

2020 training dates for GMPA's network

We are pleased to be launching our 2020 training course programme, with discounted rates for people who book prior to November 1st, 2019. We are delighted to be offering an expanded series of dates and topics for 2020, with our Understanding poverty measurement, definitions and data course taking place in Oldham and Wigan for the first time. Bookings can be made by visiting the training page of the [GMPA website](#).

A new course – *Maximising support for people on low incomes* – has been developed. This course is for VCSE and public sector organisations who work with people experiencing poverty and who wish to understand how to maximise support for their service users and those involved in service design and delivery. It will also be of interest to researchers seeking to understand current social security provision.

The *Maximising support for people on low incomes* course will be held in central Manchester and run on the following dates.

- Thursday January 30th, 2020 (only 4 places remaining)
- Friday February 28th, 2020
- Tuesday April 28th, 2020
- Thursday October 8th, 2020

Bookings for this course can be made [here](#).

The popular *Understanding poverty measurement, definitions and data* course will be held on the following dates:

- Thursday February 6th, 2020 (Oldham)
- Thursday March 12th, 2020 (Manchester city centre)
- Wednesday November 18th, 2020 (Wigan)

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 and decision makers. By the end of this one-day course participants will have developed 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](#) to secure your place.

We will also be delivering our half-day *Exploring the Poverty Premium* course on:

- Wednesday March 18th, 2020

Course attendees will be able to better understand the poverty premium, the way it affects customers, clients and consumers and how they can amend and 'poverty proof' their practices. Bookings for this course can be made [here](#).



The aim of all of our training is to respond to the needs of our network and to generate income for GMPA. The training is delivered through Policy North Training. Policy North Training has been established to increase the amount of training offered by GMPA in Greater Manchester in 2020. Beyond 2020, Policy North Training will look to deliver training courses in other parts of the country to help increase the amount of revenue raised to support GMPA's activities.

For full details of all our course, including downloadable course overviews, please visit the [training page of our website](#).

Thank you for your ongoing interest and support.

Graham Whitham
GMPA Director

How to end food poverty – national action is needed

by Tom Skinner



As regular readers of this newsletter will know, GMPA coordinates the Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance, and launched the [Food Poverty Action Plan for Greater Manchester](#) earlier this year. The Action Plan describes how we should work together (and in many cases, already are working together) at the local level to help address food poverty.

The Plan recognises that many of the levers to reduce poverty, such as the welfare system, minimum wages, pensions, and funding for public health, are held by central government. We need wholehearted and strategic support at the national level for ending food insecurity, by addressing the underlying causes of poverty as well as improving access to good food.

We were therefore pleased to have the chance to submit evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Food, Poverty, Health and the Environment.

We shared insights from across the Alliance, academics and people experiencing poverty, and pointed to a great deal of good practice being carried out by councils and other organisations across Greater Manchester. On the role of the UK Government we said,

“Things need to change. Wages and benefits haven’t kept up with living costs while essential public services have been cut, so hard-stretched communities are picking up the pieces with responses that are well-intentioned and vital, but inadequate. The burden of mitigating food insecurity is falling on the wrong sector, with food banks struggling to retain volunteers (many of whom are older), and unable to meet the overwhelming need of so many people in their communities. While efforts are made in some cases to offer “wrap-around support” such as debt and welfare advice alongside food provision, these efforts are undermined by cuts to those (and other) services. At a time when the Government should take responsibility for ensuring a right to food, it has stepped back and left the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to take on an impossible task.”

We called on the Government to enshrine a right to food in UK law by embedding the Sustainable Development Goal "zero hunger by 2030" into domestic legislation, and appointing a minister responsible for meeting this goal. We also listed a number of other actions that could be taken at the national level, including:

- Raising the minimum wage to the Real Living Wage for all workers over 18. In the interim, or if this is not possible for all sectors/employers, full support should be given to the Real Living Wage as a voluntary scheme for employers to sign up to, while ending exploitative practices associated with zero hours contracts.
- Ensuring that the welfare system, including pensions, provides enough for people and families to live on. The system should engage with claimants to understand their needs and build support around them. Reinstate ringfenced and increased budgets for [Local Welfare Assistance Schemes](#) for when people fall through the gaps in the welfare system.
- Involving people experiencing poverty, and the public, VCSE and private sectors in an "exit strategy" for over-reliance on food banks
- Increasing levels of social and affordable housing.
- Requiring local authorities to [have poverty strategies in place](#) (co-produced with people experiencing poverty, the VCSE sector and other partners), and to appoint lead members who will take responsibility for the implementation of these strategies.
- Action to address food deserts and the [poverty premium](#)
- More support and emphasis on the Healthy Start scheme, targets for each area to increase uptake.
- Measuring food insecurity at the national and local level



You can see the [full submission here](#) and comment [here](#) by signing up to the Greater Manchester Food Forum – we would welcome your feedback as we continue to learn together.

Tom Skinner
GMPA Director

*You may have noticed the new Food Poverty Alliance logo – we hope you like it!
The Food Poverty Alliance is a Greater Manchester Poverty Action project*

Working conditions in Manchester's textile manufacturing sector

by Lucy Brill



In 2017, the international women workers' organisation, Homeworkers' Worldwide (HWW), more used to mapping the garment industry in countries as far away as India, Chile and China, completed a scoping study on working conditions within the textile and garment manufacturing sector within Greater Manchester (GM). Our report is available on the HWW website [here](#).

Our outreach project contacted over sixty local organisations, collating anecdotal information about workers in the sector, which eventually led to interviews with two retailers, six manufacturers and five workers. We also built up a database of information about over a hundred companies within GM.

Initial interviews found evidence that confirmed that the low wage rates (around £4/hour) and double accounting systems found by Professor Hammer in Leicester in 2015 were also present in some factories in Greater Manchester:

'They give us payslips but they only show 16 hours/week, at £7.50/hour, whereas in fact we're doing many more hours than that .. usually we do 30 hours/week... and we're paid around £500/month.'

Small manufacturers also highlighted the challenges they faced, due to large retailers' unfair purchasing practices, which included driving down prices to levels where it was impossible for them to pay their workers properly and leaving invoices unpaid for several months at a time.

'In Bangladesh or China you have to pay 30% in advance, and then pay everything to release the goods ... whereas here the law is so weak, they all expect 60 or 90 day terms ..'

'the retailers are very dishonest .. they're all billionaires, yet they won't pay invoices for months ..'

'E-tailer (name withheld) .. is really hard to work with, constantly driving down the prices ..'

This was intended to be an initial study, that we hoped would lead to a larger action research project. Unfortunately we were not able to extend the scoping study so it is not possible to say how prevalent these issues are within the UK industry.

The report highlights the importance of further research to enable workers voices to be heard in the debate to improve working conditions within UK manufacturing, and concludes with some provisional policy recommendations.

These include the importance of accessible employment rights advice backed up by effective enforcement services that operate independently of immigration controls, to support workers who take action to claim those rights. Large retailers particularly those who value the flexibility and fast turnaround that local manufacturers can provide, need to recognise their responsibilities, and support their much smaller UK based suppliers to provide decent working conditions for workers making and packing their clothes now, and also to invest in a sustainable future for the UK industry.

Small suppliers need retailers to help them manage the risks involved in the fashion business, so they do not pass these onto their workers. Employers highlighted issues such as prompt payment terms, as well as larger or more consistent orders, which would reduce their overheads and enable them to improve working conditions within their factories. National government should also consider introducing joint liability for the most serious labour rights abuses, to hold the often much larger retailers accountable for working conditions in their supply chains



HWW would be very keen to collaborate with others to find ways to extend this work, as was originally planned when we started on the work in 2017. Please contact [Lucy Brill](#) if you have any proposals to take this forward.

Lucy Brill
Homeworkers Worldwide Co-ordinator

News from the Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign



The Living Wage Foundation [published an important report](#) this week. The report is by a coalition of businesses, trade unions, civil society organisations and international charities outlining how a global expansion of the Living Wage could help to deliver a range of UN Sustainable Development Goals including those to end poverty and hunger, improve health and wellbeing, expand quality education, deliver gender equality, provide clean water and sanitation, ensure good work and reduce inequalities. You may also have seen the announcement on September 30th by the Chancellor Sajid Javid pledging to raise the Government's 'National Living Wage' to £10.50 per hour within 5 years. There was a quick [response to this announcement](#) from Katherine Chapman the Director of The Living Wage Foundation.



[John Hacking](#)

GM Living Wage
Campaign Coordinator

Meanwhile there is lots of work being done to prepare for Living Wage Week which runs from November 11– 17th, 2019. One event already in the diary is on November 13th. This is a joint event between us and the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter. Other activities and events involving the GM Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector in supporting and promoting the real Living Wage are being discussed as we write.

A reminder that the next GM Living Wage Campaign meeting is on October 23rd from 2pm at Church House, 90 Deansgate, Manchester M3 2GH and you can book [here](#) to attend. In addition to sharing information via this newsletter we have a separate mailing list for the GM Living Wage Campaign. Please [contact me](#) if you would like to be added to this list.

Shining a light on suicide

Suicide is the leading cause of death in men under 50. More men die of suicide in the UK than heart disease, cancer, heart attack or road traffic accidents. In 2016 almost 6,000 people in the UK died of suicide.



The Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership includes a GM Suicide Prevention Implementation Group who understand that economic factors such as poverty can increase the risk of suicide. Their Shining a light on suicide [website](#) provides information for those feeling suicidal, for those bereaved by suicide, about the organisations that are there to help, there is also a free 20 minute Save a Life training programme which shows you what **you** could do to help someone contemplating suicide and there are stories from some who have shared their personal experience of suicide.

“to nurture the necessary conditions for more people to flourish, enhancing individual well-being, reducing mental ill-health and building community resilience to support those in acute need”



Please don't forget that there is still time to donate any unwanted kitchen and gardening items for homeless prevention hostels and communities across the city. Apex Storage has donated space in 4 locations across Greater Manchester (Cheadle, Ardwick, Radcliffe and near Sport City) to store donated items. Full address and drop off instructions [here](#). Please contact [Tracey](#) at Cracking Good Food to arrange delivery. #GMFoodPovertyAlliance

Forthcoming events

End Hunger UK - Week of Action October 11th - 18th, 2019



End Hunger UK are launching their campaign – a challenge to all parties to set out an action plan for ending hunger in the UK on World Food Day, Wednesday 16th October 2019. You can help to raise awareness of the new campaign by taking part in a simple photo stunt. Just get a group of people together, spell out ACT NOW TO END UK HUNGER in front of a local landmark and get the photo on social media! More information, support and materials available [here](#)



More forthcoming events

Thrive Trafford VCSE Sector Strategic Engagement Event 'Developing a Trafford Poverty Strategy'

Wednesday October 16th, 2019 from 12.45 - 3pm at Flixton House, Flixton Road, Urmston M41 5GJ

Trafford Council are developing a Poverty Strategy for Trafford and would like to engage with local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations working directly with residents living in poverty to help co-produce a Poverty Strategy for Trafford that meets local needs. [More information and book your place](#)



Feeding Regions - Turning plans into action

Wednesday October 23rd, 2019 from 9.30am - 5pm at the People's History Museum, New Court Street, Manchester M3 3ER

A one-day free conference that will consider ways to achieve better and more sustainable regional food systems. Organised by Manchester Metropolitan University and Oldham Council, the conference marks the end of phase one of the Food Chains 4EU project and will build upon recent developments in Greater Manchester, including becoming a signatory to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP). The emphasis for the day will be on sharing experiences and considering how plans can be translated into action. The day will include keynote speakers and workshops. [More information and booking](#)

GM Homelessness Action Network (GMHAN) - Preventing Homelessness

Thursday October 24th, 2019 from 10am - 1pm at Maxwell Hall, Salford University, 43 Crescent, Salford M5 4WT

We are gathering as a GM wide cross-sector network to look at what is already being done in Local Authorities around prevention, and what might be useful to include in a Greater Manchester plan around Homelessness Prevention. We will also share some updates, and have brief showcases from inspiring projects around GM. We want to see more people who have experienced homelessness at the event, so if you run a service please try to invite people that use your service to attend. Places are limited, so we ask you to select no more than 2 people from your organisation. Further info and registration [here](#).

Increasing cross sector understanding of our great VCSE workforce

Thursday October 24th, 2019, 10am-12pm or 1pm-3pm at Macc, Swan Buildings, 20 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JW).

The GM VCSE Reference Group and GM Health and Social Care Partnership are seeking to increase cross sector understanding of our VCSE workforce. Macc and Connected Consultants are working in partnership to try to engage with as many VCSE leaders as possible to explore workforce development, HR challenges and recommendations for VCSEs, public sector, or commissioners. You are invited to participate in a focus group to examine these topics in an informal environment facilitated by an external partner. Email [Bethany](#) with your name, job role, organisation and preferred focus group timing.

Manchester BME Network and Greater Manchester BME Network Joint Networking event

Friday November 1st, 2019 from 9.30am at St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester M12 6FZ

More information about the event, about membership and to book is available [here](#)

From Exploitation to Hope? A discussion on casualised working

Wednesday November 6th, from 6-8pm at Ziferblat Edge Street, 23 Edge Street, Manchester M4 1HW

Do you identify as someone who is insecure or exploited in the labour market? This free interactive workshop is a chance for young people (age 18 to 30), to discuss your experiences with peers, learn about employment rights and explore your personal expectations and aspirations. [More information and book](#)

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.



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.