

## Latest JRF report shows the scale of the poverty problem

By Graham Whitham



*UK Poverty 2019/20* is the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's annual landmark [report](#) on levels of poverty in the UK. It highlights the growing problem of in-work poverty, with over half of working age adults and three in ten children in poverty living in a household where at least one person is in work. The report shows that disabled people, single parents and people living in certain parts of the country are at greater risk of poverty.

In the UK, 14 million people are living below the poverty line. Whilst progress was made in reducing poverty among certain groups (single parent families, children and pensioners) in the noughties, the JRF argue that progress is now beginning to unravel. Even poverty among pensioners, a group who've largely been protected from social security cuts, is starting to go up.

The report identifies the following policy solutions to help address poverty across the country:

- "We need as many people as possible to be in good jobs. While the proportion of people in employment has risen consistently for six years, weak local economies in some parts of the country have led to higher unemployment, underemployment and more low pay than in the UK as a whole. This needs to change, with prospects for people in struggling places needing to be prioritised, or progress will stall. In addition, employment among disabled people and carers is still low, and they should be supported to work when they can."
- "We need to improve earnings for low-income working families, helping people in the lowest-paid jobs or working part-time. Too many people are stuck in low-paid, insecure jobs, with little chance of progression and too few hours of work to reach a decent living standard. Workers need more security, better training and opportunities to progress, particularly in part-time jobs. In-work poverty must be seen as a critical issue for our economy and given high priority by economic policy-makers."
- "We need to strengthen the benefits system so that it provides the anchor that people need in tough times. The current system needs to be improved to ensure it gives adequate support. We also need the system to offer a better service for people using it, and to shift public thinking so that a poverty-fighting social security system is seen as an essential public service and receives sustainable investment."
- "We need to increase the amount of low-cost housing available for families on low incomes and increase support for people with high housing costs. We also need to address the sense of insecurity felt by many people living in the private rented sector."

In Greater Manchester, as in other parts of England, we may feel we have limited powers to address poverty. However, the [Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign](#) (hosted by GMPA), the [Mayor's Good Employment Charter](#) and public sector commissioning that places a strong emphasis on social value can help improve the quality of work in the city region. We can begin to think more imaginatively and be more ambitious in the way we use what powers we do have over the benefits system. This means strengthening Council Tax Support and [local welfare assistance schemes](#), and calling for the devolution of more parts of the social security system where that allows us to do more to address poverty locally. Whilst the JRF report doesn't acknowledge the role of localities in addressing poverty, we at GMPA know there is no shortage of opportunities for stakeholders in Greater Manchester to address poverty if we're given the power and resources to do so.



Graham Whitham  
Director, GM Poverty Action

## Vacancy: Tameside Poverty Truth Commission Facilitator

GMPA is taking the lead on establishing a Poverty Truth Commission in Tameside, and I am delighted to say that we are now ready to recruit the first facilitator to support the process.

[Poverty Truth Commissions](#) (PTCs) create a space to meaningfully bring together people with different experiences, knowledge, and power: Within this space, people who have had experience of living in poverty come together with senior civic, political and business leaders on an equal footing. They have the power to create positive change around poverty and inequality. Around 15 PTCs have been successfully run across the country including one in Salford which was completed in 2018. One is underway in Manchester, and others in Salford, Oldham and Trafford are just getting started as we are in Tameside – each have different organisations taking a lead, and we have offered support to each of them.

The term of this contract is for the start-up stage of the Commission: this facilitator will be the first of a team of three, with the others to join the team when the necessary funding is secured. The role of this facilitator in the first year will be to recruit commissioners, facilitate meetings in preparation for the launch of the Commission, and seek sufficient funds to complete the team and launch the Commission.



The deadline for applications is 10am on Friday February 28th, 2020 – please find more information, including how to apply, [here](#).

I look forward to hearing from many within GMPA's network who would like to be considered for this role.

Tom Skinner,  
Director, GM Poverty Action

## Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign



Our first 2020 Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign (GMLWC) meeting was held on February 5th. The meeting was well attended with people from a wide range of organisations including a housing provider, local authority, voluntary organisations including GM Citizens UK, private businesses, a trade union, and faith groups. There were many ideas discussed about campaign priorities and activities to promote the Real Living Wage in GM and improve the lives of some of the city region's lowest paid workers.

GMLWC will be supporting an event in May organised by the Living Wage Foundation and GM Citizens UK. Local campaigners are encouraged to attend the event to find out more about the emerging Living Hours Campaign. The Living Hours Workshop will be held on May 12th, 2020 from 2pm-4pm at The Mechanics Institute in Manchester and will be a chance to find out more about the campaign for job security as well as fair pay. Details about registering for the event will be in future newsletters but if you want to know more now please contact me on the details below.

GMLWC has been a longstanding supporter of the development of Salford as a Living Wage City. As part of the ongoing programme of actions in Salford UNISON will be launching their campaign to get Salford's care workers up to the real Living Wage. The launch is on February 15th, 2020 at 11am at The Gilda Brook Social Club in Eccles (34 Wellington Road, Eccles, M30 0NP). All are welcome to attend. For more details [contact Steven North](#), Branch Secretary, Salford City UNISON.



[John Hacking](#),  
Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign Co-ordinator  
Follow the campaign on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

*The Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign  
is a Greater Manchester Poverty Action project*

## Train and Tram - changes to the concessionary travel pass

Do you know someone who travels on Metrolink or by rail using a pension-age concessionary travel pass from Transport for Greater Manchester? As from February 1st, 2020 bus travel will still be free off-peak, but to continue using Metrolink and rail, customers will need to add tram and train to their pass for an annual charge of £10. This will give them access to unlimited off-peak travel in Greater Manchester. Disabled concessionary passes are not affected. [More information or to add train and tram to your TfGM concessionary travel pass](#)



## More financial support is needed for young adults struggling with debt

By Colin Gallagher, United Utilities

Financial management is an ongoing challenge for most people, but worryingly, far too few under 25s are seeking advice when they fall into debt, a new survey has revealed.

This is the feedback United Utilities heard from the money advice community across the region who attended its Affordability Summit at St George's Hall in Liverpool.

The event - opened by Joe Anderson, Mayor of Liverpool - attracted debt advice charities, food banks, Credit Unions, Housing Associations and financial services to look at what more can be done to help young adults who are struggling with their finances, as well as continuing to support other people who are struggling with their bills.

Louise Beardmore, customer services and people director at United Utilities, said: "The survey showed that many young people are starting to build up debts soon after they turn 18 and very few seek expert advice on how to manage debt and borrowing.

"We're currently helping more than 100,000 customers through our financial support schemes and since the last summit in January 2019 we have helped 13,000 people out of debt with their water charges but like others we want to do more. This includes having the right support for those under-25, building up debt now and worrying about money in their first few years of adult life."



Iona Bain

Iona Bain, an independent financial writer, speaker, broadcaster and founder of the award-winning Young Money Blog also attended the event to emphasise how organisations could better target and engage young people on money management. She said: "Today, young people are thinking much more about their relationship with money. I have seen an explosion of financial apps, websites and books aimed at my generation since I started my blog 8 years ago. But as well as creating confusion, these resources do not always have younger people's interests at heart, nor do they really solve the huge problem of financial inclusion.

"Responsible educators need to find a way to cut through the noise and offer balanced, independent and trustworthy advice so we can help those facing a financial crossroads. It's by no means a given that young people who are starting work or higher education have to sink into intractable debt or start missing crucial bills."

Louise added: "This is the third Affordability event we have organised. From our point of view, if customers, whatever age, are struggling with water bills, they are likely to be struggling to pay most of their household bills. It can be difficult for a single organisation to make a widespread difference and we believe that a collaborative regional partnership can go way beyond what any one organisation could do alone. We can learn from each other and look for other opportunities."

Information on all the financial assistance which United Utilities can provide with water bills can be found [here](#).

If you provide debt advice to people struggling with their household bills, please [register for the Hardship Hub](#). The Hub contains information on more than 500 support schemes provided by 300 organisations.



## Food and Nutrition for Children and Young People

Free Distance Learning Course

Flexible learning at your own pace. Suitable for any staff or volunteers working with children, young people and families within Tameside. The training is run by the Children's Nutrition Team, Tameside and Glossop NHS Integrated Care Trust.

The training covers the importance of healthy lifestyles, food and nutrients, pre-birth and beyond, pre-school children, oral health, school children, teenagers, special diets, family friendly meals and food hygiene

For more information and to register for a place, please contact the Children's Nutrition Team on 0161 366 3900/2351 or [email](#)

**NHS**  
Tameside and Glossop  
Integrated Care  
NHS Foundation Trust



## Launch of policy toolkit: poverty and inequality reduction policies

Irene Bucelli, Abigail McKnight and Kate Summers

A new online policy toolkit provides a systematic, wide-ranging and accessible assessment of a variety of policies with a potential 'double dividend': policies that could lead to reductions in both poverty and inequality.

The selection of policies has been informed by a larger research programme, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which has explored the relationship between inequalities and poverty. This research not only identified a positive empirical relationship between



poverty and inequality it also reviewed evidence on potential mechanisms that might drive this relationship. To find out more about the statistical relationship and the mechanisms you can read the [Overview Report](#), or download the working papers from the [project page](#). The policy toolkit can be accessed [online](#) or a pdf can be accessed [here](#).

### Who is it for?

The toolkit has been designed to be a useful aid to anyone interested in policies which reduce poverty and inequality and in particular policies with the potential to have a 'double dividend'. It has been created with a wide audience in mind, including practitioners, policy-makers, academics and students.

### What will it tell me?

The toolkit presents policy options, not recommendations. It analyses policies in terms of their relationship to poverty and inequality, public and political support, type and level of intervention, evidence of effectiveness and cost to government

### How do I use it?

The policies presented in this toolkit are organised in relation to the mechanisms identified in this project as well as by policy area and type of intervention. In total seven mechanisms were identified:

- Political economy and public awareness;
- Resource constraints;
- Spatial disparities;
- Housing;
- Life-cycle and intergenerational mechanisms;
- Crime and the legal system;
- Labour market mechanisms.

Each section of the toolkit examines a selection of policies in relation to drivers within each mechanism. Overall assessments are presented in short summary tables which also provide access to the more detailed information behind each summary.

On the first page of this newsletter you can also read about JRF's *UK Poverty 2019/20* report and a series of suggested policy solutions to help address poverty across the country.

## Trafford Housing Trust: North West Foundation Job opportunities

Following its recent acquisition by L&Q, Trafford Housing Trust (THT) is establishing a new £4m per year North West Foundation as part of its 'profit for purpose' business model, building on the success of the existing L&Q Foundation. The aim of the Foundation is develop and fund social interventions that improve people's chances in life and create opportunities in our communities. As a result they have announced new roles including:



**Apprenticeship & Talent Advisor:** to manage THT's apprenticeship and graduate programmes, work experience placements, and colleague professional and technical qualifications; making best use of the Apprenticeship Levy. [More information and to apply.](#)

**Social Innovation Officer:** to take responsibility for identifying and developing new projects which address needs and service provision gaps within the Trust's communities across the North West. Demonstrating impact against the Foundation's key strategic objectives, the Social Innovation Officer will research best practice and develop innovative project proposals for consideration by the Foundation Management team. Once projects are approved, the Social Innovation Officer will commission services and manage the delivery of the projects. [More information and to apply](#)

[More information about Trafford Housing Trust.](#)

## Forthcoming events

### Greater Manchester and Manchester BME Network Joint Networking Event

Friday February 14th, 2020 from 9.30am - 2pm at St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester, M12 6FZ

Including speakers from across Greater Manchester and the Department for Education, setting a local and national picture with regard to apprenticeships, as well as hearing from apprentices themselves on why they chose this path. Also discussions within the Network on the best way forward to close the ethnicity gap in GM's apprentice population.

Please note there is a new system for managing GMBME Network events. [More information and to register](#)

### Why do Oxbridge graduates dominate UK politics?

Decent Work and Productivity Research Centre at MMU  
Wednesday February 19th, 2020 from 2 - 3.30pm at MMU Business School Room 3.01 All Saints Manchester M15 6BH

Stephen Taylor, Senior Lecturer in Human Resource Management at the University of Exeter will share insights from his study that looks at the people who occupied the more senior political offices in the UK between 1964 and 2015. As is the case today, a good majority of these people were Oxbridge graduates. [More information and booking](#)

### Homelessness Faith Sector Summit

Thursday March 12th, 2020 from 11am - 3pm at the Methodist Central Hall, Oldham Street, Manchester, M1 1JQ

Manchester has the highest number of children living in emergency and temporary accommodation. At the last meeting of the GM Homelessness Action Network (GMHAN), Shared Health presented their preliminary findings. The Faith Sector are invited, in conjunction with colleagues from GMHAN, for another Homelessness Faith Sector Summit to hear more information about family homelessness in GM and to consider how we all might contribute to the response. [More information](#)



### Manchester Voluntary Sector Assembly

Save the date: Monday March 30th, 2020 More information and a link to register your interest in the event will be available soon. Delegates will be discussing social prescribing and writing a manifesto on behalf of the Manchester VCSE sector



### 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.](#)

### Understanding poverty measurement, definitions and data

Thursday March 12th, 2020 from 9.30am - 3.45pm at Church House, 90 Deansgate, Manchester M3 2GH

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 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.](#)

There is also another course 'Exploring the Poverty Premium' on March 18th, 2020 and further dates for the two courses detailed above. Details of all courses can be found on the [training page](#) of our website.

### 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.