

## Making employment work for everyone

By Andy Burnham , Mayor of Greater Manchester

For many people, modern work isn't working.

In an increasingly insecure UK labour market, poverty rates have risen for every type of working family and one in eight workers nationally is now in poverty.

Our Greater Manchester Independent Prosperity Review, launched earlier this year, found that wages have fallen by 6.6% in real terms between 2006 and 2016 for the average worker in the city-region, in a labour market which has seen a rise in unstable and low paid work.

This can't be right. We need to be offering employees secure, fulfilling and well-paid work that prevents them from falling into poverty in the first place, and that means that our businesses can grow and succeed based on the skills and engagement of their staff.

That's why in Greater Manchester we're doing things differently, working with employers and employees in all sectors, trade unions, business representative organisations and other key stakeholders to develop a Good Employment Charter.

Through two consultations and a broader co-design process involving GM Poverty Action and others we've developed a list of seven employment characteristics which define good employment:

- Security of work
- Flexible work
- Payment of a real living wage
- Excellent people management
- A productive & healthy workplace
- Excellent recruitment practices and progression
- Workplace engagement and voice

We want to bring employers with us on a journey towards best practice in each of these fields, demonstrating the positive impact that better employment standards can have on employee welfare and business performance alike. The Charter will therefore have a tiered approach to help support and encourage employers to share excellent practice, access support to progress to higher standards, and help them become more successful as a result.

Through our co-design process and as we move into the implementation of the Charter, we're building a coalition of organisations committed to improving employment practice and offering fair conditions for their workers.

In this way, Charter members will be at the heart of the movement, demonstrating its values and spreading its influence and positive impacts to other employers in Greater Manchester – advocating membership amongst their networks and supply chains.

Our Charter model has now been agreed by the Combined Authority and, working with partners, we are beginning the process of putting the Charter into action. Already, it has been highlighted by the recent Greater Manchester Independent Prosperity Review as an important element in increasing economic growth and pay in the city-region.

I'd like to thank GM Poverty Action for the help and advice they have provided throughout the Charter's design. I believe the model we have created together can and will make a real difference for people in Greater Manchester.



Andy Burnham

## Salford: No-one left behind

by Jonathan Stancombe

From council tax to cutting the cost of funerals, from boosting benefits to decent pay, Salford City Council is fighting poverty on many fronts.

In 2017, using local people's first-hand experience and knowledge of areas to address, the council launched *No-one Left Behind* to tackle poverty in the city.

The campaign won national recognition in the Municipal Journal Awards last June and praise from the Money Advice Service but City Mayor Paul Dennett says there's no room for complacency.

"I'm delighted at what we have achieved and the number of people we have helped, especially in the face of savage government funding cuts which has taken 53% of central government funding from our budget to date with austerity having no end in sight" he said.

"The challenges just keep on coming – particularly with the rollout of Universal Credit. Salford Citizen's Advice has seen a 114% increase in the number of people coming forward for help and expect that to continue. When you think that last year they helped nearly 21,000 people you begin to appreciate the sheer scale of the problem.

"The council's welfare rights and debt advice service helped more than 3,200 people this year to claim an extra £4.8 million in benefits they are entitled to and nearly 4,000 people have used our new BetterOff service which checks benefits and signposts them to job opportunities and childcare provision in the city. We only launched the website and face to face sessions last summer.

"We've helped over 25,000 people on low incomes by keeping the council tax reduction scheme at its current level for four years and helped more than 600 householders to reduce their energy costs.

"It's no wonder that the United Nations, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the End Child Poverty campaign say that poverty is getting worse in the UK - the world's fifth largest economy. It really is a disgrace."

Last year new initiatives included tackling school summer holiday hunger, helping more than 500 children and a new low-cost funeral service which cuts the average cost of a burial or cremation by 39%.

Even the city's refuse collectors chipped in and made Christmas much more enjoyable for hundreds of local families than they might have expected. "They asked residents to put out a gift with their bins in December so we could pass it on to local charities and families. Salford people responded magnificently and donated more than 5,000 gifts worth an estimated £25,000 which went to local charities and families," said Mayor Dennett.

While tackling poverty is a key priority preventing people from falling into difficulties in the first place is vital and City Mayor Paul Dennett is clear how that can be done. "Decent jobs with decent pay and terms and conditions of employment are crucial," he said.

"Salford is the fastest growing economy in Greater Manchester with unprecedented levels of investment and opportunities for local people. TalkTalk recently announced plans to move its headquarters from London to Salford. MediaCityUK is now the biggest digital hub outside London with education facilities on site to train the next generation. These are just some of our many success stories.

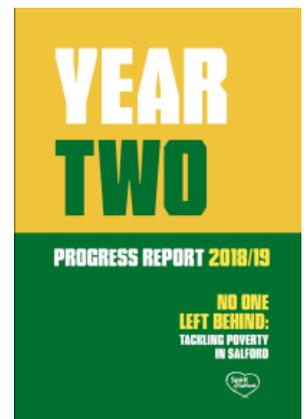


Paul Dennett

"All this, plus more and more businesses and organisations committed to following the council's lead in paying the 'real' Living Wage (as set by the Living Wage Foundation) and improving working conditions creates real opportunities for local people. Salford City council is doing all it can to ensure as many people as possible benefit from what's happening in our city.

"There's no quick fix, no magic bullet but Salford's spirit, strong partnerships, and sheer determination means we can and will do all we can to create a better and fairer Salford for all."

See the full report [here](#)



## Understanding Food Poverty and the Transitional Behaviour of Vulnerable Individuals

On Thursday April 25th, 2019 from 3.30 - 7pm at Media City UK, University of Salford M50 2HE

As almost a fifth of the UK population live in poverty and emergency food access is increasing year-on-year, our event reports on the temporal experience of austerity and food access exclusion in the Greater Manchester and city of Birmingham regions with the purpose of helping vulnerable individuals to navigate their way out of food poverty.



This event is hosted by SHUSU at the University of Salford, together with Huddersfield Business School and Birmingham Business School. Sponsored by British Academy/Leverhulme, it aims to bring together stakeholders across business, government, charities, academia and society to discuss key questions around food poverty and poverty in general.

In addition to disseminating their key findings and policy summaries from local government, the event features an open Q&A panel with leading thinkers from Greater Manchester Poverty Action, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Birmingham Food Council and Salford City Council.

GMFA Co-Director Tom Skinner, who will be speaking at the event, commented "The Food Poverty Action Plan for Greater Manchester is centred around the need to address the underling causes of food poverty at the personal as well as societal level. This event is important as it will discuss and develop the evidence base for helping people to navigate their way out of food poverty."

Conference Chairs: Prof. Morven McEachern; Dr Caroline Moraes; Prof. Lisa Scullion; and Dr Andrea Gibbons.

Refreshments are provided on arrival and midway through the event.

The event is free to attend but pre-registration is compulsory via [Eventbrite](#).

## Salford Building in Warmth

by Aneaka Kellay, Carbon Co-op

Carbon Co-op launched a video to coincide with Fuel Poverty Awareness Day 2019, showcasing Salford Building In Warmth, a partnership project with charity National Energy Action (NEA), Helping Hands and Salford Council that brings together energy experts, local handy people and neighbours to tackle fuel poverty.

With effects on health, education and employability, fuel poverty affects a growing number of people, with a staggering 15% of households in the Broughton area of Salford classified as fuel poor (figures taken from the Salford City Council – Affordable Warmth, Strategic Action Plan – 2018/2021).



As part of Salford Building In Warmth, Carbon Co-op bought in Energy Consultant Diane Hubbard to conduct airtightness testing on four energy champions' homes, highlighting the coldest, most draughty areas. The tests enabled local property maintenance and repairs service Helping Hands to make targeted and affordable improvements to homes with follow up airtightness tests used to investigate quality and impact.

Megan, one of the Energy Champions said *"Having those problems resolved, it's a lot cosier. I've told almost everyone I've met because it's been so exciting, I feel quite evangelical about the benefits, just getting small things done makes a difference"*

Diane Hubbard, Energy Consultant, Green Footsteps said *"It is vital that those undertaking energy efficiency home improvements for vulnerable householders are trained to undertake work to the highest standard. Without this training they not only risk their work not achieving the results they want, but more importantly they can put those living in homes at risk. It's great to see community initiatives in Salford doing things differently."*

As Aneaka Kellay, Carbon Co-op said *"It's been great to work with Helping Hands, Diane Hubbard and the Community Champions in Salford. We've shown that by bringing communities and expertise together, we can make a difference."*

Rebecca Long Bailey MP said *"I'm very pleased to see the initiatives Carbon Co-op, other Salford social enterprises and community energy groups are taking to find ways to tackle this real issue, and give people safer and warmer homes ."*

Read more about Salford Building In Warmth [here](#)

## GMPA's Food Providers map



In January 2017 we launched our GM Food Providers map, one of the first recommendations from the food poverty group that was the precursor to the [Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance](#). The group said that a single source didn't exist and hoped that it would be useful and informative.

We wanted it to be a point of reference for service users and advisors and we believe that, in the main, this is how it is being used, hence the 22,000+ hits. Obviously when the map was first launched it also very graphically brought to everyone's attention the number of food providers that existed across Greater Manchester and the image was quite shocking. No-one had expected there to be as many food banks, especially so many independent food banks.

Not surprisingly over the past two years, the number of food providers has grown from 136 to the current level of 203 despite the closure of some food banks through lack of funds or stock. Last year, with the increasing number of food clubs and pantries, and providers of hot meals – currently 63 – we decided to differentiate them from food banks. Some of the pantry-style providers are already working at their maximum capacity but in order to portray an accurate picture of the desperate need that exists across the city region we have agreed to show them on the map, with their situation clearly stated in the profile.

Are there any that we still don't know about? Please get in touch if we have missed any off the map by [emailing us](#) with the following details: name, address including postcode, any evidence or membership requirements (eg foodbank voucher), opening hours, contact details and website address.



The map is available [here](#)

*We were recently contacted by Stephen Pennells from the Jubilee Debt Campaign and we invited him to write for the newsletter to tell us more.*

### Ending the Great British Debt Trap

By Stephen Pennells, Jubilee Debt Campaign, Manchester

There are many causes of household poverty but one of them is the debt trap that faces people who don't have the 'Bank of Mum and Dad' or savings to fall back on and find themselves forced to borrow at the most expensive rates when a crisis occurs. This leads to another crisis. Decent and dependable work, credit unions, and responsible debt counselling are needed, but so also are structural changes.

Although Wonga is in administration, they still take payments, while others eagerly pick up their business. Moreover, regulation of credit cards, overdrafts, doorstep lending, rent-to-own and other businesses remains light, both in terms of interest rates and conditions.

People who can't shop around may pay considerably more for goods when they buy from BrightHouse or are lured by the perceived prospect of savings, into opening interest-charging accounts with high street stores.

Jubilee Debt Campaign, campaigning with others in the 'End the Debt Trap Campaign', demands an end to predatory and exploitative lending, a write-off of personal debt due to irresponsible lending and deep structural economic injustice, and changes in economic policy so that people don't need to rely on borrowing to make ends meet.

Several Manchester councillors and local MPs (Andrew Gwynne, Mike Kane, Afzal Khan and Jeff Smith) have supported the campaign, as has the Dean of Manchester.

We're calling on the Chancellor to end rip-off lending by capping interest rates and charges for loans, credit cards, overdrafts, rent-to-own and doorstep lending; and set out how the government plans to help families who are stuck in the debt trap.

JDC is a small NGO with a dedicated but overworked staff in London. To change mindsets and break the chains of domestic debt snaring over 18% of Greater Mancunians, the campaign needs you not only to sign, but also to take it to family and friends, workmates, union and party meetings, religious congregations and community centers. You can join on our [website](#)

Politicians and leaders need to be encouraged to raise their voices and reminded to keep on doing so. JDC will gladly provide materials such as cards and petition forms or help with this and can be contacted by [email](#) or on 0207 324 4722.



Dean Rogers Govender

## Forthcoming events

### From poverty to prosperity for all - a one day conference

On Tuesday April 2nd, 2019 from 10am - 4pm at Mechanics Institute (entrance off Major Street), 103 Princess Street Manchester M1 6DD - **This event is fully booked but you can add your name to a waiting list for places [here](#) if you wish**

The Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit (IGAU) and GMPA are hosting a joint conference exploring what more we can do to tackle poverty at local- and city-region level, with a particular focus on Greater Manchester. This timely conference will bring together people with expertise in economic development, skills, public service reform, procurement, social housing, welfare and debt advice services, crisis and family support services as well as those with experience of poverty to share ideas and learn from practical initiatives that have been trialled elsewhere. The day will end with a panel discussion to identify the next steps we can take to tackle poverty in Greater Manchester.

The conference builds on the [local poverty strategies](#) event GMPA held at Kellogg's in October 2018 .



### Greater Manchester Law Centre manifesto launch

On April 11th, 2019 from 6 - 8pm at Thompsons Solicitors, 55 King Street, Manchester, M2 4LQ



Access to legal advice, representation and justice can empower people, reduce homelessness and poverty, challenge the hostile environment against claimants and migrants, enforce people's rights and prevent inequality and exclusion.



Maxine Peake

The manifesto will set out their demands for change, declare what they stand for, celebrate their work so far and call on others to fight with them for free access to justice. With Richard Burgon MP Shadow Justice Secretary and GMLC Patrons Maxine Peake and Robert Lizar

Get your £5 ticket [here](#)

### Co-Creating Public Services with stories of Lived Experience

Thursday June 6th 2019 from 9.45am - 4.30pm at The Engine Room, People's History Museum, New Court Street, Manchester M3 3ER

The stories that people choose to tell about their own experience are of increasing importance in decision-making processes and are key to creating new ideas, ways of doing things and ultimately bringing about social change. With concepts such as 'co-design', 'co-production' and 'co-creation' becoming increasingly more popular, it is vital to explore what they mean and how they bring about – or not – the inclusion of a wider diversity of people's voices into decision-making realms.

[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 please [get in touch](#)

For more information please contact us by [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.



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.