

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Extension of Household Support Fund is welcomed – but government must commit to permanent funding for local welfare assistance, Greater Manchester Poverty Action warns

- **Today’s Spring Budget announcement brought the news that the Household Support Fund will be extended for a further six months**
- **This news was met with some relief by campaigners across the public and nonprofit sectors, who have been calling for its extension**
- **Greater Manchester Poverty Action welcomes the news but warns that without permanent funding, planning and delivering local welfare assistance remains difficult.**

After months of uncertainty for local authorities across the country, the Chancellor has today announced that the Household Support Fund (HSF) will be extended ‘at current levels’ for a further six months.

This news has been met with relief by councils and charities alike, who have been calling for its extension since the run-up to the Autumn Statement in November – which failed to mention plans for the fund.

It will relieve some pressures for now – but in real terms, a six-month extension rather than a 12-month extension will mean a £421million loss in local welfare funding across England. Non-profit Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) warns that the government must go further to make local welfare assistance schemes secure and effective.

Graham Whitham, CEO at GMPA said: “After months of campaigning from ourselves and partners, it is a relief to hear that the Household Support Fund will be extended for a further six months. The fund has been an absolute lifeline for some of our most vulnerable residents, providing free school meals, support with rising fuel costs and so much more.

“But while we welcome this news, last-minute announcements make planning for local authorities difficult – if not impossible. The piecemeal and uncertain nature of the Household Support Fund thus far means that councils have been unable to plan adequately or recruit permanent staff to deliver the fund, inhibiting its effectiveness.

“A six-month extension with three weeks’ notice is not enough and underlines how short-term the government’s thinking is. By now, staff delivering services funded by the HSF will be working the final week of their contract – if they haven’t already left.

“At GMPA we continue to call on the government to introduce a national strategy to tackle poverty, with permanent, ring-fenced funding for local welfare support and an Essentials Guarantee in Universal Credit - that at the very least, people are protected from going without the essentials.”

Ends.

Notes to editor:

Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) is a recognised leader on poverty in the UK and exists to end poverty in Greater Manchester and beyond.

We deliver independent, evidence-based activities to address socio-economic disadvantage. These focus on maximising the financial resources available to households, amplifying the voices of people with lived experience, and working with our network to achieve meaningful change.

GMPA is a leading advocate for the continuation of the Household Support Fund (HSF). Recently, we have signed a joint letter to the Chancellor along with Greater Manchester’s authorities urging him to continue the fund, and co-hosted a webinar on the future of crisis support along with the Independent Food Aid Network, End Furniture Poverty and Cash Perks.

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Who are Greater Manchester Poverty Action?

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We deliver independent, evidence-based activities to address socio-economic disadvantage. These focus on maximising the financial resources available to households, amplifying the voices of people with lived experience, and working with our network to achieve meaningful change.

We won't stop until our city-region is free from poverty.

Work includes:

- [Local anti-poverty strategies: good practice and effective approaches](#)
- [Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign](#)
- [Money Advice Referral Tools](#), supporting people to access advice and maximise their income
- [Money Matters programme](#), providing debt and benefit advice in schools
- [Fortnightly newsletters](#)

Further information can be found by visiting <https://www.gmpovertyaction.org/>.