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Greater Manchester

Food Poverty Alliance

Food Poverty Action Plan for Greater Manchester

The Challenge



620,000 people in Greater Manchester are living in poverty and **struggling to put food on the table.**

- We define food poverty as “consistent access to adequate food being limited by a lack of money and other resources”
- Across the UK one in four parents have skipped meals to make ends meet, half of whom went without food for a whole day, while 4 million children are at risk of malnutrition due to low family incomes
- Over 200,000 children experience poverty in Greater Manchester, and food bank use is higher than in most other areas

The Challenge

- £30bn has been taken out of the welfare budget since 2010, and councils have lost 60% of their funding from the Government for services
- The NHS spends £29bn spent on poverty-related health conditions, with poor diet contributing to diabetes, cancer, cardio vascular disease, and obesity as well as malnutrition
- 83% of respondents to National Education Union's survey said they see children showing signs of hunger during the school day, with "holiday hunger" a growing concern. Hunger has a negative impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of children, and impairs learning by reducing children's ability to concentrate
- Households with at least one disabled people are three times more likely to use a food bank

Testimonies from Greater Manchester residents

'I like to try to cook from scratch but there is no way you can afford all the fresh ingredients.'

'I always have to cut back on food because of rent and bills. I mean it's important to get your rent and bills paid... By the time I've paid my bills, I'm left with £20 a week for food.'

'The easy option is junk food, you know microwaveable meals, they are cheap and convenient. If you don't have the money the only thing you have got is the cheaper option.'

'There were times we went without food, once we didn't eat for three days, the benefits were not enough to support us. It was a vicious circle. To keep my bones strong and healthy I needed a healthy diet, but I couldn't afford a healthy diet, so my condition got worse. We wouldn't have survived without food banks. The benefits system should have been better.'

The Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance



- Coordinated by GM Poverty Action, bringing together over 100 people and organisations including people who have lived experience of food poverty – see the final slide for logos of some of the organisations involved
- Working together on a more strategic and better coordinated response to food poverty in our city region
- Funded through 2018 to co-produce the Food Poverty Action Plan for Greater Manchester, setting aims and actions to:
 - Reduce and prevent food poverty
 - Build resilience and support communities to plan and adapt to the challenge of food poverty
 - Address structural and economic issues that underlie food poverty, such as the benefits system, unemployment and precarious and low-paid employment



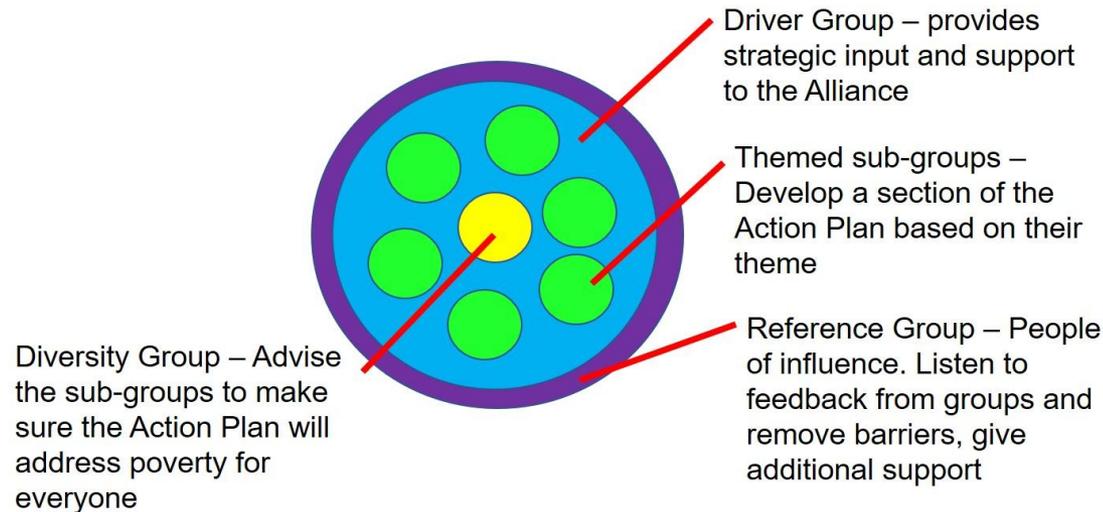
Over 100 organisations have come together in the last year to set out how we're going to end food poverty in Greater Manchester – the **Food Poverty Action Plan**.

The Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance – Structure



Themed Sub-groups

1. Addressing the underlying causes of food poverty
2. Food banks and beyond
3. Children and young people experiencing food poverty
4. Skills and training
5. Place-based access to food
6. Measuring and monitoring food poverty, and the impact of our interventions



N.b. This has been the structure during the Alliance's first year, for co-producing this Action Plan. A new structure will be designed to support implementation of the plan.

The Vision



- A joined-up support system in each neighbourhood, of local people and organisations working together, with neighbourhood teams at the heart of each system
- “No wrong door” – no matter where someone turns to for help, they will be supported to find the help that they most need
- Greater Manchester-wide efforts to support this local action and to ensure a joined-approach to food poverty, involving all sectors across the city region
- Enough no-cost, low-cost, and affordable healthy food to meet everyone’s needs, in moments of crisis and in long-term low income households
- All support activities geared towards prevention of food poverty – a locally owned “exit strategy” for reliance on crisis support

Everyone in Greater Manchester enjoys good food and a better standard of living, and they look out for each other

The Plan



- The Food Poverty Action Plan is split into two main sections:
 - recommendations for action at the Greater Manchester level
 - actions that can be taken at a neighbourhood level
 - there are also short sections about measuring food poverty and monitoring action, and about raising funds and awareness
- It describes actions to be taken over the next three years, for significant reductions in food poverty. These should be seen as the first steps towards eradicating food poverty in Greater Manchester
- All actions are taken from a set of recommendations from the working groups of the Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance – those recommendations are shown in the notes attached to each slide – and from advice from [Food Power](#), the national network of food poverty alliances
- While food poverty and related health and social issues are our primary concern, many of the actions have additional environmental benefits – these are marked with a green asterisk throughout the plan *



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Food Poverty Alliance

1) Greater Manchester-wide Food Poverty Reduction – Recommended Actions

A Joined-up Response – Councils and GMCA



- Food poverty should be identified as a priority for all public services and support services
- A lead for poverty should be appointed in the GM Combined Authority and in each council, to work with the Food Poverty Alliance and neighbourhood teams in reducing food poverty
 - A lead for food at GMCA and councils is also recommended, working with Good Food Greater Manchester on the six [Sustainable Food Cities key issues](#), and working with the lead for poverty on food poverty actions *
- Full support should be given to neighbourhoods' food poverty actions – see slides 21-30
- People leading on the green city region agenda should look for opportunities to link environmental action with food poverty action, especially those actions that tackle the underlying causes of food poverty

A Joined-up Response – Councils and GMCA



- Food deserts – use planning, grants, business rates reductions, and other tools to encourage food businesses, and charities to move into areas that lack affordable healthy food
- The same tools can be used to encourage positive business practises such as addressing the poverty premium in other goods and services
- Re-regulate bus companies to address the poverty premium and improve standards in public transport *
 - Free bus travel for people who have referrals to food banks/clubs would also help people to access the help that they need
- Actions covered elsewhere:
 - Work with the Food Poverty Alliance to monitor action and measure food poverty reduction in each borough – slides 31-33
 - Public figures could help by raising funds – slide 35
 - There are many actions for councils to take in their capacity Anchor Institutions: Employers, Procurers and Leaders – slide 19

A Joined-up Response – Welfare Reform

Greater Manchester should argue for, and work towards, a system that provides adequate financial support to ensure a household's basic needs are met, reducing use of sanctions and engaging with claimants to understand their needs and build support around them

- The welfare system (including Local Welfare Assistance Schemes – see [GM Poverty Action's research and proposals](#)) should be connected with other local support offers
- The system should lead with a welfare rights and “cash first” approach, with additional support such as fuel vouchers and food bank/club referrals as secondary options

A Joined-up Response – Education

Develop and implement a GM-wide framework for the provision of healthy and sustainable meals for children and young people, during term times and holidays, with reference to the school food standard

- Schools should:
 - Develop, share and follow good practise to increase uptake of free school meals without exposing pupils to stigma
 - Work with local businesses and charities [and seek funding from national schemes](#), with the help of neighbourhood teams, to provide breakfast clubs. Where possible they should be open to all pupils
- All 10 boroughs should support and coordinate provision of activities with food during school holidays
 - Work with schools, businesses and charities
 - Share learning to develop a toolkit, and build towards a GM-wide approach

A Joined-up Response – Education

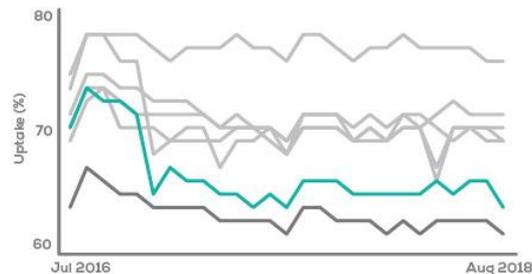


- Schools should teach good food on a tight budget e.g. as part of the Curriculum for Life, and where possible offer food support and education to parents as well as pupils e.g. creating recipe cards for pupils to take home
- Schools, colleges and universities should support local charities to provide food and cooking classes, as well as large-scale cooking of surplus ingredients for community use, making their kitchens and food storage available where possible
- Colleges and universities can help the Food Poverty Alliance and other stakeholders with research to inform actions, as well as monitoring action and measuring food poverty reduction in each borough – see slides 31-33
- Actions covered elsewhere:
 - There are many actions for schools, colleges and universities to take in their capacity as anchor institutions – employers, procurers and leaders – see slide 19

A Joined-up Response – Health and Care

- A coordinated cross-sector approach to increase uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers
 - Councils, schools and charities should work with health services to increase take-up, alongside a media campaign to raise awareness, and shops should be encouraged to promote and accept Vouchers

£3.6m unclaimed every year



Greater Manchester uptake compared to Tees Valley, Liverpool, West of England, West Midlands, Sheffield City and the national average.

Our Action Plan calls for a coordinated cross-sector approach to increase uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers

The Vouchers are given to parents on low incomes, for fruit, vegetables and milk for young children.

Uptake is lower than in other city regions, meaning **£3.6m worth of food goes unclaimed every year.**

- Seek opportunities to expand social prescribing for healthy food-related activities such as cooking classes and food growing
- Work with charities and businesses to promote healthy food, with positive messaging and campaigns
 - Campaigns should be linked to organisations that can help people to access and use healthy food, including support such as cooking classes and fuel vouchers

A Joined-up Response – Health and Care



- Ensure that disabled people and older people are given enough support to access healthy affordable food, including sufficiently long visits from care workers
- Expand the [PaperWeight Armband program](#) to help identify malnutrition in older people
- Ensure hospital discharge includes a nutrition/hydration check and provision of 'food to go' bags for those who won't have support at home
- Provide training on nutrition and cooking to care homes
- Share data and support measuring of food poverty reduction outcomes – see slides 31-33
- Actions covered elsewhere:
 - There are many actions for health organisations to take in their capacity as anchor institutions – employers, procurers and leaders – see slide 19

A Joined-up Response – Food Support and the Food Poverty Alliance



If we are able to secure enough funding to employ a full-time coordinator (see slide 35), we will:

- Support all of the actions in this Action Plan
- Continue to convene open meetings between all stakeholders who are taking action on food poverty, to encourage a joined-up response and ensure that our action is evidence-based
- Work with the food support sector (food banks, food clubs etc) to ensure provision matches people's and communities' needs:
 - There should be more long-term support (such as food clubs/pantries and community kitchens) available for long-term low income households
 - Where possible all food support should be provided alongside other forms of support such as advice, to help people address the underlying issues that cause food poverty
- Ensure that food poverty action is joined up with other action on food, including active membership of Good Food Greater Manchester

Food banks help people in moments of crisis while **food clubs** offer longer term support through a membership scheme.

Our Action Plan calls for local partnerships to set up **more food clubs, especially in areas that lack affordable healthy food.**



A Joined-up Response – Food Support and the Food Poverty Alliance



If we are able to secure additional funding on top of that required for the Food Poverty Alliance Coordinator role (see slide 35), we will:

- Create a GM-wide network of food support providers. It would:
 - Provide mutual support, training and networking opportunities for frontline staff and volunteers
 - Set minimum standards and principles to ensure the provision of high quality services across GM*
 - Encourage food support providers to collect and submit data
 - Support neighbourhood-based analysis and action
 - Facilitate conversations about reducing reliance on food support in the long-term
 - Alternatively borough-wide networks could be created such as the [Salford Food Share Network](#)
- Develop a free online platform for providers, like the [streetsupport.net](#) site created for the homelessness sector. It would:
 - Help people (and their advisers) to find the support that they need
 - Support neighbourhood-based analysis and action
 - Before then we will support and promote an [independent food forum online](#) for all stakeholders to communicate and share ideas

Businesses, Community Groups and Anchor Institutions: Employers, Procurers and Leaders

- Show leadership in tackling low pay, insecure work, and unemployment
 - Become [accredited Real Living Wage employers](#), and support the Good Employment Charter
 - The Good Employment Charter should proactively seek to bring other employers on board and to raise standards
- Develop and implement local procurement policies to source supplies locally, including but not limited to food *
 - This would support the development of more local supply chains, working with short supply chains and local labour markets
 - This would keep money within the local economy, jobs would be supported and created, and the “multiplier effect” would see this money boost the local economy
- Those that handle food should prevent unnecessary food wastage and ensure that high quality, healthy surplus food is sorted and put to good use *
- Support should be given to building capacity for food acquisition, supply and redistribution *
- Work with neighbourhood teams to explore opportunities for opening up unused land for community food growing – see slide 28
- Donate to and promote the Alliance and the fundraising campaign – see slide 35

Further Actions to Address the Underlying Causes of Food Poverty

- Develop food skills in employability training
 - These skills not only help people into work, but also help them in their personal lives and help them contribute to their communities
- Address housing costs, insecure tenancies and homelessness
 - Prioritisation of social and affordable housing in all neighbourhoods in planning decisions
 - Use landlord licensing and other tools to improve standards, and push for longer tenancies *
 - Significant action to reduce homelessness and eradicate rough sleeping is already underway
 - Ensure that [temporary accommodation](#) is equipped with cooking equipment and other white goods necessary for a basic standard of living
- Poverty premium – research and address increased costs of everyday goods for people on lower incomes – [see GM Poverty Action's research and proposals](#)
- Increase fuel vouchers provision and affordable white goods to ensure people have the fuel and equipment needed to cook meals



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2) Place-based Food Poverty Reduction

Develop a way to measure food poverty in a neighbourhood, and for Greater Manchester – set an aim for each neighbourhood



Significant reduction of food poverty in neighbourhoods

1. Identify four neighbourhoods in which to pilot place-based approaches

The neighbourhoods should have areas within them that have:

- Low incomes
- Poor diet-related health outcomes
- Food deserts
- Agencies and residents ready to work with us

See Slide 23

2. Develop a joined up local response in these neighbourhoods, develop tools and pathways

Neighbourhood teams should be at the heart of this, with support from the Food Poverty Alliance, and convene a working group in each neighbourhood. They should:

- Foster working relationships between all agencies, and a “No wrong door” approach
- Provide training for all agencies
- Develop tools to help people navigate support systems
- Gear all agencies and responses towards prevention of food poverty, develop pathways to help people out of food poverty

See Slides 24-25

3. Focused work with specific groups of people, and community-specific agencies

During the pilot project, each working group should work with one specific “cohort” of people in each neighbourhood:

- Children and young people
- Older people
- BME people
- Disabled people

See Slide 26

4. Ensure adequate provision of affordable, no-cost or subsidised healthy food, and training

See Slides 27-28

Raise funds to support coordination and adequate food provision in each neighbourhood, as well as expansion to six more neighbourhoods

5. Expand to a total of 10 neighbourhoods after initial reports from each pilot

See Slide 29

6. Share learning and make resources available for all neighbourhoods in Greater Manchester

See Slide 29



Identifying neighbourhoods for pilot projects



- We will identify four neighbourhoods in which to pilot place-based approaches, covering four boroughs of Greater Manchester
 - Public services in GM are being reformed towards a more place-based approach, with around 60 “neighbourhoods” across GM, each with around 50,000 residents
 - We will look to pilot this approach in neighbourhoods that have “food deserts” (areas that have poor access to affordable healthy food), low incomes and poor diet-related health outcomes
 - With a neighbourhood team and other agencies ready to work with us, such as
 - Food Banks
 - Food Clubs
 - Schools
 - GPs and health and care teams
 - Housing associations
 - The Department for Work and Pensions
 - “Experts by experience” – local people who have experience of food poverty from their own lives
 - Citizens Advice and other advice & information agencies
 - Other local businesses and charities, including faith groups
- Each neighbourhood team would be supported by the Food Poverty Alliance Coordinator to set up a working group including:
 - Some of the agencies listed above
 - People from the council and other services who have central responsibility for poverty or food

Public services in Greater Manchester are being reformed towards a place-based approach, with around 60 “neighbourhoods” across GM, each with around 50,000 residents.



Working Groups develop joined-up local responses



- Analysis by the Working group, with support from the Food Poverty Alliance
 - Map stakeholders of the local food and support system
 - What is working well
 - Local issues and needs
 - Desired outcomes from a joined-up system
 - How to achieve these outcomes
- Neighbourhood teams should meet all stakeholders 1-1 to aid this analysis
- Arrange an assembly of all stakeholders, encouraging closer working relationships
 - Communicate a vision of a joined-up system with a “no wrong door” approach, and the desired outcomes
 - Ask stakeholders what they need in order to achieve this, including information and training
 - Speakers include experts by experience
 - Match up organisations’ needs with others who have capabilities to support
 - Explore opportunities for social prescribing
 - Explore opportunities for community kitchens, and cooking large amounts of food together to bring down costs, build people’s confidence and skills, and make use of surplus ingredients
 - Sketch tools to help people navigate support systems – set up a separate working group to develop these tools, if necessary
 - Ask permission to share details after the meeting, or, if Beta-version of a web-based platform to connect providers is developed in time, pilot this at a local level

Working Groups develop joined-up local responses



- Develop tools, deliver training, and encourage closer partnership working and referrals systems
- Connect local action with GM-wide responses, e.g. campaigns to increase Healthy Start Voucher and free school meals uptake
- Neighbourhood teams meet all stakeholders 1-1 again to encourage ongoing involvement and partnership working
- Second and third assemblies of all stakeholders
 - Share testimonies showing benefits of partnership working thus far
 - Embed “No Wrong Door” approach across the neighbourhood
 - Refine the tools to help people navigate support systems
 - Discuss and start to develop pathways to help people and communities out of food poverty
 - Increasing household income
 - Increasing access to affordable healthy food



Focused work with specific groups of people

- In addition, each neighbourhood should work with one cohort (a group of people with a shared characteristic), and agencies that specifically work with those people
 - Children and young people
 - Older people
 - BME people
 - Disabled people
- Explore ways to improve access to food for each cohort, connecting with borough-led or GM-wide action also being taken

Working groups ensure adequate provision

- Identify gaps in provision – affordable healthy food should be accessible throughout the neighbourhood, through:
 - Food banks with healthy food
 - Food clubs with healthy food
 - Schools working with other local agencies on food poverty
 - Meals on wheels
 - Community kitchens and community fridges
 - Social enterprises providing affordable healthy food
 - Shops with affordable healthy food
 - Other community provision, such as faith groups, community cafes, providers of free hot meals, and training providers e.g. cooking classes

Working groups ensure adequate provision

- Make a plan to address the gaps in provision
 - Ask councils to use all tools at their disposal to encourage businesses, social enterprises and charities to move into areas that lack this provision
 - Ask other agencies such as charities, schools and businesses to offer support to social enterprises and charities
 - In particular, food clubs and other non-profit low-cost providers of long-term support may be necessary in poorer areas
 - Meals on wheels provision may also be essential in reaching people who are less mobile
 - Seed funding or subsidies may be necessary to ensure adequate provision in some areas
- Address cultural and language barriers, celebrating diversity and ensuring that food support is available that caters to people of different faiths and cultures
- Engage food clubs, food banks and other food providers, and help them to procure more healthy food including from local businesses and food growers *
 - Neighbourhoods should look for opportunities such as unused land, support with food growing, and people willing to help grow food for community use
- Ensure opportunities for training and education to help people cook, as well as budgeting and shopping for healthy food on a tight budget *

Expansion of the place-based approach



- The four pilot projects should meet each other quarterly for mutual support, and to agree a framework for reporting
- After a third stakeholders' assembly in each neighbourhood they should report and make tools and training available for new projects in other neighbourhoods
- The project will then expand into six new neighbourhoods, while continuing to work with the first four
- The six new neighbourhoods will assess the transferability of the pilots' learning and tools through undertaking their own local action on food poverty based on those tools
- Between them, and with the support of the Food Poverty Alliance, the tools should be refined and made transferable and readily available to all neighbourhoods in Greater Manchester

Provisional timetable



May– Sep
2019

- Identify four pilot neighbourhoods
- Agree a way of working with each neighbourhood team

Oct 2019 –
Mar 2020

- Convene working groups, agree aims
- Begin analysis, engaging a cohort for focused work, and planning the first assembly
- The four pilot neighbourhoods start meeting each other quarterly

April 2020

- First assembly of stakeholders in each neighbourhood – 12-month pilot project begins in each neighbourhood

May– Apr
2020

- Develop tools and joined-up approaches, also focused with a cohort in each neighbourhood
- Identify gaps in provision of healthy affordable food, and make a plan to address these gaps
- Second stakeholders' assembly in each neighbourhood in Oct/Nov

May – Sep
2021

- Third assembly of stakeholders in each neighbourhood – prepare reports, tools and training
- Identify six more neighbourhoods to expand into, and agree a way of working with each neighbourhood team

Oct 2021 –
Aug 2022

- Training for all six new neighbourhoods and start work in each – putting the tools and methodologies, which were developed through the pilot projects, into practise over the next ten months. Refine the tools and prepare them for use in all neighbourhoods
- The four pilot neighbourhoods review their progress and their systems, and agree a way of further developing their localised food poverty action

Sept 2022

- Make resources available for all neighbourhoods in Greater Manchester to reduce food poverty through local action, joined up with GM-wide and borough-wide actions



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3) Measuring Food Poverty, Monitoring the Impact of our Interventions

Measuring Food Poverty

- GMCA and councils should work with the Food Poverty Alliance to adopt a shared definition of food poverty, and measure it. This definition should acknowledge social acceptability, health, affordability and geographical access of food, as well as diverse aspects of lived experience, acute/chronic dimensions, and relevance to Greater Manchester
 - Use existing data-collection processes, tools and proxy measures to predict greatest risks and costs of food insecurity e.g. mapping, database building, social value methodologies
 - Identify gaps in data and design tools to monitor food insecurity e.g. annual phone survey, door-to-door community survey using Household Food Security Module in at-risk neighbourhoods. These approaches can be especially helpful in monitoring the impact of our place-based pilot projects
 - Work with other city regions such as London, who are also attempting to measure food poverty, as consistency between regions would aid comparisons and campaigns for measurement at the national level

Monitoring the Impact of our Interventions



- With support from councils, the Food Poverty Alliance will monitor preventative policy and action
 - Apply Sustain’s [*Beyond the Food Bank*](#) survey approach to Greater Manchester, to monitor and encourage borough-level action on food poverty
 - Evaluate the impact of working in an alliance, to achieve our collective aim: to eradicate hunger and reliance on crisis support



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4) Raising Funds and Public Awareness

Raising Funds and Public Awareness



The first funding requirement is for a full-time Food Poverty Alliance Coordinator, to support and coordinate the actions in this plan over the next three years (see slide 17). We hope that this funding will be pledged by public bodies and other anchor institutions in time to recruit a coordinator in May 2019.

- In addition, a public fundraising campaign to raise funds for more than this coordination role, could pay for:
 - Creating and supporting a network of food support providers – see slide 18
 - Developing and maintaining a free online platform for food support providers
 - Seed funding and, where necessary, subsidies to ensure adequate provision of affordable, no-cost or subsidised healthy food, and food training and education – see slide 28
- It should have positive messaging about what we can achieve together, while highlighting stories of lived experience
- Social impact bonds for health benefits related to food poverty reduction could release additional funding



Thanks to Participating Organisations, including:



Thanks in particular to all sub-group Chair-persons and Secretaries:

- Addressing the underlying causes – Dr Mags Adams and Nayan Joshi
- Food banks and beyond – Lily Axworthy
- Children and young people – Dominic Coleman and Letitia Rose
- Skills and training – Adele Jordan and Helen Walker
- Place-based access to food – Graham Whitham
- Measuring and monitoring – Dr Charlie Spring
- Diversity Group – Atiha Chaudry
- Reference Group – Bishop John Arnold

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Greater Manchester Poverty Action is a not-for-profit organisation based in Greater Manchester that works to address poverty across the city region. We convene and network organisations from across the public, private and VCSE sectors to foster collaboration and innovation and to maximise the impact of efforts to address hardship and deprivation across Greater Manchester. We carry out research and we campaign for changes in policy both locally and nationally so that the structural and systematic causes of poverty are addressed.