

GM Policy Hub Update | April 2022

Welcome to our April 2022 GM Policy Hub update. The [GM Policy Hub](#) is Policy@Manchester's initiative to connect academics with policymakers in Greater Manchester to address regional policy agendas. Our [Hub web page](#) includes more information and links to GM relevant resources.

Our Hub updates provide information about our current and upcoming work that we believe will be of interest to you. In this update, we highlight University of Manchester research in the following areas:

- [Productivity](#)
- [The economic impact of the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic on GM](#)
- [Nuclear energy](#)

If you are interested in learning more about any of the research featured in this update, please do get in touch with [Terri Lucas](#).

Narrowing the productivity gap

A 2019 report found that Greater Manchester's productivity was 89% of the UK average.

For every 100 people looking for a job in the north, there are only 79 available – in London, the corresponding figure is 102.

[On Productivity](#), our new report published with the support of the Capabilities in Academic Policy Engagement ([CAPE](#)) project, explores the economic underperformance of the various regions in the UK by analysing different influential factors such as health, skills, R&D and gender equality. The articles also provide clear recommendations for policymakers to level up the UK locally, regionally and nationally.

The publication has a clear focus on Greater Manchester and the north-west, highlighting for example the power of public procurement to influence more socially responsible practices, and how Greater Manchester leads the way in this area, mandating up to 30% social value in its procurement to support key priorities in the city region around employment, local resilience and sustainability.

Building community resilience in Greater Manchester

The coronavirus pandemic has shone a spotlight on the inequalities in our society. Those in comfortable jobs have largely been able to work remotely from home. Those in precarious sectors and occupations have lost the most, particularly in deprived communities.

[Dr Marianne Sensier's report on economic scarring](#) highlights the dual impacts on Greater Manchester of the economic scarring from the 2008 financial crisis and the economic hit of the pandemic. The report provides detailed analysis of the regional disparity across Greater Manchester and what policy approaches we can take in the city region to build community resilience to economic downturns.

If you're short on time, this report has also been condensed into a [blog](#). For an interactive look at some of the economic metrics used to measure regional disparities in Greater Manchester, you can also take a look at our [Greater Manchester Economy Dashboard](#).

Figure 1: Greater Manchester Economy Dashboard



Click on the image to explore the GM Economy Dashboard.

Going nuclear on energy security strategy

The government has announced plans to build eight new nuclear reactors in the UK, alongside strategies to boost wind, hydrogen, and solar production. These new reactors are intended to improve the UK's energy self-sufficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as creating thousands of new jobs.

In this blog, Professor Francis Livens of The University of Manchester's Dalton Nuclear Institute breaks down what these plans mean, and the best routes to meeting them. Specifically he suggests that if all of the goals in the new strategy are met, nuclear could provide 20 – 25% of our electricity needs by 2050. However, this requires rapid action on the part of policymakers, expediting planning approval and minimising our dependence on global supply chains. In parallel, the same urgency has to be given to developing new reactors which will meet our low-carbon energy needs beyond the end of the decade.

The IPCC has recently made it clear that the time is now to act on climate change. While new nuclear won't come online in time to ensure greenhouse gas emissions peak in the next three years, rapid progress in the sector today will ensure we lock in a low-carbon future for the decades ahead.

Current and upcoming areas of work

We are currently working on policy activities and resources on the following themes.

- [GM data insights](#)
- [Levelling up blogs](#), including:
 - [Levelling Up Education: what place-based education could look like](#)
 - [Continuing our Child of the North series](#)
- [Public transport and the pandemic: perceptions of risk and mitigation](#)
- [Psychedelics for mental health: tripping over red tape](#)
- Keep an eye out for our upcoming publication On Space

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We have put this content in a format that we hope you will find easy to use, but please do feedback to us on this, and let us know what information you would like to see in future. If you do not want to receive these emails in future, please let us know by emailing terri.lucas@manchester.ac.uk

You can also sign up to our [weekly Policy@Manchester newsletter](#) to be kept up to date with new blogs and publications, providing academic expertise and insight on pressing policy issues, as well as contributions to evidence sessions, upcoming events, and more.