

## GM Good Employment Charter – Have your say

Article by Graham Whitham

GMPA is delighted to see Andy Burnham taking forward the idea of an employment charter for Greater Manchester. This is something we've been working on for some time through [our joint paper with the Inclusive Growth Unit](#), our Work and Wages Special Interest Group (SIG) and through the GMPA hosted Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign.

An employment charter can both celebrate and promote existing good employers and encourage the adoption of positive employment practices by other employers. As a tool it has a role to play in helping to create a more inclusive economy where people are valued and secure in the job that they do.

Getting the charter right from the outset will be crucial in determining the impact it has. The scope and operation of the charter is something Andy Burnham's team have been exploring and the Mayor has opened [a consultation on what the proposed charter should look like](#). GMPA and the Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign will be submitting a response (the deadline for responses is April 13th) and we're encouraging members of our network to do the same, both from the perspective of being employers and as advocates for a more inclusive economy.

An evidence paper published to support the consultation recognises some of the challenges we face in Greater Manchester, around things like low pay and productivity. (The evidence paper can be downloaded from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority website [here](#)). There are other areas where we fare worse than the national average, including employment rates for people aged 50 to 64 and people with learning disabilities. It also recognises some of the city region's strengths and the potential for economic growth to be more closely linked to positive outcomes for individuals and communities.

The Charter will aim to complement existing initiatives at a local authority level, such as employer pledges and charters in Bolton, Oldham and Salford, and will be co-designed by local employers, employees and residents. It will also sit among a series of other policies that are focussed on creating a more inclusive economy.



Graham Whitham

During Living Wage Week in November, the Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign hosted a series of workshops across GM looking at how an employment charter could work and what it might include. A number of key themes emerged from those workshops, including the need for clear standards for what 'good employment' means in Greater Manchester, a 'good employment toolkit' to support employers to amend and improve working practices and the active involvement of trade unions in workplaces. These themes will help inform our response.

Please make sure you take the opportunity to feed into this process.



## Support our work

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 on becoming a Principal Partner please contact [Graham](#). You can also find more information on our [website](#)

# Capitalism has coopted the language of food – costing the world millions of meals

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

Hardly a day goes by when food is not in the news. We are at once encouraged to eat healthily, buy locally, and reduce food waste. Meanwhile, stories about the various groups of people going hungry are also on the rise – [malnourished elderly people](#), children's [holiday hunger](#), and [rising food insecurity](#). Increases in these rates [have been linked](#) to government policies such as welfare reform and commercial protections that give rise to zero-hours contracts. But in my view the problem is deeper than this – it is embedded in the way we talk about food. The language we use is confusing – it creates feelings of guilt and enhances social divisions.

Most people in economically developed countries purchase at least some of their food from a supermarket, where food is sold to make a profit, usually for a large corporation. We tend to think of this as ordinary food. Food acquired through other means – for example, from local allotments, supermarket surpluses, [digital food sharing apps](#), [community refrigerators](#), community food programmes, or [gleaning](#) – is considered alternative food.

By thinking of food in this way we imply value judgements on the consumers. Finding a new language could enable a more healthy, pleasurable and sustainable relationship with the food that is available to all of us, whoever we are.

**Surplus food** is food intended for supermarkets, but for a variety of reasons is no longer able to be exchanged commercially.



One recent example is a chicken production plant closed for poor hygiene and mislabelling practices, not because the food, prior to reaching the plant, was inherently bad. Thousands of chickens were wasted but if the producer had been able to move quickly to a charity or discounter who could collect, package, and distribute the meat, it would not have been wasted. None could be found in time.

Other examples include packaging malfunctions, over-supply due to favourable growing conditions, unexpected changes in demand or when food is oddly shaped and therefore deemed unsaleable by supermarkets. If such food is rescued it is sometimes sold to discount retailers who sell the surplus more cheaply and are one of the largest growing sectors in the UK. Food may also become animal feed, be composted, or turned into [biofuel](#).

Increasingly, this surplus food is donated to organisations such as [FareShare](#), [Food Cycle](#), [Real Junk Food Projects](#), and others in the UK but also in [other countries](#). Donated surplus is distributed to eaters through [cafes](#), [community pantries](#), [social eating](#), [cooking lessons](#) and the like, or indirectly through charities and third sector organisations who then feed people in many ways – often not as emergency food providers (foodbanks).

We don't really know how much surplus food is rescued and donated. But in 2017 FareShare helped distribute the equivalent of [28.6m meals](#) to nearly 7,000 organisations. Food from the [Community Shop](#) network provided almost 4m meals, and [City Harvest](#) delivered just shy of 1m meals to organisations in London. Despite this, figures suggest that considerably more could be rescued. Wrap ([Waste and Resources Action Programme](#)), estimates that nearly 2m tons of food is wasted annually from the UK commercial sector (one ton is approximately 2,380 meals), much of which could have been eaten.

## Shared, social, sustainable food

The links that surplus food has with waste and commercial loss cause us to see surplus food as inferior food, despite its edibility. While I agree that [austerity and welfare policies](#) are causing great harm to families and communities, I also know that donated surplus food is a resource that supports the resilience of organisations aiming to help struggling communities and households.

The effect of framing surplus food as [second class](#) dismisses the positive social, cultural, environmental and economic values of this food, complicates how organisations aiming to help communities can do so while still preserving dignity, and for eaters, comes to signify a failure to engage with the commercial supply chain. All while giving the commercial sector a pass.



A shared meal using surplus food



Megan Blake

[Access to free or low cost surplus food](#) is a means for expanding tight budgets, enabling community interactions, and enhancing personal and household well-being through social cooking and eating activities. It also brings people together.

**So, what if we referred to surplus food as shared or social food?** This language would reflect the social role this food plays and we would associate it more closely with the care of self, family, community and planet that this food enables.

# Are you a carer in Greater Manchester?

If so, complete this survey and give your views on the best support to those balancing caring and work.

## Supporting working carers

Following the launch of the Carers Charter for GM in January 2018, the GMHSC Partnership is demonstrating its commitment to carers by adopting the Working Carers Pledge. The pledge was developed using established good practice and research by carer organisations and outlines twelve commitments to working carers such as support with balancing multiple roles, help to stay healthy and well, and access to support and information they might need.

Of the 220,000 carers of working age across Greater Manchester around 65% are in employment. GMHSC want to better understand what can be done to make working carers better able to balance their caring and work responsibilities, and what can be done to get more carers into paid employment, if this is what they wish to do. As GMHSC begins to look at how they make sure working carers across GM receive the support they need, a survey has been developed to understand the different challenges working carers can face and the support made available to them by their employer. This survey is open to all working carers in the region. The survey can be found [here](#)

**Everybody should have access to good food.**

**Nobody should have to go to bed hungry.**

All children should have decent food 365 days a year. That is why End Hunger UK has been campaigning for action to tackle holiday hunger.



But now, changes proposed to Universal Credit could mean that a million children from the poorest families in the UK lose their free school meals altogether.

Please email your MP and ask them to make sure children don't lose this vital support. The Children's Society have set up a simple e-action you can use today.

[Read more and take action on our blog.](#)

## Care Workers for Change – Campaign Action March 29th



Care Workers for Change are leading the demand for dignity in social care through fair funding, decent jobs, and quality services. They are campaigning for Community Integrated Care (CIC) to treat their care workers with respect and to value the crucial work they do in our communities.

CIC are a profit-making company employing more than 5500 people in the care sector. Many of their workers are paid the minimum wage and subject to poor quality employment terms and conditions.

They are asking campaign supporters to join them to show the workers at CIC that they value them, by holding a meeting outside CIC sites throughout Greater Manchester on Thursday March 29th 2018, and presenting the workers with traditional Easter gifts. The meetings are likely to be held at 7.30 pm till 8.30 pm in order to fit in with shift changes, but they will confirm full details of timings and where to meet with those signing up to support our campaign.

They are calling for CIC to give access to UNISON to speak to workers and to engage in talks with them about the issues that their staff are concerned about, working together to improve the quality of care and working conditions. They are also asking them to undertake to pay all their staff the Real Living Wage.

**If you would like to attend an action outside your local CIC home in the evening of Thurs March 29th– please RSVP to [Conor McGurran](#) to confirm and to receive full details.**

## Local approaches to improving the quality of work

Inclusive  
Growth  
Analysis  
Unit

What can we do to improve the quality of work locally?

Participants came together to consider this question at the Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit's annual conference, held at the end of last year.

Speakers included the RSA's Matthew Taylor, Lesley Giles of the Work Foundation, and the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham. We heard about why better work is crucial for productivity and social outcomes, how devolution creates an opportunity for coordinated action, and about existing projects and programmes that are making a difference.

A set of slides and notes from the day are available on the [IGAU's website](#) and the team welcome feedback and thoughts on how we might take forward the ideas discussed – email [igau@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:igau@manchester.ac.uk)

## Forthcoming Events:

### International Arts & Homelessness Summit/Festival Launch Event

Thursday March 15th, 2018 from 6.30 - 7.30pm at the Whitworth, Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6ER

Come along to this event celebrating the launch of the first International Arts and Homelessness Summit/Festival which will be in Manchester from November 15th - 18th, 2018 at which 200 delegates from at least 14 countries will share and celebrate the use of arts in the homelessness sector. [More info and book](#)



### Raising Awareness and Overcoming Homelessness Film

Thursday 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-feelable basis.

[More information and to book](#)

### Volunteer Wellbeing Champion Induction Day



Thursday March 29th, 2018 from 10am - 4pm at the Training Room, Salford CVS, Eccles Old Town Hall, 5 Irwell Place, Eccles M30 0FN

Are you interested in volunteering in Salford? Then do come along to this day of learning and sharing about Salford CVS's Volunteer Wellbeing Champion roles. They have a team of volunteers across Salford delivering projects supporting older people. They are looking for more enthusiastic volunteers from all walks of life to take part. [More information and booking](#)

### Being seen, being heard: young people's politics in devolution deals

**Film screening and workshop** On Friday April 6th, 2018 from 2 – 4pm at HOME Manchester, Tony Wilson Place, Manchester M15 4FN

Are we doing enough to ensure young people are represented in decisions that will affect their future? [More info & Book](#) Password 'teamfuture'

### All our Futures—Creating a healthy built environment for older people

by Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing

Thursday April 19th, 2018 from 12noon - 4.30pm at Jean McFarlane Building, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PY

Topics include: The health impacts of housing; austerity urbanism: experience of neighbourhood regeneration in peripheral towns; are urban designers equipped to design for older people; inclusivity and accessibility in the built environment - the role of regulations and standards. [More info and book](#)



We are aware that the University of Salford are holding a Conference 'Homelessness 2018: Solutions to the Housing Crisis' on March 16th, 2018 but we have not publicised this as they are charging £390. You can find out more [here](#) and places were still available at the copy deadline for this newsletter

**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.*

## Local Elections

will be held on Thursday May 3rd 2018

Are you registered to vote?

If not, it's very easy and you only need to do it once (unless you change your address, name or nationality).

Go to this [website](#) to register.

You can vote at a polling station, by post or by proxy (someone else is authorised to vote for you).

**Let's use our voices and vote.**

## 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.

