

We can solve Poverty in the UK



13 million people in the UK are in poverty, a number costing the government and tax payers £78b per year. And solving this enormous problem? £14 to £15 billion per year of additional central government spending. Those are the headline statistics in a new report released by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) this week, *"We Can Solve Poverty in the UK: A Strategy for Governments, Businesses, Communities and Citizens"*.

This report, the JRF 'Anti-Poverty Strategy' as it is being called, has been over four years in the making and there were whispers in the community that it would be a game changer, seen as a new Beveridge report for the 21st century. The report did get some attention in the press when it was released yesterday but didn't make the front pages of the newspapers¹. Several (Telegraph, Daily Mail) didn't report on it at all, others contained articles within their main editions. This is evidence of course that GM Poverty Action and others organisations need to continue to shout loudly about the issue to ensure the media takes it seriously.

The report is light and not overly long. It puts people with lived experience of poverty first (reminding us that 'nothing about us without us is for us'), and presents a very complicated subject in a clear, accessible way that teaches as much as it informs. It begins by framing the subject, asking 'What is Poverty?' and 'Why Poverty is still with us?'. Then comes a series of case studies showing the impact of poverty on individuals across lifetimes 'from the cradle to the grave'. A number of hard truths (or boldly announced 'facts'), accompany the narrative: *A child born in a deprived neighbourhood will die an average of nine years earlier than a child born in a wealthier area... Four out of five low-paid workers fail to escape low pay after 10 years...*

Then comes the recommendations, suggesting what strategies Government (national and local), Businesses, Citizens, Housing and Service Providers and Investors and Philanthropists can take to tackle and eliminate poverty. Government leads. *"About one fifth of public spending overall is associated with poverty and much of this is devoted to remedying its effects"*. Part of the report's attraction is its emphasis that the answer is not simply about huge increases in spending, in spite of the £14-15bn figure already acknowledged.² *"Not all proposals have cost implications – indeed, many are about changes in culture, leadership, strategy and reallocation of resources."*

But this could come at a cost, because there is no significant welfare state redesign or new structural conception that might make it Beveridge take 2; the report is quite accepting of the existing premise of the market based societal model and the institutions operating within it. *"People with less money and skills are generally in a weaker position in relation to markets"*, it notes early on, without suggesting direct alternatives. Indeed, the recommendations for action are often small incremental increases in particular benefit pay-outs, for example raising the level of JSA in line with the National Living Wage to 2020, or increasing the higher benefit level in the Work Related Activity Group for Employment and Support Allowance. Commentators in the press reflected on its support for 'Responsible Capitalism', although the Inclusive Growth agenda is encouraged as a vehicle for delivering change and many examples of best practice showcase how this could be done. The Inclusive Growth agenda is very relevant to Greater Manchester: the Combined Authority are embedding it in their strategies, and GMPA are engaging in this process through the Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit.

Ultimately then, what does eliminating poverty come down to? *"Given many of the causes of poverty"*, the report concludes, *"arguably the fairest way to pay for poverty reduction is through general tax rises on people who are relatively better off"* But it notes that *"redistribution alone will not build the capacity and skills needed to solve poverty in the long term, or deal with the main underlying drivers of poverty."* This is a new vision for a new social and political consensus. All actors have a role to play, and solving poverty is not about simply then what is easiest to deliver, but what is needed on the ground.

Unfortunately, GM itself does not escape the dire poverty statistics. Manchester Evening News³ yesterday gave visibility to JRF data that showed three GM areas in the top ten most deprived areas in England, with 11 GM constituencies listed in the top 30 most deprived nationally. *A quarter of people in the region (25%) believe their family are at serious risk of falling into future poverty*, they report. GM Poverty Action will therefore be working with the network to think about how the lessons of this very welcome Anti-Poverty Strategy can be applied locally.

See 1 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs/the_papers for Wednesday 7th September.

See 2 <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/sep/06/raise-taxes-by-15bn-a-year-to-end-uk-poverty-joseph-rowntree-foundation>

3 <http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/areas-greater-manchester-named-among-11841499>



Walking with the Wounded: working to support veterans from the heart of Greater Manchester

The Walking with the Wounded (WWTW) Canada Street Manchester office's mission is to establish the charity in the North West, develop numerous corporate networks and partnerships to generate funding opportunities, promote and build community cohesion with all residents on Canada Street and provide accessible accommodation at the training hub to support veterans attending training courses within the area.

Canada Street provides a service to veterans who contact its staff for help as well as residents in the street, to assist them access employment, gain new skills and to ensure they are supported throughout the process. The scheme also aims to provide guidance, support and advice to those who are, or at risk of becoming homeless.

The project originated with the military charity's desire to create a presence in the city where WWTW knew there was a need for local support.

The resulting DIY SOS partnership was a first, bringing together Manchester City Council, WWTW, Haig Housing and a huge amount of time, expertise, materials and supplies donated to the project by volunteer contractors. Together, they completely refurbished eight properties. Now, with 8 work placements, 17 jobs secured and 11 veterans in training, wounded ex-servicemen and women are really benefitting from the centre.

WWTW North West Operations Manager Gary Lamb said: *"Since opening we have had around 20 walk in's including those who became residents. Some of the beneficiaries that have presented to us here in Canada Street have been referred by friends or other agencies. To date we have successfully supported all."*

"Generally when an individual drops in it is because they are aware of the level of support available to them. Some of the individuals have hit crisis point and have tried to deal with their personal issues without the proper support, this is sometimes related to them being a proud individual and not wanting to ask for help. A majority of the individuals have been in need of employment support or have been at risk of becoming homeless and have no one else to turn to. As momentum builds and increased partnerships develop with employers and other support organisations, the Canada Street office is becoming a hub that ex service personnel see not just as a drop in but a place where they feel they can develop trust and where normal life can begin."



Canada Street

Co-founder and Chief Executive of WWTW Ed Parker commented:

"Residents are getting the training and employment opportunities they need in a veteran's housing community within the existing community. I celebrate this unique partnership between public, private and charity sectors. We are hoping in time to replicate the WWTW elements of the Manchester project in other cities where so many veterans deserving a brighter future. Currently the scheme is supported by employers like IKEA Ashton, CleanStart, Kier Group and PepsiCo. It is still early days and we have lots more to achieve - we are inviting employers to engage with us to find ways to work together."

Cllr Bernard Priest, Deputy Leader of Manchester City Council, said: *"The Canada Street project provides the full package of support for veterans in Manchester. Good quality housing is of course key, but it's important to think long-term. That means training, education and development to provide the skill set necessary to ready veterans for employment and work placements like this are one of the best routes into jobs."*

Steve Lever, Team Leader, CleanStart said: *"CleanStart has been working closely with WWTW over the last 9 months to develop employment opportunities for veterans and service leavers who are ready to take on new challenges and responsibilities. The combination of transferable skills gained while in the armed forces, together with many organisations wanting to actively help veterans, means having ex-service personnel as part of the CleanStart workforce is a genuine win-win. We have also recently announced ambitious plans to grow and we see the WWTW being a key partner going forward to help us expand our team and bring new skills and experience to the CleanStart offer."*

[More information about Walking with the Wounded](#)

Follow-up on the last Newsletter story

SmartStart
MANCHESTER & SALFORD

Wood Street Mission's Back-to-School shop highlights the large number of families unable to afford the cost of the new school year. The community shop has given out thousands of uniforms and other school goods free over the past three weeks with 592 visits from families in August, that's an average 66 every day. A snapshot survey of families visiting the shop found that:

- 37% would have to borrow money to purchase uniform if they did not get help from the charity
- 47% would have to go without food or paying the rent if the uniform wasn't supplied to them
- 77% needed help to afford the costs of uniform and other school goods at the start of the school year



Roseanne Sweeney chief executive of Wood Street Mission said: *"It's concerning that so many families cannot afford the costs of the new school year without sacrificing other essentials or getting into debt. We had families queuing from 7am to get into our shop because they were unable to buy basic necessities for their children like shirts, bags and even underwear."*

"We are however pleased that thanks to the generosity of our supporters we were able to relieve some of the financial burden at an expensive time of year and ensure thousands of kids can go back to school in the right uniform so they fit in with peers and can engage at school."

The community shop was stocked with over 600 warm school coats funded by a £15,000 grant provided by the Brian Kennedy Trust. Linda Miles director of the Trust said: *"When we first heard about Wood Street's SmartStart project, we were really keen to help as we appreciate how difficult it is for some low income families to buy school uniforms for their children. We also know how important it is that children arrive warm and well fed at school hence our decision to fund a large number of school coats. The Brian Kennedy Trust are really pleased to be working with the Wood Street Mission and admire the work they do in ensuring Manchester children are given every opportunity to have a fair start in life."*

In addition to the community shop, Wood Street Mission kitted out over 2000 children for the new school year through a catalogue-type system where families referred for help were able to get uniform sent direct to their homes by a well known schoolwear supplier.

While opportunities for disabled people are broader than ever before, complex barriers still exist reports Positive News

15% percent of the world's population live with some form of disability. According to the WHO this number is growing. In the UK, the number of laws safeguarding against disability discrimination has increased in the last decade but while everyday awareness of disability is improving, recent research from the World Bank shows that disabled people are still more likely to suffer social exclusion and economic hardship than other people.

In Britain, the living standards of those with disabilities are generally worse than those without. According to government figures, 19% of people living in families with a disabled member live in poverty, with the figure rising to 21% in children. More than 25% of those with a disability feel they don't often have control or choices in their lives, and disabled people are more likely to experience unfair treatment at work and to become victims of crime.

The UK government is currently subject to two separate UN investigations examining whether austerity measures and budget cuts have had a disproportionate impact on disabled and disadvantaged people.

The ONS in July 2015 reported 'striking inequalities in disability between the least and most deprived areas' and their statistics showed that in the 10 Greater Manchester local authority areas 11.2% of residents reported a disability that limited them a lot in their daily activities against for example only 8% in neighbouring Cheshire.

It has been shown that when disabled people are overlooked in society, the social and economic costs to communities are enormous; it is now recognised that an environment that allows every person to achieve their full potential is in the interests of society as a whole. [Read the full report](#)



Forthcoming Events:

Greater Manchester Voluntary Sector Assembly – Health and Social Care Devolution
at St Thomas Centre Ardwick Green North,
Manchester, M12 6FZ on September 14th, 9am - 12 noon

Although the agenda is still to be set, there is a great deal of interest in attending the next Assembly when Jon Rouse, Chief Officer, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership, will be attending.

Please [book onto the event](#)

Please note that here are certain criteria for attending these VCSE events

Have your say on the future of Transport in Gtr Manchester
Wednesday September 14th 2016 1.30– 4pm at St Thomas Centre,
Ardwick Green North, Manchester M12 6FZ

This consultation event will enable TfGM to present its draft plans and implementation strategy and have face-to-face interaction with a cross section of the Greater Manchester VCSE sector.

[Further information and to Book](#)

Wythenshawe Connecting Communities Workshop
Tuesday September 27th, 2016 6.30 - 9pm at the Wythenshawe Forum,
Forum Square Wythenshawe, Manchester, M22 5RX

Connecting Communities Workshops aim to support individuals and community groups to discover new possibilities and connections in their neighbourhoods to help them grow, attract new members, come up with new initiatives and do even more where they live.

[Further information and to Book](#)

GM BME Network and Manchester BME Network Event
Wednesday October 19th 2016
Save the date - more information to follow.

Curating Spaces of Hope: Finding common cause in disconnected communities
Thursday, October 20th 2016 from 12 noon - 3.45pm at The Parish Church of Saint Thomas Stockport - Holt Street, Stockport, SK1 3PY

To bring together thought leaders and practitioners to engage with the Spaces of Hope framework for purposes of partnership generation

[Further Information and to Book](#)



Why GM Poverty Action?

In the Recommendations Report of the GM 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 100 organisations plus many independent individuals.

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.

