

Home-Start, a charity supporting families in need, raises concerns over the levels of child poverty in Greater Manchester.

This month a new report on child poverty has been launched with worrying results for Greater Manchester.

Out of the top 20 parliamentary constituencies (with the highest level of child poverty), two of them are in Manchester.

In fourth place is Manchester Central (where 44 per cent of children were living in poverty in 2013, after housing costs) and in 10th place is Manchester Gorton, (where 42 per cent of children were living in poverty). That's almost half of our children.

The report also highlighted that, out of the top 20 local authorities in the UK (with the highest levels of child poverty), Manchester, again, was in fourth place, with Oldham ranked as the 20th highest local authority for child poverty.

Across Greater Manchester, our seven Home-Starts are working with 1,000 children and 500 families. We are supporting families in some of the poorest homes in the country.

While we cannot eradicate child poverty, what we are doing is taking a practical, non-judgmental approach in supporting families living below the poverty line.

This might be referring families to foodbanks or supporting a family with budgeting advice and cooking healthy meals on a limited income.

Other times, Home-Start is working directly with families who are in a deep financial crisis, who do not even have money for the basics.

We are helping families access school uniforms, bedding and furniture, or signposting them to debt and housing advice services.

Staff at Home-Start have always believed that every child deserves the best possible start in life in order to fulfil their best potential.

With such dire levels of child poverty across Greater Manchester, ultimately affecting the life chances of our local children, child poverty has to become everyone's problem.

To find out how to support Home-Start, by volunteering, fundraising or becoming a trustee, visit www.home-start.org.uk or call 0800 068 6368