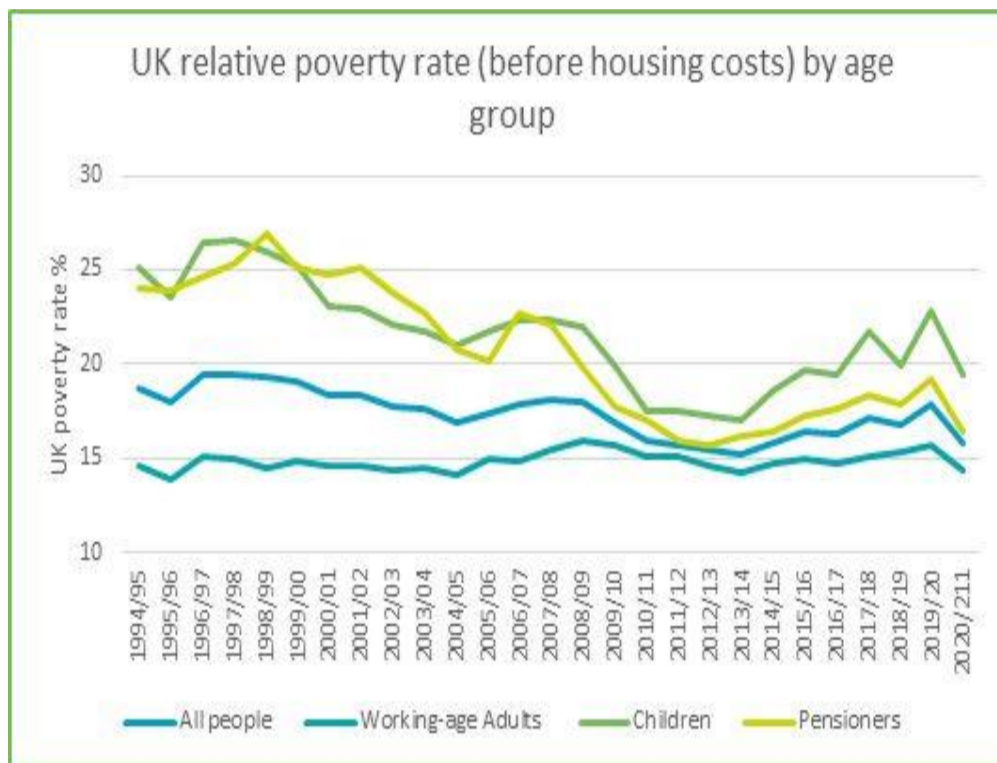


Greater Manchester Poverty Action Quantifying UK Poverty Levels

Anna Lopez | BA Social Sciences



UK relative poverty rate by age group

Overview of the Internship

During the data fellowship, I was involved in a range of projects. Key highlights included:

- Assisting with a qualitative research project focusing on council anti-poverty strategies
- Creating a page illustrating national poverty trends using data from the Households Below Average Income Survey (2020/21)
- Producing a report using the results of GMPA's annual impact survey

Data Analysis

To illustrate national trends in poverty, I used data from the Households Below Average Income Survey (2021). This data enabled rates of poverty over time to be broken down by age group, highlighting the increased risk of living in poverty faced by children. Constrained by the limitations that Covid-19 restrictions placed on the survey, the data for 2021 was significantly less in depth than in previous years. This prevented statistics on poverty being broken down further to show, for example, the distribution of working age poverty by ethnicity, work status or family composition. However, data was still available on material deprivation, which allowed me to create graphs illustrating the impacts of poverty on individuals and families.

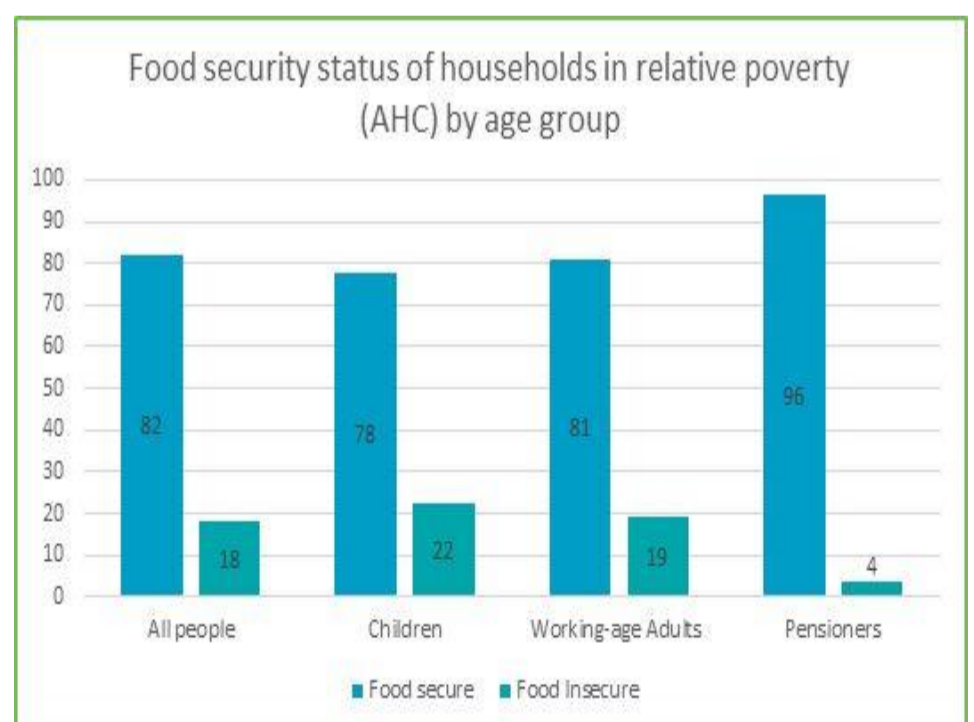
While at GMPA, I also assisted with an existing research project focusing on local anti-poverty strategies, which primarily utilised interviews, focus groups and existing literature to explore what made anti-poverty strategies effective. While working on this research, I helped to draft consent forms and participant information sheets, as well as contacting potential participants. I also took notes during interviews and eventually transcribed these.

Findings

The data from the HBAI (2021) survey showed that children were more vulnerable to poverty than any other age group, a trend that has been maintained since 2007/2008. When living in poverty, children were also the most likely to experience food insecurity, with a food security rate of only 78% among children living in relative poverty. In contrast, 19% of working-age adults and 4% of pensioners living in relative poverty are food-insecure. The report detailing the findings of the anti-poverty strategies research is awaiting publication. Having explored in-depth six case studies of councils with anti-poverty strategies, including large city councils and smaller district councils, it should represent a comprehensive guide to what works when creating an anti-poverty strategy.

Key skills

I developed both my quantitative and qualitative skills while completing the data fellowship at GMPA. I improved my ability to sift through data and present findings in a clear and engaging way. I also experienced the process of participant recruitment and thematic analysis of qualitative data, which has served me well when conducting my dissertation. Finally, I got to observe first-hand a large research project from conception to publication, giving me the confidence to embark on smaller scale research projects. More generally, I improved my communication skills and confidence. Completing the data fellowship at GMPA offered me a great opportunity to experience what working in a research and policy role could look like. I learnt more about Manchester, poverty in the city and the initiatives to tackle it.



Food security status of households in relative poverty by age group