployment, greater usage of food banks, a rise in loneliness and mental health concerns, and a huge impact on children and young people's education, training and employment opportunities.

Manchester's residents have been disproportionately adversely affected by the pandemic. Existing inequalities, particularly for our most deprived communities, ethnic minorities and those already living in poverty, have deepened. There have been severe effects on our children and young people, who have faced significant disruption to their education and employment opportunities, widening the gap between those who are already the most vulnerable and their counterparts.

Despite the health challenges, the economic interruption and hardship the city has faced due to the pandemic, our aspiration for a more inclusive economy has not been diminished. Our city has a long and proud tradition of triumphing over adversity. We have a wealth of experience in developing a unique set of mature cross-sector partnerships to

create a shared vision for the future and deliver pragmatic and innovative solutions to our problems. Before the pandemic, this approach resulted in three decades of sustained economic growth driven by investment in skills, transport infrastructure, and major strategic developments in the city centre, our districts, and around Manchester Airport.

In the two decades before the COVID-19 pandemic, Manchester achieved exceptional growth. The city saw very significant increases in its population, and helped by major investment and strong partnerships, sustained economic growth. The city's assets, infrastructure, innovation, population and skills have enabled the city to be more resilient to the last recession than many other parts of the UK, and have powered growth over the past decade.

Our economy has become more diverse, with digital, creative, technology and health-innovation businesses now thriving alongside more traditional sectors, such as financial and professional services. This economic growth, building on the strengths of our existing communities, has helped to encourage a younger, more diverse and higher-skilled population. However, now there is a new set of challenges that needs to be overcome.

Manchester is at a critical point, due to the combined challenges of COVID-19 and Brexit, and the uncertainties in our well-established international relationships and trade. Adapting and mitigating the impact of climate change is a major challenge, given the city's zero-carbon ambitions, but it is also

an opportunity to build into our recovery plans. [Our Powering Recovery: Manchester's Economic Recovery and Investment Plan](#) sets out the importance of investing in our people, our places, and our prosperity to continue to strengthen our role in driving economic growth throughout the North and beyond the boundaries of the city. The next phase of public-service reform and health and social-care integration will require redoubling efforts to connect all our residents to the opportunities of economic growth and reduce demand.

This report looks back to the position from the period March 2020 to March 2021, and clearly outlines the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our city, and the activities carried out to mitigate this impact and start the recovery process.

## Our Manchester – Forward to 2025

In 2015, people were asked what their dream Manchester would be like, to help shape the Our Manchester Strategy 2016–25 and to let us know what makes the city a place where people want to live, work, play and do business. The consultation, which reached tens of thousands, gave the clearest picture yet of what matters to people. The Our Manchester Strategy was formally adopted by the Council in January 2016 and was launched two months later. It set out the long-term vision for Manchester's future, providing a framework for action by the Council and its partners across the city.

Over the first five years of the Strategy, Manchester made significant progress, going from strength to strength towards our vision. However, some challenges remain, and the COVID-19 pandemic has put the city in a very different place. Halfway through the Our Manchester Strategy, we took the opportunity, during summer 2020, to reset our priorities for the next five years to 2025, acknowledging – but looking beyond – current challenges, to make sure the city achieves its ambition. We asked what Manchester’s priorities should be; over 3,800 people responded with their views, and their priorities are at the heart of ‘[Our Manchester Strategy: Forward to 2025](#)’. The reset was overseen by the Our Manchester Forum – a partnership board of stakeholders from across the city who oversaw the creation of the original Strategy during 2015 and have been monitoring its implementation ever since.

While Forward to 2025 sets out the five-year vision and reset priorities for Manchester, it recognises the city must work swiftly to address the most pressing issues arising from the pandemic as we continue to live with and recover from COVID-19. These are not new challenges for some of Manchester’s communities, but they have been magnified. COVID-19 has disproportionately affected our Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, those on low incomes, and our residents with disabilities, due to higher incidences of underlying health conditions and occupational risks. As uncertainty and unemployment have increased, the importance of tackling the underlying causes of poor health, deprivation and poverty – and ensuring equal access to the best education – have been brought to the fore.

Despite this, COVID-19 has also highlighted Manchester’s strengths, and it provides opportunities to drive further progress. Communities have joined together to support one another. National recognition for key workers who kept the city moving is a platform to push for improved pay, working conditions and progression opportunities. Less commuting has led to cleaner air. More residents have been using the green space on their doorstep and supporting local businesses. We are optimistic that Manchester can overcome the challenges and build on the opportunities.

In the five years to 2025, as we work to support the city to recover from COVID-19 and achieve our long-term aspirations, we must make sure that investment, growth, and new opportunities reach every neighbourhood and community, especially those most in need. Manchester’s success is fundamentally linked to Greater Manchester, the north west and the Northern Powerhouse; the Government’s plans to level up the country must present opportunities for investment and development to benefit the city and the wider North.

### Renewed focus

The Our Manchester Strategy: Forward to 2025 outlines that in order to achieve our vision, our communities want to see a renewed focus on:

- **Our young people** – providing investment, support, opportunity and hope for the future of the city
- **Our economy** – fulfilling opportunities for our residents as we create and attract a talented, globally competitive and diverse workforce
- **Our health** – tackling physical and mental inequalities and ensuring fair access to integrated services

- **Our housing** – creating a choice of housing in liveable neighbourhoods throughout the city
- **Our environment** – pioneering zero-carbon solutions and improving green spaces
- **Our infrastructure** – creating active, integrated, affordable and green transport, as well as better digital connections.

During the consultation and engagement process, many residents indicated their desire for Manchester to be a ‘truly inclusive’ city, with all residents having the same life chances. Equality of opportunity was acknowledged to be a priority, especially by Black, Asian and ethnic minority residents. In response to that, and reflecting the impact of COVID-19 on exacerbating existing inequalities, Forward to 2025 has made a strong commitment to place equalities, inclusion and diversity as a cross-cutting theme of the strategy.

This commitment is further strengthened by making Equality one of the Council’s nine core priorities in our refreshed Corporate Plan, with a commitment to ‘Work together with Manchester’s citizens and our partners to understand our diverse communities, improve life chances, and celebrate diversity’.

### Manchester priorities

For Manchester to achieve its vision, we will refocus our efforts on these priorities to 2025. Throughout each priority runs Manchester’s commitment to build a more equal, inclusive and sustainable city for everyone who lives, works, volunteers, studies and plays here. Only by working together can we achieve our priorities and vision. Our priorities to 2025 are:

### A thriving and sustainable city

- We will maintain Manchester's vibrancy and ensure that all our communities are included in the life of the city, regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, faith, or socioeconomic background.
- We will work to ensure Manchester has a strong, inclusive and innovative economy with diverse growth sectors, where our residents are recognised for their contribution via fair contracts and are paid at least the Real Living Wage.

### A highly skilled city

- We will ensure that all Manchester's young people have access to good-quality education, and we will support them to be work-ready.
- We will continue to support all our residents to learn, progress, upskill and retrain so they can access the city's current and future employment opportunities.

### A progressive and equitable city

- We will strive to create a truly equal and inclusive city, where everyone can thrive at all stages of their life, and quickly and easily reach support to get back on track when needed.
- We will improve physical and mental-health outcomes and ensure good access to integrated health and care services across the city.

### A liveable and zero-carbon city

- We will create sustainable, safe, resilient and cohesive neighbourhoods, with more affordable housing, good-quality green spaces, and accessible culture and sporting facilities.

- We will achieve our zero-carbon ambition by 2038 at the latest, via green growth, sustainable design, low-carbon energy, retrofitting buildings, green infrastructure, and increasing climate resilience.

### A connected city

- We will enable increased walking and cycling, and continue to develop an integrated, accessible, safe and green public transport system across the city and beyond.
- We will become a digitally inclusive city, with better digital infrastructure, access to digital technology, and strong digital skills.

Each year, we will demonstrate our collective progress towards these goals through the State of the City Report, which is organised according to the five themes. This year's Report represents the fifth year of analysis of our progress against the Our Manchester Strategy.

## A thriving and sustainable city

A key factor driving the growth of Manchester over the past decade has been the stability and diversification of its economy. This has created new employment opportunities and attracted high levels of investment, making the city an attractive place to live, work and study. Recent years have seen Manchester diversify towards knowledge-intensive sectors supporting a high number of graduates and the city's higher-education institutions.

However, the prolonged COVID-19 restrictions and economic shutdowns have had a dramatic impact on the economy that could not have been anticipated.

Impacts across the city have been far-reaching and have disproportionately affected specific sectors and resident groups, while the repercussions on the hospitality, retail, culture and sport, aviation, tourism and visitor economies have been unprecedented. In addition to this, certain groups of people have been disproportionately affected by unemployment and loss of earnings resulting from the pandemic.

In recent years the rapid rise in Manchester's population has been boosted by the strong economy and availability of high-quality accommodation in the city centre. During the pandemic the development of this accommodation was paused, as was the movement of people nationally and internationally. In addition to this, decreasing employment opportunities due to the pandemic restrictions saw the number of people choosing to make Manchester their home greatly reduced. One of the main contributors to population growth in the city has traditionally been international immigration, including foreign students. Consequently, effort will be needed to minimise the impact that COVID-19 may have on Manchester's future population growth. Despite this, the city's reputation for welcoming people from around the world remains strong, and it is anticipated that as travel restrictions lift new residents will begin to arrive.

The Office for National Statistics population projections for the city have not been updated since 2018 and so do not take into account the effects of Brexit and COVID-19 on the city. These figures will not be revised until after the publication of the 2021 census results. However, the updated Manchester City Council forecasting model shows an increase in population since 2016 with an expected growth over the next five years.



The most recent data for economic growth (between 2018 and 2019) shows that Manchester's economy continued to grow compared to the rest of the UK, and during 2019, total employment continued to rise. Reliable data or analysis on the impact of the pandemic on employment structures is not yet available, but the prospects for different sectors are expected to vary. It is already evident that the pandemic has led to significant job losses across the city, and that new ways of working and changes in consumer behaviour will have significant ramifications for the employment opportunities in the city.

In the face of these challenges, the diverse and adaptable nature of Manchester's economy will be needed to ensure that the city is able to respond to and be resilient to the economic challenges in the years ahead. Alongside this, the continuing presence of a significant gap between resident and workplace wages presents a further challenge to achieving a recovery that is founded on inclusive growth. Ensuring Manchester has a strong and inclusive economy where residents are recognised for their contribution via fair contracts and being paid at least the Real Living Wage is one of the key components of the Our Manchester – Forward to 2025 reset. Despite this, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant rise in poverty in Manchester, evidenced by a 90% rise in the number of unemployed people claiming benefits between March and May 2020. The true extent of in-work poverty has also come to light in the past year, and by the end of 2020, 37% of Universal Credit claimants were in work but eligible for benefits to meet their shortfall in income.

Manchester's city centre has grown and been transformed over recent years and is a major asset for the city. While the development of cities globally

has been reduced by the pandemic, Manchester has maintained momentum and continues its pre-pandemic growth trajectory following an initial slowdown in March 2020. Manchester has continued to successfully and sustainably develop, due to a strong, co-ordinated and collaborative response with partners across the city.

In recent years, cultural activity has been key to Manchester's growth and at the heart of the city's identity, enhancing its attractiveness and reputation. The value of the visitor economy pre-pandemic was £9billion; it is estimated that during 2020 at least 70% of that value was lost, resulting in more than £6billion loss to the economy, as well as thousands of job losses across the tourism, hospitality, leisure and culture sectors. Research shows that international visitors are not expected to return to pre-pandemic levels until 2023/24, and it is still too early to determine the impact of Brexit on international visitors to the city. Despite this, there is expected to be pent-up demand to visit the city once the virus is managed and restrictions lifted, and this will be supported by new attractions at existing and new businesses, such as The Factory, RHS Bridgewater and Therme Manchester.

Manchester's visitor economy has been a key driver in the city's economic success over recent years, supported by Manchester Airport as a global gateway. Travel restrictions during the pandemic have had an unprecedented impact on the local and regional visitor economy, affecting businesses, supply chains, and employment opportunities throughout the North. Many of these are ongoing and likely to be long-lasting, resulting in consequent changes to consumer behaviour.

## A highly skilled city

A highly skilled workforce is essential to ensure Manchester's economy continues to thrive. Increasing skill levels within the city's population will ensure our residents can access the high-level jobs the city's economy is creating and help reduce levels of dependency, giving everyone the opportunity to benefit from the city's economic success. Over the past 16 years, the progress made in improving the skill levels of residents has been a key component in ensuring the city's overall growth is maintained.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the skills and labour market. The rapid change of skills supply-and-demand landscape has resulted in some occupation areas growing rapidly while others are declining. An important part of the city's recovery work has focused on skills, the labour market and business activity.

Ensuring children have a good start in life and preparing them to learn is critical to the future success of the city. The Council remains committed to improving school-readiness through continued engagement with Early Years settings and the provision of specific targeted early help intervention where it is needed. During 2020, Early Years Foundation Stage assessments (the teacher assessment of children's development at the end of the academic year in which the child turns five) were unable to take place. Services across the city focused on partnership working, and a range of organisations adapted their approaches to provide flexible service delivery and a blended approach.



The pandemic has had a major impact on the delivery of education for children and young people in the city. Schools were closed for most pupils for significant periods of the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years, and the UK saw the cancellation of national assessments and exams. As such, our focus has been to support schools, Early Years settings and other education providers to provide good-quality remote learning and to support the most vulnerable. Support was provided for schools and education settings via the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), over 3,000 laptops to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and the gifting of thousands of books, including a book to every child in Year 6 in both 2020 and 2021 in Manchester. All schools in Manchester provided a remote learning and an extended curriculum offer, including for children with special educational needs/disabilities. Despite remote learning and home schooling, there are likely to be attainment setbacks in future years. Manchester's educational institutions continue to work hard to ensure our young people can access education. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, improving the outcomes for all children will remain a key educational priority as well as an increased focus on emotional resilience for all Manchester children to support them in their recovery from the crisis.

School Ofsted inspections were suspended in March 2020; however, before this, 90% of schools and 98% of Early Years settings were classed as 'good' or 'better'. The quality of Manchester's primary and secondary schools continues to improve, and the number being rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted are above the national average.

The Manchester College continues to support its students to think beyond their next educational step towards their ultimate career ambitions so that they can be assisted to meet these aspirations. This vision is being supported by the development of a new £140million estate, which will provide students of all ages with state-of-the-art, industry-standard facilities to support the delivery of a high-quality, technical education. From September 2021, the college will commence its delivery of T Level courses, delivering a significant level of post-16 technical education. The commitment of the college to ensuring that all students achieve their full potential has also played an integral role in seeing the college become the number one college in Greater Manchester for overall achievement.

There remains a focus on increasing the number of residents obtaining qualifications in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths), digital and creative skill-related subjects. Rapid progress is needed in the development of digital and technical skills, as the growth of Manchester's digital sector is currently being inhibited by the lack of appropriately skilled candidates to fill the available roles. In addition to this, digital skills continue to grow in importance across all occupations, while digitisation and automation play an increasingly important role in changing the skills needs in employment. Several fast-track and intensive training courses are now emerging to address this challenge. In addition, these initiatives are focused on improving diversity within the sector and ensuring that there is greater digital inclusion, so that all Manchester residents have a basic level of digital literacy.

Supporting the delivery of Manchester's commitment to be zero-carbon by 2038 will see a growing need to create good-quality green jobs that support socially responsible businesses to thrive, secure investment for zero-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure, and establish the products, services and business models that we need to succeed. Manchester's new employability programmes aim to prioritise green-economy skills to broaden the skill base and support growth. It is estimated that over 6,000 additional jobs in the low-carbon and renewable-energy sector will be required by 2030, increasing to over 10,000 by 2050. We are working closely with the GMCA to gather and analyse skills and intelligence information in order to understand the occupation, skills and progression pathways and to identify specific gaps in provision.

Ensuring the city's residents have the necessary skills to engage with the needs of the job market has become increasingly important following the ongoing economic impacts of COVID-19. As such, there is a need to ensure that Manchester takes full advantage of the Government's schemes to support people into work and training. This includes the Kickstart Scheme, which supports young people aged 16–24 at risk of long-term unemployment, into newly created paid employment, with the Government directly paying employers the young people's wages for six months, plus an amount to cover overheads. Locally, the Manchester's Rising Star Fund was launched in January 2021 to support ambitious young people with up to £2,000 to overcome barriers that are preventing them from progressing in education, employment, training or self-employment. Since its launch over £35,000 has been awarded.

Effective careers education information and guidance (CEIAG) plays an important role in building ambition and aspiration to ensure Manchester's young people have the necessary knowledge, understanding, confidence and skills to make informed choices and plans about their future learning and careers. The Council continues to support the CEIAG network to help make our young people aware of the city's changing economy. We have continued to support and encourage businesses to work with our primary and secondary schools and colleges to help our young people reach their full potential and support a bounce back in the economy, and especially work-based learning. During the pandemic we successfully maintained the CEIAG network, and over 80% of secondary schools and colleges engaged via virtual meetings. In addition to this, the network was introduced to 15 businesses, many having a social value commitment to Manchester.

Good-quality apprenticeships across all ages, levels and sectors are critical to building a strong and resilient economy. 2020/21 has been a challenging period for employers, providers and those seeking apprenticeships. During the period after the COVID-19 lockdown began (23 March 2020 to 31 July 2020), there was a decrease of 47% in the overall number of apprenticeship starts nationally compared to the same period in 2019. In the academic year 2019/20, apprenticeship starts fell by 18% nationally and fell by 23% in Manchester compared to 2018/19. The focus of employers has also shifted towards higher-level and older apprentices. Owing to a data time lag, it is difficult to assess the full impact of the pandemic on apprenticeships, but Manchester continues to increase the number and quality of apprenticeships.

Despite the strength and resilience of Manchester's economy, there are still significant challenges to overcome to connect all Manchester's residents to the city's growth. Improvements made in recent years in skills, qualifications, job security and wages have not reached all our residents, leading to a persistent gap between workforce and resident wages. This has been further negatively impacted by the economic crisis following the pandemic. In response to this, Manchester residents facing redundancy or a reduction in their working hours have been supported by a partnership that assists them to retrain or find new employment opportunities.

In certain communities, there remain concentrations of residents with low or no qualifications, alongside issues of social exclusion and poor health. However, despite the impact of the pandemic, in 2020 the number of residents with no qualifications has continued to fall from 24.7% in 2004 to 7.8% in 2020. The gap between Manchester's population and the national average is also reducing; in the past year the gap has halved, and Manchester is now only slightly above the national average of 6.2%. Conversely, the proportion of Manchester's residents educated to degree level has continued to increase from 27.3% in 2004 to 47.7% in 2020; this remains higher than the national average, 42.8% in 2020. An integrated approach with partners is required to support residents with no and low levels of qualifications. Adult education provides one route to respond to these challenges, but a more cohesive skills system with clearer defined priorities is needed if it is to make a significant impact on social mobility in the city. The Manchester Adult Education and Skills Plan has continued to evolve, change and adapt over the past year to meet the challenges of the COVID-19

pandemic and skills shortage in the city, and adopts a place-based approach to meet the needs of the city's residents.

## A progressive and equitable city

Manchester aims to be a place where everyone has the same opportunities and life chances, with the potential to lead a safe, healthy, happy and fulfilled life, no matter where they were born or where they live. This means reducing disparities between different areas of the city and different communities within it. While Manchester has made real progress towards achieving this aim – including improvements in education and housing, better access to jobs, and reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training – much more work is needed.

The urgency of this has been heightened by the exacerbating effect of COVID-19 on the existing inequalities in the city, which disproportionately affect some of the most already disadvantaged communities. For example, it is estimated that Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups account for 45% of the city's population; however, at the peak of the pandemic, these groups accounted for approximately 60% of COVID-19 cases. Many minority ethnic groups were more economically vulnerable than the rest of the city's population and were up to four times more likely to work in 'shut down' industries during lockdown. Nationally, disabled people accounted for approximately 60% of COVID-19 deaths, and learning-disabled people were found to be up to six times more likely to die from COVID-19, trends that were reflected

locally. The pandemic has had a particularly profound effect on disabled people, those with long-term health conditions, ethnic minorities, women, migrants, those living in poverty, and older people; the exact nature and extent of the social and economic impacts of the pandemic continues to evolve. The Council's focus on reducing inequalities is now more important than ever, and it remains committed to tackling these entrenched inequalities so Manchester can become a progressive and equitable city.

Manchester has been working for a number of years to radically transform public services so they are focused on our people and our communities, rather than organisational silos. The integration of health and social care is transforming the experience and outcome of people who need help by putting them at the heart of the joined-up service. This approach is reflected in Manchester's [Locality Plan – Our Healthier Manchester](#), which presents the first five years of the ambitious, transformational change needed to deliver our vision to radically improve health and care outcomes in the city. The plan supports residents to become independent, resilient and better connected to the assets and networks in place in the community. As part of this, services will be reformed so that they are built around residents and communities.

The number of individuals and households experiencing homelessness in Manchester has remained high and there remains significant pressure on services that are working to prevent and tackle homelessness in the city. The Government's 'Everyone In' initiative launched during the lockdown of the city centre in March 2020 successfully provided safe, supported

accommodation for people who had been sleeping rough in the city, or who had been living in shared spaces in emergency accommodation. Consequently, there was a decrease in begging opportunities during this period and a greater engagement with statutory and support services. The number of people presenting as homeless decreased by 3% from 2019/20, largely due to a drop in presentations during the first national lockdown, in March 2020. However, the number owed a statutory duty increased in 2020/21, in part due to people accessing support via emergency COVID-19 accommodation who would not have engaged with services in the past. The Council continues to work in partnership with voluntary, statutory and business partners to prevent and tackle all forms of homelessness.

During 2020/21, we worked with partners to develop a range of responses to tackle rough sleeping that focus on increasing access to settled homes in the social and private-rented sectors. A wide range of incentives were developed for tenancies in this sector, including specialist support, financial assistance, rental guarantees and landlord-insurance policies. This has successfully helped over 1,000 households move into private-sector properties. 2020/21 also saw the launch of the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme, which supports and provides accommodation for those impacted by rough sleeping. Phase 1 of the scheme saw more than seventy properties developed and delivered. A particular challenge in Manchester has been the lack of settled accommodation for individuals who need a home as well as mental health support. During the past year, the Greater Manchester Mental Health (GMMH) team have partnered with the homelessness service to pilot innovative

ways to tackle some of these barriers, including providing funding for deposits and rent voids to secure properties.

Various initiatives have been developed to provide support for those with long-term health problems and disabilities. Activity continues to support our residents to access good-quality work, with employment being recognised as a key contributor to reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing. High rates of health-related worklessness have persisted in Manchester in times of economic growth and economic downturn. The Working Well programme takes a holistic approach to supporting residents into good-quality employment by offering a range of skills support, work experience and employment support. There is now a need to ensure that the work of these programmes is scaled up to support those with physical and mental health issues.

Reducing the number of children and families living in poverty and supporting them to be more resilient and able to meet their full potential is key to building a progressive and equitable city. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the city's children and families, plunging many more into poverty. The latest data shows that the number of children in Manchester living in poverty continues to rise and is significantly higher than the UK average. Work in Manchester has focused on employment as a route out of poverty, raising and protecting family incomes, boosting resilience and building on strengths. In December 2020, the Family Poverty Core Group approved the [Family Poverty Strategy Reprioritisation](#) document, which was developed to ensure that in light of the COVID-19 pandemic the strategy continues to meet the



needs of children and families living in poverty. The reprioritised strategy included additional priorities, such as digital inclusion.

Building a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for our children and young people is imperative for the city's success, as outlined in the [Manchester Children and Young People's Plan](#). However, the impact of COVID-19 and the periods of lockdown on the city's children and young people is becoming increasingly evident. Despite the resilience shown, we know that children and young people from disadvantaged families have been disproportionately impacted. Throughout the pandemic, Manchester continued to provide services for vulnerable children and families, and referral rates to Children's Services in 2020/21 were similar to the previous year. The number of Looked After Children has slightly decreased to 1,371 (by the end of March 2021), but remains consistently above other similar local authorities. Consequently, Children's Services are taking a comprehensive approach to reduce the number of entrants into the care system and the length of time that children spend in local authority care.

[Manchester's Early Help Strategy \(2018–21\)](#) states that families, particularly those with multiple and complex needs, will have access to co-ordinated Early Help in accordance with need as soon as difficulties are identified. A collaborative approach between Early Years, Early Help and the Local Care Organisation has been developed taking a whole-family approach, and the Early Help Hubs have a key role to support this at the neighbourhood level. This has helped to provide Manchester's children with the best start in life and ensure they are ready for school.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a unique challenge for Adult Social Care, which has played a critical role in supporting vulnerable people across the city to remain safe and as independent as possible. Work during the pandemic focused on hospital discharges, providing ongoing support for care providers, ensuring a supply of PPE, and COVID-19 testing. The pandemic has strengthened the city's commitment to deliver integrated health and adult social care between Manchester City Council and Manchester University Foundation Trust.

The [Manchester Healthy Weight Strategy](#) was agreed in March 2020 and launched in May 2021 with MCRactive. The strategy was developed with a range of stakeholders and takes a whole-system approach to tackling obesity across each life course. The delivery of the strategy will be supported by the Healthy Weight Project within schools and work with health visitors to support children.

The mental health of many people has been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Be Well, the wellbeing and social-prescribing service for Manchester, has been an essential component of the neighbourhood response. During the pandemic, the service worked with partners across the city as part of the community response to support individuals around the delivery of medication and food parcels. This ensured that vulnerable residents had the support they needed.

The pandemic has had a major impact on cancer services; significantly fewer residents presented at their GP practices and there was a consequent drop in cancer referrals. Referrals are still not back to pre-pandemic levels, and there continues to be some evidence of hesitancy among residents to attend hospital.

A long-term plan to tackle Manchester's entrenched health inequalities is set out in the [Manchester Population Health Plan \(2018–27\)](#). This plan is now the overarching health and wellbeing plan for the city. Good progress has been made in several areas, such as a reduction in the number of mothers being reported as smokers at the time their baby was delivered, and an increase in the proportion of cancers diagnosed early. However, evidence suggests that the pandemic has had a major negative and disproportionate impact on the city's residents. The life expectancy of Manchester residents and recent improvements in death from preventable diseases (such as cancer and cardiovascular) may have been reversed by the pandemic. Clear evidence has emerged that the pandemic has also disproportionately affected particular groups, notably Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, those born outside of the UK, disabled people, and those in high-risk occupations and/or in poverty. Consequently, Manchester still has some of the worst health outcomes in the country, with significant inequalities across the city.

In order to progress towards becoming a progressive and equitable city, there has been a continual shift in the focus of services towards the prevention of problems and early intervention. Services are being focused on hubs within communities to aid integration and partnership working, and to maximise the impact of the strengths of the communities in which people live. Such actions aim to ensure people receive the right support from the right place at the right time so they can lead healthy, happy and fulfilled lives wherever they were born and wherever they live, and so they can continue to benefit from the success of the city.

The introduction of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams is transforming the way residents experience their community-based health and adult social care. This has been critical during the pandemic. Intervention, prevention and reablement and services that better support people's needs in the community have supported vulnerable people, preventing the need for more intensive health and social-care interventions and ensuring the safe discharge from hospital as soon as they are able. The move to integrated working with community-based health and social-care staff working collaboratively within the Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO) is crucial to the city's success. Manchester has been a national leader in developing more integrated health and social care in recent years; the city is well placed to take advantage of the Government's national reforms to establish Integrated Care Systems at the level of Greater Manchester, including plans to 'supercharge' MLCO. As part of this work, a new agreement between Manchester City Council and Manchester University Foundation Trust (MFT) has been developed that will effectively deliver integrated health and adult social care and include the delegation of responsibility for adult social care to MLCO.

The Age-Friendly Manchester programme aims to improve the quality of life for older people in the city, making Manchester a better place for people to grow old. [Manchester: A Great Place to Grow Older \(2017–21\)](#) outlines systems and structures needed to work well together to improve the health and wellbeing of older people through a collaborative and partnership programme. Intervention, prevention, reablement and services that better serve people's needs in the community are resulting in fewer adults, particularly older

people, in need of going into residential or nursing care. However, Manchester's older people have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and its subsequent restrictions, affecting both their physical and mental health. Social connectedness and low levels of digital access have also led to an increase in loneliness and social isolation. In response to this, the Age Friendly Manchester Older People's Board has reset its priorities with a renewed focus on the city being more age-friendly in order to ensure that Manchester is a progressive and equitable city.

## A liveable and zero-carbon city

Ensuring Manchester is a great place to live with sustainable, safe, resilient and cohesive neighbourhoods is crucial to us fulfilling our 2025 ambitions. This will be achieved by providing a range of high-quality housing options in clean, safe, attractive neighbourhoods, and by maintaining widespread access to high-quality cultural, sporting and leisure facilities. Pursuing a zero-carbon future with cleaner air will also help to create attractive neighbourhoods where people are happy.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, Manchester continues to try and meet the varied housing needs of all its residents by developing a diverse supply of good-quality housing available to rent and buy that is well designed, energy-efficient and affordable. During the pandemic, homes continued to be delivered at scale, with more new homes built in 2020/21 than in any year since 2008.

A key part of the city's recovery from the pandemic will be the continued increasing delivery of housing – particularly affordable housing. The demand for housing from our most vulnerable residents has not diminished and has become more acute, with growing numbers on the housing register and in temporary housing. Manchester is committed to deliver new housing using brownfield land where possible, but this is only made possible by continued access to Government funding. Without this investment, the city will be limited in its ambition to build much-needed homes for our residents and progressing our zero-carbon ambitions.

In July 2019, Manchester City Council declared a climate emergency, which recognised that the crisis of climate change is the single biggest challenge faced by the world today and can only be overcome by taking urgent, radical action. Manchester is committed to becoming a zero-carbon city by 2038 at the latest and has set a carbon budget for its direct carbon emissions, setting out how much CO<sub>2</sub> can be used between 2018 and 2100. Over the past year, a range of projects and initiatives has been delivered to progress our zero-carbon ambitions. The Council's direct-carbon emissions have significantly reduced in recent years, but the city is not yet decarbonising at the required pace and collective and urgent action is now required.

Ensuring that Manchester is clean and well maintained and that residents are supported to take pride in the city is one of our key priorities. The standard of street cleansing in an area makes a significant contribution to its perception and appeal as a neighbourhood of choice. The Council continues to be committed to recycling more of the

city's waste, but despite this it is anticipated that the recycling rate in 2020/21 will fall, as residents spend more time at home and produce more waste. Fly-tipping also increased during the pandemic as household waste increased. Manchester continues to work closely with communities and partner agencies to address littering and fly-tipping through a process of enforcement and education, together with a programme of direct action in partnership with the local community.

Through the Community Safety Partnership, the Council continues to work with other public-sector bodies, universities, Greater Manchester Police, businesses and communities to develop new initiatives to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. While the overall approach is to reduce the amount of reported crime, in some cases known to be underreported (such as domestic violence and abuse incidents), the strategy encourages people to report suspected incidents. Following the March 2020 lockdown, cases of antisocial behaviour in the city more than doubled. This was largely due to the Greater Manchester approach to intervene when house parties and gatherings occurred that breached COVID-19 regulations. The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a significant impact on levels of recorded crime, both locally and nationally. Across Greater Manchester, offences reduced mainly due to the impact the city centre and its night-time economy normally has on crime statistics, and the pandemic led to bigger reductions in theft and robbery offences than other kinds of crime. More generally, crimes against the person reduced less than crimes against property, while offences flagged as domestic abuse in Manchester saw a small increase. There were also signs, particularly in the early months of lockdown, that young people

were experiencing increased exposure to domestic violence. Extra funding has been secured to commission extra services providing increased capacity to focus on early intervention and prevention.

Conserving, protecting and enhancing biodiversity is a key priority for Manchester. A plentiful supply of well-managed green and blue infrastructure plays an important role in improving health and wellbeing; it also encourages more active lifestyles and contributes towards the city's carbon-reduction strategy. During the past year, Manchester's parks have seen a significant increase in visitors, as they became more important during lockdowns to support residents with their physical and mental wellbeing. The pandemic also saw the formation of two new Friends Groups and 17,500 volunteer hours were used to help keep parks litter-free.

Manchester has a dynamic and vibrant history of cultural innovation delivered by major cultural institutions alongside a rich mix of smaller organisations. The sector provides a key role in delivering both economic and social objectives of the city. The COVID-19 crisis has seen the cultural sector's income generation and programming output severely reduced, and it is anticipated that the sector will continue to face challenges into the coming months and years. Many organisations reacted quickly to the challenges faced during lockdown restrictions by seeking different ways to deliver their programmes. This demonstrated a creative approach to maintaining relationships with audiences, participants and artists, as well as supporting more vulnerable members of society to engage and be creative. In response to the ongoing challenges, Manchester has developed a [Cultural Recovery Plan](#) to aid the sector's recovery.

During the past year, Manchester's libraries have provided a lifeline for residents when their ability to visit other venues was severely limited. Despite visits to libraries inevitably falling during the pandemic, there was an exceptional increase in the use of electronic resources. During the third lockdown at the beginning of 2021, libraries remained open, as they were considered to be an essential service for residents, partially due to their role in providing free internet access. Libraries have also offered a varied and diverse online programme of events and activities for all ages, which have been very popular.

MCRactive, a not-for-profit organisation overseen by the Council, are responsible for driving sport and activity across the city by encouraging everyone to have a more active and healthier lifestyle. During the pandemic, MCRactive have developed new ways to support residents via online activity, which saw more than forty weekly live streams or online classes delivered during periods of lockdown.

Manchester's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector has been integral to the city's response to the pandemic. The recent State of the Manchester VCSE Sector report (Macc et al, 2021) identified that Manchester's VCSE sector comprises 3,871 voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises that make a difference to Mancunians' lives every day; this number increased sharply in response to the pandemic. VCSE services and initiatives are delivered by some 162,000 volunteers giving around 481,000 hours each week, valued at £242million per annum (based on a Real Living Wage of £9.50 per hour).



During the pandemic, the Volunteer Centre Manchester received over 7,000 volunteer applications. Over 2,500 registrations of support were received as marshals for vaccination sites, and 300 to support surge-testing efforts. The Voluntary and Community Sector delivered the COVID-19 Impact Fund and distributed £745,000 to support the mental health and wellbeing of priority resident groups and £50,000 to support victims of domestic violence and abuse. VCSE groups and organisations have worked in extremely challenging circumstances to support residents' health and wellbeing, yet despite this, the pandemic has presented a significant challenge for the VCSE sector. This is illustrated by 50% of Manchester VCSE organisations having had to use up their reserves in the 12-month period up to July 2021, 51% of these directly because of COVID-19. In an increasingly challenging funding environment, the long-term impact of the pandemic on the viability, diversity and strength of Manchester's VCSE sector remains to be seen.

## A connected city

For a city to be successful it needs to be well connected locally, nationally and internationally. Connections are essential for residents to access work opportunities, education and services, and for businesses to access markets and their customers. As modern technology is increasingly enabling these connections to happen virtually, fast and reliable digital connectivity is needed alongside effective and efficient physical connectivity.

The Council has continued to work collaboratively with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to take a strategic approach to planning our city's

transport network. A refreshed [Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040](#) was adopted in early 2021, along with a five-year delivery plan of infrastructure priorities. This strategic approach has been built on in Manchester with the adoption of a refreshed [City Centre Transport Strategy](#) in March 2021, which prioritises walking as the main way of moving around the city centre.

Manchester Airport enables excellent national and international connectivity by air. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, passenger numbers increased year on year to 29.4million passengers in 2019. However, passenger numbers have been severely impacted by the pandemic reducing to just over 7million during 2020; a 76% reduction compared to 2019. The Airport is currently undergoing a £1billion transformation programme, due for completion in 2024. This work has significantly increased the size of Terminal 2 and will maximise the capacity of the Airport to be able to carry 55million passengers a year. In recognition of Manchester Airport's key role in supporting the economy of the city and the North as a national and international transport hub, the Council has been the major contributor to an economic support package put together in May 2020 by all ten Greater Manchester local authorities.

Progress has continued to be made to improve Manchester's rail connectivity over the past year. Preparations continue to facilitate the construction of High Speed 2 (HS2), with plans focusing on the development of a new station to be constructed at Manchester Piccadilly, which will also support the regeneration of the surrounding area. Plans for high-speed rail links connecting Manchester to other cities in the North of England have also

been progressed by Transport for the North. Both schemes will transform the connectivity of the region to the rest of the UK, driving economic growth.

Improvements have been made to strategic and key-route road networks to support the movement of people and freight locally and around the country. Highways England continue to progress several projects specifically focusing on the M60 and its role in distributing traffic through the city and to other areas outside Greater Manchester. Within Manchester, the Manchester and Salford Inner Relief Road (MSIRR) is essential to distribute traffic more effectively throughout the city and to improve the capacity of the network. During 2020, several improvements were made along this route to improve the flow of traffic and improve access into the city centre for cyclists and pedestrians. Working with partners to improve the safety of the highway network through targeted investment to develop infrastructure to reduce accidents and enforcement operations saw a reduction in those killed or seriously injured on Manchester's roads during 2020. Manchester is working with Highways England to ensure that these projects can be aligned with our commitment to be zero-carbon by 2038.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, journeys into the city centre by car were decreasing year on year and there were subsequent increases in walking, cycling and journeys made by public transport. Owing to the pandemic, there has been a 18% decrease in journeys into the city centre by all modes and a significant impact on the volume of patronage on public transport and highways usage. The extent to which public transport can regain mode share is likely to be dependent on a

range of factors, including confidence in hygiene and cleanliness, the effectiveness and adoption of face coverings by passengers, and overall prevalence of COVID-19 in the community. In addition to this, it remains unclear whether the upsurge in walking and cycling, which was encouraged by the clearer roads of the lockdown period, will be sustained.

Increased amounts of investment are being made into the highways network to make it easier and more attractive to make more short journeys on foot or by bike. In [Greater Manchester the Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#), known as the Beelines, there are details of how Greater Manchester will create a genuine culture of cycling and walking. Funding of £160million has been made available, with Manchester securing £79million for projects to deliver improvements to the highways network to make it easier and more attractive for people to take shorter journeys on foot or by bike.

In March 2021, the Greater Manchester Mayor announced that powers contained in the [Bus Services Act 2017](#) would be used to introduce a system of bus franchising in Greater Manchester. This would see the introduction of a unified brand across the city region for buses, with simplified, integrated ticketing across the bus network and Metrolink. This will support the development of a resilient and accessible comprehensive transport system that is attractive and affordable, enabling residents to access jobs, education and services in a seamless journey by combining several modes of transport.

The transport system is a major source of emissions that are damaging health and contribute to climate

change. Manchester is taking action to reduce the harmful levels of pollutants that exist in some areas of the city. In 2021, the Clean Air Plan for the region was approved by the ten Greater Manchester authorities; this includes the introduction of a Clean Air Zone by 2024 and a multimillion funding support programme for businesses and organisations to be able to upgrade their non-compliant vehicles. The Council continues to work with TfGM to expand the region's electric-vehicle public-charging network in order to encourage the use of electric vehicles and to support the city's commitments to be zero-carbon by 2038. Ways to further decarbonise transport by increasing the use of low-emission and electric vehicles and implementing a public-charging network are being explored.

In 2017, a consortium including the Council and TfGM secured £3.7million funding to trial a driverless electric shuttle service at the Airport and trial the use of autonomous vehicles between Stockport Railway Station and the Airport. It is hoped this will reduce congestion, improve air quality and road safety, and reduce carbon emissions. These trials were due to commence in summer 2021.

Manchester is already leading the way to becoming a digital city. It is one of Europe's fastest-growing technology cities with a strong and resilient digital sector. Ensuring that residents are equipped with the skills and technology to make the most of our rapidly digitising world is of fundamental importance to our future success. Over the past year, this has become increasingly important as the reliance on reliable broadband connections and digital skills has become increasingly important during the lockdown restrictions imposed during the pandemic. Work is underway to develop a Digital Strategy for

the city, which will focus on skills, neighbourhood connectivity, business and zero-carbon. Digital exclusion can have a range of negative impacts, such as social exclusion, an increased risk of poverty, and reduced access to employment. In 2020, Manchester developed a [Digital Inclusion Action Plan](#) working with stakeholders across the city to reduce digital exclusion. Part of the city's response to the pandemic was to provide over 900 residents with digital support via the Response Hub. This support has been able to continue by being integrated into the services provided by the Council's Libraries team.

## Conclusion

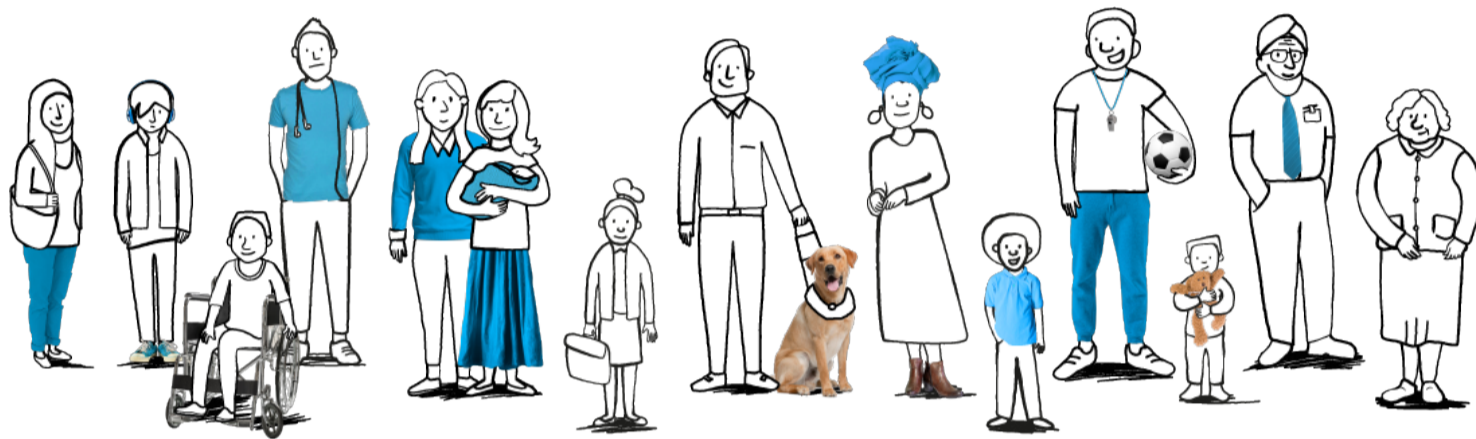
Significant progress has been made since the launch of the Our Manchester Strategy, with Manchester's population, economy and international profile all increasing. However, even before COVID-19 brought new challenges, there were many significant issues to overcome to fully deliver the vision for Manchester by 2025. The future of the UK outside the European Union continues to remain unclear, which may have an impact on future levels of migration and investment in the city. There is a need to address our communities' health outcomes and deprivation in our communities, and to ensure that our residents have the necessary skills to benefit from the success of the city. Addressing climate change becomes increasingly pressing each year. When delivering Manchester's recovery from COVID-19, we need to ensure a continued focus on addressing the challenges the city already faces, as well as the emerging ones resulting from the pandemic.

The reset of the Our Manchester Strategy has reframed the Strategy, recognising the progress Manchester has made over the past five years since the Strategy's launch in 2016, and the new and evolving challenges that have resulted from the ongoing effects of COVID-19. The reset will ensure the city focuses on the most salient priorities for the next five years to ensure we achieve our 2025 vision.

Through the Our Manchester approach, Manchester is seeking to address these challenges in a different way. Organisations, businesses and voluntary groups are continuing to put the four Our Manchester 'behaviours', outlined earlier in the chapter, into action and change the way they work. The Our Manchester approach is enabling new and different relationships to be established between the Council, partners, residents and workers in the city to ensure the city fulfils its potential and meets the aspirations of all who live and work in the city.



# A thriving and sustainable city



**627,000** residents expected by 2025

## Population

Population growth expected over next five years, assuming a gradual resumption of international travel, continuation of construction projects and steady economy recovery. **An increasing number of residents are aged 25–39** due to the city's rising popularity as a place to live, study and work.

Source: Manchester City Council Forecasting Model W2020 (adjusted to include impact of COVID-19)

## Living wage

In-work poverty is on the rise – by the end of 2020, **37% of Universal Credit claimants were in work but eligible for benefits** to meet their shortfall in income. It is estimated that 76% of Manchester residents earned at least the Real Living Wage of £9.30 in 2020. We aim to ensure that everybody is paid at least a Real Living Wage by 2025.

Source: Provisional 2020 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS

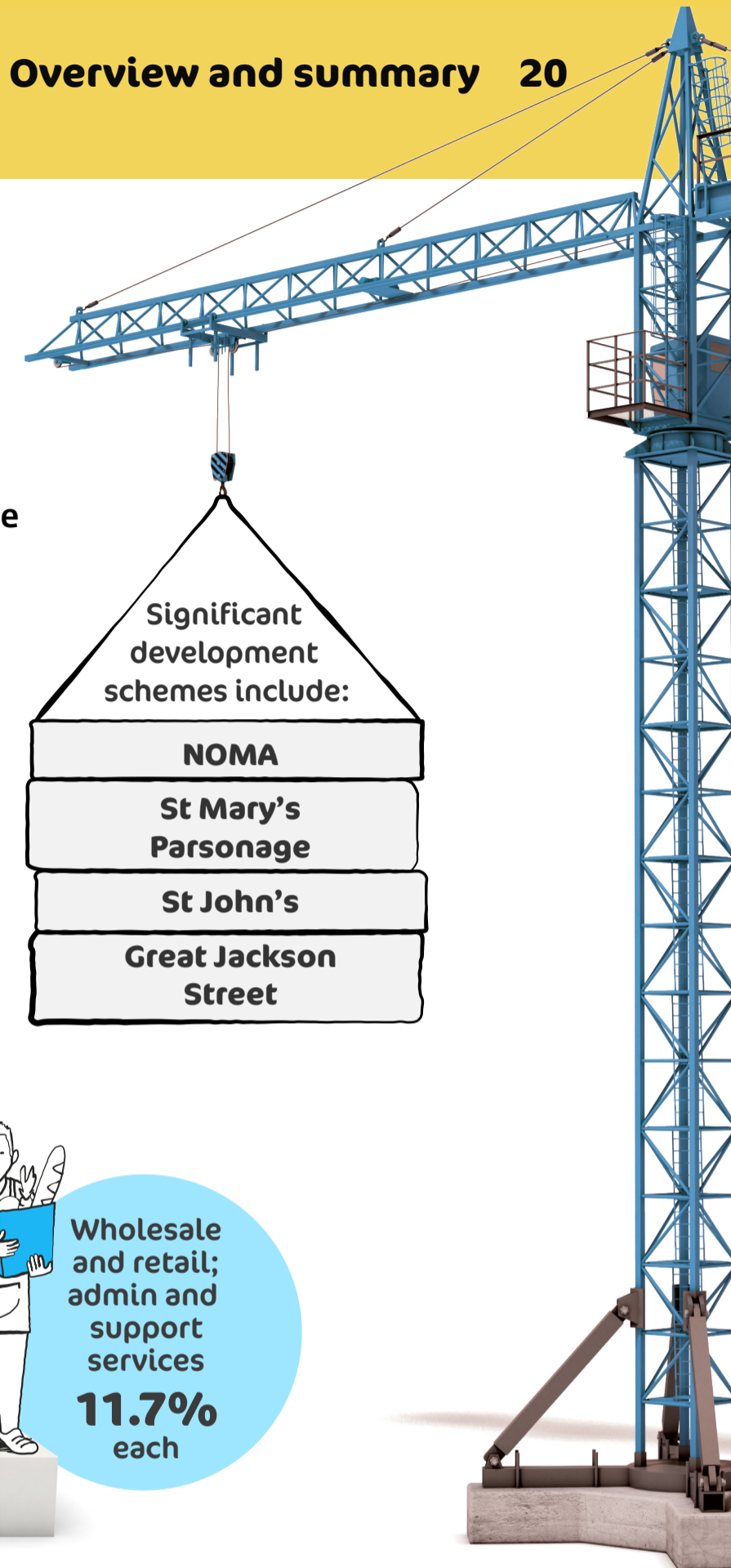


**76%** of Manchester residents earning at least the Real Living Wage

## Development in the city centre

Vibrant, mixed-use development has continued to transform the city's skyline – following an initial slowdown in March 2020, construction activity continued at a rapid pace. Manchester's Recovery and Investment Plan will help to ensure that this growth continues.

Source: Manchester City Council



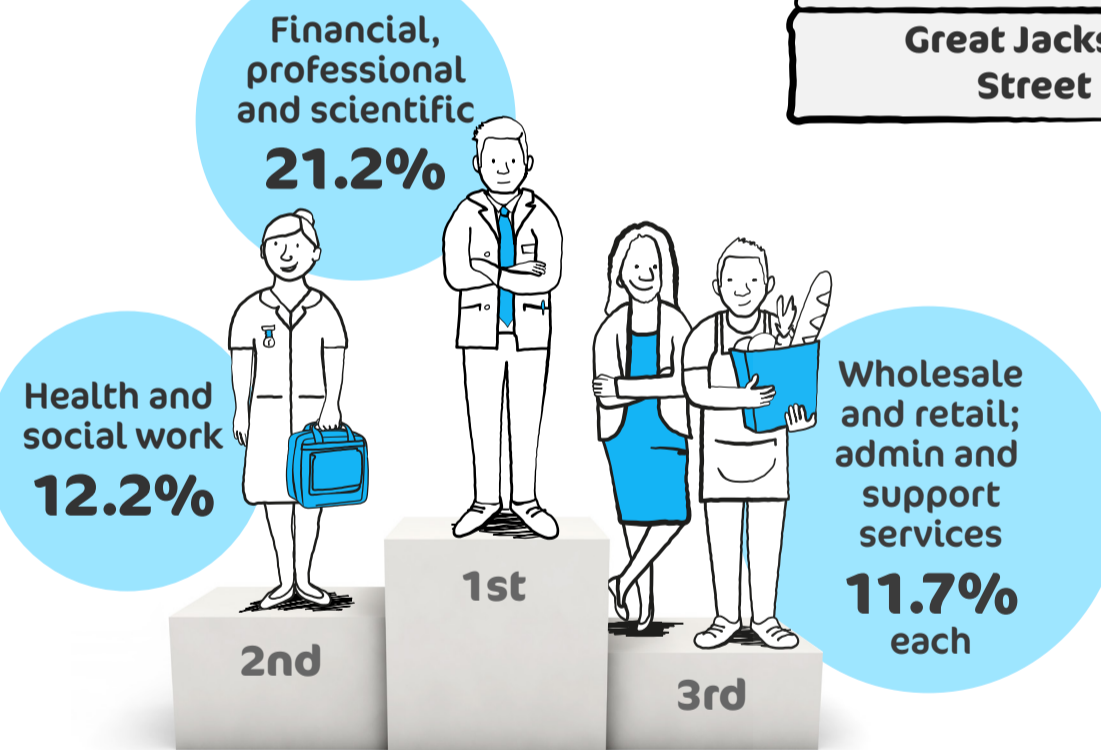
Significant development schemes include:

NOMA

St Mary's Parsonage

St John's

Great Jackson Street



## Employment

Pre-pandemic, employment in the city continued to rise, from 357,000 in 2015 to 410,000 in 2019. The pandemic disrupted many of our sectoral strengths, significantly impacting upon culture and retail. New ways of working and changes in consumer behaviour will embed and bring further sectoral changes, impacting upon employment opportunities in the city.

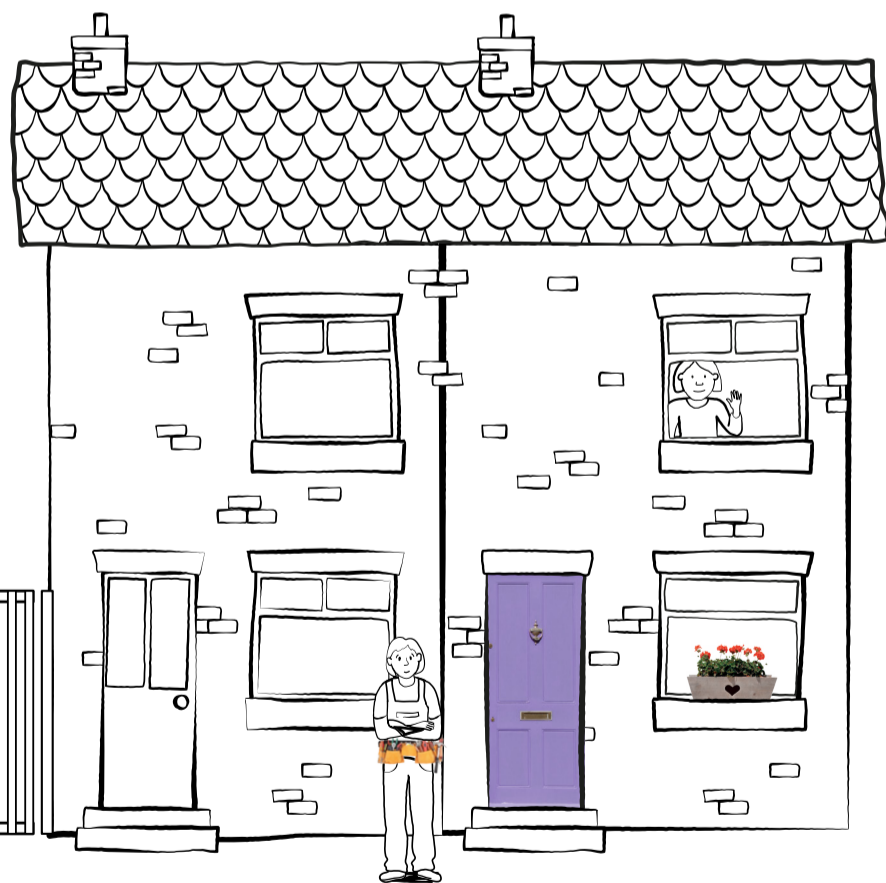
Source: ONS Business Register and Employment Survey, 2019 (provisional). Percentage of the workforce employed in the city's largest sectors.

# A highly skilled city

## Remote learning

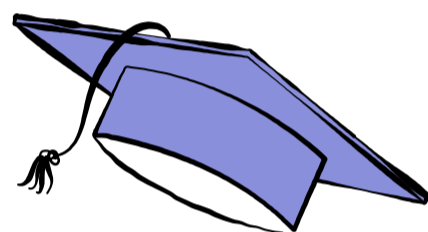
During the pandemic, schools, early years settings and other providers were supported to ensure a good-quality remote learning offer. **The Council provided advice and direct support for individual schools, distributed PPE, and allocated over 3,000 laptops to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children.**

Source: Manchester City Council



An estimated **6,175** new low-carbon sector jobs will be created by 2030, reaching **10,763** by 2050

**23%** of 2018/19 graduates originally from Manchester working in the city,



with a further **13%** working elsewhere in Greater Manchester

## Graduates

An increasing number of students are enrolling at higher-education providers in the city. Early indications show that the graduate recruitment market is recovering to pre-pandemic levels. Manchester University estimates that approximately **48% of its graduates express a desire to stay in the city for work.**

Source: HESA Graduate Outcomes Survey (survey taken 15 months after graduating)

## Skills for a zero-carbon economy

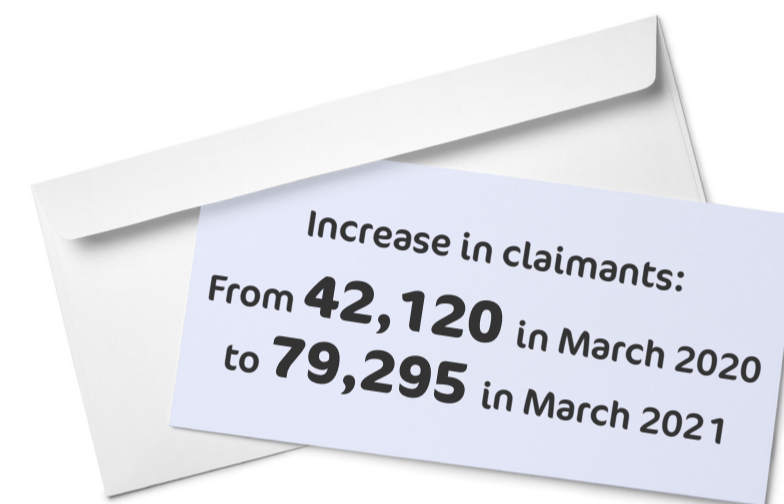
**Manchester is committed to a green, zero-carbon and climate-resilient recovery.** A zero-carbon skills framework is being developed to understand the skill needs that will emerge for each low-carbon sector, including retrofitting buildings, low-carbon heating, low-carbon transport and low-carbon services.

Source: Ecuity Consultants and Local Government Association, 2021

## Universal Credit

Significant **increase in Universal Credit claimants between March 2020 and March 2021.** The number of Universal Credit claimants in work has increased due to the high level of furlough. Younger residents aged 16–29 account for an increasing proportion of in-work claimants.

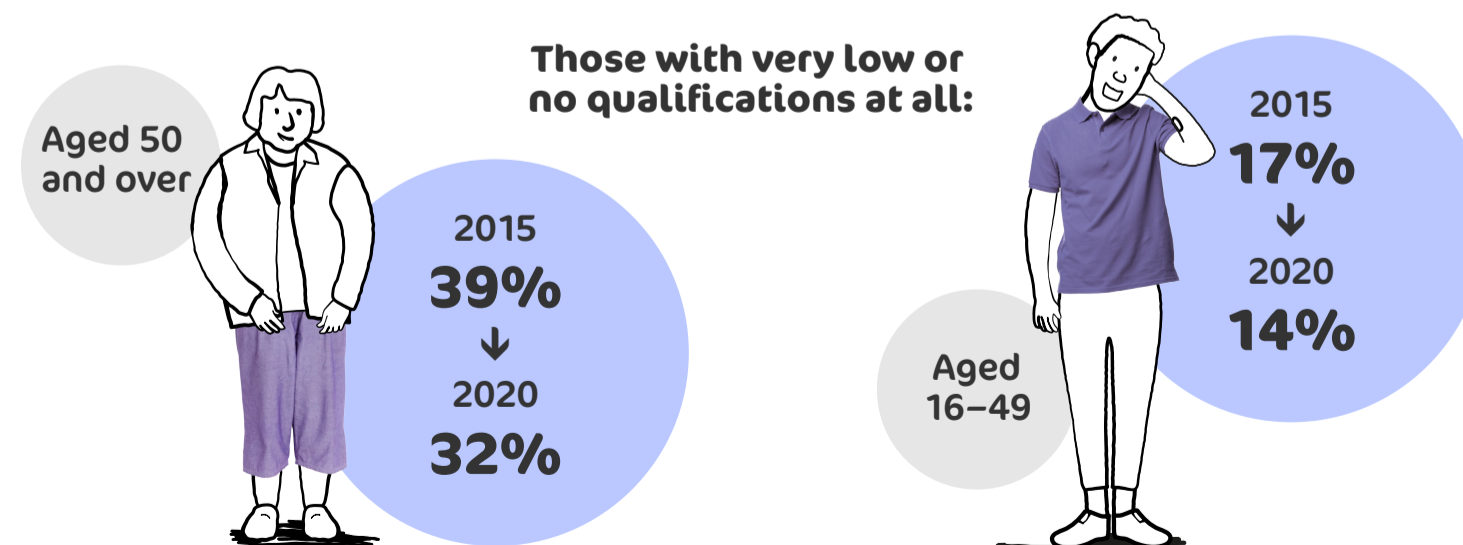
Source: StatXplore, Department for Work and Pensions



## Qualifications

**Over the past 16 years, the proportion of residents with no qualifications has reduced** from 24.7% to 7.8%, and is now only slightly above the national average of 6.2%. Over half the Manchester working-age population with low or no qualifications are unemployed. Low skill levels are more prevalent in residents aged over 50.

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, 2020





# A progressive and equitable city

## Homelessness

Significant increase in households residing in temporary accommodation over the past six years. There has been a 17% year-on-year increase in the use of temporary accommodation, in part due to the lack of move-on options during lockdown. **The Housing Solutions Service continued to see high demand in 2020/21** and a 30% increase in presentations where domestic violence and abuse was stated as the reason for loss of settled home.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (P1e and H-CLIC statutory return); HPA2, Locata.

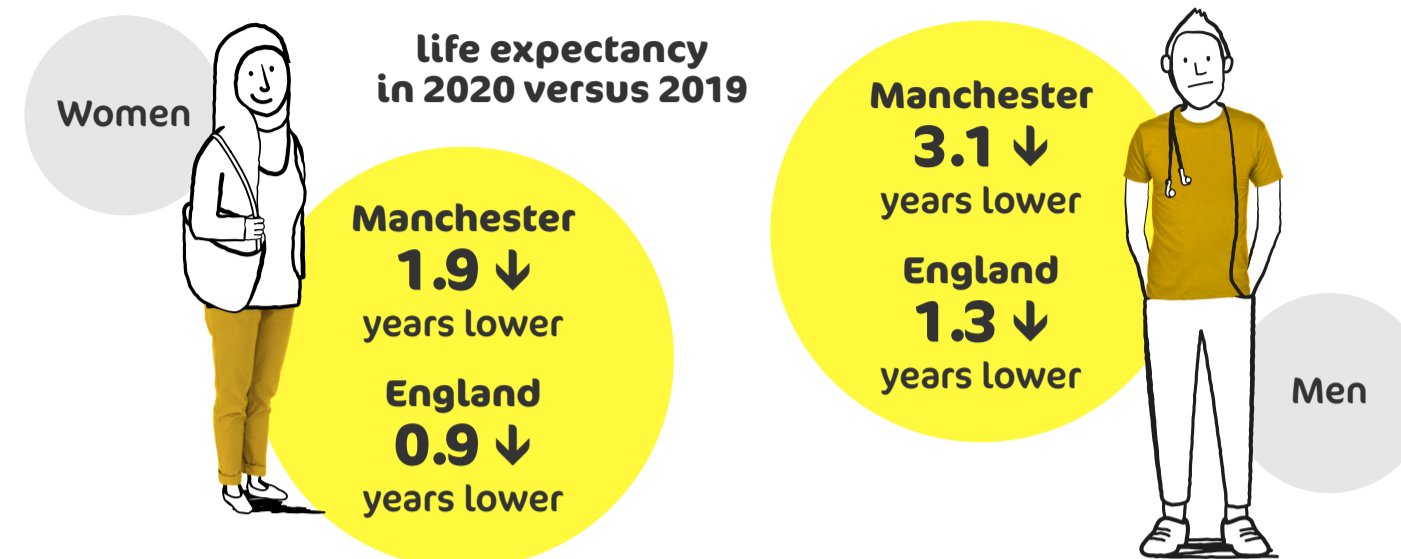


Increase from **406** (March 2015) to **2,546** (March 2021) households in temporary accommodation  
**9,608** people presenting as homeless (2020/21)

## Family poverty

**46,700 children living in poverty**, after housing costs taken into consideration, in March 2020, an increase of 1,550 children since March 2019. Affecting around 41.8% of those aged under 16, this rate is significantly higher than the UK average. 2020/21 saw a 50% rise in demand for food banks and pantries, and over 110,000 food parcels were delivered to residents' homes.

Source: Research by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University for the End Child Poverty Coalition



## Life expectancy at birth

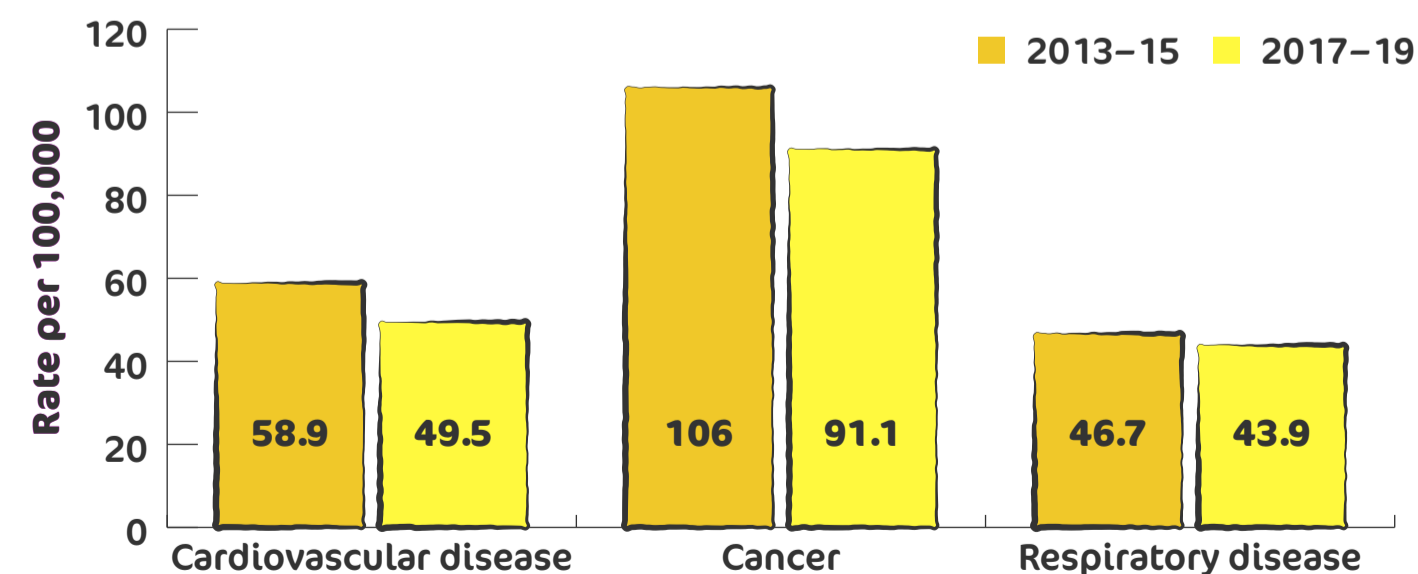
Provisional estimates of life expectancy at birth show the impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic**. The size of the fall in life expectancy in Manchester is more than that seen in England overall, widening inequalities in life expectancy between Manchester and the national average.

Source: England estimates, Public Health England; Manchester estimates, local analysis by Manchester Population Health Team based on ONS mortality data and mid-year population estimates.

## Premature mortality from causes considered preventable

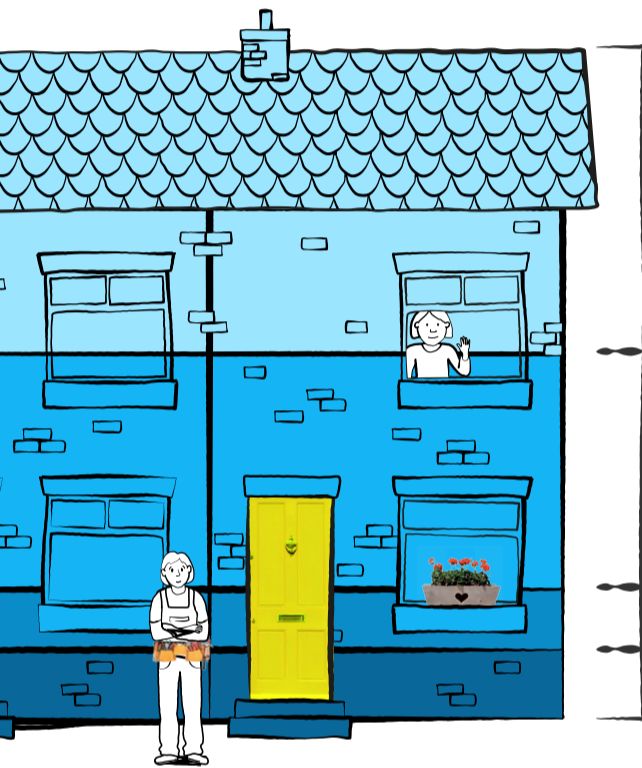
Although rates have fallen in recent periods, Manchester has one of the highest rates (per 100,000) in England of premature deaths from cardiovascular disease, cancer and respiratory disease.

Source: 2013–15 and 2017–19 three-year averages, Public Health England/ONS





# A liveable and zero-carbon city



2025 new homes target  
**32,000**

**17,499** new homes built

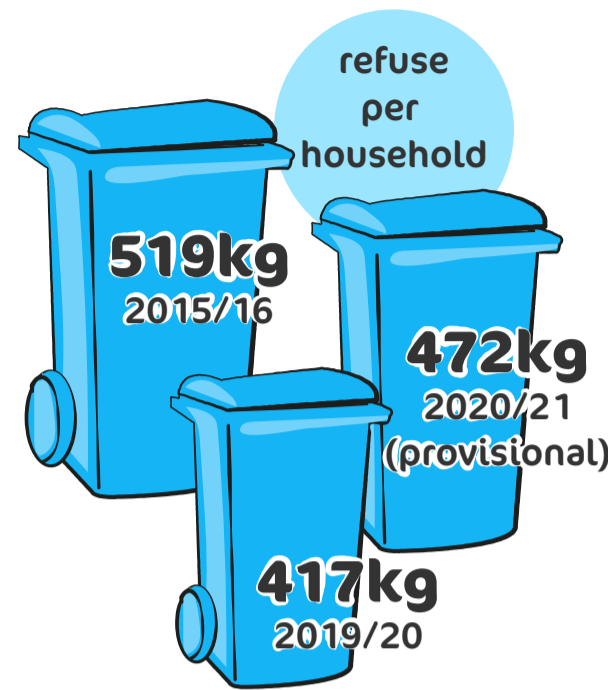
2025 affordable homes target  
**6,400**

**1,927** affordable homes built

## Housing

The continued **delivery of new affordable homes is increasing housing options** for some of our most vulnerable residents. In 2020/21, 446 new affordable homes were completed across Manchester – the highest figure since 2011. However, the pace of delivery needs to increase if we are to meet our Residential Growth Strategy targets.

Source: Manchester City Council Expected Completions List. Homes built between April 2015 and March 2021.



## Recycling

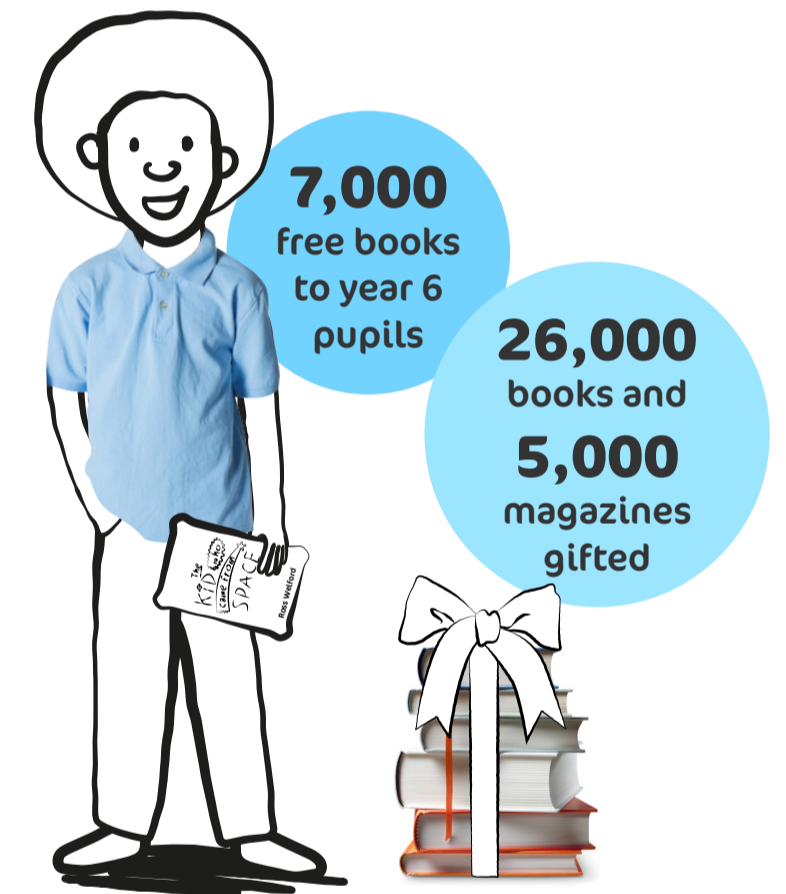
Recycling rates were maintained at **40%** in 2018/19 and 2019/20 but are forecast to fall to 37% in 2020/21. This is due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is in line with the national trend, which has led to residents spending more time at home and so producing more waste that goes into their refuse bins.

Source: Waste Data Flow

## Libraries

Libraries worked with Read Manchester to ensure children continued to read despite the reduced access to libraries. In 2020/21, 26,000 books and 5,000 magazines were gifted through foodbanks and Sure Start centres, all 7,000 year 6 pupils in the city received a free book, and 16,000 children were given automatic membership to the Summer Reading Challenge, and a library card.

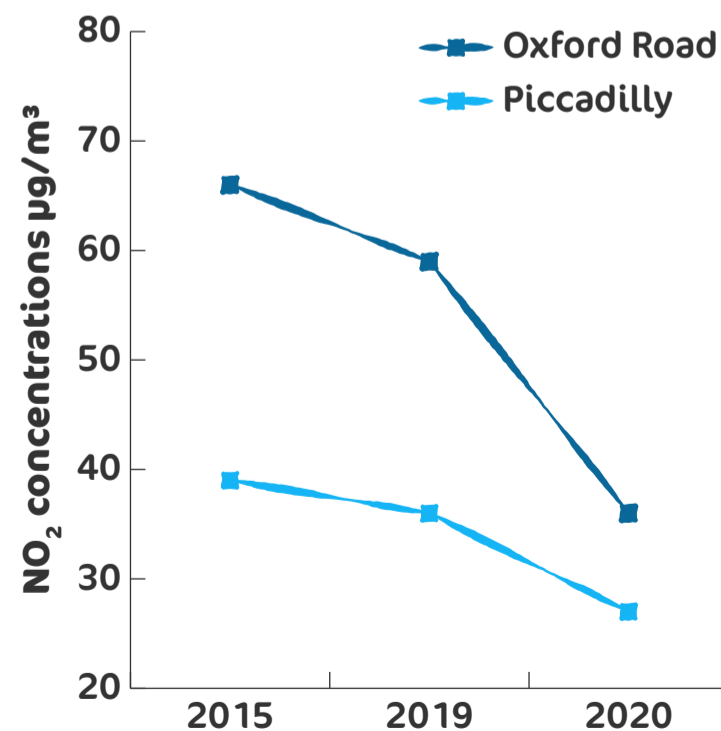
Source: Manchester City Council



## Air quality

Long-term monitoring trends indicate that **there has been an improvement in air quality across the city**. During 2020, concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) dropped significantly as a result of lockdown restrictions, resulting in Manchester meeting the 40µg/m<sup>3</sup> legal limit at all monitoring sites.

Source: Air Quality England



## Volunteering

Manchester's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector has been integral to the city's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The State of the Manchester VCSE Sector 2021 report identified that VCSE services and initiatives are delivered by some **162,000 volunteers giving around 481,000 hours each week, valued at £242million per annum**. During 2020/21, Manchester VCSE organisations received 7,331 volunteer applications via Volunteer Centre Manchester. This included specific opportunities for residents to support the response to COVID-19.

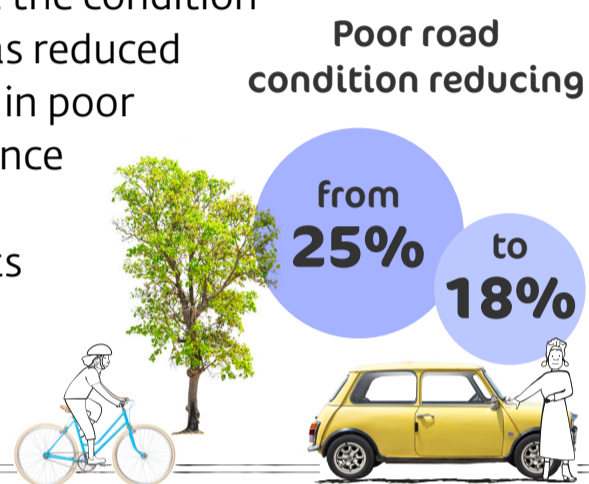
Source: Manchester Community Central

# A connected city

## Highways network investment

£66.1million invested since 2017 to improve the condition of the city's roads, footways and drainage has reduced the proportion of the road network rated as in poor condition, from 25% in 2017 to 18% in 2020. Since the start of the programme, the number of reported drainage gully faults and complaints has fallen by 47%.

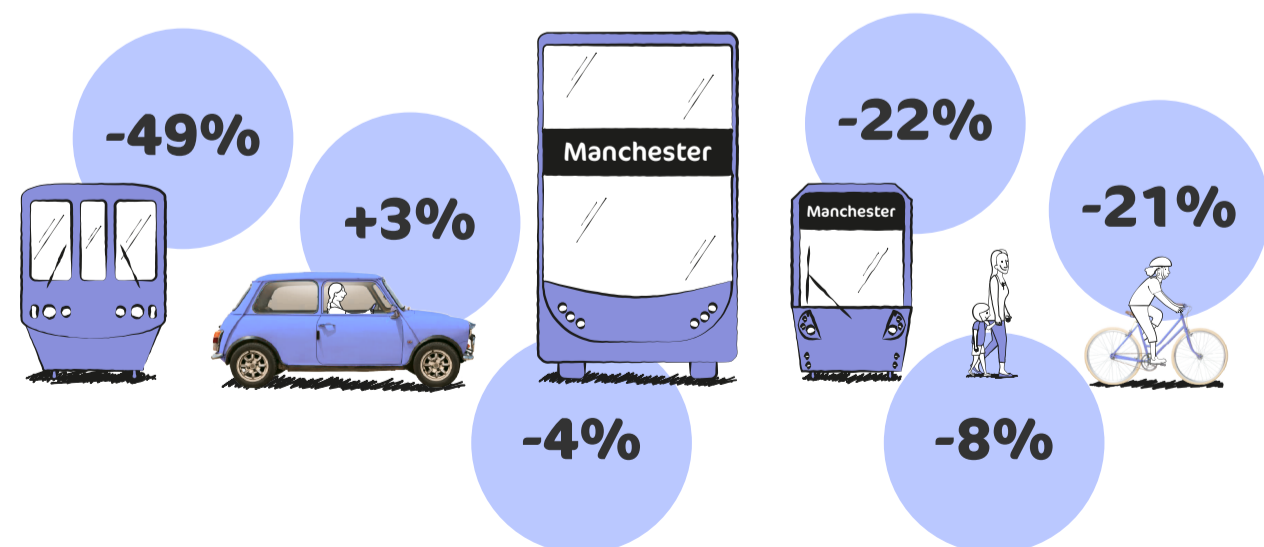
Source: Manchester City Council, GEIST survey



## Trips into Manchester city centre

Travel demand to and from the city centre has grown significantly in recent years, reflecting increases in the number of jobs and the resident population. However, owing to the pandemic there was an 18% decrease in journeys across all modes between 2019 and 2020.

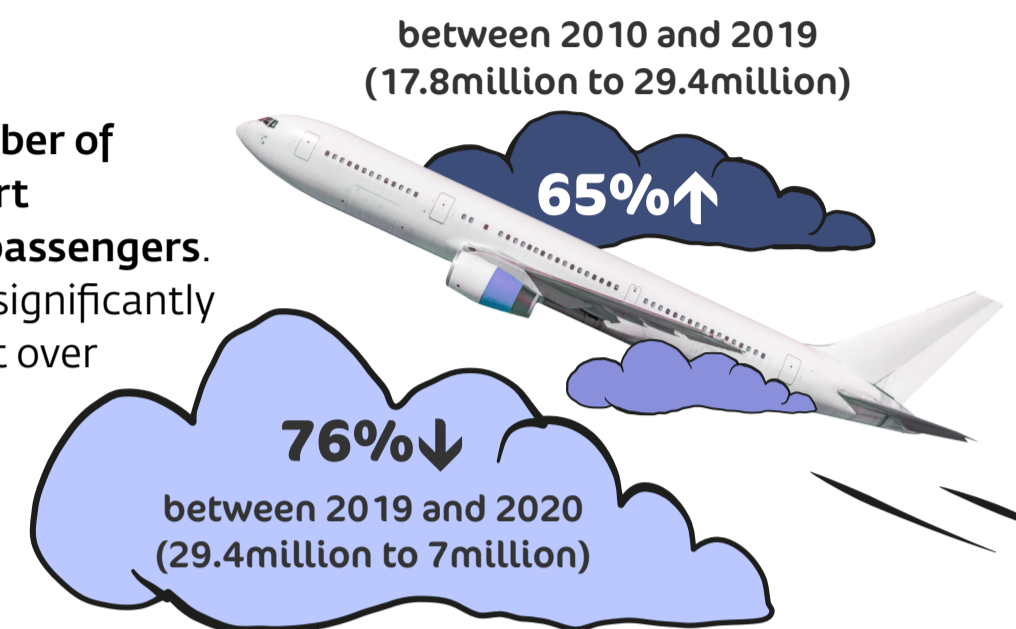
Source: TfGM. Percentage change in number of trips into Manchester key centre (7.30–9.30am) between 2019 and 2020. Rail surveys undertaken in mid-March were significantly affected by measures taken to combat COVID-19.



## Airport

Between 2015 and 2019, the number of passengers at Manchester Airport increased by 27% to 29.4million passengers. However, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced passenger numbers to just over 7million during 2020. These figures are a reflection of world trends.

Source: Civil Aviation Authority



## Digital inclusion

The Digital Inclusion Action Plan delivers a diverse programme of activity to drive digital inclusion across the city. It includes a digital-support telephone service for residents without skills and/or confidence to use the internet effectively, and increases the number of residents with access to the internet through donating internet devices.

Source: Manchester City Council. Activity during the pandemic.

## Digital connectivity

Consumers are upgrading to high-speed broadband packages but do not always take the fastest packages available to them. Ultrafast broadband (over 300Mbit/s) is now available to 68% of the city's homes and businesses, but only around 5,000 premises have taken up these ultrafast services.

Source: Ofcom