



Sunshine House

'Most of the community centres in Wigan have closed, there's very few left'. People tell it like it is in Scholes, an area of central Wigan. Sitting having lunch at Sunshine House, talking to 5 of the volunteers and directors, they are realistic about the longstanding challenges the area faces. *"This is one of the most deprived areas in Wigan"*, says Jackie. Others around the table nod, suggesting other local areas such as Birkett Bank, Swinley and Ince. *"But George Orwell lived just around the corner from here when he wrote his book"* Dianne reflects, talking about The Road to Wigan Pier, Orwell's study of poverty in industrial northern working class England. *"And we've still got real poverty here"*, says Lynn, *"but it's different from back then"*.

Today, they see single mums on benefits struggling with bills, families damaged by loan sharks, and drug and alcohol addiction running through the community. Barbara, the centre manager says, *"A man came in last week with a Link Officer – he hadn't been out of his house for 8 years"*. The numbers coming through Sunshine House community centre are huge, nearly 200 people per day and much of this is to do with the purpose of the centre, which has a loose mission statement as 'improving the quality of life for residents in the area by providing facilities in accordance with needs, and by giving people what they want.' The simple name, Sunshine House, is full of optimism, hope and possibility and the group around the table talks with excitement about making all the services more inclusive. They are already 'dementia friendly' but want to expand to include sign language.



A lot of the attraction is services provided exactly as people want them – matching needs with simple, human, provision – or as Barbara puts it, for people in the community, *"you don't know what you need until you need it. People don't always want to go on a course, they want quick help with how to shop on amazon, or to Skype a granddaughter in America"*. Lynn adds, *"Some come in just for a cup of coffee because they want a chat, isolation is a big problem."* Local community members are core to the centre, involved in decision making and planning. GMPA arrives as the staff are preparing for a Board Meeting: *"everyone on the Board is part of the community"*, says Barbara, adding, *"what's the point of having people who live elsewhere and aren't involved."* The centre is open for 13 hours a day during the week and although the opening hours are shorter - only 5 ½ - at the weekend, they are open 7 days a week.



Barbara gives a tour of the centre, showing off the rooms and facilities that are light and spacious. On GMPA's second visit, all of them are full with events and activities. An Active Life exercise group; classes on Calligraphy, Photography, Jewellery making, Cookery; Slimming World and Winston's Wish, who look after children who have experienced bereavement.

The busy, bustling activities inside the centre contrasts sharply with the area outside, where Sunshine House has a charity shop in the shopping precinct just next door. It's a shock to see almost every single one of the shops shut and shuttered, at midday on a weekday. It's a vivid reminder of how much light Sunshine House brings to an area which has suffered much deprivation and it is a testament to the energy and determination of the team who work there.



For more information about Sunshine House please visit their [website](#)

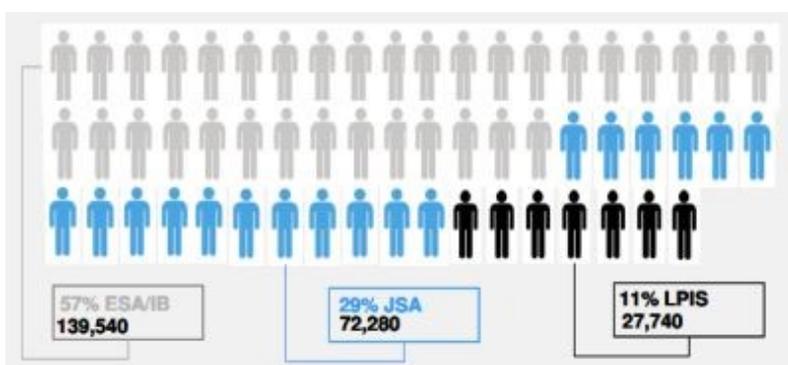
Working Well Programme

Speaking at the Welfare Conditionality - Voices from Greater Manchester event held at the University of Salford in June, Councillor Sean Anstee, Leader of Trafford MBC under the title of “A new future for skills and employment in Greater Manchester” outlined the Working Well Programme.

Our ambition is to create an integrated employment and skills eco-system which has the individual and employer at its heart, and that better responds to the needs of residents and businesses and contributes to the growth and productivity of the GM economy. The programme is being delivered across all ten Local Authority areas of GM and is a ‘work first’ programme with the primary objective of sustained employment for people who have been long-term unemployed because of a health condition. These individuals will require intensive support provided through keyworkers

All participants are eligible for up to two years of support (though some may require less), and up to a year of in-work support. The largest age group is 45 – 54 and most have not been employed for several years, if at all (56% male, 60% have no dependent children, almost 80% are single and over 80% are living in rented accommodation).

Clients are dealing with a combination of complex issues, for example learning difficulties and disabilities, mental health problems, homelessness, severe literacy and numeracy challenges as well as addiction, debt, the breakdown of their family relationships, poor physical health and a criminal record. These problems present other work barriers such as childcare costs, low skills and qualifications and transport costs.



Across GM, around 227,000 people are claiming out-of-work benefits (A shown in the Working Well Expansion Report September 2015)

Working Well will offer a seamless, coordinated and sequenced package of services enabling the achievement of multiple outcomes. Personalised support for those with the most significant barriers to employment sits at the heart of this ‘eco-system’, facilitating the journey. We recognise that clients will have multiple needs and we can help to resolve these by ensuring that caseworkers are properly integrated with local services in order to succeed.



Cllr Sean Anstee

There will be a robust evaluation of the programme which will also inform development of future Work Programme co-commissioning with DWP. The assessment will need to go wider than an individual’s work and skills experience to identify in-depth barriers to employment, including working with the whole family where appropriate and ongoing case management and review will be required. This will be essential where support for mental health problems is drawn in for a client. There will also be bespoke support including English and maths, employability and vocational skills training, together with wrap-around support to motivate and build confidence and self-esteem.

By the time it is fully rolled out, the programme will cover 50,000 individuals and have a £100m budget and will include a pilot supporting older workers with long-term health conditions back to work. Early results in December 2015 shows that 4,517 clients had been referred to the WW pilot of whom 91% have been attached to the programme. 68% identified mental health issues as a severe barrier to work. Of the 231 clients who have already entered employment, 87% remained employed.

On the following page you will find a Working Well client’s case study.

[More information](#)

Working Well Case Study:

Bob* had been homeless for 18 months, sleeping at a family member's home a few nights each week but otherwise sleeping rough. He suffered from severe depression and anxiety but refused to see a GP. He had violent outbursts which had led to prison sentences in the past.

Despite these difficulties Bob formed a good bond with his keyworker who contacted the Local Lead to address his homelessness and mental health condition. The keyworker was able to accompany him to Stockport Homes to register him as homeless, and also liaised with his GP and Stockport's Psychological Service.

Stockport Council's Troubled Families unit provided Stockport Homes with evidence of benefits claimed within 3 hours – this would typically take 3 weeks.

Bob went to see the Psychological Service for CBT therapy and started to correctly take his prescription medications. Engaging with these services supported his claim to housing.

Over the following weeks Bob accepted a property from Stockport Homes, developed a CV alongside an employment coach and is now 'work ready' and seeking employment. He has experienced dramatic improvements in his mental health.

Bob is awaiting feedback on a recent job interview.

(the individual's name has been changed in this case study)

Community Voices

This week's Community Voices video records [Andrew Johnson and Martin Burke who live on the College Bank estate, in Lower Falinge, Rochdale](#). They both work on the estate's Resident's Association and discuss poverty on the estate with us.



Lower Falinge is one of the most deprived places in Britain. It's rank in the 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation was 33, where a rank of 1 would have made it the most deprived neighbourhood out of more than 32,000 neighbourhoods nationally.

To hear or watch previous GMPA interviews please visit our YouTube Channel [Community Voices](#)

CPAG Welfare Rights Conference 2016: Universal Credit - next steps

On Thursday 8 September 2016 at the University of Manchester Innovation Centre, Core Technology Facility, 46 Grafton Street, Manchester, M13 9NT

Our 2016 Welfare Rights Conference focuses on the challenges facing families as the roll out of Universal Credit accelerates.

The next few years will bear witness to a huge change in the welfare rights environment, with the full Universal Credit service set to be rolled out to over one hundred local authority areas during 2016-17, and across all 381 local authorities by June 2018.

Increasingly, families and the advisers working with families will need to understand how Universal Credit is supposed to work, who wins and who loses, and the lessons to learn from the early implementation of the new system.

With expert speakers, a range of focused workshops and the opportunity to network and share ideas with welfare rights workers, policy workers and other advisers from across the country, the conference is not to be missed.

You can attend two **workshops** from:

1. Universal Credit Housing Costs
2. Universal Credit Digital Roll-Out
3. ESA 'Substantial Risk'
4. Human Rights Challenges

Exhibition Space to showcase your work, products and services. If you are interested in exhibiting please email [Sebastien](#)

Booking a place: Delegate tickets, including 2 workshops, teas, coffees, buffet lunch and conference materials, are £130 for a voluntary organisation and £175 for statutory and lawyers.

To book place(s) please complete our online [booking form here](#).



Forthcoming Events:

End Hunger UK campaign planning session

Monday July 18th, 2016 from 3 - 5pm
at Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street, Ancoats, Manchester M4 7HR

Come and plan your local End Hunger events as part of a national campaign on World Food Day in October. All are welcome and you could get inspired by each others ideas.



Event Fee £3 [More information and book](#)

What's happening with GM Health and Social Care Devolution?

Thursday July 21st, 2016 9am - 12 noon
at the Friends' Meeting House, 6 Mount St, Manchester M2 5NS

Each Greater Manchester district is developing a Locality Plan which will lever in Transformation funding. Meanwhile thematic plans for areas such as mental health, cancer, learning disabilities and dementia are being developed at the GM level. VCSE organisational involvement in the development and delivery of all these plans is patchy. This event provides an opportunity to engage directly with key decision-makers.

[Further Information and Booking](#)

Forging a good local society

Thursday 28th July from 6 - 8pm at the International Anthony Burgess Foundation, Engine House, Chorlton Mill, 3 Cambridge St, Manchester, M1 5BY

You are invited to the Manchester launch of Forging a Good Local Society, a new publication by CLES Chief Executive – Neil McInroy.

How do we tackle poverty and create social justice? Do we continue to rely on trickle down of wealth and an inadequate social safety net, or is there a new progressive local way? Neil McInroy makes a powerful case for the latter.

The evening will include a drinks reception and Neil McInroy in conversation with Kate Green MP. There will be ample time for debate and questions but places are limited so please book quickly. [More information and booking](#)

The 2016 Manchester Sleepout

On Friday November 4th, 2016 at Manchester Cathedral

We're 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.



[Register for The Manchester Sleepout 2016](#)

[Find out more about the Sleepout](#)

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.

