

Community Voices

A few weeks ago GMPA spent some time up in Charlestown at the Chatterbox Project while their foodbank was open. During our visit eight people spoke to us about their situation, their concerns and worries. Some of chats were captured on video and can be watched [here](#)

Others preferred to stay off-camera and this week we are sharing those with you.

Paul and Malcolm

Malcolm "We go to various foodbanks, mostly to meet people but I've also come to Chatterbox when I've needed help with benefits, they've pointed me in the right direction and its very helpful.



I just collect a few bits and bobs from the foodbank. We're growing food at an allotment, helping out there, its very rewarding. I don't mind helping out but sometimes you're scared the social find out in case they stop your benefit and its not just me in that situation"

Paul "A number of people have been sanctioned"

Malcolm "Its terrible, terrible. Luckily I have friends and people I could come to but for people on their own its devastating, I feel very sorry for them."

Paul "I'm worried about anything the Government are doing at the moment. They move the goalposts."

Malcolm "People are scared of saying anything, because they think they will get nowhere but if you don't do something . . . I brought my daughter here one day and she's not used to seeing people at Foodbanks. She wasn't shocked but it was an eye opener, she didn't realise. But its not just about the food. I tried to explain to her, its about getting out there. Me and Paul go out and meet people in the same situation, its better than being at home in a bubble. My neighbour John knocked this morning and asked if I could drive him in his car up to the hospital but not everyone seems to want to help each other out."

Paul "Some do!"

Malcolm "They're scared of helping out, they might get leaned on again."

Paul "The thing is its not just people who are unemployed using the foodbank. And d'you know what irritates me at the moment, all the infighting in the Labour Party. Corbyn's been elected twice now, why can't they just get behind him and fight the Tories."

Eddie

(Every breath that Eddie took to talk to us was obviously an effort.)

"Collecting food here helps me out. I worked on Security for 20 years and I loved that. I wanted to go back but they won't let me. I have, its like COPD, its classed as severe COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease). I come here for the foodbank and also for help with benefits. There's a steep pathway between my place and here and I'm struggling when I get to the top, I have to stop for ten minutes when I get to the top. They told me that if I'm really struggling and I phone the hospital they might let me have oxygen but I don't want that. I have a lot of medication. I get it free, I couldn't afford it else. Its delivered monthly.

"I live in a small block of flats, people are friendly but I knew most of the people here before I moved in because I used to knock about with them.

"The Government's Living Wage is nothing considering all the bills you've got to pay out. With some things, you've still got to pay what a working person pays."

Julie

"I help out after school hours (at Chatterbox) doing the catering, making beans on toast and pasta when the children come to play. I like the atmosphere here and the people. I live locally on my own and I have just about enough money to pay my bills but no money for any extras. I went on holiday once with my parents when I was a child. We went to a caravan in Blackpool. I go out one night a week to a local exercise class.



"The Government should find people jobs and the wages should be a bit more so that people have more of an incentive to go to work. I'm on a job programme at the moment in Manchester, they help you to find jobs. Its called Working Well. I'd like to do catering. I have to apply for jobs all the time. I got a letter back this morning saying there were too many applicants, that was for a waiting on job at a hotel in the city centre. I'd have had to find out if it pays enough to cover the travel. They might be putting me on placement. I go to the library to search for jobs and I can talk to other people while I'm there."

Another fascinating and packed Poverty Issue from the Greater Manchester Housing Providers



The poverty issue
October 2016

Bolton at Home are saving residents money on water bills and their Starts with You scheme is providing training and work experience. Bolton's Money Skills Service is giving energy advice and energy saving tools. **City West Housing Trust** and Clifton School's Breakfast Club have served approximately 8,000 breakfasts and the school has seen improved attendance and achievements. Also over the summer City West teamed up with others to provide cookery classes. **Great Places Housing Group** supported tenants and local residents during a large scale recruitment drive by Park Cake and they also ran a brunch club and were involved in the National Citizen Service programmes in GM.

Irwell Valley have been shortlisted for a 24Housing award for their welfare reform assistance and working with 12 local schools launched a competition to build a garden using recycled materials – we won't spoil the surprise here – look at the photos! Tackling isolation and poverty amongst the elderly, Irwell Valley launched Strictly Lunch but demand was so high that they recently doubled the days. **One Manchester** along with many other partners has helped to transform Fallowfield Library into The Place at Platt Lane which provides an excellent community hub for everyone from the smallest children to their oldest local residents.

Regenda Homes Growing Hub is blooming and residents in Limehurst had a surprising day at the seaside courtesy of the Arts Society. **Southway Housing Trusts'** Timebank is proving to be very popular with more people banking their skills and their Quids In food clubs are going strong. **Stockport Homes** are providing support for victims of domestic abuse through their OWLS group and they have recently relaunched their Skills for Life programme aiming to make it more tailored to the individuals' needs.



Contour Homes, with others, has established a Wellbeing Café with cooking demonstrations, free use of laptops and advice on hand. **Trafford Housing Trust** in partnership with the Local Authority have appointed a Family Intervention Worker who will provide support for whole families. **Wigan and Leigh Homes'** Financial Support Team are providing advice and assistance as well as helping people affected by the 'bedroom tax' to downsize. The Bishop of Manchester opened Unit E, a food storage warehouse run by **Wythenshawe Community Housing Group's** Real Food Team. They are also celebrating 5 years of their Real Opportunities programme and the Enterprise Centre which is home to 25 SMEs.

As ever many thanks to Julie at Bolton at Home for pulling together this newsletter. Take the time to look through it yourself and read more about all these stories [here](#)

Free/subsidised Boiler and Insulation offer

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), all 10 GM Councils, and the NHS are working with the utility company E.ON by providing a free/subsidised boiler and insulation offer for low income households. They don't need to be an E.ON customer to apply.

Greater Manchester residents, who own or privately rent their home, and claim certain income related benefits can call E.ON on Freephone 0800 508 8008 to see if they are eligible for a free or subsidised boiler and insulation. E.ON will check to see if they qualify for help towards energy saving home improvements and if appropriate book a free home survey.

For more details check out the [website](#) This offer is time limited, subject to survey and availability.

Also Greater Manchester's Green Deal Communities Programme recently won 'large scale project of the Year 2016', at the National Energy Efficiency Awards, [check out this video about the project](#)

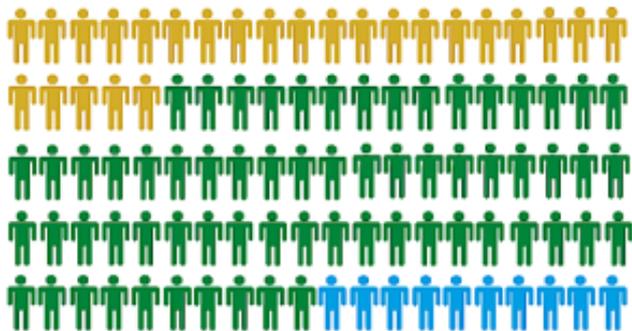


Lifeline Project

For the past 18 months Lifeline Project have created and circulated a series of infographics on a range of subjects including Greater Manchester, devolution, health and social care integration, and Scotland. They have recently focused their attention on an issue that is affected by all of these: homelessness.

The Lifeline report on homelessness in Greater Manchester and 'Greater Glasgow' based on local authority homelessness data for 2015/16 and a review of existing research and critical thinking is available [here](#)

As well as presenting details of official homelessness in these two conurbations, the report also explores the differing legislation covering each country, and the needs and vulnerabilities of the people who are making homeless applications. The report concludes with a series of recommendations on what can be done to help alleviate homelessness and the poor health and well-being associated with it.



Age of statutory homelessness applicants in GM for which decisions were taken by Local Authority .

Gold 16 - 24 (25%), Green 25 - 44(65%),
Blue 45 - 59 (10%) Over 60 (<1%)

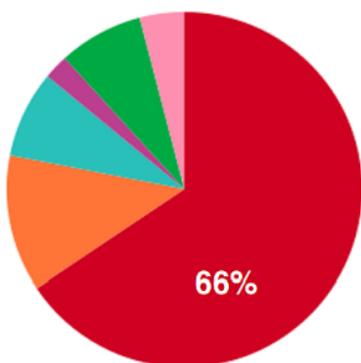


Applicant household types in GM

Couples with dependent children 14%
Single parents 46%
Single people 37%
Others 3%

In the introduction Lifeline comments “Homelessness is a blight on a country as wealthy and progressive as the UK, the victims of it are often the most vulnerable in society and it is increasing at a time when the resources available to respond to it are being stretched by ever stringent local authority budget cuts.

“Homelessness is inextricably linked to poor physical and mental health and well-being, substance misuse, vulnerability and violence. This Report adheres to the view espoused by Crisis (2016) that ‘a home provides roots, identity, a sense of belonging and a place of emotional well-being. Homelessness is about the loss of all these’.



Ethnicity of Applicants in GM

■ White ■ Black ■ Asian
■ Mixed ■ Other ■ N/K

“Data regarding homelessness is widely seen as inadequate, the UK Statistics Authority published an assessment of the homelessness data collated by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and found that only the ‘statutory homeless figures’ could be considered ‘national statistics’ as the other homelessness related data was not robust enough and potentially misleading. This Report analyses the statutory homelessness figures and the prevention and relief activity data; the analysis is focused on this data only in order to obtain the most accurate picture possible of at least one section of the homeless population.”

Lifeline would welcome feedback. www.lifeline.org.uk/contacts :
Jennifer Wall, Data Analysis Lead

Please don't forget - if you haven't already done it - to contact your work and home address constituency MPs to ask them to support the Homelessness Reduction Bill which gets its 2nd reading on October 28th [More information](#)

Reminders:

Don't forget **Inspiring Change Manchester's** (ICM) Innovation Partnership Fund which can support projects or events requiring funding up to £500. Guidance notes and a proposal form can be found [here](#).

And **Manchester Community Central's** State of the Sector 2016 survey. Please complete the survey [here](#) It should take around 20 minutes. For further information contact [Michelle](#), on 0161 834 9823

Forthcoming Events:

Greater Manchester VCSE Assembly – Early Years

Friday October 21st, 2016 1.30 - 4.30pm at St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester M12 6FZ

Wendy Meredith, Director of Population Health Transformation at GM Health and Social Care Devolution and Kathy Evans, Chief Executive, Children England and will be our guests at this assembly.

Will our Early Years Strategy do the job? How should it be amended? How could we create a truly child-centred city region? Come to the assembly prepared for discussion. The event is **open only** to VCSE organisations currently working in GM. [Further information and to book](#)

The Vision for Devolution - Members and Friends Meeting

Wednesday November 2nd, 2016 3 - 6pm St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester M12 6FZ

To debate the long term strategy for GM devolution and discuss our vision, plans and hopes for the city region. What is meant by inclusive economic growth and how could it help to reduce inequalities and poverty? And what role could be played by VCSE organisations as everything evolves? Our guest will be Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council
Prior to the event, GMCVO will hold its AGM [Please book by October 24th](#).

The 2016 Manchester Sleepout

On Friday November 4th, 2016 at Manchester Cathedral

The Booth Centre are asking you to take on the challenge of sleeping out for one night only, to highlight the hardships faced by homeless people night after night. By joining our Sleepout in 2016 you can help raise vital funds to support homeless people in our community. We raised over £60K in 2015. Places are limited so please register as soon as possible. Hundreds of people will be joining us for this great event.
[Register for The Manchester Sleepout 2016](#) [Find out more](#)



COOKBank 2 Day Train the Trainer Course

On November 21 and 22, 2016 at MERCI, Ancoats, Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street Ancoats, Manchester, M4 7HR

Designed for anyone who is interested in developing a good food culture in the community and needs structure and support for getting more people engaged to cook affordable nutritious food communally, socially and safely. The cost of attending the course is £200 per person but that includes lunch on both days, refreshments, all written materials, equipment (aprons provided) and the ingredients to cook. [More information and book](#)

Why GM Poverty Action?

In the Recommendations Report of the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission, 2.4 *Maintaining Momentum on Poverty* called for the formation of a Poverty Action Group to help take forward the work of the Commission.

A small number of public, private and civic sector individuals came together to form GMPA. This group has since grown to over 700 individuals from more than 200 organisations plus an increasing number of members of the public.

GMPA is based upon principles of cooperation between organisations.

For more information about Greater Manchester Poverty Action

please visit our [website](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) or visit our [Facebook](#) page. You can also visit our YouTube channel [Community Voices](#)

All these platforms are there to share news and opinion from our readers, from GM Poverty Action and from the community.

We want to celebrate our successes, find new ways of working together and provide a voice for the people living in poverty in our region. But we can only do this with your help and support.

For more information or to share your news please contact [Chris](#) or [Peter](#).

Copies of previous newsletters are available on our [website](#)

If you would like to contact us or submit an article for inclusion in a newsletter please get in touch in one of the following ways:

Post: c/o 5th Floor Church House, 90 Deansgate, Manchester M3 2GH

Or contact our Communications Manager: Chris Bagley
T: 07419 774537 [Email](#)
and we will reply as soon as possible.

NB GMPA does not have full-time dedicated administrative support so please do not expect an immediate response.

