

Universal Credit – action taken, more to do

By Graham Whitham



Last week the new Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Amber Rudd MP acknowledged that key ways in which Universal Credit operates and functions need to be addressed. The first important announcement was that the two-child limit for Universal Credit payments will not apply to children born before April 2017. Whilst this is a welcome change, it still leaves the two-child limit in place for children born after that date, hurting families with more than two children who are already at greater risk of poverty. Many campaigners are rightly calling for the policy to be abolished altogether.

One of the major concerns about Universal Credit has been the lack of flexibility around the regularity of payments. Some are concerned that monthly payments cause problems for people used to budgeting on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Amber Rudd is looking at how the system can provide more frequent payments to those people who need them. At GMPA we believe the option of more frequent payments should be made available to everyone in receipt of Universal Credit. That way people will be able to choose the option that best meets their budgeting needs and habits.

Other announcements included looking at making it easier for families to manage childcare costs. Action is needed to reduce the complexity of accessing support for childcare and to support parents to meet upfront childcare costs when moving into work. The migration from the legacy benefits system to Universal Credit has placed a huge burden on the government and recipients of support. Amber Rudd said she will look at the migration of people onto Universal Credit to minimise some of the problems this causes for individuals and their families. The ideal would be an automatic migration of people from the legacy system to Universal Credit (rather than having to put in a new claim for support), but we are yet to see an indication from the Government that they will follow this course of action.



Graham Whitham

The announcements are welcome but tentative steps towards addressing some of the concerning elements of Universal Credit. In Greater Manchester, many individuals and organisations are fully aware of the challenges created by the implementation and operation of this new social security system. At GMPA we are working with others to understand what can be done locally to improve the way the social security system operates. Please get in touch if you would like to discuss this further.

Understanding poverty measurement, definitions and data – GMPA training course

Would understanding how poverty in the UK is defined and measured help you and your organisation in the work that you do? Do you need to identify robust sources of data to support your fundraising bids? Are you regularly challenged about the nature and scale of poverty in the UK and find the myriad of information about poverty hard to navigate?



GMPA's 'Understanding poverty measurement, definitions and data' course is designed to support organisations facing these challenges. The course was fully booked when we ran it in September so we've added two new dates – [March 7th and June 5th](#)

Feedback from the September date included: "Great work – learnt loads" "A complex and in-depth subject was covered in an interesting and informative manner" "Good balance of presentation and group discussion".

Please book now to secure your place on one of the [two dates](#). By the end of this one-day course participants will have developed an understanding of what key poverty data-sets tell us, how best to access data sources and how to use this knowledge to support the work that they do. You can download a full course overview and find out [more information here](#)

Food Poverty Action Plan for Greater Manchester Launch Event on Monday March 4th 2019



When: 12:30 - 3pm, Monday March 4th, 2019

Where: Methodist Central Hall, Central Hall, Oldham Street, Manchester, M1 1JQ

How to book: Places are limited, so please [book for free using this link](#)

Thanks to those who have already been signing up after seeing the "Save the Date" in the last newsletter of 2018. We can now confirm the venue as Methodist Central Hall, the same place where we launched the Alliance itself just eight months ago, and have also included a draft agenda for the event – all details are now on the booking form so please [follow this link](#) to find out more and to book as we celebrate how far we've come in co-producing this plan, and look at how we can put it into action together.

Feeding the City: Greater Manchester Saturday January 19th, 2019



The Food Poverty Action Plan for Greater Manchester will propose many actions for businesses seeking to benefit and improve access to good food in their local communities, so it is great timing to be able to share this opportunity.

[Impact Hub](#) are putting on a free workshop to help you develop ideas for sustainable food businesses to benefit your local community. Funding, training and advice will be available for new businesses through the [Feeding the City program](#), and this workshop will help you to develop your ideas, ready to apply for this funding - please note that the deadline for funding applications following the workshop is Sunday January 27th, 2019.

When: 1:30pm - 5pm, Saturday January 19th 2019

Where: Bridge 5 Mill, 22A Beswick Street, Manchester, M4 7HR

How to book: Places are limited, so please [book for free using this link](#)

*Our city region is growing and we're struggling to feed ourselves sustainably. We want to support you to make change! What food problems would you like to solve for your community?
Do you play with the idea of starting a social business, or already have an idea in mind?*

[Feeding the City](#) is a fully funded 12 month programme that will support sustainable food start-ups across all of the UK. Successful applicants will receive bursaries, and have access to business and food expert advice and training throughout 2019. At this Idea-Generating Workshop you will be supported to develop an idea for your own social business, get to know others working in similar areas and have a chance to learn more about Feeding the City. Using concrete tools, you will be helped to think through important elements of your idea in a structured way and to identify blind spots. Furthermore, you will receive valuable feedback and also learn which criteria are important in the funding application. Even those who have no concrete or only a vague idea are welcome.

Please note, any queries about the [Feeding the City](#) program should be directed to [Impact Hub](#), while you can find out more about the Greater Manchester workshop through [the booking form](#).

Forthcoming events

Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance: Action Plan Launch Event

Monday March 4th, 2019 from 12.30pm - 3pm at Methodist Central Hall, Central Hall, Oldham Street, Manchester, M1 1JQ

Please [book now to reserve your place](#), to find out what you can do to help us end hunger in Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester Poverty Action: Understanding Poverty Data Training Courses

March 7th and June 5th, 2019 - full day courses, venue to be announced

Do you want to understand more about how poverty is measured and where you can access data? This course is for organisations who wish to strengthen the case for their work by presenting accurate and relevant data about poverty to funders, supporters and policy makers. A more detailed course overview and booking is available via our website [here](#)

Ancora Project Conference: Telling the story of help through crises

Tuesday January 22nd, 2019 from 1.30 - 4.30pm at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Chadderton Suite, West Street, Oldham OL1 1QJ



The Ancora Project is a Big Lottery funded service and is a collaboration between KeyRing, Christians Against Poverty and Oldham Foodbank. The role of Ancora is to support and empower people experiencing or at risk of experiencing hardship crisis. Hear the stories of the people we have helped and find out more about the

facts and figures which why our work is so important. [Book by Jan 18th!](#)

Greater Manchester and Manchester BME Network: Market Place and Joint Networking Event

Wednesday January 30th, 2019 Registration from 9.30am - 2pm at GMCVO, St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North Manchester, M12 6FZ

The format will differ slightly from the usual events. As well as the usual networking, this event will include a 'Market Place' for BME Social Entrepreneurs and everyone interested. It will bring together recent work by GMCVO in partnership with GM BME Network and Flourish on connecting BME Social Entrepreneurs to social investment.

Come along and meet BME social entrepreneurs, support their enterprise journey and learn about our research. You will have the opportunity as usual to drop into information, support and learning sessions about social investment, social enterprise and finding resources and funding. Includes a free lunch. [More information and book](#)

Social Work and Austerity

Thursday January 31st, 2019 from 10am - 3pm at The University of Manchester, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Room A2.16, Manchester M15 6JA



The recent UN Rapporteur's report outlined the extent of poverty in the UK and its impact on individuals, families and communities. This event will consider how social work as a profession and individual social workers can respond. [More information and book](#)

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

Support us

Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) exists because of the support of likeminded organisations and individuals across Greater Manchester, and beyond, who share GMPA's desire to see an end to poverty in our city region. There are three ways you can support GMPA's work, either through individual donations, signing up as a supporter or becoming a GMPA Principal Partner.

[More information](#)

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 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.