

Prosperity for all? Getting poverty onto the agenda in discussions of city-region policy

By Ceri Hughes, IGAU, University of Manchester



Discussion of what we can do to tackle poverty has largely disappeared from the national policy agenda but it continues to affect people across Greater Manchester. How can the city-region respond to the challenge?

At last month's conference – From Poverty to Prosperity for All (organised jointly by GMPA, IGAU and JRF) – we brought together over 90 people from Greater Manchester and beyond to explore what could be done to improve the lives of the estimated 620,000 people in poverty across the city-region. Could we make reducing poverty central to discussions about both economic and social policies? What could this achieve? And what would have to change to achieve this?

A broader “anti-poverty” strategy

Moving from ‘grow now, redistribute later’ to a more ‘inclusive economy’ approach could help to address poverty, as we explore in the Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit's [new paper](#). Inclusive growth policies have the potential to reduce or prevent poverty by targeting some of the poverty risk factors – including by improving job security, tackling low pay, or prioritising investment in quality foundational services. This is significant given that the majority of people in poverty are of working-age: for many in this group, jobs – getting and keeping one, getting a better one, balancing work with other commitments and good health – are likely to be a concern.

But we cannot assume that these kinds of policies *will* have an impact on people in poverty. Re-designing jobs in the social care and retail sectors, or introducing a [good employment charter](#) for businesses across Greater Manchester could benefit people in poverty, but those links are not straightforward and need to be forged from the outset. This partly comes down to a question of policy design: are initiatives explicitly aiming to engage and benefit people from a range of backgrounds, including those on lower incomes? Have policymakers (and employers, voluntary sector organisations etc) thought about the barriers that people might face? These aren't new questions, but they remain a weak spot in design. Tackling poverty may not always be a priority but we need to know when it is, and why other things might take precedence for a while.

Bringing poverty into view at city-region level

How could we raise the profile of poverty at city-region level and build stronger links between areas? There is already a lot going on in local communities across the region. Several local authorities still conduct analysis of the causes and nature of poverty, and have maintained and updated [child and family poverty strategies](#). But poverty also needs to be considered at city-region level, where key policies are increasingly being discussed.

Currently, none of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's leaders are responsible for tackling poverty, and there are no explicit targets to reduce poverty. GMPA's [Food Poverty Alliance](#) recently called for a poverty lead to be appointed to the Combined Authority, as well as in each of the ten councils. Assessing the impact that policies could have on low income residents could also be made a routine part of the policy development and scrutiny process at local and city-region level. These are just a few of the ideas discussed at the conference and shared again here in the hope that they will lead to further conversations and action in coming months.



Ceri Hughes

Recruiting a new Campaign Coordinator

Our Campaign Coordinator Vicky Egerton, who was working for the campaign part-time, has started a full-time job so has had to step back from the Living Wage Campaign role. We want to thank Vicky for her work on the campaign, particularly last year's Living Wage Week when she secured an important meeting with the Co-operative Group, and the development of a strategy for engaging local authorities.



We are therefore recruiting a new part-time coordinator. Please share [this vacancy](#) with anyone who you think might be interested.

This is a crucial time for the campaign. GMCA's work in other areas, such as on food poverty, is opening new doors to talk about a raft of anti-poverty measures with major local employers, including the Real Living Wage, so the new role will be more integrated into our wider anti-poverty work than ever before. There is scope to build up the campaign group and empower activists to go out and advocate for the Real Living Wage in their own places and organisations. We also want to start planning events and actions for an inspiring and impactful Living Wage Week.



The role is 2 days/week for the next six months, with a possible extension, or even development into a full-time role if the project is broadened out to focus on a wider range of good employment issues, and we want the Coordinator to work with us to explore those possibilities.

The deadline for applications is 10am on Friday May 24th, 2019, and interviews will take place on Monday June 3rd and the morning of Tuesday June 4th.

Please read the [job description](#), [download the application form](#), consider applying, and share this exciting opportunity through your networks.



[Giving World](#) partners with companies to redirect end-of-line and discounted stock to those in need in the UK. Charities, community groups and not-for-profit organisations can register and request items for their beneficiaries. Whilst all goods are free, delivery costs will be charged.

We have been asked to share the following article in order to reach our readers working in Lancashire:

Lancashire County Council Welfare Service Review

You are invited to take part in a Welfare Rights Service consultation to understand how the proposal outlined below may impact on your organisation and the people your service supports.

The proposal: to reduce access to the provision of welfare benefit advice and guidance services. This would mean that the service would focus on advising and assisting in legal challenges against benefit decisions, including representation at Appeal Tribunals within the limited resources available. As a consequence it is unlikely that they would continue to advise and assist vulnerable customers under pension age, encourage older people to make the most of their income or provide urgent advice and support for referrals from health professionals.

About the service: The service currently supports approximately 6,000 people a year with their benefit issues, and last year obtained £7.8 million in benefits for its customers. Of this, approximately £4.5 million came from work involving legal challenges and representing at Appeal Tribunals, approximately £800,000 came from advice to vulnerable people of working age and the remaining £2.5 million was from the advice and take-up work with older people. More information is available via the consultation web page.

What you can do now: LCC are asking the public, staff and other county council services that use the service, and partner organisations to give their views by completing an [online questionnaire](#). You can ring 01772 531712 or [email](#) if you wish to receive a printed version. Please reply to the online consultation by Sunday June 9th 2019.



GMPA Training courses 2019

Understanding Poverty Data Thursday June 5th (Full day): This course is for organisations and individuals who wish to strengthen the case for their work by presenting accurate and relevant data about poverty to funders, supporters and policy makers. It is suitable for researcher, third, public and private sector organisations. The multitude of data and reports about poverty that

“A complex and in-depth subject was covered in an interesting and informative manner”

“Great work, learnt loads”

are out there can make accessing the right data difficult. The contentious nature of poverty makes it particularly important to understand how poverty is measured and which figures are the most appropriate to use. Participants will develop an understanding of what key poverty datasets tell us, how best to access data sources and how to use this knowledge to support the work that they do. [Book here](#)

Exploring the Poverty Premium Wednesday September 11th (Half day): Low income consumers in the UK face several disadvantages in the marketplace – known as the poverty premium. This course supports service providers, businesses and policy-makers to identify changes in policy and practice that can help mitigate the impact of the poverty premium, minimising the risk of debt and financial hardship among people on low incomes.

Risk of poverty among different groups Wednesday November 6th (Half day): This course looks at trends in poverty in the UK among different groups. It is designed for organisations seeking to strengthen the case for existing projects or develop new projects aimed at tackling and preventing poverty and will also be of interest to researchers and policymakers seeking to develop a better understanding of poverty in the UK.

Further information and booking forms for all these courses are available on our [website](#)

We have discounted rates for students, third/VCSE sector and public sector attendees. All courses take place at Church House on Deansgate in the city centre, just a short walk from Manchester Victoria and from Exchange Square Metrolink station.

Forthcoming events

Discussion and implications: recent evaluation of the Welsh prevention legislation (Housing Act 2014)

Tuesday May 14th 2019 from 12.00 - 3.00pm at Salford City Council, Council Chambers, Civic Centre, Chorley Road, M27 5AW
Please RSVP by [email](#) by Tuesday 7th May 2019

The Housing Act (Wales) 2014 – implemented in April 2015 - introduced a number of changes in the way that homelessness is addressed in Wales. The University of Salford led by Professor Anya Ahmed, undertook an evaluation of the processes and impacts of the Act, the purpose of which was to understand how the Act has been implemented by organisations involved in supporting people at risk of homelessness (local authorities, housing associations and third sector organisations) and also, to gather evidence to inform the Welsh Government’s understanding of the impact of the Act on people who are homeless/at risk of homelessness. The final report was published in July 2018 and a series of recommendations were subsequently made to the Welsh Government.

You are invited to come to hear key findings from the study including:

- Lessons learned from Wales
- Challenges to implementing the Act
- Recommendations for successful future implementation

The hope is that this will inform a discussion among stakeholders regarding the implications for their organisations in delivering the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Launch of the Decent Work and Productivity Research Centre, Manchester Metropolitan University

Friday May 17th, 2019 from 11.30am at MMU Business School, Lecture Theatre G.33, All Saints Campus, Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6BH

You are invited to the launch of the Decent Work and Productivity Research Centre with guest keynotes from Mayor Andy Burnham and Professor Damian Grimshaw (International Labour Organisation).



Decent Work and Productivity at Manchester Metropolitan University is a new University Centre of Research and Knowledge Exchange dedicated to bringing together leading researchers in the field of employment.

This launch event will be an opportunity to debate contemporary challenges in the world of work, find out about their research, and help shape their future research agenda.

[More information and to book](#)

More forthcoming events

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](#)

Peer Support and Solidarity in Manchester

Wednesday June 12th, from 12.30 - 3.30pm at the International Anthony Burgess Foundation, Engine House Chorlton Mill, 3 Cambridge Street, Manchester M1 5BY

No matter what community you are part of or working with, there are disabled people who are part of it. The event aims to provide an opportunity for people to exchange ideas and strategies around empowering individuals and local communities through fostering peer support, linking communities and building solidarity.

This event is aimed at third sector organisations and service providers in the Manchester City Region. Book your place [here](#)

Low pay, earnings mobility and policy

Wednesday July 3rd, 2019 from 4pm at MMU Business School, Room 3.08 All Saints Campus, Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6BH
Speaker: Dr Paul Sissons, Coventry University

Drawing on recently funded research Paul will discuss patterns of low pay and wage progression in the UK, and examine the factors influencing these. How patterns of mobility differ across low-paid sectors, and the relationship between low pay and in-work poverty will also be discussed. He will then consider the opportunities and constraints around developing policy and practice to support better in-work progression, as well as relating this to wider concerns about 'good work'.

This free event is part of the Centre for Decent Work and Productivity's seminar series, Manchester Metropolitan University.

[More information and book](#)

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

Salford VCSE Conference

Thursday May 23rd, 2019 from 9am - 4.30pm at AJ Bell Stadium, Stadium Way, Eccles M30 7WH



"Radical Roots to Practical Action"

Speakers include:

Kathy Evans, CEO, Children England
Nathan Yeowell, Head of Policy, NPC
Peter Holbrook, CEO, Social Enterprise UK

You need to select one workshop from the morning session and one workshop from the afternoon session when you book your place. There will also be an interactive 'social showcase' running at the conference.

[More information and to book](#)

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.