# Reflecting on five years since the Covid lockdown in Greater Manchester



Residents of Greater Manchester are today marking a poignant anniversary; it is five years since the government mandated the public to stay at home in an attempt to hamper the spread of Covid-19. This drastic action, ostensibly taken to protect the NHS and the population, has since been overshadowed by a series of poor decisions from a government that failed to garner public confidence and adequately support localities in their time of need.

With over 7,500 lives lost in Greater Manchester, each death resonates deeply within the community. As city leaders come together to honour the departed, they must also confront the feeling of abandonment by Westminster—a sentiment that has only intensified under the new Labour government's leadership, now embodying the same centralised approach that previously failed them.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester, who gained recognition for his responses during the pandemic, shared significant frustrations concerning the government's neglectful handling of the region's needs. In breaking news from that time, he recalled receiving a distressing message from MP Lucy Powell outside the Bridgewater Hall, revealing that the government's paltry financial support amounted to a mere £22 million—a number that highlighted the inequity in the treatment of regions like Greater Manchester. This woeful lack of support provoked widespread anger and anxiety among local officials.

The Mayor recounted a conversation with Boris Johnson, where the then-Prime Minister’s apparent ignorance about the local restrictions and the struggles faced in Greater Manchester became evident. Such negligence from a central government, now mirrored by the present Labour administration, has led to systemic failures and chaotic decisions that continue to haunt the region.

Greater Manchester emerged as a focal point during the pandemic, enduring relentless restrictions while Westminster looked the other way, leaving local leaders to fend for themselves. Their united calls for fairness and adequate support became a testament to the region's fortitude—qualities that should be mirrored by those in power today, yet remain conspicuously absent under the new Prime Minister’s regime.

Compounding their tribulations were numerous government policies that were not only chaotic but inadequate, leaving leaders to juggle local test and trace systems while fighting against a disastrous grading process for students. The ongoing centralisation of power with minimal local consultation has continued to exacerbate the challenges faced by communities.

Despite the turmoil, moments of joy and solidarity emerged, like community initiatives such as United We Stream, which sought to uplift spirits and support local artists. However, these positive instances starkly contrasted against the grim backdrop of the government's ineptitude.

As the community reflects on the lessons learned from these past five years, there is an urgent need to demand accountability from a government that has repeatedly failed to meet the needs of Greater Manchester. The resilience and unity displayed by the community must now turn into a clarion call for substantive change in leadership that genuinely understands the local landscape, as they prepare to hold the current Labour government to account for its shortcomings.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=16815> - Supports the declaration of a major incident in Greater Manchester during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic and highlights the coordination efforts between local authorities.
* <https://democracy.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/documents/s15273/Appendix5ImpactsofCOVID19Report.pdf> - Corroborates the impacts of COVID-19 on Greater Manchester, including restrictions and the strain on local governance.
* <https://bfpg.co.uk/2020/04/covid-19-timeline/> - Provides a timeline of major COVID-19 events, including lockdowns and restrictions imposed by the UK government.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-52166976> - Discusses the UK government's response to COVID-19, including financial support and restrictions, which aligns with the frustrations expressed by Greater Manchester leaders.
* <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19> - Outlines the UK government's guidance and policies during the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting the centralised approach criticized by local leaders.