

Could you support GMPA to continue the fight against poverty?

Greater Manchester Poverty Action relies on financial support from our [Principal Partners](#) and through funding for project work, such as our work on food poverty and the GM Living Wage Campaign.

With a lot of VCSE sector resource now being redeployed to directly address the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, funding opportunities for organisations undertaking strategic policy and influencing work are likely to be limited in the short term. This has already had an impact on GMPA's funding position, and we are using the frontpage of today's newsletter to call for organisations and individuals to support us financially so that we can continue the fight against poverty.

The economic impact of the lockdown is likely to be felt most by those places already experiencing poverty, and more households across the city region will be facing financial insecurity over the coming months. As with all economic shocks, the effects of this current crisis will be felt for years. Addressing this will require a renewed effort and focus on tackling poverty, not just by the government in Westminster but by local decision makers across Greater Manchester.

That's why we believe the work of GMPA has never been more important. It is vital that we are able to continue supporting stakeholders to tackle poverty, whether its supporting local authorities to develop effective anti-poverty strategies, networking food banks and food clubs or identifying good practice that can be replicated across the whole of the Greater Manchester. We can only continue with this work by growing our [Principal Partner](#) and [Supporter](#) schemes.



PRINCIPAL PARTNER 2020



WE SUPPORT GMPA 2020

Our **Principal Partners Scheme** involves larger financial pledges of support. If this is something you would like to discuss further, please [contact us](#) . Principal Partners join the GMPA Advisory Group alongside people with lived experience of poverty. Organisations who sign up as Principal Partners will be listed on our website and will be sent a "Greater Manchester Poverty Action Principal Partner" image for use in their own publicity.

Our **Supporters Scheme** involves smaller donations and you can sign up by completing [this form](#). Organisations who sign up as supporters will be listed on our website, and will be sent a "Greater Manchester Poverty Action Supporter" image for use in their own publicity.

Graham Whitham
Director, GMPA

Principal Partner: Oxfam

"Tackling poverty and inequality, wherever we find it, is the central mission of Oxfam, including in the UK, so we are very pleased to support the work of GMPA as a lead and convener, working in partnership to challenge policy and practice and make Greater Manchester a fairer place for all, placing the views and experiences of people in poverty at it's heart"

Supporting coordination of food provision during COVID-19

By Tom Skinner

I represent GMPA on the GM Food Response Core Team, taking the lead (with [10GM](#)) on understanding VCSE sector food providers' response to COVID-19, and helping them and local authorities to work together more closely and effectively. GMPA ran a survey of VCSE food providers at the start of the lockdown, [providing valuable intelligence](#) to shape each borough's response systems. At the start of this month I wrote a [paper for the Humanitarian Assistance Group](#) recommending actions to support VCSE food providers during the COVID-19 crisis, including:

1. Assuring a robust supply of food;
2. Helping to provide access to facilities for storing and distributing chilled and frozen food;
3. Funding and in-kind resource to maintain and expand activities;
4. Additional volunteer capacity;
5. Reliable health and safety guidelines and measures;
6. Coordination between public services and VCSE food providers.

Half of these recommendations have already been agreed for action, and the others set aside for more detailed discussions in the Food Leads meetings.

I have also been connecting VCSE food providers with local authorities and offers of support such as food, volunteering and equipment.

This role is essential in helping Greater Manchester to make use of the food that is on offer to people in need of support, and I am pleased that our work coordinating the GM Food Poverty Alliance has put us in a position to do this.



However there is much more to be done here, including facilitating meaningful open conversations about the desired long-term set-up, how to tackle the underlying causes of food poverty, and the sustainable roles of local government, VCSE sector food providers, and other stakeholders including people who have experience of food poverty (the 7th recommendation in my paper). I am therefore delighted to be able to share a job opportunity for a Food Poverty Coordinator (see below) who will join GMPA's team and work with me to help Greater Manchester develop an effective response to food poverty, now and in the long-term.

Tom Skinner
Director, Greater Manchester Poverty Action

The Core Team, established last month, includes representatives from the NHS, GM Combined Authority, 10GM, Food Sync, One Manchester and others. Its role is to support the boroughs' food provision activities, providing intelligence and helping them to learn from each other (and the VCSE sector), and to join up and share resources. It brings Local Authority Food Leads and VCSE infrastructure organisations together in a weekly Food Leads meeting, which feeds into Greater Manchester's Humanitarian Assistance Group.

Recruiting a Food Poverty Coordinator

Following the launch of the [Greater Manchester Food Poverty Action Plan](#) last year, we have the opportunity to shape Greater Manchester's food poverty response.

GMPA is looking to recruit a confident and dynamic coordinator to help implement the Action Plan. The Coordinator will initially support coordination of the COVID-19 food provision and will also work with a longer-term perspective towards our vision of a joined-up system aimed at preventing food poverty.

The deadline for applications is 5pm on Thursday May 21st, 2020 and interviews will take place online on June 2nd and 3rd, 2020.

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



Low income families need more support from the government

By Graham Whitham

At a time of great uncertainty for households up and down the country, GMPA has been supporting calls for the government to do more to protect families from poverty. This includes adding our support to calls from national charities, and through campaigns like the End Child Poverty and End Hunger UK.

A number of announcements over the last month or so will be helping some people. The government's furlough scheme and increase in support through Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit will help. The government has provided extra funding to councils to meet increased demand for support with paying council tax. April also sees the end of the benefits freeze, with benefits uprated by 1.7%.

Although welcome, these measures are unlikely to be enough to stop the pandemic pushing many households into financial hardship, either in the short or long-term. There are additional measures GMPA would like to see, and we will be adding our voice to national campaigns calling for changes which will include:

- Substantially increasing Child Benefit. This is the quickest and most efficient means of getting extra money into the pockets of families;
- Ending the two-child limit that restricts benefit payments to the first two children in the household;
- Scrapping the benefit cap that limits the total amount of support a household can receive through the benefit system; and
- Providing extra funding towards council's local welfare assistance schemes so that they can meet the extra demand for support over the coming weeks and months.

Sow the City webinar

Next Friday April 24th, 2020 from 10am - 10.45am, Sow the City are running a webinar about their food poverty mapping work. You can sign up [here](#).



They have recently mapped the South Manchester area for food deserts (areas without access to fresh fruit and veg within 10 mins walk) and also food swamps (areas with large numbers of takeaways).

John Ross, Sow the City Director, will present their initial findings and talk about some of the work that Sow the City is doing to tackle food poverty (eg through their Growing Manchester programme). The webinar will be in a presentation format with opportunities to ask questions at the end.

Please note the maps have **not** been developed in response to Covid 19 but they could be useful as we start to develop longer term interventions and plans to mitigate secondary impacts.



Families can now apply for Healthy Start food vouchers without a health professional's signature on the form, as was previously required.

These new regulations are welcome during the Covid-19 pandemic, as low-income families desperately need support to buy healthy food, and health professionals are already at capacity. The change precedes a digital service for online applications –which is expected later in the year you see more about this announcement [here](#).

Healthy Start is the UK's food welfare scheme for pregnant women and young children in low-income families.

Vouchers, worth £3.10 per week, can be used to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables, milk or infant formula. Greater Manchester Combined Authority, following a recommendation from the GM Food Poverty Action Plan, are now [charting uptake of the vouchers across Greater Manchester](#).

With uptake in Greater Manchester's boroughs ranging from 51% - 63%, nearly 150,000 families are currently missing out on millions of pounds worth of healthy food vouchers, costing close to an estimated £4million a year

[Find out more about Healthy Start vouchers and how to apply here.](#)

Mustard Tree is open

By Jack Barton

Mustard Tree

Combating Poverty – Preventing Homelessness

Mustard Tree is currently still open! We're operating as key workers under the categories of food distribution and front-line services. We're now providing an emergency food offer, supported by our volunteers - here's George out on one of our very first deliveries.

We want to take the opportunity to say a huge THANK YOU to our partners for all your positivity and encouragement. We've been around for the last 25 years - combating poverty and preventing homelessness - and working to our values of Belief, Dignity, Opportunity, Diversity and Partnership. We think these values are more relevant than ever and we are committed to continuing to support people across Greater Manchester at this time.



COVID-19 response

- We are delivering 100 emergency food parcels and Food Club items a day to vulnerable people across Manchester and Salford;
- We are providing 30 essential toiletries packs a day to rough sleepers visiting our hubs in Ancoats, Little Hulton and Eccles;
- We are serving 20 people a day through our onsite Food Club, which provides cost-effective food for families and individuals struggling to make ends meet;
- We are offering advice and guidance for people in need coming to our hubs, including signposting to partners and translations of Public Health England guidance into different languages;
- We are continuing to support vulnerable people accessing our structured vocational training project.

If you can help, you can click on either of this links to provide [food donations](#) or [financial donations](#).

Thank you

The Coronavirus outbreak and how it relates to GMPA's work

As the impact of the Coronavirus outbreak impacts people's lives across Greater Manchester, our small team at GMPA will be doing what we can to highlight consequences of the virus on people experiencing poverty and on efforts to tackle poverty.

Between March 18th - 31st, GMPA ran two surveys to understand the initial impact of the Coronavirus outbreak on parts of our network. Thank you to everyone who responded. The findings from both surveys have been passed on to key stakeholders across the city region and the main findings are available on our [webpage](#) which also provides links to many useful resources including the local authority hubs, National agencies and VCSE infrastructure organisations.

Please take every possible care and thank you for all that you are doing.



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.