

# A RECOVERY PLAN FOR CULTURE IN GREATER MANCHESTER



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# INTRODUCTION

The expression, experience and enjoyment of creativity and culture are vital to the wellbeing and health of our people, our places and our economy. Embedded into the fabric of GM life, this is part of what we are famous for; here in Greater Manchester, stories of the world and of our streets are being written, read, told and heard; animating and improving life here, for everyone. GM; cradle of culture and creativity: GM is known as a radical place of pioneers; as a place that champions creativity and culture and shares it with the world. We successfully attract, create and share the world-class, whilst also using culture to help share many people's stories and to enhance social inclusion. Our mindset, approach and outputs are the envy of many, who recognise in GM a unique and uniquely affirmative culture that contributes to quality of life and that attracts many to the city, to live, work and play.

GM is characterised by more cultural activity and expression, embedded in more places, with more support and encouragement, and more opportunity to take part, explore, enjoy and benefit. Here in GM we absolutely recognise the value of culture and creativity to our quality of life - and to our prosperity - and we unlock and unleash it to help everyone get more from life. Culture is everyone's here, and we make sure that it is lived and breathed, and that it serves as a beating heart in all our communities. Culture really works here. Culture is inspired and nurtured here so that our individual neighbourhoods and boroughs, as well as GM as a whole and our economy, flourish. The investment we make creates positive impact across the city-region, enhancing quality of life, strengthening community and making for better places to live and enjoy. Positive change is felt from classroom to workplace, infancy to older age - creating more opportunity for expression and enjoyment as well as to find work and careers in a growing and thriving creative sector.

By providing opportunities for all to participate, we make sure that output is redolent of all our people and places, who enjoy equal billing as consumers and creators; making our culture an authentic representation of our voices and voice. Used as an active ingredient for common good, we take an inclusive and progressive approach to ensuring that all can see themselves represented, and to embedding culture widely into practices and interventions that improve the wellbeing of all.

GMCA currently supports culture in Greater Manchester in three key ways: through investment in the 35 organisations that form the GM Culture Portfolio; through strategic activity, supported through our GM Culture Strategic Funds; and through our Great Place project, supported by Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund.

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Since lockdown was announced in March, all theatres, music venues, art galleries, and festivals in Greater Manchester shut their doors and cancelled all physical activity. While some have managed to maintain some level of digital delivery, or have supported wider GM responses in relation to supporting vulnerable residents, most staff have been placed on furlough and delivery has ceased.

While some orgs are technically able to open, many are struggling to generate the earned income required to operate as a viable concern and will do so until there is no longer a requirement for social distancing.

## **Nationally, Oxford Economics research, commissioned by the Creative Industries Federation research projects;**

- Drop of £74 billion for the UK's creative industries in 2020 (£1.4 billion a week)
- 406,000 (1 in 5) creative jobs expected to be lost - more than nine times the entire workforce of British Airways or almost triple the workforce of Asda in the UK.
- Creative industries GVA projected to fall by £29 billion (-25%), with the creative industries being hit twice as hard as the wider UK economy\*
- Music, performing and visual arts projected to lose £11 billion in revenue (-54%) and 57% of jobs (178,000) with theatres, recording studios and concert venues remaining closed.

GM is the second largest cluster of creative industries outside London and the South East, so the impact is likely to be felt more keenly than in other places around the country.

*'For now, I'm adopting the stance of the realist-optimist. We don't know where we will be in a year's time, but we can now plan, based on a range of possible scenarios. That's the realist bit. The optimist in me sees the enormous value of what our sector does – how people and communities have turned to culture and creativity in this crisis – and anticipates how they will surely turn to it again and again as we begin the work of restoring our sense of wellbeing and our sense of our place in the world. Through the creativity of our artists, organisations, museums and libraries, we will be heard, and we will explore the meaning of this. We will celebrate, console, commemorate and come together. Through creativity and culture, we will heal.'*

**Darren Henley, Chief Executive, Arts Council England**



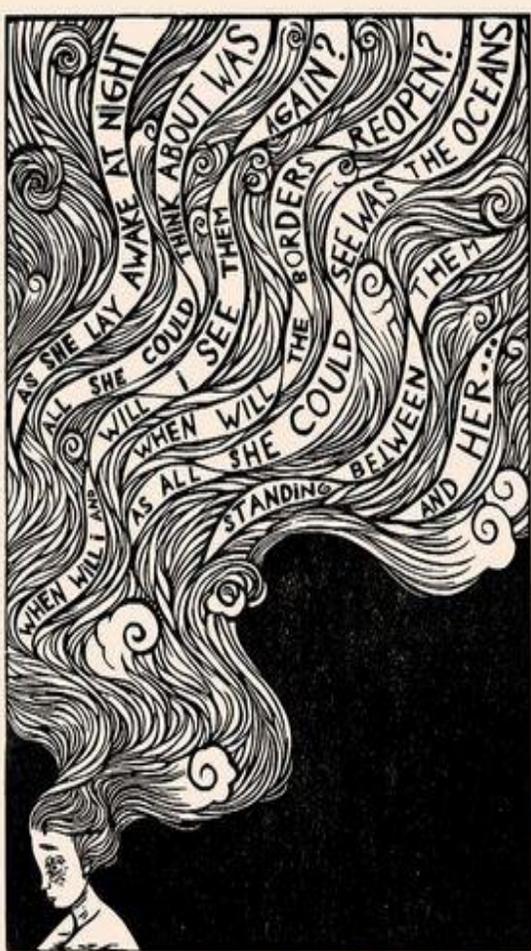
## WHAT GMCA DID

In March GMCA agreed to front-load payments to the 35 GM culture fund recipients with no expectation of delivery. The amount granted by GMCA to organisations for the first six months was £1.75m. This gave organisations, like the Halle, Royal Exchange, Bury Met, Oldham Coliseum, Bolton Octagon, Brighter Sounds, breathing and planning space so they could support their staff and adapt their business and programming as required.

In March, GMCA Launched [GM Covid Commissions](#) – individual grants of £500, providing musicians, poets, illustrators, artists, writers and designers with vital funds and creating an archive of work that documents the first few months of lockdown. 60 artists were supported and the submissions provided focus and funds for artists in GM and received critical acclaim, with airplay on Guy Garvey's BBC 6 Music Show and publication in Caught By The River. Speaking of their commission, one of the artists said *'I want to thank you, as by giving me the chance to make the commission, you showed me that I was able to do something so big and quite scary. Since this happened, I have finally opened an online shop and I've already had orders! My life is really changed for the best'*.

In April GM Culture and GM NTE Adviser Sacha Lord launched United We Stream, in swift response to the UK shut down due to coronavirus. The platform was designed to raise funds for the culture and night time economy sector to support it through this challenging time. In just eight weeks the platform hosted more than 300 globally renowned artists and local breakthrough talent (including events curated by Contact Theatre, Manchester Jazz Festival, Night & Day, Manchester Camerata and Brighter Sound). United We Stream has reached more than 8 million people from across the world in just two months and has been praised by colleagues in GMP and GMHSCP for its role in promoting the 'stay home' message. The platform has raised £400,000 in donations, which are now being distributed to more than 100 businesses and individuals in the GM culture and night time economy through the United We Stream Solidarity Fund.

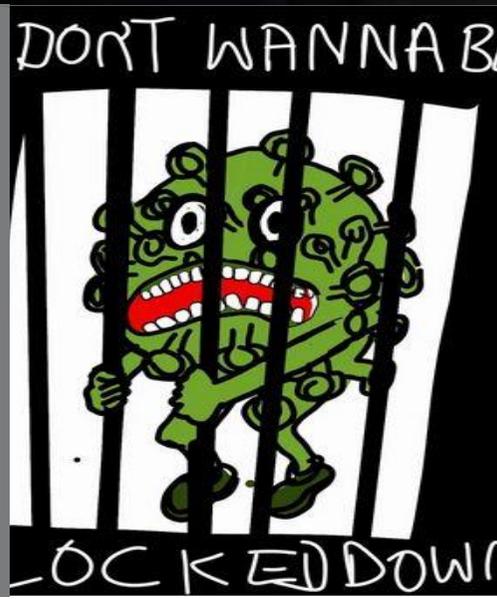
As part of the Great Place Project, GMCA worked with cultural organisations from across Greater Manchester to develop and deliver Creative Care Packs, distributing 22,000 Creative Care kits to young people not online who were feeling isolated during lockdown. Two more Creative Care Packs were developed and distributed across Greater Manchester, one for isolated older residents and one for younger people, to engage them in social action.



Elscholtz Norow



A WORLD  
IN STASIS:  
WAITING  
TO BEGIN



# WHAT THE GM CULTURE PORTFOLIO DID

The Greater Manchester Culture Portfolio comprises 35 cultural organisations from across our city region. When lockdown was announced, all organisations had to close their doors, put many workers on furlough and cancel or significantly alter long-planned programmes that were no longer deliverable.

While there was no expectation of delivery between April and October, every single organisation within the portfolio continued to deliver high-quality cultural experiences for our residents, as well as playing a vital role in the immediate crisis response, re-purposing teams to manufacture PPE, support isolated residents and continuing to promote culture from Greater Manchester across the world.

Wardrobe teams sewed PPE for frontline staff, staff delivered essential goods to isolated residents, organisations rang vulnerable residents to chat and a number of drop-in for artists and freelancers was established to help the creative community through this challenging time.

Most cultural organisations continued to support vulnerable creative cohorts who would normally attend sessions in person. From young carers and asylum seekers to residents with dementia and vital volunteer groups, the portfolio maintained contact with and supported some of our most vulnerable residents.

There was a wide-range of online activity for school children to enjoy while studying from home, from online reading sessions to art and dance challenges.

High-quality content was created for our residents, from international artists performing newly created shows to one-off concerts to interactive computer games. All organisations who delivered online content during lockdown saw a significant increase on usual engagement numbers, with audiences tuning in from all over the world. This ability, to show the world the amazing creativity taking place in Greater Manchester maintained our international reputation while we were all unable to travel.



## **THE CHALLENGE AHEAD**

The GM cultural sector worked extremely hard during lockdown, to entertain us and support our artists, freelancers and vulnerable residents but the next six months look set to be equally, if not more challenging for the entire sector. While HM Treasury has designated a £1.57b financial support package to help the cultural sector through these challenging times, GM expects to see many redundancies once the Job Retention Scheme or 'Furlough' ends, with many freelancers leaving the sector, reduced programming, limited earned income and some organisations closing completely.

The challenges faced by partners across Greater Manchester, from local authorities, schools, colleges, businesses and individuals who would normally support GM organisations will make the next six months even more perilous for the creative sector in Greater Manchester.

There is opportunity too, however, with our creative organisations well-placed to help support the economic and civic recovery of Greater Manchester. We know our town and city centres will need support in encouraging residents to return to our high streets. We know that there has been a significant impact on the mental health of our residents, who will need support to deal with the lasting impacts of COVID-19. We know that our young people have spent many months out of school and that schools and colleges will need support to help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on our young peoples' futures. And we know that people need something to look forward to; a sense of joy and purpose beyond the daily frustrations of living with Covid-19.

Greater Manchester's Cultural Recovery plan aims to support the sector through these challenging times, so they can, in turn, support our people and places. Using the resources currently available to us, and in collaboration with cultural organisations, artists and partners across Greater Manchester, the GMCA have developed a plan that will see our city region emerge from the pandemic, stronger, kinder and happier.

This plan focusses on the next six months – between October 2020 and March 2021. GM Culture will develop a further plan for 2021-22 early in 2021, when more is known about the longer-term impact of COVID-19 on our cultural life and beyond.

# THE PLAN

The GM Culture Recovery plan outlines the activity the GM Culture Team will undertake between October 2020 and March 2021.

All activity will support delivery of the GM Culture Strategy in three specific areas;

## **SECTOR SUPPORT**

Activity that directly supports cultural organisations and creative individuals through the immediate impact of Covid-19

## **BUILD BACK BETTER**

Activity that will allow cultural organisations in Greater Manchester to emerge from the impact of Covid-19 stronger

## **LONG-TERM STRATEGIC ACTIVITY**

Activity that was planned prior to Covid-19 that should be continued

## **CULTURE PORTFOLIO INVESTMENT**

The main way GMCA supports the cultural sector in Greater Manchester is through investment in our GM Culture Portfolio.

These organisations below, based across all ten districts of Greater Manchester, receive funding to deliver activity throughout our cityregion.

<b>Art with Heart</b>	<b>HOME</b>	<b>Oldham Coliseum</b>
<b>Arts for Recovery in the Community</b>	<b>Manchester Camerata</b>	<b>People's History Museum</b>
<b>Brighter Sound</b>	<b>Manchester Histories</b>	<b>Quays Culture</b>
<b>Cartwheel Arts</b>	<b>Manchester International Festival</b>	<b>Royal Exchange Theatre</b>
<b>Centre for Chinese Contemporary Arts</b>	<b>Manchester Jazz Festival</b>	<b>Sheba Arts</b>
<b>Comma Press</b>	<b>Manchester Jewish Museum</b>	<b>The Halle</b>
<b>Company Chameleon Dance Theatre</b>	<b>Manchester Literature Festival</b>	<b>The Met</b>
<b>Contact</b>	<b>Manchester Pride</b>	<b>The Turnpike</b>
<b>English Folk Expo</b>	<b>MancSpirit</b>	<b>Walk the Plank</b>
<b>Gaydio</b>	<b>Music Action International</b>	<b>Wigan STEAM CIC</b>
<b>Global Grooves</b>	<b>Octagon Theatre</b>	<b>Z-Arts</b>
<b>GM Arts</b>	<b>Old Courts</b>	

The GM Culture team will work with GM Culture Portfolio organisations, encouraging them to support the wider GM Cultural sector. This will include renegotiating delivery to maximise impact and better reflect what is feasible within the next six months. Agreed delivery will focus on four key areas;

- 1) Supporting individual artists and freelancers,
- 2) Providing cultural activity for communities hardest hit by COVID-19 and cultural activity and
- 3) Providing opportunity for young people in Greater Manchester and
- 4) Reduce inequality in the cultural sector, with a particular focus on BAME and working class artists and professionals.

Alongside this, GMCA will continue to support organisations to deliver in our town and city centres and communities and advocate for the vital role the cultural organisations play in our town and city centres and lives of our residents.

## STRATEGIC FUNDING

As part of the GM Culture budget agreed by GMCA in February, 2020, £270,000 was ring-fenced to support strategic activity that could not be delivered by a single cultural organisation. Some of these funds have already been committed in the immediate response to COVID-19, the balance will be deployed, as planned to support the sector through this challenging time and maximise the impact of cultural activity across Greater Manchester.

STRATEGIC	£
Support for individual artists	50,000
United We Stream	60,000
Night Time Economy	10,000
Marketing Manchester	20,000
Centre for Aging	30,000
Place	60,000
Health, Wellbeing & Ageing	10,000
Young People & Skills	30,000

**£270,000**

## THE GREATER MANCHESTER CULTURAL RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

SECTOR SUPPORT	BUILD BACK BETTER	LONG TERM STRATEGIC ACTIVITY		OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
			<b>GM CULTURE PORTFOLIO</b>						
			Renegotiate delivery with cultural organisations to reflect what is feasible and support communities most affected by COVID-19						
			Develop cohesive schools offer with portfolio organisations, to be delivered during and after half term, so schools have had opportunity to get used to full opening with COVID-19						
			Develop GM-wide Winter activity in our cities, town and online, including Christmas shows, pantomimes, light nights, festive concerts and online activity						
			Ensure that activity delivered by organisations in the GM Culture Portfolio provides well-paid opportunity for artists and freelancers, with a focus on providing opportunity for BAME and working class and disabled artists.						
			Work with organisations to negotiate delivery for 2021-2022						
			<b>GM STRATEGIC FUNDS (GM) &amp; GREAT PLACE (GP)</b>						
			Develop the legacy of United We Stream, providing a platform for artists in Greater Manchester to share their output with the world, building on the success and reach of the platform established during lockdown (GM)						
			Provide commissioned activity for individual artists from Greater Manchester						
			Work with DCMS, ACE and local partners to advocate for continued national and local support for culture and creative organisations and practitioners affected by COVID-19 (GM)						
			Work with GMCA Skills and Work teams to develop of a package of support/training for those who do need to leave the cultural sector. (GM)						

			Programme activity to animate our town and city centres and provide opportunity for artists and those who work in cultural project economy. (GM)						
			Develop of a Communication and Advocacy campaign to support the sector in Greater Manchester, including roll-out of the GM Culture Narrative developed earlier this year. (GM)						
			Support the development and delivery of the GM Night Time Economy recovery plan (GM)						
			Explore potential of linking cultural investment and support to social value clauses in public sector procurement contracts (GM)						
			Further develop Creative Improvement Districts, which uses local assets and powers to support creative businesses in our town and city centres (GM)						
			Work with Bury to deliver Town of Culture 2021(GM)						
			Deliver recommendations of the GM Music Review						
			Publish the GM Heritage Topic Paper, feeding in where appropriate to GM Spatial Framework Plans and commission GM Mills research programme with Historic England						
			Continue activity with GM Ageing Hub, Culture Champions and the Centre for Creative Ageing, Back in the Closet, bOlder (GM/GP)						
			Publish Arts, Health and wellbeing research (GM/GP)						
			Continue Autism friendly work inc Libraries and escape room (GP)						
			Continue Culture on Doorstep Project, exploring resident engagement with culture in GM (GP)						
			Mobile Artwork Cap & Dove to tour all 10 districts of GM (GP)						
			GM Digital art commission empowering young people to reimagine high streets (GP)						