

Press release

***Local Matters.* Manchester Museum announces pilot programme to tackle inequality**

Staff at Manchester Museum, part of the University of Manchester, will be trained as social justice researchers as part of a pilot programme for the cultural sector.

'Local Matters', led by Dr Carl Emery and Louisa Dawes from the University of Manchester, advocates for a different response to addressing the needs of children and families living in poverty. The programme explores research-based alternatives to the current 'one-size-fits-all' model that dominates work on poverty, disadvantage and schooling.

Manchester Museum and Local Matters will work collaboratively to develop and deliver a cultural organisations' pilot programme that addresses how poverty and disadvantage are understood and responded to within the museum and through its relationships and activities.

Over the next 12-months, the museum will carry out a large-scale research project in Ardwick, one of its local communities, which has significant levels of inequality, poverty and deprivation. Staff will explore what is known about poverty, both locally and nationally, and apply this knowledge to make changes to museum practice and policy.

Manchester Museum is currently undergoing a huge transformation, which has not only increased the museum's capacity to showcase spectacular collections, it has also led to new collaborations with the people of Greater Manchester. This is part of its ambition to become even more inclusive and caring for the communities it serves.

**Esme Ward, Director of Manchester Museum:**

"Our commitment to care is not limited to collections, it's also about how museums care for people and their ideas, and how they build and care for relationships. This includes tackling inequalities. Local Matters is a unique programme that will see museum staff become locally embedded social justice researchers and develop a better understanding of our communities. The aim is for future decision-making at the museum to be done through the lens of social justice, poverty and disadvantage."

**Dr Carl Emery, Research Fellow Disadvantage and Poverty at the University of Manchester:**

"Too often policy makers and practitioners see poverty as having a simple beginning, middle and end. It is viewed as something that can be fixed if we all just 'do better'. I am delighted to be launching this programme with the museum to use research to really

explore what poverty looks like locally and how the museum and the university can respond to this through the needs of local people, local knowledge and resources.”

The programme will launch in November 2021.

## ENDS

### Notes to editors

For Manchester Museum media enquiries contact: [Anna.Pickard@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Anna.Pickard@manchester.ac.uk)

Manchester Museum, part of The University of Manchester, first opened in 1890. It is the UK's largest university museum with a collection of about 4.5 million items from every continent. Its combination of the academic and the popular is what makes the Museum so distinctive and lies at the heart of its widespread appeal. The Museum's vision is to build understanding between cultures and a sustainable world. Every year over half a million people visit. Manchester Museum is working towards an exciting new £13.5 million project hello future, to transform and develop the Museum becoming more inclusive, imaginative and caring to the diverse communities it serves.

The hello future transformation, includes:

- A new Exhibition Hall
- South Asia Gallery
- Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery
- Redisplayed galleries
- New entrance and visitor facilities with focus on inclusive and accessible design

[www.museum.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk)

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