


WORK & WAGES
Series: Is work the best route out of poverty?

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported last month that [the number of people in poverty from working households has risen again](#). Yet again most of the people in poverty in the UK are from working households. One in every eight UK workers is living in poverty, but the [Greater Manchester figure is much higher](#).

Clearly there are a lot of low-paid jobs. But do they build towards longer-term solutions – do they give people a career ladder that they can climb into better-paid jobs? The evidence is not encouraging – [four out of five low-paid workers remain stuck in low pay after ten years](#).

This begs the question, is work actually helping people out of poverty?

Yes and no. Moving from unemployment to work usually increases a person's income. But if it is low-paid and/or insecure work, and if associated costs are high such as childcare and transport, it may not help at all. This may (or may not) be manageable in the short-term, but given the apparent lack of progression opportunities in most areas of work, work may not be a short-term or long term solution for many people.

Of course, the availability of paid jobs is essential in any bid to tackle poverty but the maxim that "work is the best route out of poverty" is demonstrably untrue, as most people in poverty are already in working households, and [have been since 2013](#). Furthermore some people are not capable of taking on any paid work, or at least not of taking the limited range of jobs that are available, perhaps due to disability, illness, or caring responsibilities.

Rather, the solution for most people now is not just the existence of jobs, but better jobs. (And for those who are not able to do any paid work, sufficient support from the welfare state to help them avoid poverty.) Government seems too narrowly focused on quantity of jobs, but equally important are questions around the quality of jobs.

I have invited several experts to write in response to these questions about quality of jobs. Their responses will form the "Work and Wages" series of articles to appear in future newsletters.

- Do the available jobs pay the real Living Wage (currently £8.45/hr) or more, enough for a decent standard of living?
- Are there enough hours in a job, for people to work enough and earn enough for a decent standard of living?
- Is there the flexibility and support for those who need it in order to work, such as parents, carers, or disabled people?
- Is workers' representation the answer? What role can trades unions play in addressing in-work poverty?
- Are jobs productive enough to make higher pay feasible? How can employers and employees work together to bring the best out of a workforce?
- Do people gain skills through their work and training (or before they get to the job market), so they can progress into better paid jobs, or jobs that suit them better in different ways?
- Are there enough better paid jobs available in which to progress?
- Are these questions too individualised – do we understand well enough how different communities of people interact with the jobs market, and vice versa (e.g. BME people, disabled people)?
- Does transport and other infrastructure help people into better jobs?
- Are jobs a fair transaction of time and skills given in exchange for financial reward, with responsibility shared fairly between employer and employee?



At present we have more questions than answers. But perhaps if we work together to develop answers to these questions, in the future we really will be able to say that work is the best route out of poverty.

Editorial by Tom Skinner

GMPA has created an emergency food provision map of the region

The most well-known food bank service, The Trussell Trust now has 54 distribution points in Greater Manchester but there are many more emergency food providers including churches, community centres, charities, and local action groups.

In Greater Manchester, GMPA has mapped 136.



As we reported in our newsletter of November 30th, only thirteen years ago there were almost no food banks in the UK. They already existed in many European countries but from 2004 they began to spring up here in every town and city. The financial crisis and austerity measures since have seen them become a part of our landscape. There are now an estimated 2,500 places in the UK where those in need can collect a food parcel.

As part of our plans to draw together people with strong common interests under the broader heading of poverty we formed a Food Poverty Special Interest Group which met for the first time in September 2016. Membership of the group is currently:

Lily Axworthy, Development Officer, Greater Together Manchester

Lynda Battarbee, Foodbank Network Development Officer, North West England, The Trussell Trust

Megan Blake, Director of the MA in Food Security and Food Justice, University of Sheffield

Nancy Brown, Education and Youth Advisor, Oxfam

Adele Jordan, Director, Cracking Good Food

Miranda Kaunang, Development Manager, Fareshare Greater Manchester

Lindsey Laidlaw, Project Manager, Children and Families Directorate, Manchester City Council

Julie Ralph, Policy Analyst, Bolton at Home

Charlotte Spring, PhD student studying the growth of surplus food redistribution, University of Salford

Chris Bagley, GM Poverty Action

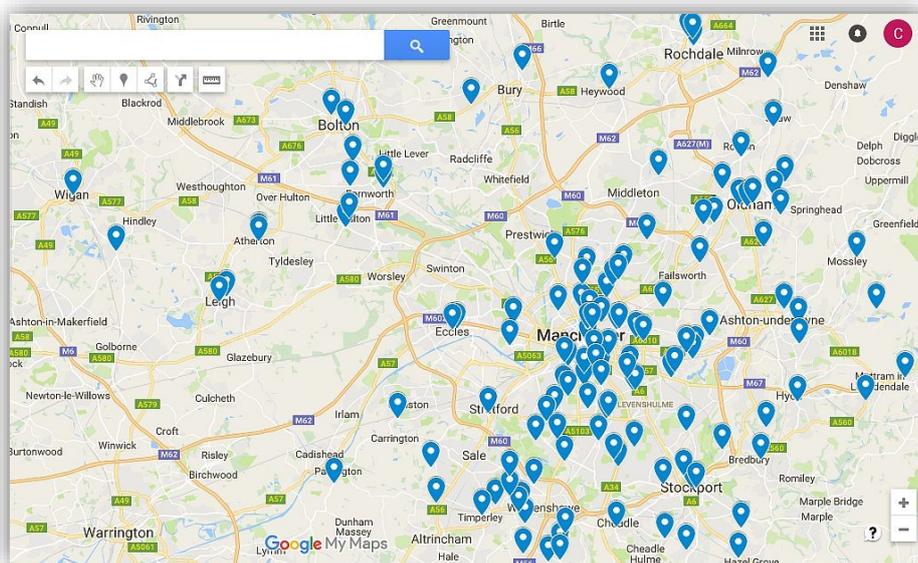
One of our first objectives was to create this food map as we believed that a single source currently didn't exist and we hoped that it would be useful and informative. An almost unexpected outcome has been that it is also a very powerful image demonstrating how critical the situation in the region is at the start of 2017.

"You don't go to a food bank for fun, you don't go so you can save your money to spend on something else." says Tom Skinner, a Director of GMPA "You go because you have no choice if you want to feed your family or yourself." and he added "Will we ever again be a country without need for them? There are so many people going hungry right now, sadly it's hard to imagine a UK without food banks. But we have to try. In the meantime, we'll make sure people know where they can go if they are in need."

The [GMPA Emergency Food Providers map](#) is freely available to everyone and will be accessible from our website in the hope that it will be of assistance to advisors when directing people to their nearest, accessible foodbank.

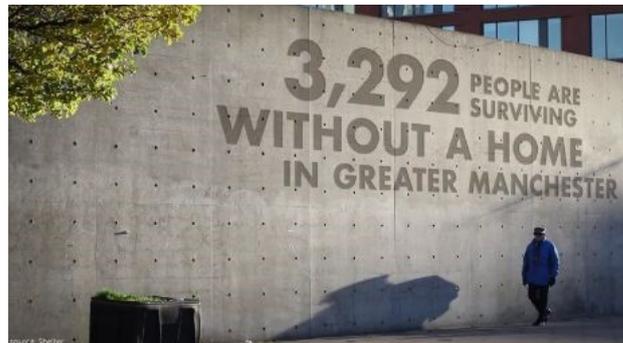
We would welcome information about any foodbank we may have missed and we are short of some items of data such as hours of opening or referral method for a few food banks. We also understand that a food bank may not wish to be shown on the map if they are already overwhelmed by local demand. We are happy to amend the details to reflect this although we would prefer to keep a pin in the map for every food bank in existence in order to make the level of need crystal clear.

If you have any information that could improve the food map please email contact@gmpovertyaction.org



Homelessness

The Homelessness Reduction Bill will be discussed again in Parliament on January 27th. Please encourage your MP to attend the debate and use #NoOneTurnedAway on Twitter.



More information is available on Crisis [website](#)

Please also share [this powerful video](#).

If you can offer any help do get in touch with [Street Support](#)



BBC PANORAMA

ARE YOU AFFECTED BY THE BENEFIT CAP?

Share your experiences for a BBC documentary

BBC Panorama is making a current affairs documentary about how the benefit cap is affecting people across the UK.

If you're being affected by the cap, we'd like to talk to you about the impact it's going to have on your life.

If you're happy to talk to us in confidence about your experience or opinion of the benefit cap, please text or call Richard on 07712 465703. We'll call you straight back.

Early years and poverty workshop

The Family and Childcare Trust and GM Poverty Action will host a workshop in central Manchester in the near future, supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, to discuss the role of the early years in reducing poverty.

Recommendations from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's strategy to solve poverty in the UK will be presented and participants will discuss local and national challenges and priorities for early years services and the opportunities created by devolution in Manchester.

The workshop will be a chance to feed back on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's recommendations, identify shared priorities and network with those with an interest in the potential of early years provision to reduce poverty.

Numbers will be limited and expressions of interest are invited from anyone with a particular interest or background in the early years. Please email [Chris](#) if you would like to attend.



DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

People are facing greater and greater hardship as a result of cuts in benefits, homelessness, uncertainty at work, and escalating racism. Legal aid – which is an essential part of the welfare state – has been cut again

and again. The people most in need across the ten districts of Greater Manchester are being deprived of access to justice.

Greater Manchester Law Centre has been set up as a clear challenge to this. We now have premises (the main Princess Road in inner city Moss Side) and volunteers providing some legal advice (welfare rights, with sessional solicitors offering more widely). Thanks to two generous national charitable trusts we have been able to appoint a Supervising Solicitor who will start to supervise and regulate all our advice and representation. Thanks to continuing support of another trust, we are now looking for a person to work with her, to ensure that the law centre maximises support from all possible sources, including volunteers, community groups and trades unions across the county. This is so that we can manage the development of a sustainable organisation, committed to campaigning and policy demands and service provision, for the long term future.

This will be an 18 month post (in the first instance) and requires someone who is able to work alongside the Supervising Solicitor and take substantial responsibility for managing the development of viable law centre activity for all of Greater Manchester. Anyone who is interested is invited to contact j.nicholson@kenworthysbarristers.co.uk or denise@gmiau.org in the first instance (for informal inquiries and information).

Formal applications will need to be made by **12.00 noon on Monday 30th January 2017** and we are hoping that interviews will be able to be held in Manchester within the following 10 days. Download an application pack [here](#)

Forthcoming Events:

I, Daniel Blake (free screening but donations welcome)



Friday January 20th, 7.30 - 10.30pm at Broadoak Community Centre, Broadoak Road, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 8RS

“the harsh reality of having to live whilst caught up in the complicated benefit system is a film that is a film in Ashton about the Blakes. You might think it will cause some faces. Donations on the door if you can afford it. All donations go towards funding food parcels given out by Charlotte Hughes and friends.

Sorry, fully booked

[More information and book.](#)

Six Families, Two Years, One Researcher: An exhibition of Everyday Life in Austerity

Friday January 27th, 2017 from 1.15pm - 2.15pm at GMCVO, St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Ardwick, M12 6FZ

University of Manchester researcher Sarah M. Hall followed the everyday life of six families for two years.

Working with North West zine artist Stef Bradley the findings were then turned into an exhibition that is visually appealing, but also thought provoking and has attracted widespread attention in the policy world.



Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign: Campaign Group Meeting

Monday January 30th, 2017 2 - 4pm at Room 8, The Union MMU, 21 Higher Cambridge Street, Manchester M15 6AD

You are invited to come along to the first Campaign meeting of 2017. Please let [Alec](#) know if you are planning to attend. We hope to see you there.

World Basic Income

Saturday February 4th, 1- 6pm at the Sacred Trinity Church, Chapel Street, Manchester M3 5DW

A new practical solution to global inequality and poverty. With speakers from a wide range of disciplines and organisations the event will explore through panels and discussions:

- The context—inequality, poverty, cash transfers and basic income.
- Practicalities of distributing cash—funding, distribution and ownership;
- Building a movement—grassroots mobilising, influence in high places, pilots, experience and evidence.

[More information and to book.](#) [More information about World Basic Income](#)

Greater Manchester & Manchester BME Networks next joint event

Wednesday February 8th, 2017 at St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester M12 6FZ The theme at this event will be around Heritage.

[More info and to register](#)

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 Local Authorities and MPs and 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.

