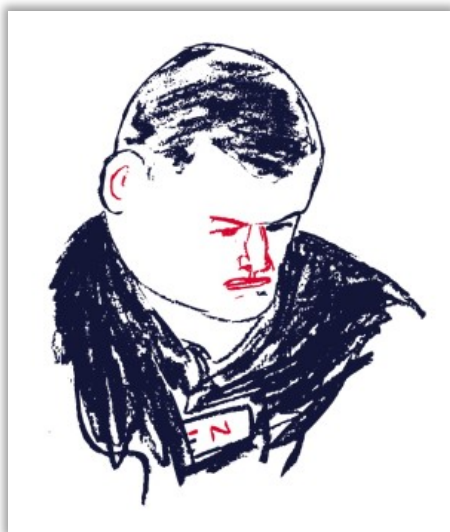


Love for the Streets at the Whitworth

Love for the Streets is a grassroots campaign led by young people who aim to mobilise students to tackle issues of homelessness in innovative ways. Mainstream narratives of homelessness are generally negative and perpetuate unfair stereotypes, but Love for the Streets provides an alternative perspective to address these social inequalities.



Art, music and culture are fundamental aspects of society which bring people from different backgrounds together to create a platform for communication. Love for the Streets is combining these elements to curate a unique exhibition that will showcase art produced in different workshops over eight weeks of sessions. In a collaboration with Manchester School of Art (MSOA), students have been teaching participants from homeless charities, such as Greater Together Manchester and Cornerstone, a variety of creative skills including photography, fine art, graffiti, drawing and collage. These sessions are led by the MSOA students and have provided a great opportunity to form relationships in an engaging and creative environment, between people who might not necessarily have opportunities to interact on a social basis.



The whole exhibition (open only for one day!) is not just curated to display these final pieces, but to show the journey that these groups have embarked on together - the whole process will be documented and displayed amongst other information about homelessness in Manchester. Expect interactive elements throughout the day, as well as work from David Tovey, who is a formerly homeless artist and activist. David has been featured at the Tate Modern and founded the first One Festival of Homeless Arts.

Most importantly, this event will be open to all of the participants of this project as well as the general public to ensure that the space is as inclusive as possible and is truly representative of the workshops aims in general. Art work which has been produced at some other amazing charities, the Mustard Tree and the Booth Centre, will also be on display.

What's more, the day event will also include live music, delivered by both a student jazz band called Top in Deck, and the Booth Street Guitar Group who play soulful renditions of classic tunes. The whole day will be an inspiring and engaging display of what can be achieved when groups collaborate to bring something different to our perceptions of homelessness.

Combining art and music in a stimulating way to make people think about social issues in a different frame is incredibly important, and this event will demonstrate how easy it can be to create free spaces where all members of society are truly welcome, despite their backgrounds and current situation.



Come and join us on Saturday March 10th, 2018, from 10am - 5pm at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6ER

You can find out more about [Love for the Streets on Facebook](#)

Written for GMPA by Lily Fothergill

Is having a job the single most important way out of poverty?

Last year GMPA Director Tom Skinner launched a series of articles on in-work poverty, asking "[Is work the best route out of poverty?](#)" Here Bolton Councillor Sue Haworth unpicks that question by exploring the changes in evidence over the last ten years.

The Prime Minister often declares at the despatch box that the best solution to poverty is for people to have jobs. But there are two stand out issues pertaining to this that we must address in Greater Manchester. The first is the fact that not all our citizens here in GM are able to take up paid employment. Mostly these are people with long term ill health problems and / or disability. Under devolution we have a responsibility to prevent worsening poverty in these people's lives and to encourage them to volunteer and to stay included in communities in GM. The [new Work and Health programme in GM](#) can act to prevent all the dimensions of poverty in non-working people's lives and seek tangible benefits for people and their families.

Secondly, we must unpick what the Prime Minister means by her statement. Work is a source of income and it is also a source of all round economic wellbeing, while poverty has many facets, for example relative and absolute poverty, and poverty of self determination and equality.

There is growing evidence in GM of a tipping point regarding these effects; make work too insecure, make the income stream from the work too variable or too low, and the benefit rapidly starts to wane. If the experience of work is low pay, persistent stress and poor working conditions, again a tipping point is exceeded, where the benefit of work becomes overshadowed by the daily negative experience of poor quality work.

Only five to ten years ago I was persuaded by the public health knowledge base in England that work was likely the number one factor that contributed to a person's health and wellbeing. But this evidence is now under the microscope by today's generation of academics, building the knowledge base on inclusive growth, work and poverty here in GM. Reports are already warning us of the tipping point effect that poor quality work is having in people's lives in GM.

Work is no longer the poverty panacea we were working towards five or ten years ago. Reports from The Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit at The University of Manchester make it clear that we must address the quality of work with as much vigour here as we do tackling unemployment. Pay, terms, working conditions and underemployment are vital components of the work and poverty agenda in GM today.



Cllr Sue Haworth



It is nearly time for our next Campaign meeting on **March 14th, 2018 from 2 - 4pm** and we hope you can join us! It will be an interactive meeting, as we want you to have the opportunity to help shape the Campaign Group work for the next few months.

Potential areas for our work include: young people 18-24; voluntary and not for profit sector; social care; public sector and education; retail and big employers such as Manchester Airport.

Overall, we want to continue to:

- ✓ Support more employers, across the whole of Greater Manchester (GM) to become accredited Living Wage employers.
- ✓ Build partnerships to take our work forward.
- ✓ Raise awareness about the real Living Wage.
- ✓ Support the creation of the GM Good Employment Charter.

These are exciting times and together we can make a real difference to people working in Greater Manchester. So please join us on **March 14th** ([More information & book](#)) . In the meantime, should you have any questions, queries, comments or suggestions, please do get in touch via an email to Lynn or call 07948 549 485.



Work & Pensions Committee: PIP & ESA trust deficit fails claimants and the public purse

In November 2017, the Greater Manchester Law Centre (GMLC) submitted a contribution to the Work and Pensions Committee, who requested evidence and experiences of the medical assessments for disability benefits. Specifically, the Committee focused on the assessments for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), carried out by private contractors Capita, Atos and Maximus.



GMLC's submission focussed on the Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) process. If a claimant's application for benefits is rejected, they must go through the MR process before they can appeal. GMLC collected evidence from service-users and advice workers as well as other Greater Manchester individuals and organisations. The final report shows: **there is a severe lack of trust in the application process, many claimants are caused unnecessary suffering, and an inefficient process costs more in the long run.**

Many benefit decisions are reversed. Since 2013 there have been 170,000 PIP appeals taken to the Tribunal. Claimants won 63% of cases. In the same time, there have been 53,000 ESA appeals. Claimants won roughly 60%. **The DWP spent about £100m on benefit appeals including the Mandatory Reconsideration (MR), creating immense stress for claimants and literally losing money during the process.**

In the full report, the Committee says public contract failures have led to a loss of trust that risks undermining the operation of major disability benefits.

Frank Field MP, Chair of the Committee, said: *"For the majority of claimants the assessments work adequately, but a pervasive lack of trust is undermining its entire operation. In turn, **this is translating into untenable human costs to claimants and financial costs to the public purse.** Government cannot, must not, fail to recognise the unprecedented response the Committee had to this inquiry, remarkable for the consistency and clarity of themes that emerged through thousands of individual accounts."*

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) attests that the most common reason for decisions being overturned at Appeal is that new evidence has come to light. However, organisations who support claimants say that many decisions are revised by considering pre-existing evidence. Quite simply, the benefits should never have been denied in the first place. The DWP's own data shows that this "new evidence" is most often oral evidence provided by the claimant, which could have been gathered at the initial assessment. The Department's "lack of determination" in addressing this shows real weaknesses in its feedback to, and quality control over, contractors, which must be urgently addressed.

Tom Griffiths, GMLC member and Chair of the Manchester Mental Health Charter Alliance, said: "It appears that there is some progress being made as a result of persistent submissions from concerned organisations, individuals and legal networks. **However there is still a long way to go to bring justice and integrity to the heart of the assessment process."**

Visit www.gmlaw.org.uk for a full summary of the Committee's report.

Both Work & Pensions reports can be downloaded here: [Full report](#) [Claimant experience](#)



Training Course in Community Journalism

This spring *The Meteor* is teaming up with the Centre for Investigative Journalism to offer a comprehensive 12 session training course in community journalism. For those disappointed by media coverage in your area, this is a chance to set the record straight by producing the news yourself; covering the stories you know are important to your community. The **free** course beginning in April will teach you the fundamentals of quality journalism, and enable you to tell stories confidently by writing articles and producing multimedia creations.

You will receive training from industry professionals on how to find and produce quality stories, ongoing mentoring and support from The Meteor team and opportunities put your new skills into practice and have your work published.

The Meteor are looking for a diverse group of people who care about, and have an active interest in, their communities; who want to amplify underrepresented voices; who want to investigate and hold power to account and have an interest in sharing stories – whether that be through writing, filmmaking, data visualisation or other creative methods of storytelling

[More information and to apply](#)

Welfare Reform Correction: In our last issue we included a table of changes to benefits that had taken place over the past eight years. Some of the more recent reforms have been or are being challenged and so have either been amended or have not taken place, such as the Local Housing Authority cap and the 'Pay to Stay' plans. Please accept our apologies for any errors.


Forthcoming Events:

Manchester Renters Forum

On Thursday March 1st, 2018 from 6.30 - 9pm at The Mechanics Institute, 103 Princess Street, Manchester M1 6DD

The forum is an opportunity to reflect on experiences of renting in the city and make collective demands for safe, secure and affordable housing, both now and into the future. This forum is limited to residents of Manchester but it is hoped that further meetings will be planned for other GM areas. [More info & book](#)

GM Mayor's Green Summit: VCSE Listening Event

Monday March 5th, 2018 from 1.30 - 4pm at GMCVO,  St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North Manchester, M12 6FZ

A consultation event to listen to Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations thoughts, questions and commitments to influence the Greater Manchester Green Charter and achieving a more sustainable and carbon neutral GM. This 'listening event' is one of many that will inform the Mayor's Green Summit which takes place on 21st March 2018 [More information and book](#)

Manchester Volunteers Meet Up

Monday March 5th, 2018 from 5 - 7pm at Macc, 3rd Floor, Swan Buildings, 20 Swan Street, Manchester M4 5JW

Do you want to meet people (like you), that volunteer, or give their own time in our great city? Manchester Volunteer Meet Ups are facilitated by Volunteer Centre Manchester (managed by Macc) and provide a chance for people in the City of Manchester who are volunteering - or seeking to volunteer, to come together; learn about relevant volunteering opportunities, network, share experiences and get support. [More information and register.](#)

Connect: The National Youth Homeless Conference

Thursday March 8th from 10am - 4.30pm at Hotel Football Old Trafford, 99 Sir Matt Busby Way, Stretford, M16 0SZ

Participants will work together to tackle issues discussed in a range of themed workshops such as The Manchester Charter and a combined authority approach. Other sessions will focus on the policy landscape in 2018, routes into training and employment, fundraising, safeguarding and promoting good mental health. The conference fee is £54 .36 [More information & book](#)

Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign Group Meeting

On Wednesday March 14th, 2018 from 2 - 4pm at The Methodist Central Hall, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ [More information & book](#)

Raising Awareness and Overcoming Homelessness Film

On Thursdays March 15th and March 22nd, 2018 from 6.30pm at the Edge Theatre, Manchester Road, Chorlton M21 3JG

Screening a film made by community members, trained by the Institute of Community Reporters to record those experiencing, have been, or are on the brink of homelessness. It has been edited by artist filmmaker [Clara Casian](#) into a 20 minute film. Numbers are strictly limited so RSVP is **essential**. FREE but donations greatly appreciated on a pay-as-you-feel-able basis.

[More information and to book](#)

Do you have any events that you'd like GMPA to publicise? Please [Email us](#) with the details.



Emergency Food Providers Map

After launching our third map, we are conscious that the Emergency Food Providers map is now a year old. We have started to check all the information on the map but would welcome your help. Do you use a food bank or a pantry, or perhaps you regularly recommend one nearby? Could you take just a few minutes to [look at the map](#) and check the information for the ones you are familiar with? Are there new ones we've missed or ones that have closed? If any entries need updating please email [Chris](#) with the correct details. Your help is much appreciated. *Many thanks.*

Support our work

The first two newsletters of 2018 included appeals for your support. GMPA exists because of like-minded people across Greater Manchester, and beyond, who share our desire to see an end to poverty in our city region.

Individuals and organisations can now sign up to become either Supporters or Principal Partners. Many have already joined us. For more information please visit the [website](#)

For more information about Greater Manchester Poverty Action

please visit our [website](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) or visit our [Facebook](#) page.

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

Copies of previous newsletters are available on our [website](#) If you would like to submit an article for inclusion in a newsletter please [get in touch](#)

For more information please contact us by [email](#) or call 07419 774537 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.



Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of GMPA. We try to fact-check all articles and events, but if you notice an error please [let us know](#) so we can correct it in a future newsletter.