

Living Wage Week

Monday November 11th - Sunday November 17th, 2019

By John Hacking, Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign Co-ordinator



[Living Wage Week](#) is almost upon us and the Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign will be busy delivering, supporting and promoting a range of events and activities about the benefits and importance of paying the Real Living Wage. These are some of the activities that you can get involved with, but for up to the minute information during Living Wage Week [visit our Facebook Page](#) or [follow us on Twitter](#).



SUPPORTERS' NETWORK EVENT
Real Living Wage | November 13th



Wednesday November 13th, 2019 from 8.30 - 10am: the Campaign will be holding a joint event with the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter. The event is aimed at GM employers who are interested in the Charter and finding out more about the Living Wage and will be held in Salford Museum and I will be speaking along with local accredited Living Wage Employer, Anchor Removals, and the Living Wage Foundation. The event is for employers in GM and if you want to come along then please [book a place here](#).

Wednesday November 13th, 2019 from 2 - 3.30pm: The Campaign is delighted to be partnering with another accredited Living Wage Employer, Boo Consulting, to deliver an exciting Living Wage Week event in Bolton later that day. I will be speaking again and any employer in Bolton can come along and find out more about the Living Wage. [Book a place at this event here](#).

Other events and actions: On Monday November 11th from 8:30 – 10:00am in Salford the Living Wage Foundation will announce the new Living Wage rate for 2019/20, and to celebrate Salford achieving its 'Making Salford a Living Wage City' status. The GM Living Wage Campaign is a sponsor of Salford's Living Wage City application and will be attending the event on Monday at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, One New Bailey, 4 Stanley Street, Salford, M3 5JL. The event is being delivered in partnership by Salford's Social Value Alliance and the Living Wage Foundation. As well as a keynote speech from Rebecca Long-Bailey MP for Salford and Eccles and Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, there will also be contributions from local political, business and civil society leaders including Paul Dennett, Mayor of Salford. There will also be testimony from local employees who have benefited from the Living Wage. [Book your place here](#).

The Campaign is also working with accredited Living Wage Employer IKEA at their Ashton-under-Lyne branch to organise an in-store promotion to celebrate their continuing commitment as a Living Wage Employer. More detail on this will be on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.

The Campaign is still working with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors on other events and activities during Living Wage Week. We are in close contact with GM Citizens and will be working with them to ensure maximum coverage for the message about the Living Wage throughout Greater Manchester. If you want any more information about Living Wage Week or the GM Living Wage Campaign then do [send me an email](#). We hope to see you in Living Wage Week.



John Hacking,
Greater Manchester Living Wage
Campaign Co-ordinator

Universal Credit and In-Work Conditionality – the employers view

by Katy Jones, Centre for Decent Work and Productivity, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School

Universal Credit – the new working age benefit for people who are unemployed or on a low income – potentially involves the introduction of “in-work conditionality” (IWC), placing responsibilities on individual claimants to increase their earnings (e.g. through increasing their hours/earnings in their current place of work or by taking up additional or alternative jobs elsewhere). These expectations may be backed up by support (e.g. through advice from Jobcentre staff), but also by benefit sanctions if individuals do not comply with mandatory work-related requirements.

Whilst additional support for low-income workers is welcome, the extension of IWC (and sanctions) to those in work is controversial. Research focusing on claimant experiences has raised questions about the extent to which IWC results in meaningful in-work progression, and has uncovered the counterproductive consequences of a sanctions-based approach focused on requirements to apply for a high volume of jobs. Furthermore, employers are key to outcomes arising from such policies, but they have been largely absent from policy discussions. Our project ([briefing note](#) and [full report](#)), supported by PIN, begins to fill this gap, through consulting with 12 businesses operating in Greater Manchester.



The employers sampled offered a range of roles and contract types – some offered mainly full-time positions, others offered mainly part-time roles but required staff to take on additional work as required, some employed staff on zero hours contracts. Regarding expectations for employees to progress within their firm, employers said that this was something they would consider, however that the capacity for this varied, and weak consumer demand could make offering more hours difficult. Ultimately, their ‘bottom line’ would have more sway over expectations placed on staff, and there was widespread reluctance to increase wages due to perception that this would impact negatively on profits. Furthermore, employing staff on a part-time, flexible basis was central to existing business models:

“We wouldn’t want to have every single person on a full-time contract. We’d still need some flexibility to fluctuate with the demands of business levels” (Employer 11, hotel)

Employers felt that the impact of IWC would depend on a range of factors including business needs, worker responses, and the approach taken (i.e. whether a supportive/sanctions-based approach, and the nature of support). There was a concern that IWC may be a hindrance to workforce flexibility and that it might adversely impact on staff motivation and well-being:

“[It’s] simple, happy team, happy guests...If we have a team who’s burdened with all these headaches, then of course that’s going to impact on our quality, productivity” (Employer 5, hotel)

Employers also felt IWC could increase recruitment costs for businesses – not only due to increased turnover, but also if more applications were made by others subject to it. Interviewees complained about the high costs associated with dealing with a high volume of applications, which they felt in part resulted from the existing emphasis of Jobcentres on requiring jobseekers to focus on the quantity, rather the quality of applications and job fit.

In addition, some employers felt that policymakers should focus more on employer practices, rather than solely on claimants. Supporting employers to be better businesses was felt to be more likely to have a positive impact on both individual progression opportunities and firm performance:

“It would be probably more beneficial for the government to help employers become better employers, and to make the workplace a more positive environment than it is to push employees to get more jobs” (Employer 10, soft play centre)

Our project has highlighted a number of important issues which policymakers should consider as their ‘in-work offer’ is developed. Importantly, a ‘work first, then work more’ approach, focused on placing conditions on individual workers fails to consider long-standing issues of poor work quality and management practices, and appears to be at odds with the nature of the UK labour market, and broader policy agendas focused on improving productivity and work quality.



Katy Jones

More information about the [Centre for Decent Work and Productivity](#)

Inclusive Economy case study: SharpFutures

GMPA has been working on behalf of the GM VCSE Leadership Group to develop tools that help promote the voluntary and community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector's role in the Greater Manchester economy. As part of this project, we are publishing a series of case studies highlighting organisations delivering social value and operating alternative and ethical business models. This is the fifth case study. Further information, a short film and all of the case studies are available on our [website](#)

 **SharpFutures** SharpFutures supports diverse young people into employment in the creative digital and tech sectors.

SharpFutures is a community interest company and social enterprise, incorporated in 2012.

By offering a range of services, including facilitation of apprenticeships, work experience and volunteering, SharpFutures nurtures transition into work while responding to the fluctuating needs of creative digital businesses. It provides bespoke educational packages that include tours, workshops, expert talks and events to schools throughout Greater Manchester. Its work experience, experience days and tours give young people the chance to find out more about the creative digital sector while learning new skills.

SharpFutures' [POD \(people on demand\)](#) programme provides a unique support service for creative digital businesses, while helping to identify and bring new talent in the sector. Made up of apprentices, graduates and job seekers with entry level skills in production running, social media, admin and marketing support, POD fulfils a valuable function in providing flexible support to fledgling and fast-growing businesses in the sector. Clients include the BBC, ITV, Cisco, Pro Motion, Manchester City Council, and many independents.



SharpFutures delivers PR, marketing, graphic and digital design, social media, and event runners support services to businesses, such as The Sharp Project and Space Studios.

In its first five years, SharpFutures created: £693,000 in economic value in Manchester; £2.4 million in social value; a social return of 8:1; and £378,000 in cost-savings to the public purse. Engaging with over 5,000 young people from 119 schools, colleges, academies and youth groups across Greater Manchester, DISCOVER activity generated social value worth £1,845,883. The total social value generated through POD and apprenticeships was £587,204, with total savings to the public purse of £306,824. SharpFutures has supported 20 young people to do 30 apprenticeships, with 100% of completers moving into employment (40% female). 65% of apprentices were previously not in education, employment or training, long-term unemployed or in low-paid and unskilled employment.

In the next five years, SharpFutures aims to focus on its strengths to ensure that it is a significant player in the inclusive economy. This means growing from its Greater Manchester base and scaling to other geographical areas. The single most difficult barrier to overcome is access to finance.

SharpFutures makes things work effectively by ensuring anyone from any educational or employment/unemployment status is able to access and participate in the benefits of working on the [POD \(people on demand\)](#) programme.

[Further details](#)

**GREATER MANCHESTER
VCSE LEADERSHIP GROUP**
the sector's voice in Devolution

Everyone should experience a little joy at Christmas, but for many it can be a sad time. Loneliness, bereavement, family breakdown or just having too little money to celebrate are some of the reasons. So with the help and support of many individuals and agencies, this project is able to provide hampers to many who are struggling. The hampers contain everything that an individual or family needs to put on a traditional Christmas spread – right down to mince pies and Christmas crackers!

How it works:

Each Autumn Urban Outreach touch base with all those who have previously supported the project. They ask schools, churches, businesses and other groups to consider making a pledge to collect specific items used to make up the hampers.

We also depend upon the generosity of many individuals and organisations who donate the money we need to purchase fresh items for the hampers. This includes fruit and vegetables – not forgetting the chicken!

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, agencies workers are invited to nominate **Bolton** individuals and families to receive a hamper. Then just before distribution day our volunteers get stuck into preparing the hampers.

It all gets very hectic as they finalise preparations and get all the hampers delivered in time. None of this would be possible without the support of many agency workers who call to collect and deliver hampers to the doorstep of those they have nominated. It's hard work – but very rewarding for all concerned.

The appreciation shown by hamper recipients can be overwhelming!

"When we arrived to collect the parcels, seeing all the volunteers restored my faith in society. I went out delivering the parcels and the response was inspiring. All four families were overwhelmed with your kindness and couldn't thank us enough for delivering the parcels."

Each year the project has benefited from many sources of support which has ensured that they have been able to cover most of our direct costs. They are grateful to all of these including Bolton Council, Bolton at Home, Seddon construction, churches and businesses across Bolton and many individual donors. If you are able to supply items or funding for the hampers or want to know more please [get in touch](#).

**Urban Outreach would like to thank everyone
for their continuing support!**

**Forthcoming events****TOMORROW: Keeping Warm in the Outer Hebrides: Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency**

Thursday November 7th, 2019 from 2 - 4pm at The University of Salford Peel Park Campus, Salford M6 6PU

Part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science 2019. Special guests Anne Ryan and Martha MacLeod from Tighean Innse Gall (TIG) will lead a seminar in which they share insights from their work health, fuel poverty and energy efficiency with rural householders in the Outer Hebrides. They will describe and reflect upon the Glusad Comhla Project, which is applying a social prescribing model to energy efficiency, helping people whose health is compromised by living in cold or hard to heat homes. The project began in March 2018, and GPs have, for the first time, a route for referral to expertise within TIG and to treat this in the same way that they make a referral directly from their computer to a hospital consultant. [More info and book](#)

SHUSU**Sustainable Housing &
Urban Studies Unit**

Tameside: Cook and Eat

From November 13th, 2019

The Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance, which GMPA coordinates, has been calling for more nutrition and cooking skills training, for organisations and residents across the city region, to help improve people's diets which can be especially difficult for those on low incomes. The Children's Nutrition Team in Tameside is offering free training for people working and volunteering in Tameside - "Cook and Eat, Train the Trainer" weekly from 13th November, and "Level 2 Food and Nutrition Training for Children and Young People and Level 2" weekly from 14th November. [More information](#)



More forthcoming events

The Manchester Sleepout

Friday November 8th, 2019 kindly hosted again by Manchester Cathedral

Each year [the Booth Centre](#) invites people to take on the challenge of sleeping out for one night to highlight some of the hardships that people have to face every night. They are working to end homelessness, in all its forms. Join them in their mission. Sleep out once, so that others don't have to. [More information, FAQs and registration is now open.](#)



Greater Manchester Law Centre – Turned away, 'gateway' or gatekeeping in homelessness services

Monday November 18th, 2019 10am - 1.30pm 669 Stockport Road, Longsight M12 4QE



Greater Manchester Law Centre is pleased to host Garden Court Chambers and Greater Manchester Housing Action for a discussion of the "D v Essex" case and the particular issues surrounding youth homelessness. [More info and book](#)

Food Collection

November 21st - 23rd, 2019

For three pre-Christmas days each year, Tesco hosts a nationwide drive to encourage customers to buy an extra item or two of food when they shop in store and donate it at a collection point on their way out. The food donated is used to support people who are struggling to put food on the table. You can volunteer to help out at your local collection or simply shop at Tesco over those three days and drop a few items into the collection. Tesco tops up customer food donations, by making a financial contribution equivalent to 20% of the value of the food collected. Find out more or offer to help [here](#)



GREATER MANCHESTER
POVERTY ACTION



Understanding poverty measurement, definitions and data

Thursday February 6th, 2020 from 9.30am - 3.45pm at the Honeywell Centre, Oldham, OL8 3BP

Debates about whether poverty exists in the UK and how to define and measure it have raged for decades. A multitude of data is available that helps quantify poverty, but that wealth of data can make finding the most useful and best supporting evidence difficult. 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. [More information and book.](#)

Maximising support for people on low incomes in the austerity era

Friday February 28th, 2020 from 9.30am - 3.45pm at Church House, 90 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2GH.

This course will explore how to access and identify support for people on low incomes in the context of social security reforms and cuts. This course is for VCSE organisations who work with people experiencing poverty and who wish to understand how to maximise support for their service users and public sector professionals involved in service design and delivery. It will also be of interest to researchers seeking to understand the current social security landscape. [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.