

GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 9 April 2025

Subject: School Readiness Update and Response to 2019 Task and Finish Report

Report of: Councillor Mark Hunter Portfolio Lead for Children and Young People and
Michael Cullen Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Children and Young
People.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an update on School Readiness Performance for academic year 23/24
- Identify progress against the key issues highlighted by the 2019 report of the GMCA Overview and Scrutiny School Readiness Task and Finish Group.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the contents of the report and identify any areas for further scrutiny.

Contact Officers

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Report authors must identify which paragraph relating to the following issues:

Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

The latest performance data for child development and school readiness, discussed in section 2 and appendix 2 of this paper, highlights the impact of socio-economic and health and wellbeing inequalities on child development in the early years and highlights the widening of the disadvantage attainment gap at age 5 for children in GM, since the covid pandemic. Section 4 of the report outlines some of work underway within the GMCA School Readiness programme to respond to this challenge.

Risk Management

N/A

Legal Considerations

N/A

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Background to the GMCA programme is outlined in section 1. Funding for the programme is non-recurrent and due to end in March 2026.

3.3.Financial Consequences – Capital

N/A

Number of attachments to the report: 0

Background Papers

- School Readiness Update Report to Corporate Issues & Reform Overview and Scrutiny Committee, February 2024

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

No

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency? No

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1. Improving school readiness at age 5, continues to be a priority for Greater Manchester; it is a key priority within the GMCA Children and Young People's programme and a shared, system priority within the Integrated Care Partnership Joint Forward Plan.
- 1.2. In December 2024, the government identified improving school readiness as one of five key milestones within its Plan for Change; setting a target for 75% of children in England to achieve a good level of development (GLD) at the end of Reception by 2028. For context, the England figure in 2023/24 was 67.7%, compared with 63.3% in GM.
- 1.3. Since 2019, GMCA has led delivery of the GM School Readiness transformation programme as a key policy priority within the Public Service Reform agenda. The programme has focussed on narrowing the gap with national performance rates for school readiness, through strong system integration, early identification of family need by universal services and delivery of evidence-based interventions. The programme aims to provide additionality through supporting locality systems in their statutory duties to deliver early years support and services from pregnancy to age 5.
- 1.4. A comprehensive update on School Readiness performance and the GMCA School Readiness Programme was provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2024. The Committee requested a further update at a future meeting to focus on how learning from a previous Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish group has informed the programme.
- 1.5. Between 2017 and 2019 a Scrutiny Committee School Readiness Task and Finish Group was established to support with identifying the key opportunities and challenges relating to the GM ambition to improve school readiness outcomes. The final report (Appendix 1), agreed in 2019, identified a number of key issues for the future success of early years in GM. This paper outlines how these are being addressed through the GM programme and where ongoing challenges remain.

2. School Readiness Performance Context

- 2.1. When looking at early years assessment data it is important to remember that its primary purpose is to identify the children who require additional support. Although a helpful indicator of outcomes, assessment data should not be considered as a measure of success or failure as this risks overstating outcomes. GM is committed to focussing on identifying every child who requires extra support in their early years to make sure that they receive that support and build the skills and capabilities required to help them start school ready to learn and thrive.
- 2.2. As discussed in the 2024 report to the Committee, data since 2020 highlights the profound impact of the pandemic and associated restrictions on the development of children under 5. Reduced universal service provision, restricted access to support network and early education and childcare all played a significant role on the early experiences of young children and families during 2020-21. It is also important to recognise that GM was disproportionately impacted by the length and severity of lockdown restrictions.
- 2.3. The pandemic also exacerbated systemic issues present across early years and family support services prior to 2020, including high workforce turnover, long waits for specialist support and under-investment in the early education and childcare sector and workforce.
- 2.4. In more recent years the sustained cost of living crisis has also impacted. Nearly 30% of children aged 0-5 years growing up in GM experience disadvantage which can negatively impact a family's capacity to provide the care their baby or young child needs. It may also impact on parental mental health and wellbeing, impacting on the parent-infant relationship critical to early years development.
- 2.5. It is therefore important to recognise the impact of child level characteristics, including socio-economic background, ethnicity, gender and special educational needs and disability (SEND), on a child's likelihood of achieving GLD and, given population demographics in GM, the impact this has on aggregate school readiness data.

- 2.6. Appendix 2 provides a full breakdown of GM and locality data across the two key measures of ASQ3 (age 2 – 2.5) and GLD (end of reception – age 5). Child development outcomes at age 2 and school readiness outcomes at age 5 in GM remain below the England average with significant variation across the 10 localities.
- 2.7. However, there are sustained improvements in child development at age 2, with six localities outperforming the England average: evidence of the effectiveness of an increased focus on early interventions and the first 1,001 critical days from conception to a child's 2nd birthday.
- 2.8. For this measure, it is important to acknowledge that variance in delivery of the assessment may also impact on the recorded results. ASQ3 is a parent led assessment, with varying degree of professional input and moderation in place across GM. Further work is required to understand any correlation between assessment results and different delivery models.
- 2.9. When reviewing school readiness data since 2020, it is important to recognise the specific and unique experiences of each cohort during 2020/21. Children included in the 2023/24 GLD data would have been 6 months to 1.5 years old at the start of the pandemic (March 2020). These children would have, therefore, been disproportionately affected by the lockdowns and restrictions due to being in the critical window of brain development that happens before age 2.
- 2.10. Despite small improvements in GLD, the gap between GM and England average has widened slightly. Outcomes for children experiencing disadvantage has also declined, which mirrors the national and North-West trend. Discussion with stakeholders had highlighted the specific experiences of this cohort during the covid pandemic and the relationship between deprivation and child development as key factors reflected in this year's data.
- 2.11. Further insight work on this year's dataset is underway with stakeholders from across the EY system to ensure that the GM and locality transformation work is responsive to the latest data and evidence.

3. Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group 2017 – 2019

- 3.1. Following the GM School Readiness Summit in 2017, a small Overview and Scrutiny School Readiness Task and Finish Group was established to further interrogate and identify the opportunities, challenges and wider policy relevant to improving School Readiness outcomes in GM.
- 3.2. The work of the group took place between 2017 and 2019, and a final report was produced but not formally shared with Committee for discussion. Elected Members involved in this work met with the relevant GMCA Officers in 2019 to discuss the GMCA school readiness strategy and alignment to the key issues identified in the report.
- 3.3. In the subsequent five years, significant progress has been made in relation to the key issues outlined in the report. It should also be recognised that strategic priorities and specific deliverables have evolved in response to the changing policy context and the impact of the covid pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis.
- 3.4. The report highlighted a number of key issues for the future success of the GMCA school readiness programme, which are broadly grouped into four thematic areas, further detail under each theme is provided in section 4.
- Workforce development
 - Early Education and Childcare
 - Data and evidence
 - Whole system prioritisation of early years.

4. School Readiness Delivery Progress

- 4.1. Several of the issues identified in the Task and Finish Group report have been the focus of the GMCA programme deliverables progress since 2019. A summary of key issues identified in each thematic area is outlined below, alongside progress to address these through the programme.
- 4.2. It should be noted this is not a comprehensive overview of all activity within the programme since 2019 and complements existing locality system transformation work also underway.
- 4.3. **Workforce development**
- 4.3.1. **Issues identified:**

- A lack of integrated career progression routes and inequity in the professional status of the workforce across the system.
- A lack of pathways to recognise transferable skills and support people with relevant skills and experience to quickly acquire required qualifications.
- Need for clear workforce standard to support consistent practice across multi agency EY workforce and improve quality of pre and post qualifying training.
- Low qualification levels in some roles impacting on knowledge and practice, particularly in early education and childcare.

4.3.2. The GMCA School Readiness programme has a priority to invest in the Early Years workforce through several projects summarised below, which directly respond to the identified challenges.

4.3.3. **Development of clear workforce standards to support integrated working, training and professional development across a GM multi-agency early years workforce**, through co-design and implementation of GM REFLECT (GM Early Years Workforce Competency Framework). The framework outlines the skills, knowledge, abilities and characteristics that everyone who works with young children and families from conception to age 5 is expected to have.

4.3.4. The framework enables multi-agency practitioners at all levels of qualifications and experience to carry out a self-evaluation and to reflect on their strengths and areas for further professional development.

4.3.5. The framework also aims to support training providers with ensuring pre and post qualifying programmes meet the required standards, improving the practice readiness of people entering the early years workforce. Work is already underway with FE colleges to embed the standards in relevant T-levels.

4.3.6. The framework is completed by a suite of learning resources and assets including, seven free to access eLearning modules, developed in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University to strengthen knowledge in key child development domains, aligned to the framework

4.3.7. **Investing in multi-agency workforce programmes to support with developing a whole system approach to supporting early years development.**

The programme has developed and/or commissioned several workforce development packages which are aimed at the multi-agency EY workforce to support with developing consistent understanding, language and practice approaches. These include:

- **Think Equal programme training** - which supports pro-social behaviours and emotional wellbeing in the early years. All practitioners and teachers delivering the programme must complete 5 hours of digital training aligned to the personal, emotional development prime area of learning within the EYFS. Training is now being extended to the wider workforce including library services, children's therapy teams, Early Help teams and Family Hub practitioners.
- **Physical Development Train the Trainer** aims to upskill practitioners in supporting functional skills in the early years and identify how they can support at the earliest opportunity to reduce delayed development and therefore reduce demand on specialist services. The model has been piloted in Manchester, Salford and Stockport and endorsed for wider rollout in GM.
- **GM enhanced training and support package to strengthen use of the WellComm early language assessment and targeted intervention in early years settings.** The GM approach aims to reduce variance in workforce skills and confidence across the city region and support a consistent approach in use of WellComm.

4.3.8. **Early Education and Childcare workforce campaign** – this 12-month campaign, launched in October 2024, aims to respond to the significant workforce challenges facing the sector including high staff turnover, low morale, and a general lack of awareness of the qualifications and routes into the sector and progression opportunities - issues which have worsened since the Covid-19 pandemic. The campaign aims to:

- celebrate and value the existing workforce, highlighting the personal impact they make on the lives of children and families across GM
- raise awareness of the role of early education and childcare in supporting early child development
- boost recruitment into the sector through promoting the different roles and qualification pathways in GM.

4.3.9. The campaign includes 12 months of activity across social media, out of home and in-home paid for advertising, for example across the Transport for Greater Manchester network. A selection of images from phase 1 of the campaign are included in Appendix 3.

4.3.10. Campaign activity from Spring 2025 will target young people and align to the promotion of clear technical education routes into priority sectors, including early years, through the MBacc and BeeLine supporting resource. GMCA is working closely with Further Education colleges and apprenticeship providers in GM to ensure high quality T-level programmes which provide the required theoretical and practical training, align to the GM REFLECT framework outlined in section 4.3.1.

4.4. Early Education and Childcare

4.4.1. Issues identified:

- Opportunity to consider sector led support model for early education and childcare sector, building on the expertise of maintained nurseries
- Variation in quality of providers and lack of evidence to identify on those most in need of support
- Variation in quality of nursery buildings and physical environment between types of provision e.g. maintained nurseries, school nurseries and Private voluntary and independent (PVI) settings.

4.4.2. Early Education is a key area of focus within the GMCA programme, recognising its importance as an intervention to support with improving outcomes and addressing inequalities in the early years.

4.4.3. Sector led improvement model piloted through innovation hub model

with Martenscroft nursery. The 2022 pilot explored provision of sector led support from an Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' maintained nursery setting, to PVI providers, identified as requiring additional support. The model demonstrated positive outcomes for practitioners and children; learning was then shared with DfE to inform design of the national Early Years Stronger Practice Hub programme. This national programme has funded several hubs in England, including the Bright Futures Stronger Practice Hub based in Trafford working across GM. GMCA is working in partnership with Bright Futures to maximise the potential of this model to support with strengthening evidence-based practice in early education settings, with a particular focus on settings in areas of deprivation.

4.4.4. Targeted initiatives in settings located in neighbourhoods with lowest

school readiness performance. A more granular approach to use of school readiness data, through applying a neighbourhood spatial footprint to GLD, has supported with ensuring GM initiatives are reaching the settings needing additional support and supporting with considering where to focus targeted interventions. Examples of this data driven approach within the GM programme include the Think Equal programme rollout in 500 nurseries, identified based on GLD neighbourhood performance. This supports work by locality Quality Improvement teams to support settings where there are quality concerns.

4.4.5. In relation to building infrastructure, two DfE funding streams are

enabling Local Authorities to support providers with capital improvements required to increase the number of places available.

- £5.6m of funding has been made available to GM Local Authorities through the DfE Childcare Capital Expansion Funding. This can be used by Authorities for projects that increase access to childcare places, improve existing provision making it more inclusive to wide range of needs and central capital work required to enable deliver of the new entitlements (e.g. new IT infrastructure).
- The DfE School Based Nursery Capital grant allows schools to apply for up to £150,000 to develop new school nursery provision. Details on funding awards will be announced spring 2025.

4.5. Data and Evidence

4.5.1. **Issues identified:**

- A lack of granular data to support elected members with understanding GM and locality performance
- No consistent GM approach to digitisation of child assessment data to support with analysis and insight across agencies and between professionals and parents.

4.5.2. The GMCA programme continues to focus on development of an evidence-based model for early years and has strengthened the system approach to using data and evidence in the following ways.

4.5.3. **Development of GM data dashboards for GLD and 2 year funded early education entitlement.** GM dashboards allowing for granular analysis of school readiness data at age 5 through child level characteristics and population level demographics have been developed. These are updated annually and widely shared across GM and locality stakeholders, including elected members, it can be accessed via the following link [Workbook: EYFS Dashboard 2021/22.](#)

4.5.4. **An equivalent [dashboard](#) is also produced to show take up of the 2 year funded early education entitlement** for families requiring additional support (as opposed to working parent eligibility). This tracks take up of the entitlement at a neighbourhood spatial footprint to support with the strategic focus on increasing take up in 10 priority neighbourhoods where take up was historically low or resistant to change.

4.5.5. **Rollout of the GM Early Years integrated digital application** to support the digitisation of child development assessments to strengthen data recording and sharing across the multi-agency early years workforce and between professionals and parents. Over the last 5 years GMCA has invested in expanding the digital app, now used in four Greater Manchester localities – Bury, Rochdale, Salford and Stockport. Over 12,000 parent/carers have created an account in the application and over 85,000 digital assessment forms have been completed in the app.

4.5.6. The application facilitates easier data sharing, avoids the need for duplicate assessments and helps to identify developmental issues with the child in a timelier manner. Other benefits include helping to meet user expectations for completing forms digitally, improving data quality and reporting, reducing printing costs and saving time preparing paper packs. Where localities have fully adopted a digital offer, the Early Years Application is able to realise a time saving of 31 minutes per assessment visit.

4.5.7. The application has also been successfully integrated into national NHS databases to ensure data is consistent and data quality is of a high standard. The integration into national NHS databases ensures that early years professionals are notified immediately when children are born in GM hospitals within the application.

4.5.8. From September 2024, certain elements of the application, relating to a specific assessment that has been digitised in the application, were turned off. This was due to the assessment copyright holder rescinding the agreement to digitise the assessment within the application. This has resulted in Salford no longer using the application and other localities using the application in a reduced capacity. Resolutions to the issue are currently being explored.

4.6. **System Prioritisation of Early Years**

4.6.1. **Issues identified:**

- Need for a clear communication strategy for early years to ensure a whole system response and make early years everyone's business in GM.
- Ensure that localities invest in early years; at the moment (2019) no single agency have overall responsibility for 0-4
- Funding at a national and local level is critical to improving outcomes.

4.6.2. The GMCA programme continues to focus on raising awareness of the importance of early childhood development and the role that parents, professionals and wider communities play in supporting children during the early years. This has been progressed through:

- **Strategic partnership with BBC Tiny Happy People** to promote use of the platform and resources across GM.
- **Development of GM 10 Top Tips** for Talking/Moving/Thriving/Play and Book Sharing – key messages to support parents, families and professionals.

- **Early Education and Childcare campaign** which includes key messages on importance of early years to outcomes later in life. (see Appendix 3).
- 4.6.3. Investment in early years remains challenging given the wider financial pressures across local government and health. Inclusion of Early Years as a priority deliverable with the GM Integrated Care Partnership Joint Forward Plan will support with ensuring GM and locality system prioritisation of investment in pregnancy to 5 support.
- 4.6.4. However, national funding and workforce capacity for key early years services including Health Visiting, early family help, and early education and childcare remains below the level required to ensure timely access to support for all families.
- 4.6.5. National policy and programmes, notably the DfE Family Hubs and Start for Life programme have brought welcome additional investment into some GM localities to accelerate development of place-based family support from pregnancy to age 19. Six GM authorities are amongst the 75 funded nationally with 25/26 allocations for GM totalling over £9 million. However, the inequity in the national funding poses challenges to authorities without additional resource and the collective ambition for an equitable GM offer.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny School Readiness Task and Finish group in 2019, remain equally relevant in 2025. Despite some pre-pandemic improvements, GM remains an outlier for child development outcomes at age 2 and school readiness outcomes at age 5. This is reflective of levels of deprivation across the city region, increasing poverty and the ongoing challenges of addressing the impact of the covid pandemic on early child development. Variance in regional and national funding for key early years services including health (maternity, health visiting, mental health and children's therapies), place-based family support and early education are compounding this challenge.

- 5.2. As outlined in the report, the GMCA programme has remained agile to these challenges through several projects that respond to locality identified priorities. Work focuses on strengthening the whole system model of support required from pregnancy to age 5; leveraging strategic partnerships, using data to target improvement activities, developing and evaluating evidence-based pathways and investing in our key enablers including the multiagency early years workforce, digital tools to support new ways of working and improving access to high quality early education, particularly for our children who need it most.
- 5.3. However, the latest outcomes data highlights that entrenched inequalities remain in school readiness levels for specific population groups, including children experiencing poverty and disadvantage and boys. This, alongside the challenging national and local funding context, supports the need for an unrelentless focus on early years within GM and an ongoing commitment from political and strategic leaders to restate our commitment to babies, young children and their families and consideration of further transformation work required.
- 5.4. Work is currently underway to refresh the investment case for the School Readiness transformation programme, informed by the evidence base, locality priorities and insights from families and communities. This will also provide an opportunity to ensure that the early years support is embedding within the Live Well model of community prevention and support.

Appendix 1 - GMCA Task and Finish Group - School Readiness 2017-19

Members: Stella Smith, Bury; Colin McLaren, Oldham; Yvonne Guariento, Stockport.

Summary of our findings

1. Starting point - the School Readiness Summit 20 October 2017 at the Macron Stadium, Bolton.

The key points were that

- 12000 children in GM were not achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of Reception (4 years old) in 2017.
- By 2 years old, according to the Health Visitors' assessments, (Ages and Stages Questionnaire), these children were already significantly behind in their development.
- Jonathan Rouse, the GM Director of Health, identified medical factors such as tooth decay, as an accompanying factor.
- Speech and language delay were directly linked to poor educational outcomes.
- Smoking in pregnancy leading to low birth weight, poor maternal nutrition were other factors.
- It was already recognised therefore that intervention needed to happen as early as possible in the first 1000 days but even better, in the antenatal period, when the mothers needed support themselves.
- The emphasis then shifted from the school to the pre-school period, with Health Visitors' and Midwives' role becoming a key focus.
- Digital innovation allowed Health Visitors in Salford to save hours of time inputting data and was seen as crucial to more efficient working.
- Poor continuity of information and poor communication lines between different services, Health, Social work and Education were identified as major challenges.
- Integration of the key teams supporting the child and family was identified as a key goal. "Team around the Child".
- Targeting the most vulnerable is essential which is why such importance is attached to health and education records.
- Examples of schools as system leaders were given at the Summit, showing the value of school as a hub where a range of services, Health Visitors, Midwives, Social Workers, would have a base and be available to parents as a "one stop shop" as well as forming valuable links with teachers and sharing information and advice.
- There were examples of schools in Bolton and Manchester, where schools had used these resources to drive up the standards and achieve much higher levels of children achieving a GLD, from very low starting points.
- The Ofsted Inspector present emphasised the importance of emotional and language development and the importance of play and interaction with adults.
- The GM Mayor and Lucy Powell, MP for Manchester Central, both committed themselves to a wide ranging drive for improvement in the next few years, despite the financial pressures.

2. What was the remit of the Task and Finish Group and what did we do?

It was clear that a lot of thinking and preparatory work had already been accomplished by the time of the Summit in 2017. There were clear aims and routes for development.

Our concerns:

BOLTON	MANCHESTER	ROCHDALE	STOCKPORT	TRAFFORD
BURY	OLDHAM	SALFORD	TAMESIDE	WIGAN

- Would innovations remain as paper exercises, without actual large -scale real changes happening on the ground?
- Data to measure progress - was it available?
- The definition of GLD - whether it was a standard definition in all boroughs or variable according to the particular features and challenges of each borough
- The reality of Early Years experience in different settings, in different boroughs
- The quality and the morale of the EY staff
- Whether there were adequate numbers of trained EY staff and other support services - Education Psychologists, Health Visitors, Social Workers
- The quality of the fabric of the settings
- Systems Leadership issues
- The achievability of the goals of 80% of the cohort to attain a Good Level of Development, in a short space of time. The steep rate of improvement across the different boroughs, with a variety of challenges, seemed unrealistic.

What we did:

- We had regular meetings as a group with Sue Ford, GMCA Statutory Scrutiny Officer, to develop an agenda and plan activities. Emma Stonier took over from Sue in January.
- Sue arranged meetings with key players in GM –
 - Jayne Forrest, GMCA Public Service Reform Lead.
 - Joanne Roney GMCA Lead Chief Executive Young People and Cohesion. 10 July 2018
 - A conference call was held with Chris McLoughlin, Children's Services Director in Stockport, on the work of Stockport Family, the integrated Health and Social Work service.
- A series of visits to EY settings was arranged to EY settings in Oldham, Bury, Stockport
- Yvonne Guariento attended the second GM EY Summit at the Etihad Stadium 28 February 2019
- We attended the Nursery Head Teachers Forum in Middleton 29 March 2019

What we learned:

Progress

- Implementation is well under way with the creation of the "School Readiness Board" to lead and be accountable for progress. (John Mann and Joanne Munby)
- Good practice is clear - we know what we are aiming for.
- Digitisation/Digital licensing: four early adopters - Oldham, Bury, Tameside and Salford.. £4m investment secured. Health visitors, midwives, EY advisors the target groups. Parents can see the child's assessment online.
- Children's Golden Record as an operational tool.
- Dental health - the Health and Social Care Partnership - investment in dental care - nurseries issued with toothbrushes.
- Mental health - a lot of work on infant/parent support and early attachment issues. ADHD started in Tameside: identified best practice and standards with the CCG. Built in to general practice.
- A White Paper on Public Services reform will be brought to the Scrutiny Committee in March.
- E9m investment programme to combat Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) - interventions with families - abuse, neglect, domestic violence.

- A Research and Evaluation Team set up
- A plan for a new Academy for Health Workers and Social Workers, with support from MMU and Salford University, to tackle the shortage of trained staff. A new qualification.
- Wider "place-based" integration at local level - Health workers, EY and teachers
- Sharing and embedding of learning and expertise across GM
- Modelling of use of volunteers - Longsight Community Primary School.

Action Plan for GM and boroughs:

- Support parents with the home learning environment
- Support EY providers with funding
- Provide play places
- Support localities in delivering improvements
- Workforce development - CPD
- A team behind each named child in need of intervention

Risks/Challenges

- National funding issues - Council budgets cut year on year.
- No extra money for the Prevention agenda of Public Health when Health was awarded extra funding before Christmas.
- The number of children in care has doubled.
- Slow pace of assessment of mental health needs
- Family learning environment - slow pace of cultural change
- Not enough Level 3 trained EY workers
- Private and Voluntary settings often have very precarious finances as the Govt. funding for free places for 2 year olds and 3-4 year olds does not cover real costs. Local Authorities cannot make up the shortfall. This can lead to nursery closures.
- Free meals for KSI pupils, while desirable, has led to a decline in parents registering for Pupil Premium and free school meals, cutting school funding further.
- PV settings struggle to fund release of staff for training.
- Systems leadership - the school as a hub - this is still very patchy.
- Dept of Work and Pensions will be the biggest beneficiary of early intervention but does not contribute to funding.
- Mismatch of Ofsted rating of "Outstanding" with actual GLD scores of children. Outcomes do not match the judgment of Ofsted on quality of provision. Does the data measurement process need to be integrated?

Key issues for the future success of EY

- Workforce development. The average EY worker has an FE qualification at Level 2 whereas a Health Visitor will be a postgraduate.
- Professionalisation of the EY workforce and integrated pathways for career progression with nursing, apprenticeships etc. are needed. Some concern that the entry level should still be an option.
- A "Health and Social Care apprenticeship degree" free with full funding for 120 staff to do a degree, on a day release basis.
- Conversion courses

- GM must develop GM standards around the workforce, in partnership with the colleges, private providers and academy trusts. "Teaching" schools, where there is good practice, should be identified and used to train EY practitioners.
- Use the expertise of the Heads of existing maintained nursery schools as a basis for system leadership.
- There needs to be more detailed data on progress available to Scrutiny.
- A Communication strategy to raise the profile of EY -The National Literacy Trust and the BBC have offered to work with GM. As Jon Rouse said - EY in GM needs to become a brand.
- Extend digital licensing across GM
- Audit of EY providers/ identify areas of need for LA support
- Ensure that localities invest in Early Years. At the moment no one body has overall responsibility for 0-4 year olds.
- Apply the same standards to all settings, maintained nurseries, private and voluntary providers regarding quality of buildings and outdoor facilities. This can be difficult where the councils do not own the premises or employ the workforce.

We have been impressed by the commitment and creative ideas of the people involved at all levels. The blueprint is there but the task is enormous and Rome wasn't built in a day. Funding at national and local level will be critical.

Appendix 2 – School Readiness Performance Date for 24/25

Chart 1: GM Child development outcomes at age 2 - 2.5 years 2017 – 2024

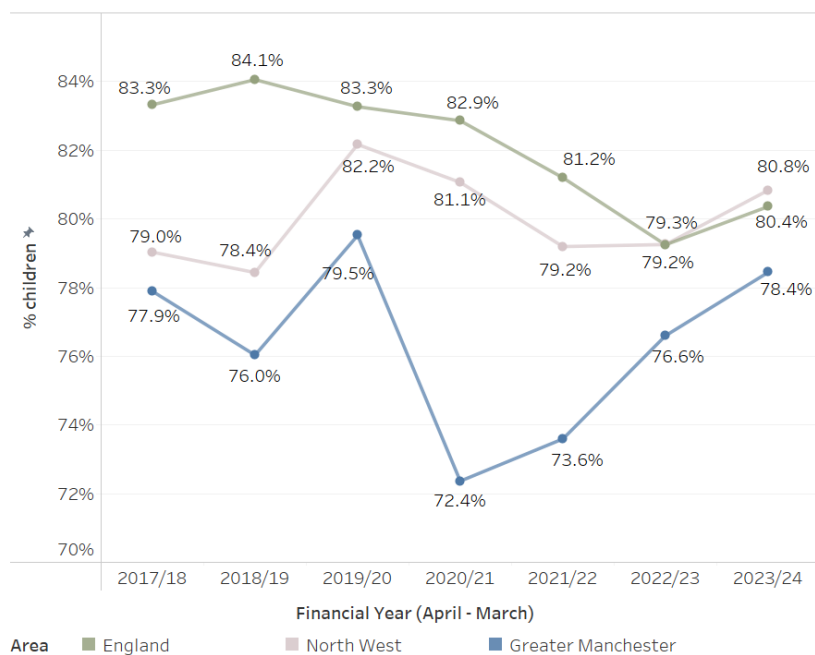
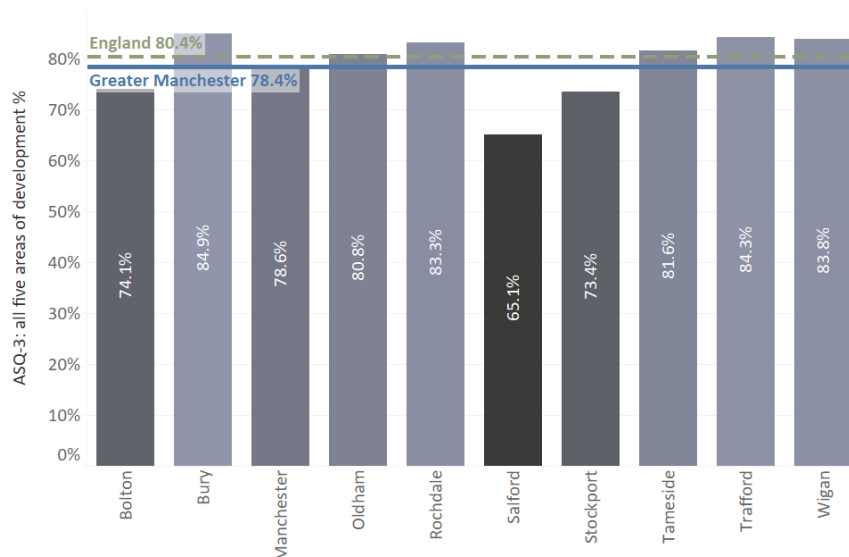


Chart 2: Child development outcomes at age 2 - 2.5 years by GM Local Authority 2024



BOLTON
BURY

MANCHESTER
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE
SALFORD

STOCKPORT
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD
WIGAN

Chart 3: Percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development 2014 – 2024

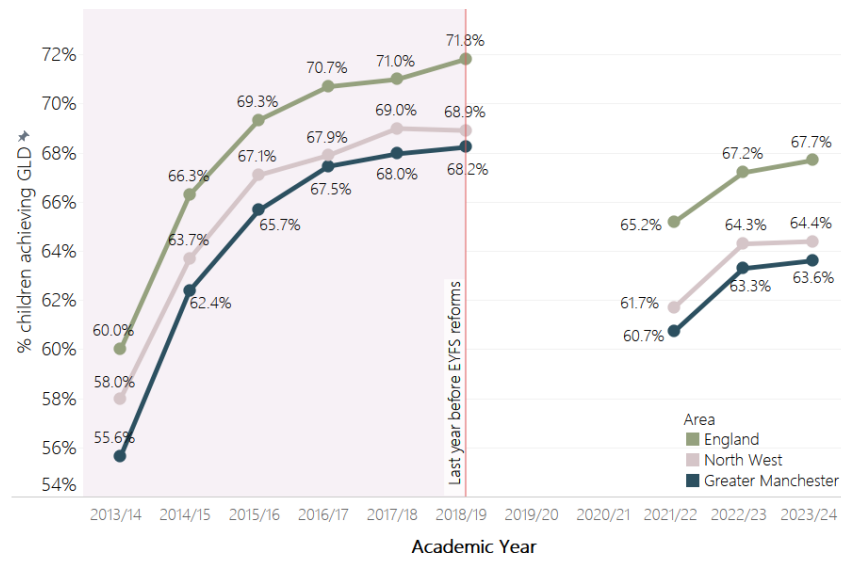


Chart 4: % of children achieving a Good Level of Development by GM Local Authority 2023/24

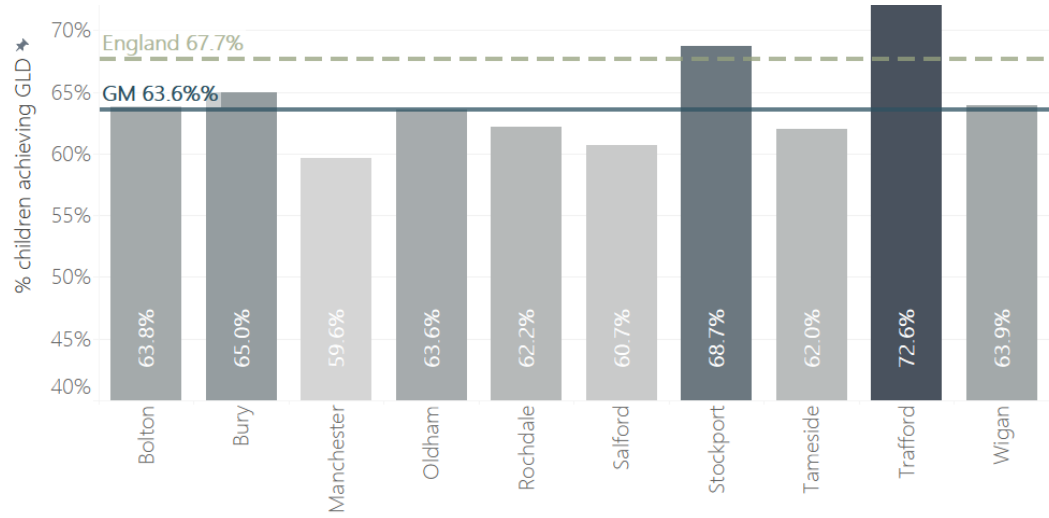


Chart 4: Percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving GLD
2014 – 2023

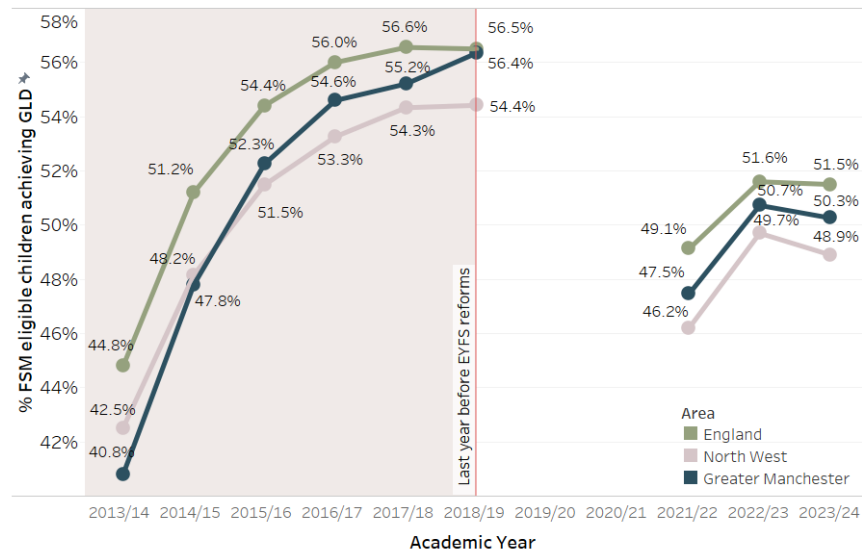
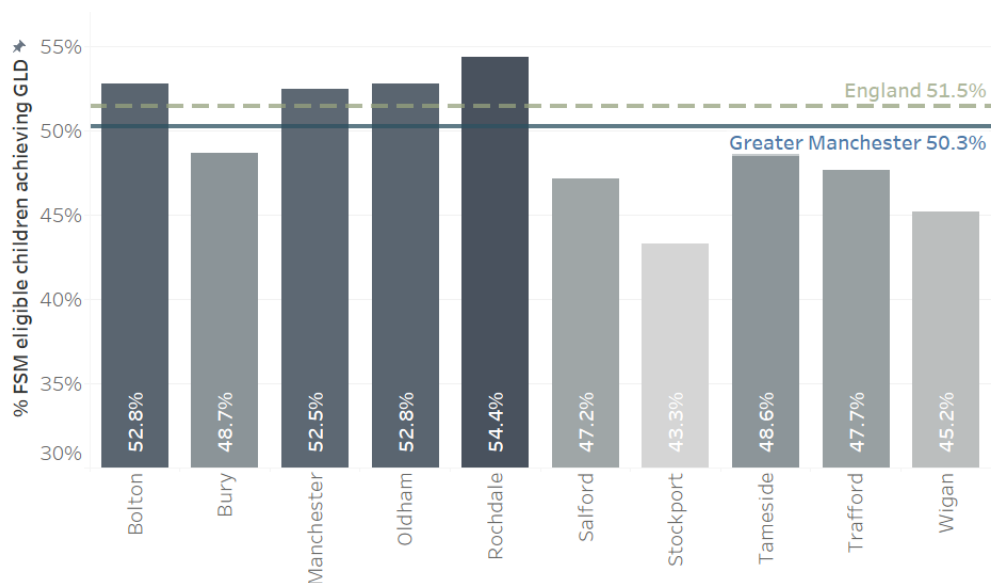


Chart 6: Percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a Good level of Development by GM local authority, 2023/24



Appendix 3 – GM Early Education and Childcare Workforce Campaign Example Assets



"It's being willing to take it on, even with the challenges, it is really hard, but just realise it's all part of making these children who they are."

-Scarlet, Early Years Educator Apprentice (Level 3)
The Nursery: Special Educational Needs and Disability Childcare Ltd, Rochdale

Early Education: helping our children to thrive.
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"It's a very rewarding job, it's fun. You become a really positive character, working with these children, they make your day."

-Reesa, Managing Director
Golden Petals Pre-School, Oldham

BOLTON
BURY

MANCHESTER
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE
SALFORD

STOCKPORT
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD
WIGAN

