

A society divided by poverty

By Ivan Lewis MP

The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated recently,

“I reject the idea that there are vast numbers of people facing dire poverty in this country. I don’t accept the UN rapporteur’s report at all. I think that’s a nonsense. Look around you; that’s not what we see in this country.”

In the context of poverty, we sadly do not live in one society, one nation or even one city region, we are deeply divided. A society where the world of work and social networks increasingly means people on different levels of income have little or no contact. This is socially regressive.

One of the great virtues of the best Children’s Centres are that they bring together parents of all social classes. This is mutually beneficial for the children but also for adult relationships and community cohesion. However, the cuts to early years provision and the absence of a meaningful child poverty strategy undermine any efforts to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty which blights too many families.

The impact of austerity has fallen disproportionately on the poorest and most vulnerable in our society. Women, ethnic minorities, children, single parents, asylum seekers and people with disabilities have suffered the most.

Since 2010, the Government has made more than £30 billion in cuts to welfare, housing and social payments. Social and living standards have not improved and for too many have worsened since the global economic crash of 2008.

Every day we see the impact of the breakdown of much of our social fabric in the form of people sleeping rough on our streets. It is hard to celebrate the growth exemplified by the cranes in the skies of our major cities when down below too many people are huddled in doorways and under archways seeking shelter and sanctuary.

The Child Poverty Action Group has stated that an additional 300,000 children will be living in poverty by the time universal credit has been fully implemented in 2023-2024. The two-child policy is not compatible with our national commitment towards children. We owe a duty of care to all children, not just the first two, to enable families to foster healthy environments in which they can flourish.

Our social security system is intended to function as a safety net to support and assist people through situations such as low-pay, sickness, long term disability and unemployment. Instead, too often it has become a source of despair and misery with the most vulnerable in society beholden to the seemingly arbitrary rules which dictate how much universal credit one is entitled to.

A new Prime Minister will rightly be expected to resolve the Brexit stalemate. But alongside this, he or she must recognise the economic and social imperative to reduce levels of poverty which help to fuel (division) in our fractured society. The stark division in our country between Remainers and Leavers is corrosive. But so are levels of poverty which consign too many of our fellow citizens to poor life chances and a poor quality of life. It is a human tragedy for those trapped in this cycle of despair, but it is also undermining our economy in a world where human capital is at a premium.

This is in our country, all around us, and it isn’t right.



Ivan Lewis MP

Thousands of women and children miss out on healthy food scheme in 2018

Press release issued by [Sustain](#), the alliance for better food and farming

Charities and health groups have warned Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock that low-income women and children in over 130,000 households are missing out on £28.6m of free fruit, vegetables and milk due to poor promotion of the Healthy Start voucher scheme. Of this, £4 million would have gone to families in the North West, a huge blow to the budgets of those who need it most.

The coalition of 26 charities and health bodies includes Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, the Royal Society for Public Health, Royal College of Midwives and the Trussell Trust. They called on the Government to boost promotion of the Healthy Start voucher scheme, which can be worth up to £900 per child over the first four years of life.

The vouchers adds at least £3.10 to a family shop per child each week and over the first four years of a child's life this is equivalent to 1,090 pints of milk, 1,100 apples, 218kg of carrots and 143kg of peas.



Kath Dalmeny, Chief Executive, Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, said "The Government is missing a trick. This money has been set aside to support low income and young families, but the Healthy Start voucher scheme for fruit, vegetables and milk is not being properly managed or promoted. Over 4 million children are living in households who sometimes run out of money for essentials such as food – these vouchers can help keep good food on the table."

Shirley Cramer, CBE, Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Public Health, said "Having access to nutritious food required for healthy development is a right of every child. We know that healthy food is three times more expensive than unhealthy food; the scheme can help those at the greatest disadvantage in the most deprived areas."

However in 2018, pregnant women and children missed out on an estimated £28.6 million worth of vouchers in England and Wales, representing a missed opportunity by government to help families afford to feed their young families and also to encourage healthy eating habits that could have lifelong benefits.

An open letter calls on the Government to fund a programme to ensure that midwives, health visitors, GPs and other relevant staff in health, social care and early years settings actively help all eligible pregnant women and new parents claim their Healthy Start vouchers. They suggest that this programme could be funded from the estimated £28.6 million of Healthy Start vouchers that went unclaimed last year.

The letter also asks the Government to confirm the date for a consultation on Healthy Start, which was committed to by the Department of Health and Social Care last June in Chapter 2 of Childhood Obesity: a plan for action.

The Sustain food and farming alliance, which coordinated the open letter, is also encouraging people to [write to their MP about Healthy Start](#) to make sure all children have access to fresh fruit and vegetables for a healthy start in life.



Average take-up of the vouchers in England and Wales was only 64% in 2018, or approximately 135,000 households missing out, with no government funds dedicated to supporting local health service providers to promote the scheme. [A map of current take-up](#) rates in England and Wales is publicly available and updated monthly by the Department of Health.

The [Greater Manchester Food Poverty Action Plan](#), which we launched in March, calls for concerted action to provide food with activities for children and young people during school holidays. Manchester Holiday Buzz is a great example of this, involving businesses, charities, the council and housing associations.



Manchester Holiday Buzz Playscheme Fund 2019-2020



Young Manchester is passionate about giving children and young people the opportunity to play. We know that financially disadvantaged children can experience hunger in the holidays and a holiday experience gap. Open access playschemes are one way for children to make new friends, stay active and access healthy food during the school holidays. Playschemes offer supervised play during school holidays. Most schemes are free of charge, but some may ask for a small donation eg 50p per session.

Funding is available for the delivery of open access holiday playschemes for children and young people aged 5 – 14 years. Closing date for applications: **5pm Friday June 14th 2019**. This is for voluntary and community sector organisations working with children and young people and education providers partnering with the VCSE sector. Organisations must be based in Manchester and/or mainly working with Manchester residents



For more information, the fund prospectus, application guidance and an application form please go to the [website](#)

In March Kellogg's pledged to support the Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance in several ways, including increased their support for breakfast clubs across the city region. Now they have published a report showing the scale of hunger in the classroom, and committed more resources across the country. This is part of an expansion of their corporate responsibility work and impact, [Kellogg's Better Days](#), which seeks to address the interconnected issues of food security, climate and wellbeing.

One in nine children missing six hours of learning each week through hunger in the classroom

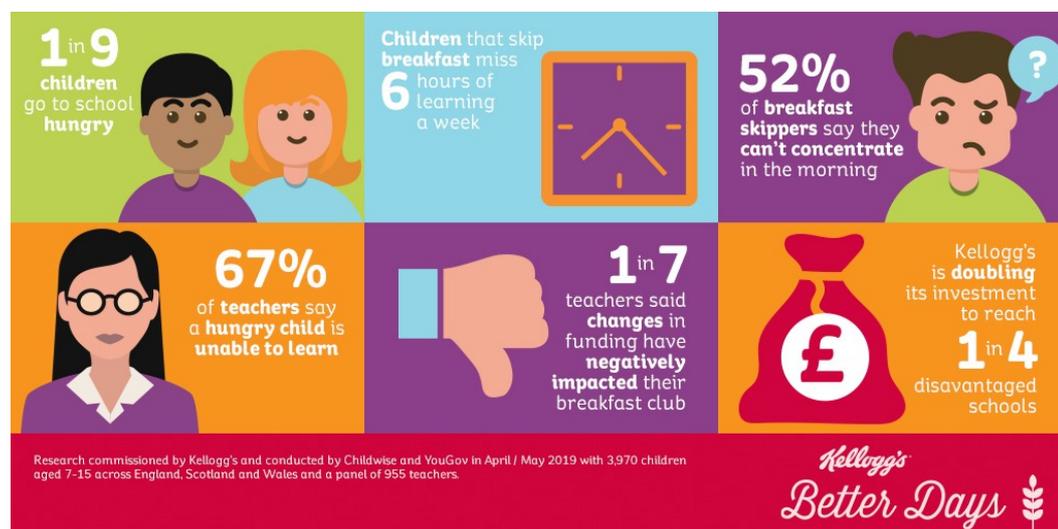
One in nine children goes to school with an empty tummy and the effect of this is a loss of education.

Research by Kellogg's, with 4,000 children and 950 teachers suggests that the impact of hunger in the classroom is huge with children losing six hours of learning each week. if they arrive at school hungry. That's the equivalent of three weeks of learning time each term.

A fifth of teachers say that a hungry child takes up too much of their time and two thirds (67%) claim they are unable to learn. Children agree it impacts their education with half of breakfast skippers saying they can't concentrate in the morning.

Older children are even more likely to start the day without anything to eat, with one in six secondary schoolchildren not having breakfast and girls are the worst culprits for skipping breakfast before school, especially in high schools with nearly a fifth not eating in the morning.

For those children at schools in areas of high deprivation a third said they noticed a child at their school was hungry and gave them some of their food to eat.



But, one in seven teachers warn that recent changes in school funding have negatively impacted their breakfast club provision. It's important these clubs continue to run as the benefit of them is proven with a third of teachers saying that pupils who attend a breakfast club are keen and ready to learn.

Peter Cansell, National Association Primary Education said: "It's shocking that in 2019 there are still nearly 800,000 children starting the school day on an empty tummy. This is leading to a shortfall in critical learning time.

"This research even shows that those children that eat breakfast are happier, probably because they have the energy and enthusiasm to enjoy the school day. The benefits of pre-school clubs are proven, they ensure that children go into the classroom with the ability to concentrate."

For those that are eating in the morning there has been an increase in older children having their breakfast on the go, grabbing it on the way to school and more children are eating continental breakfast foods with twice as many starting the day with pancakes and croissants.

Today, Kellogg's – a long standing supporter of Breakfast Clubs - announced it is doubling the number of grants it offers school breakfast clubs to support one in four schools in the poorest parts of the UK.

Oli Morton, Kellogg's managing director said: "We believe every child should have the best start to their day and our latest study shows the importance of a good breakfast and that too many children are still going to school without the vital fuel that they need to help them learn".

"This shows that the work that we and our partners carry out, as part of our Breakfast Club programme, is as important as ever. That's why today we will be doubling our commitment to breakfast clubs in 2019 to reach the most vulnerable parts of the country as they play a vital role in giving a child the best start to their day."

Schools can apply to join the Kellogg's Breakfast Club network by emailing breakfastclubuk@kellogg.com

GM Good Employment Charter - Making employment work for everyone

by Ian MacArthur, Business Growth Hub

For many people, modern work isn't working. Record high employment figures conceal major deficiencies in the quality of work people are doing.

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.

The 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 and third sector organisations 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, representative organisations and other key stakeholders to develop a Good Employment Charter.

Through two consultations and a broader co-design process involving GMCVO and others, including GMPA, we've developed a list of seven employment characteristics which define good employment:

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

Taking the Charter forward into implementation we want to support employers 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 organisational performance alike. The Charter has been developed with 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.

The 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.

The Charter Supporters' Network will be launched in July and employers from across the private, public and community and voluntary sectors will be able to sign up then and access a number of resources and networks to help drive up employment standards. Also in July, a representative pilot group of employers from across Greater Manchester will work with the Charter Implementation Unit (hosted by the Growth Company), on developing membership standards appropriate for employers of various sizes across all sectors. Third sector employers who would like more information on the Charter or would like to take part in the pilot process should contact [Ian MacArthur](#)

VCSE representatives required - Greater Manchester Inclusion and Wellbeing Partnership



The voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership are collaborating to establish the GM Inclusion and Wellbeing Partnership.

The GM Inclusion and Wellbeing Partnership's main role is to encourage and champion equality, diversity and inclusion through engagement across GM and within localities. Representatives should have professional and/or lived experience of equality and inclusion to be able to contribute to an annual work plan that aims to address health and social inequality across Greater Manchester. Individuals must also be willing and able to take up the appointment to the GM Inclusion and Wellbeing Partnership for an initial period of two years with attendance of bi-monthly meetings.

Interested individuals can obtain further information about the role via the supporting documents via [this link](#). If you have any further queries or if you would like to be considered for this role please complete the Expression of Interest form and return to [Audrey Okyere-Fosu](#), GM VCSE Equalities Co-ordinator via **by 5pm on Friday 21 June 2019**.

New service puts debt support at your fingertips

introducing the North West Hardship Hub

Debt advisors across the North West are being encouraged to register for a new online resource putting hundreds of support schemes at their fingertips.

'The North West Hardship Hub' brings together financial assistance schemes from across the public and private sector to help the money advice community quickly and easily pinpoint the right support for people who are struggling with their household bills.

Supported by regional water company United Utilities and developed in conjunction with the money advice community, the Hub now contains information on more than 500 schemes from 300 organisations covering sectors such as electricity, gas, telecoms, water, local authorities and housing associations.

Jane Haymes, affordability manager at United Utilities said: "The idea behind the Hardship Hub came about after we organised an affordability conference in Liverpool back in 2018. Debt advisors who attended the conference said what they really needed was a facility to help them quickly find debt support schemes from all the different providers across the North West without having to trawl all the different companies' websites.

"A year later, with the support of the debt advisor community, the Hardship Hub was launched and it's been a great success. The site now contains information on hundreds of schemes and is continuing to grow."

Once registered, debt advisors can easily search to find what schemes are available in postcode areas so their clients get the support they need.

Said Jane: "The Hub has made it incredibly easy for debt advisors to find the right schemes for their clients. What's really useful about the site is that the advisors can rate each scheme so that the providers can see whether their scheme is delivering the support it should be. I'd encourage all debt advisors from the North West to give it a go."

Registration for the Hardship Hub is free, visit the [website](#).



Engagement Officer - Food For Life Get Togethers

Fixed term 2 years, from August 2019. 37.5 hours per week home based

URGENT! Closing date June 14th, 2019

Are you passionate about positively changing people's lives through the power of good food? Food For Life Get Togethers is a 4 year, UK-wide programme which will connect different generations through cooking, growing and sharing food. The programme aims to bring people of all ages together to improve their physical and mental wellbeing, tackle ageism and build new connections that strengthens communities.

As an Engagement Officer for Food For Life Get Togethers, you will be responsible for promoting the programme by engaging and inspiring settings, groups and organisations to participate by phone, online and face to face. You will provide practical support to settings to deliver cross generational food activities and assist in all aspects of programme delivery. The programme will take place in schools, early years, care and community settings. [More information](#)

Congratulations!

The [Asda Fight Hunger Create Change programme](#), in partnership with FareShare and the Trussell Trust, won the Consortium Award at the Business Charity Awards. The award celebrates an outstanding partnership between one or more companies and one or more UK charities. The three-year, £20m partnership with the Trussell Trust and FareShare was launched last year and aims to help one million people in crisis access nutritious food and support services.

Lindsay Boswell, CEO of FareShare, said: "We understand the important role nutritious food plays not only in fighting hunger but also in connecting communities – with meals often acting as a gateway for vulnerable people to access other vital services which can ultimately help lift them out of poverty. And now, thanks to the partnership and Asda's support, we are reaching thousands more people in need across the UK."

Emma Revie, CEO of the Trussell Trust, said: "No one should need a food bank's help in the UK. Working together means we can tackle the root causes of poverty through research and campaigning for long-term change, while also ensuring food banks can offer as much support as possible until we reach a future where that help isn't needed."



Forthcoming events

Sanctions, Support & Service Leavers: Social security benefits and transitions from military to civilian life

Tuesday June 18th, 2019 from 12.30 - 2.30pm at the House of Lords, London

This event presents the findings of a two-year ground-breaking project funded by the Forces in Mind Trust and represents the first substantive research focusing specifically on veterans' experiences of navigating the social security benefits system, providing unique insights into how people are experiencing the system during a period of significant welfare reform and includes presentations by the University of Salford and the University of York research team, followed by a panel response.

This event is free to attend, but [registration is essential](#) as access to the House of Lords is by invitation only. If you have any questions about the event or the project please contact [Professor Lisa Scullion](#)

A Mental Health Charter for Manchester

Wednesday June 19th, 2019 from 12.45 - 3.30pm at Harpurhey Neighbourhood Project, Upper Conran St, Harpurhey, Manchester M9 5UX

Enabling service-users and carers to have their say about mental health services in Manchester. Promoting the value of a Charter and looking at how it can benefit everyone who wants to live in a fair and equitable society. [More info and book](#)

Reducing Re-offending Rates

Wednesday, June 26, 2019 from 3.00pm until 7pm at the Manchester Renaissance, Blackfriars Street, Manchester M3 2EQ

Employing or working with prison leavers can be a challenge. There are risks. However, ANTZ has identified those risks and they provide guidance and governance to deal with them.

What's working?: Various companies already working with ANTZ employ prison leavers or work hard to support people in or out of prison in other ways. They are making a difference and it's measurable. ANTZ can show % reductions in re-offending rates and real impact in changing people's lives – both for employers and employees. This is an opportunity to find out all the information you need about working with or employing prison leavers. Alongside the speakers will be a panel of experts with diverse and real-life experience in this area. They will share their insights and as it is an open forum they will also answer your questions.

Food and refreshments will be provided and there will be the opportunity to network with like-minded people. [More information and book](#)

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

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](#)

How to make a just food future: alternative foodways for a changing world

July 8th - 10th, 2019 at the University of Sheffield

Sponsored by the Sheffield Food Futures Research Centre and the RGS-IBG Food Geographies Working Group, this conference brings academics, practitioners, food thinkers and policy makers together to consider contemporary approaches to addressing current food issues. We are very pleased to announce Professor Julian Agyeman, from Tufts University as our keynote speaker, plus Gary Stott (Incredible Edible) Barbara Benish, and Tom Skinner, Dr Charlie Spring and Dr Rebecca St. Clair from Greater Manchester, with more to be announced soon.

Conference registration is **FREE** but places are limited to 100 delegates. If you would like attend please register via our [Eventbrite](#) page.

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

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](#)

NB GMPA does not have full-time dedicated administrative support so please do not expect an immediate response.



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