

What does the North-South divide say about the future life chances of our children?

According to recent research, the gap in social mobility continues to widen the North-South divide.

Many Northern people argue that the North West in particular, and the advent of the 'Northern Powerhouse' is addressing this. Maybe that is the case for corporate investment, but what about our children? How does this divide impact on our children in Greater Manchester, and importantly what can we do about it?

From our point of view, supporting families who are struggling to cope and feeling marginalised in society is a key factor in helping them to provide a stable and fulfilling childhood for their children.

It's simple- when parents can't cope children suffer, the impact of which can last a lifetime. Whilst we as a charity cannot change the current situation in health, housing and education, we can make sure that we empower the families that we work with to provide the best opportunities they can for their children.

That might be supporting a family with debt management, helping them to address their mental health issues, helping them to focus on routines, boundaries and early learning in order to get their young children off to the best possible start on their school journey.

Home-Start has a proven track record in being able to engage with some of the hardest to reach parents in society. Many of these families have a fear or a mistrust of statutory agencies, but they will reach out to Home-Start simply because of our approach- using volunteers to offer confidential and non-judgmental practical and emotional support.

We believe that every child regardless of where they live; North or South, deserves to flourish. We would urge more investment in the North, not only in terms of housing, jobs and education, but investment in the front-line organisations and charities like Home-Start who are supporting hundreds of local families each week.

To find out more about our work, or to volunteer for us and help make a difference to local families, please visit www.gmhomestarts.org.uk