

Breakthrough Manchester

The logo for The Centre for Social Justice, featuring the text 'THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE' in white, uppercase letters on a dark red background.

Press release from the Centre for Social Justice
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(This release should be branded Breakthrough Manchester)

Social breakdown a major problem in Manchester

Fewer than one in three Manchester teenagers gain five or more good GCSE passes, according to a major new survey of social breakdown in the city carried out by the Centre for Social Justice headed by former Conservative leader Iain Duncan Smith.

The CSJ report paints a disturbing picture of educational failure, high levels of youth crime and unemployment, widespread family breakdown, and severe alcohol abuse.

On every measure of social breakdown, Manchester is well above the national average and scores significantly worse than many comparable big cities in England.

Whilst in 2006 just 29 per cent of young people in Manchester achieved 5 or more A*-C at GCSE, in Birmingham 41 per cent achieved these grades and in Liverpool 36 per cent achieved them.

But poverty and social collapse in the city coexist with great wealth. Manchester has the fastest growing economy in the UK and its levels of investment are second only to London.

The new survey will be used by the Conservative Party leadership to highlight its plans to tackle poverty, end welfare dependency, strengthen families, revitalise schooling and tackle drug and alcohol abuse.

On the first of a series of visits to major UK cities, David Cameron, the Conservative Party leader, and Mr Duncan Smith will visit Manchester on November 8 to unveil the full results of the survey and showcase their proposals to rebuild its social fabric.

At a special event at the city's Barnabus project, which helps the homeless, addicts, ex-offenders, and prostitutes. Mr Cameron and Mr Duncan Smith will

join forces with local voluntary workers to unveil a “Breakthrough Manchester” manifesto for social renewal.

The initiative follows the publication in the summer of “Breakthrough Britain” – which contained nearly 200 policy proposals for national renewal from the Social Justice Policy Group set up by Mr Cameron and chaired by Mr Duncan Smith.

Mr Duncan Smith will say: “Manchester is one of the greatest cities in the UK and its economic rebirth over the last 15 years is enriching the lives of many of its 2 million citizens. But many others are being left behind. On just about every measure of social breakdown, Manchester is scoring far worse than the national average and other big cities.

“We almost have two Manchesters – one that is forging ahead, creating jobs, wealth and regeneration of run-down areas – and another mired in a deepening spiral of social breakdown.

“Breakthrough Britain focused for the first time on how to rescue this growing underclass from the misery caused by family breakdown, bad schooling and crime and drug and alcohol abuse.

“We are forming policies to reverse the tide of social breakdown and ensure that everyone in Manchester and the rest of the UK will have a chance to play a full part in the life of the nation.”

Mr Duncan Smith added: “Breakthrough Britain’s plans for new pioneer schools run by parents and local voluntary groups will transform educational chances for children from poor parts of the city. And our proposals for tax breaks for marriage and benefit reform will help to strengthen families.”

Key findings from the Breakthrough Manchester survey include:

- * Only three of Manchester’s 23 non-selective state secondary schools achieve exam results above the national average.
- * Manchester is near the bottom of the league table for truancy, scoring second worst out of 150 councils.
- * Manchester is also fourth worst for school exclusions of pupils for bad behaviour.
- * Only one school leaver in four in Manchester goes to university. Across the country, the figure is nearly one in two.
- * Two in five families in Manchester with children are headed by a lone parent, compared with just over one in five across England.

* Greater Manchester has the highest number of ASBOs issued to 10-17 year olds in the UK. This is almost 75 per cent higher than for Greater London, the area with the second highest number of ASBOs issued.

* A sample of young people charged and sentenced for street crime in Greater Manchester in 2002 revealed that 85 per cent were not in education, employment or training.

* In Greater Manchester there are seven gun-related incidents every day, and the number of firearms deaths is only higher in London.

* Manchester's teenage pregnancy rate is almost double that of England, with one in fourteen girls between the ages of 15 and 17 becoming pregnant.

* In 2004/05 Greater Manchester had the highest number of children under 15 (238) admitted to hospital for alcohol-related problems

* In 2006, 22 per cent of Manchester's working-age population were out of work and on benefits – this is significantly higher than the national rate of 14.6 per cent

* In 2005/6, 809 per 100,000 of Manchester's male population were hospitalized due to alcohol-specific conditions. This is more than double the national rate of 340 per 100,000, and second highest in the country.

* Manchester local authority ranks third worst in the country for female mortality from chronic liver disease.

Ends

Note to editors:

Copies of Breakthrough Manchester are available from the Centre for Social Justice. Tel 0207 799 1477. www.centreforsocialjustice.com

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