

A SOCIAL GLUE

**GREATER MANCHESTER:
A CREATIVE HEALTH CITY REGION**

SUMMARY REPORT

FOREWORD

As we establish the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership – the structure through which we'll deliver health and social care in the city region over the next five years – we are very clear that our priorities are improving population health and reducing health inequities.

If we didn't know about health inequities before COVID-19, the pandemic has brutally exposed the vulnerabilities that exist among our people. But, of course, we did know. *The Marmot Review* shone a light on the social determinants of health a little over 10 years ago, and we now have a second report which includes bold and ambitious recommendations on how to reduce health inequities and build back fairer for future generations.

Greater Manchester has begun the journey towards becoming a Marmot City Region, where people can look after and improve their health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer. *A Social Glue* makes a passionate and compelling case for the vital role of culture and creativity in achieving this aim.

We know that health is impacted by having a decent job, being able to support yourself, having a home. But there are also more intangible elements that contribute to quality of life, health and happiness, and one of those is access to culture and the means to express yourself creatively – what is increasingly referred to as creative health.

Greater Manchester is proud to be the crucible of creative health, and we are home to many and varied organisations whose mission it is to improve community and individual wellbeing through access to the arts and heritage. Manchester Museum, Art With Heart, Venture Arts and Contact Theatre are examples of where artistic excellence and a commitment to engagement and co-production come together to generate real impact and change for communities. The *Parallel Narratives* document accompanying this report illustrates many more case studies of exemplary practice.

We are also home to organisations that have become true specialists in delivering arts-based health programmes: the Arts and Mental Health Service at i-THRIVE, working towards a GM-wide offer of arts-based mental health support for children and young people; PORE, working with people in recovery from substance misuse; and the Camerata, supporting people with dementia through Music in Mind. Their practice demonstrates how creative health approaches can be as important as medication in improving health outcomes.

Whilst we need to grow our local evidence base, we know from the people who experience them that these approaches work, and we have a firm starting point from which to embed creative health into our developing integrated care system.

A culturally rich and creative city region is part of what's going to foster a healthier city region. There's real room for creative health to grow and for it to become part of the fabric of our lives.



Sir Richard Leese
GM ICB Chair Designate

A SOCIAL GLUE

A *Social Glue* is a snapshot in time of the fast-growing field of culture, health and wellbeing and its place in Greater Manchester's ongoing cultural evolution. It's an exploration of ways forward for the city region, looking at how we might think and do things differently and how creativity, in all its forms, can contribute to dynamic and healthy communities.

A Social Glue offers a panorama of research, practice and policy, asserting that culture and creativity have the potency to be part of the transformation of people's lives and the communities we live in, increasing the possibilities of living well. The full report looks to the recent past and the here and now of Greater Manchester, linking people and place with culture and creativity and the factors that underpin health and wellbeing in this thriving city region. It positions Greater Manchester as a heartland and incubator of new thinking and action.

Creativity has the potential to inspire better connected, more critical and active citizens, where the arts, in all their forms, help us to make sense of the world and drive change, in the cultural sector as elsewhere.

The last decade has seen a flowering of work in this field – a rich and messy ecology, variously known as arts for health; arts in health; or culture, health and wellbeing. Whatever the term, it describes a preoccupation with humanising clinical environments, reaching explicit health outcomes, widening participation and – increasingly – addressing inequities. Greater Manchester has been described as “the crucible of the arts and health movement”.¹ *A Social Glue* builds on this heritage with a focus on communities, public health and diversity of practice. The result is a blurring of the boundaries of care, of health and wellbeing and of creativity in all its forms.

The full *Social Glue* report reflects on *Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On* (2020),² which offered a scathing critique of the lack of progress made in addressing health inequalities across England and simultaneously published an evaluative case study of Greater Manchester. The case study highlights some worrying health trends in the city region. It also reflects on the progress brought about through devolution and Greater Manchester's “place-based” approach to systemic change, noting that this system-wide methodology is essential to tackling the social determinants of health and related health inequalities. Marmot recommends that reducing health inequalities is placed at the heart of policymaking, stating that health and wellbeing should be valued as much as measures of economic growth, and he calls for investment “in the development of economic, social and cultural resources in the most deprived communities”.³

¹Gordon-Nesbitt R. *Older and Wiser? Creative Ageing in the UK 2010–2019*. King's College London, 2019. <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/resources/reports/kcbaringreport-a4-2019-forweb.pdf>

²Marmot M, et al., *The Marmot Review 10 Years On*. London: IHE; 2020. <http://www.instituteoftheequity.org/resources-reports/marmot-review-10-years-on>

³Ibid.

In becoming the UK's first Marmot City Region, Greater Manchester has made a strategic commitment to “put into practice the report’s recommendations by working across all public services in our city region to ensure that policies, approaches and resources are geared towards creating a fairer, more equal society”.⁴

Reflecting on the relationship between health systems, people and place in Greater Manchester, Donna Hall and Warren Heppolette suggested that “a place-based approach to primary care networks, integrated care systems and strategic transformation partnerships needs to be driven by much more than health and care professionals meeting once a month to agree stuff. It needs to be rooted in the anthropology of place, listen to people’s stories and understand the reality of their lives”.⁵

Through an exploration of research and policy, *A Social Glue* suggests that now is the time to disrupt the boundaries between culture, health and social care. In England, the arts and health movement is being politically driven through an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Arts, Health and Wellbeing. The inquiry report that emerged from the APPG’s work, *Creative Health* (2017), has galvanised much of the strategic activity in arts and health at a national level in the years since it was published, and it forms the basis of the National Centre for Creative Health, launched in 2021.⁶ The centre’s hubs, hives and huddles network aims to advance good practice and research, inform policy and promote collaboration, helping to foster the conditions for making creative health integral to health and social care and wider systems.

The evidence presented through the APPG’s work demonstrates how arts-based approaches can help people “stay well, take greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and enjoy a better quality of life”.⁷ *Creative Health* acknowledges the unique opportunity afforded to Greater Manchester through devolution, stating that this landmark arrangement with central government “could enable synergies between the arts, health and wellbeing to flourish”.⁸

A Social Glue draws on a body of research, including *Exploring the Longitudinal Relationship Between Arts Engagement and Health* (2015),⁹ an evidence base of 15 longitudinal studies suggesting that attending high-quality cultural events has a beneficial impact upon a range of chronic diseases over time. *A Social Glue* also references a substantial scoping review of literature on arts and health by the World Health Organization (WHO) which references more than 900 publications, including 200 reviews covering over 3,000 further studies, and it draws on a recent synthesis for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), *Evidence Summary for Policy: The role of arts in improving health & wellbeing* (2020).¹⁰

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Hall D. and Heppolette W. 2020. “Place” is Where The Heart is. <https://www.carnallfarrar.com/articles/place-is-where-the-heart-is/>

⁶ National Centre for Creative Health. 2021. <https://ncch.org.uk/>

⁷ All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing*. All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Report. 2017. https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/appg-inquiry/Publications/Creative_Health_Inquiry_Report_2017_-_Second_Edition.pdf

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Gordon-Nesbitt R. *Exploring the Longitudinal Relationship Between Arts Engagement and Health*, Arts for Health (2015) <https://www.artsforhealth.org/research/artsengagementandhealth/ArtsEngagementandHealth.pdf>

¹⁰ Fancourt D., et al., Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), *Evidence Summary for Policy: The role of arts in improving health & wellbeing*, 2020. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929773/DCMS_report_April_2020_finalx_1_.pdf

“This is the time for bold thinking and brave action, this is the time for an essential pivot towards a new way of doing things that puts tackling inequality at its heart, this is the time to take Greater Manchester to the next level, a place with good lives for all”.

THE GREATER MANCHESTER INDEPENDENT
INEQUALITIES COMMISSION. THE NEXT LEVEL: GOOD
LIVES FOR ALL IN GREATER MANCHESTER (2021)

A Social Glue explores some key areas of development around the arts, mental health and wellbeing across the city region, with particular reference to social prescribing. It advocates for the city region as the ideal testbed for new ways of delivering the social prescribing agenda that are able to flex to the subtle divergences between neighbourhoods, communities and local human and physical resources. Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham has described a vision for health and wellbeing with social prescribing as key to addressing health inequalities, and *A Social Glue* makes the case for culture and creativity as a powerful ally in this endeavour. In reference to Greater Manchester's ambition to grow its social prescribing offer, Burnham said:

“Many appointments at GP surgeries are down to issues around wider social determinants of health. Social Prescribing is therefore a key pillar of the Live Well approach set out in our health plan to address health inequalities in adulthood. It has the potential to reduce the clinical prescribing bill for the NHS by shifting our focus from a particular illness to the whole person, encompassing issues that we know impact on people's health, like housing and someone's employment situation”.¹¹

Turning to children and young people's mental health, *A Social Glue* describes the Thrive Framework,¹² intended to achieve a national transformation of child and adolescent mental health services. GM i-THRIVE is implementing this system change across Greater Manchester, and it is the only team nationally to include an arts, culture and mental health programme in its approach. This signals a drive to do things not only differently but also in ways that work systemically with the arts and culture in all their forms across the city region.

Greater Manchester is continuing to spearhead work in the field of creative ageing, as it has done over the last decade, being named the first UK age-friendly city region by the WHO in 2018.¹³ Culture Champions is a key strand of the ageing well agenda in Greater Manchester, making space for older people to advocate, lead and produce cultural activities for their peers and communities across the city region. The programme plays a significant role in not only drawing attention to cultural and creative opportunities as a way of enriching people's lives but also encouraging older residents to instigate social change on their own terms.

From amateur hobbyists to well-funded public exhibitions and all that lies between, what is happening on our doorsteps across the city region offers a taste of the much larger potential of human creativity as part of a health and social change agenda. Here, health and ill health aren't understood solely in terms of deficit and disease but through the social determinants of health. Examples from across the city region are surveyed as *Parallel Narratives* in a sister document to the full report.

Creativity has the potential to inspire better connected, more critical and active citizens, for whom the arts, in all their forms, help to make sense of the world and drive change in the cultural sector as elsewhere.

Our contemporary attention should rightly focus on the factors that influence everyone's health, where culture and creativity enable communities and citizens to consider themselves participants in a common venture.

The arts and culture aren't being held up as a utopian palliative for all life's ills, and *A Social Glue* acknowledges the need to remedy the deficit of useful evidence identified in *Evidence Summary for Policy: The role of arts in improving health & wellbeing* (2020). This is particularly the case around the “research on arts and the prevention of mental illness in children and adults, including whether arts engagement at different stages of the lifespan is associated with lower risk of incidence of depression, anxiety or other mental illnesses”.¹⁴

Cultural policy and the post-Covid priorities of funding bodies and think tanks offer Greater Manchester myriad opportunities. The introduction to Arts Council England's (ACE) ten-year strategy sets out a vision for a nation of creative people who experience high-quality culture and where culture fosters community, is made by and with communities and is just as present in village halls and the streets where we live as it is in arts centres. ACE's renewed vision states that “by 2030, we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experience”.¹⁵ This is a vision which speaks directly to Greater Manchester's ambitious culture strategy, *Grown in Greater Manchester. Known Around The World* (2019),¹⁶ which prioritises generating the conditions for creativity to flourish; enriching the lives of all our people through engagement with the culture and heritage of Greater Manchester; and celebrating, protecting and developing Greater Manchester's unique culture, heritage, assets and ecology. The strategy explicitly champions the role of culture in improving health and wellbeing.

A Social Glue offers a unique platform from which to spearhead a change in creative health, from a situation in which arts and health is focused on ill health and deficit to one in which human creativity is seen as a liberating social asset and a means of effecting individual and communal change. It warns of the dangers of the arts being seen as a blunt instrument, acknowledging the nuance and complexity opened up by creativity. *A Social Glue* suggests that, crucially, we need to support artists, activists and those working in health and social care to develop their skills to respond to this agenda. Greater Manchester certainly has the spirit and drive to make this happen, building on its renowned arts and health lineage and rich arts and heritage sectors. The time has never felt more appropriate to connect the strands of health with social and civic life.

A Social Glue illuminates some of the pathways that arts and health has taken, from its early connections with clinical environments and desired clinical outcomes, to a contemporary understanding of a broader public health and social change agenda. There is much learning to build on, from collaborative approaches to creating an age-friendly city region, to our knowledge of inequalities across communities. And, with the burgeoning mental health crisis across the life-course, the opportunities for connected thinking are rife.

¹¹Burnham A. Extract from Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership. More people than ever before benefitting from social prescribing as Greater Manchester leads the way. March 2020. <https://www.gmhsc.org.uk/news/social-prescribing-day/>

¹²Wolpert M et al., 2019. Thrive Framework for system change. <http://implementingthrive.org/about-us/the-thrive-framework/>

¹³World Health Organization. The Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. 2018 <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/network/greater-manchester/>

¹⁴Op.cit. Fancourt D., et al., 2020.

¹⁵Arts Council England. *Let's Create. Ten-Year Strategy 2020–2030*, 2021. <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/our-strategy-2020-2030>

¹⁶*Grown in Greater Manchester. Known Around The World. Greater Manchester Culture Strategy*, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, 2019.

“By 2024 Greater Manchester will be the UK city region where heritage, culture and the arts play a key part in the health and wellbeing of its diverse residents and workforce; a global leader addressing systemic inequalities across the life-course, demonstrating and nurturing the power of collective, creative action for social change”.

THE MANCHESTER DECLARATION

We have seen the strength, power and traction of social movements, and this narrative positions collective care and empathy at the heart of dynamic and healthier communities. Culture, heritage and the arts can be key drivers in addressing pressing health and social care issues, in a city region uniquely placed to go sustainably beyond social prescribing.

Through shared values and collective endeavour, there is a real possibility to contribute to public sector reform, where communities are at the heart of change, central to both vision and implementation. Our contemporary attention should focus on the factors that influence everyone’s health, where culture and creativity enable communities and citizens to consider themselves participants in a common venture.

In discussion of the creation of a system for change in Greater Manchester, the Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission aspired to realise a vision of “good lives for all”. *A Social Glue* contends that creativity and culture are a critical part of this vision.¹⁷

A Social Glue suggests that the conditions are right to pull these strands of possibility together, where one size, doesn’t fit all and where work that is hyper-local is nurtured with communities as part of a region-wide vision. At the very heart of this narrative, we situate participatory and socially engaged artists and practitioners. We place equally high value on the people at the centre of our communities and those citizens, activists and change agents who will turn the reimagining of our city region into reality.

We will achieve all this through sophisticated collaborations and learning from our pasts to inform all our futures. The Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership and Greater Manchester Combined Authority – alongside local authorities, arts and heritage organisations, education, the voluntary sector, community groups and funders – are some of the critical components of this social glue. What we need to do, here and now, is to realise the value and skills of the health and arts communities and set in place some key actions to begin this cultural shift. What is necessary is that we drive this work forward systemically.

By 2024, Greater Manchester can be the UK city region in which heritage, culture and the arts play a key part in the health and wellbeing of its diverse residents and workforce – a global leader addressing systemic inequalities across the life-course, demonstrating and nurturing the power of collective, creative action for social change.

¹⁷The Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission. *The Next Level: Good Lives for All in Greater Manchester*, 2021. https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/4337/gmca_independent-inequalities-commission_v15.pdf

RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve this vision, *A Social Glue* offers a set of recommendations:

ONE

Greater Manchester should identify appropriate leadership to take this agenda forward, within the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership, in a connective role with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and alongside local authorities, cultural, arts and heritage organisations, educational institutions, the voluntary sector, community groups and funders. This is a collective endeavour, in which locating leadership within the health sector has the potential to unlock possibilities, resources and opportunities not currently accessible from within local government or the cultural or voluntary sectors.

TWO

Greater Manchester should work to embed creative approaches into all areas of devolved health policy and strategic health plans. We should build the identity of Greater Manchester as the first creative health city region in the UK, going beyond the recommendations set out in the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing's report, *Creative Health* (2017).

THREE

Greater Manchester should focus on the intersections between people, place, culture, heritage and creativity. Hyper-local and neighbourhood models, building on local assets, co-production and imaginatively evidenced work that is owned by communities, will enable innovative cross-sector partnerships and support cultural and municipal organisations to reimagine their civic and social offer.

FOUR

Greater Manchester should reorientate the potency of the arts and creativity in health from a medical to a social model, focusing on assets and potential not deficits and ill health. The arts and culture are rarely a cure for illness, but they can prevent the onset of ill health and contribute to us living healthier, happier and fuller lives. Our plans should recognise the unique potential of culture and creativity to helping us live well, positioning the arts at the heart of all future developments in the inequalities agenda.

FIVE

Greater Manchester should be marketed as the legitimate UK centre of culture, health and social change, rethinking the role of the high street and communities as destinations for wellbeing-enhancing experiences.

SIX

Greater Manchester should nurture, support and value its artists and creative practitioners, recognising the contribution that this diverse community makes to a health and social care agenda. Serious consideration should be given to the training needs of those working in this field and the possibilities of mentorship programmes for emerging artists as well as professional development.

SEVEN

Greater Manchester should move beyond social prescribing, linking green and blue spaces, heritage and the arts to the potential to live well. We should not be afraid of moving our focus to where there are high levels of deprivations and where communities fall outside the system for reasons of culture, ethnicity or religion. Key themes should include mental health.

EIGHT

Greater Manchester should address a lack of evidence, particularly around children and young people in the context of social prescribing. The city region should develop a collective culture, health and social change research hub that is outward-looking, proactive and intrinsic to its citizens, practitioners, artists and activists, Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership. This will build on our assets; offer opportunities to develop test-and-learn sites; inform evidence-based practice; enable a more robust understanding; develop methods to support co-design; and build on a heritage of socially engaged creative practice and co-produced healthcare.

“Greater Manchester is uniquely placed to combine its strengths in advancing the creative health and the Marmot agendas. From way back, the area that is now Greater Manchester has pioneered best practice in arts and health initiatives. More recently Greater Manchester has seized the opportunity to pioneer the integration of health and social care services and work proactively to mitigate the damage to health caused by social and economic disadvantage. Combining those two traditions, as *A Social Glue* proposes, will enable the people of Greater Manchester to enjoy longer lives better lived in a more healthy and health-creating environment”.

RT HON. LORD HOWARTH OF NEWPORT
CO-CHAIR, ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON ARTS,
HEALTH AND WELLBEING

HERE & NOW

Greater Manchester retains its vision and tenacity to do things differently, and this mantra is more relevant than it has ever been.

The structures and people are almost in place to support this work systemically. As we have seen on the ground, individuals, groups and organisations have the appetite to conjoin this creative health agenda, where evidence of the reach and impact of cultural participation on health and wellbeing is rich and growing.

A combination of increased public understanding of health and creativity and a national drive to embed culture and creativity in a public health agenda means the time has never been better to champion and deliver this agenda. The opportunities for reimagining the ways in which health and wellbeing are nurtured, through cultural investment in all our communities, is *here and now*.

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