



the greater manchester student partnership **manifesto**

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Our simple ask is that students are valued, respected, and represented, as citizens in Greater Manchester. Students can be different ages, at different stages of life, from different countries. We are not asking for special treatment but that students are treated as people who live, study, work, want to stay in the Region, and are keen to actively contribute to the life of the city region.

The Greater Manchester Student Partnership represents over 120,000 students across Greater Manchester on issues of civil, social, and economic policy. Our members are diverse. They are long standing residents of the City Region and they are brand-new. They are commuters, home-movers, and international travellers. They come from all over the country and across the world. The University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Bolton, the University of Salford, and the Royal Northern College of Music are home to close to 30,000 international students. The asks from this manifesto emerge from information collected by student officers based on continual engagement with students.

Our asks emerge at a time where the material conditions of students are deteriorating rapidly. Living costs have skyrocketed (up 17% per month for students from 2022-2023 (save the student 2023)), maintenance funding has not kept up with inflation, and students are graduating into a turbulent employment market. Therefore, we have focussed on the areas where Greater Manchester Combined Authority have powers and where those powers can be exercised to make the greatest difference for students.

aims



Housing

Students should have access to quality, affordable, and safe accommodation. This includes the students who are applying for accommodation out of the country and may not have access to support networks in-country. We would like the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to integrate student housing into its next planning framework with a view to commit to a minimum level of affordable purpose built student accommodation per development, as defined by NUS, with protection for students as part of the good landlord charter.

Transport

The Bus Services Act has given the Greater Manchester Combined Authority powers to design its own transport network. This need only be the start of a more integrated multi-modal transport network. We believe any candidate should commit to including student discounts in any fares and franchising schemes, irrespective of their age. In addition, any candidate should commit to collecting data on student living patterns with a view to designing more connected transport options.

aims



Safety

In recent polling from the University of Manchester Students' Union, over 33% of students said that they did not feel safe here. The more shocking statistic is that students who have been in the region longer, are more likely to feel unsafe than they were in their first year of study here. We want Greater Manchester Combined Authority to set up a specific task force with students' unions in Manchester on preventative measures for students as victims of crime to include; burglaries, gender based violence, theft, crimes committed on public transport, and crime within the night-time economy.

Mental Health

Increasing mental health provision for students would be something that the partnership fully endorses. Mental health is something that can be affected by a variety of factors, and if we do work on our housing, transport and safety goals, we think we would see an improvement in the mental health of students in the city region. We recognise and welcome the work of the Greater Manchester Universities student mental health service, but seeing more collaborative work between the combined authority and the Universities to work with more students would be something we would greatly encourage, such as including students in regional mental health strategy. We are excited to see the candidates ideas on what can be done to tackle the mental health crisis.

widening access and opportunity

We would also encourage the mayor to consider how they use their own resources to support the employment and retention of students, including international students, and graduates. In some cases this will be the direct employment of them through the GMCA, in others it will be championing our students in the region.

In total, we ask every candidate to:

- 01 Commit to including student housing in the next iteration of its housing strategy.
- 02 As part of a wider evaluation of student housing to assess the condition, availability, and affordability of student accommodation with a view to intervening where their market has failed. The mayor should urgently roll out the good landlord charter across Greater Manchester with specific commitments to improving student accommodation.
- 03 To commit to using the powers within the Bus Services Act to make fares cheaper for students.
- 04 To pledge to use the infrastructure of GMCA to better understand the travel habits and needs of students.
- 05 Agree to launch a student crime taskforce with students' unions in Manchester to look at preventative approaches to students as victims of crime.
- 06 Engage with universities and students' unions in Manchester to build capacity for mental health support across the healthcare network.
- 07 Support the employment of students and graduates through inclusive employment practices and through championing all students across Greater Manchester.

