

## Fighting poverty on all fronts in Salford

By Cllr Sharmina August, lead member for anti-poverty, inclusive economy and equalities.

Salford City Council

Preventing poverty, supporting people and campaigning against poverty underpins Salford's updated anti-poverty strategy which has just been published, based on insight from people who have experienced life on or below the breadline.

Salford is now recognised as a leader in Greater Manchester for its pioneering anti-poverty work, a bitter-sweet accolade for the city.

We're proud to be recognised for the many ways we prevent residents falling into poverty such as expanding our welfare rights and debt advice service and increasing the number of Salford employers paying the real Living Wage.

We're also proud of how we provide for residents in difficulties. At the start of the pandemic we set up the Spirit of Salford helpline in just 48 hours and recruited 800 emergency response volunteers to ensure that vulnerable people got the food, medicines and support they needed. Our Salford Assist service, which provides emergency help with food, gas, electricity and essentials helped 8,000 people, compared to 3,000 the year before.

Our big challenge now is recovering from the pandemic. Unemployment in Salford is up by 93% and claims for Universal Credit more than doubled last year. One in ten of Salford's working age population is now registered as a benefit claimant and we know a complex system means people often don't get the money they are entitled to or are unjustly sanctioned for breaking DWP rules.

Our anti-poverty taskforce will focus on people's experience of the benefits system during the pandemic, including those unable to claim, to see how we can campaign to improve it. It will also carry out the first UK research on veterans' experience of the benefits system.

We know not enough Salfordians are benefiting from the city having the fastest growing economy in Greater Manchester.

Our anti-poverty strategy, The Salford Way, is our response:

- A focus on an inclusive economy and maximum social value from all public spending in Salford, with training and work experience opportunities built into contracts;
- Offering personalised job-hunting support and skills development;
- Ensuring people benefit from the digital revolution and our booming construction industry
- And working to be England's first Living Wage City to lift more people out of poverty pay.



Cllr Sharmina August

Read about The Salford Way [here](#)

At GMPA we are pleased to see many of the components needed for an effective and strategic approach to tackling poverty being put in place by several of our ten Greater Manchester boroughs. This framework should include voluntary adoption of the socio-economic duty. We are holding an event with Just Fair on June 30th that will look at practical implementation of the duty. We are launching a guide to coincide with the event. Other elements of an effective local framework for tackling poverty include the development and implementation of an anti-poverty strategy, clear political and senior officer leadership within the local authority, partnership working and engagement of people with lived experience of socio-economic disadvantage. You can read more [here](#).

## Local implementation of the socio-economic duty

Online event on Wednesday June 30th, 2021 from 5 - 6pm

The government has chosen not to enact Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010, the socio-economic duty. However, some local and combined authorities are voluntarily implementing it. It has the potential to act as a powerful tool for addressing socio-economic inequalities locally. On June 30th join us for this free session marking the launch of a new practical guide for local authorities and combined authorities in England (including in Greater Manchester) to support them to voluntarily adopt and implement the duty, in partnership with people with lived experience of socio-economic disadvantage.

The session is for elected councillors and officers of local authorities and combined authorities, and any related stakeholders.

[Book your place here.](#) The guide and dial in details will be sent to registered attendees 24 hours before the event.

The event is hosted by [Just Fair](#) and Greater Manchester Poverty Action.



## GMCA is delighted to announce the appointment of two new team members:

### Lucy Bird – Fundraising Officer



Lucy is responsible for sourcing funding opportunities for the organisation.

After obtaining her Masters in Fine Art from Lancaster University, she worked at the university developing programmes to make university education more accessible and inclusive.

Following this experience, she worked at the older peoples charity, Age UK, advocating for older people and managing services to ensure they remain socially, physically and mentally active.

Lucy is passionate about improving the lives of people underrepresented in society and ensuring that opportunities are universal to everyone. She is a volunteer befriender in her spare time and enjoys exploring new places with her dog, Busby.

### Emily Wilbourn – Policy Officer

Emily works on Greater Manchester Poverty Action's policy, advocacy and research.

Since 2014, she has worked on human rights and refugee and migrant issues in roles at Amnesty International and Freedom from Torture. She is passionate about working with people who are experiencing inequality, so that their voices are at the heart of policy and decision-making.

She enjoys volunteering in her spare time, and has volunteered for Oxfam, International Service and the British Red Cross in the past.



## Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy consultation

Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping is a key priority in GM and a number of initiatives are already in place to help reduce homelessness and rough sleeping, including [Housing First](#), the [Entrenched Rough Sleeper Social Impact Bond](#) and A Bed Every Night. But there is more to do.

This strategy looks at how GM prevents homelessness, as well as mitigating the risks of homelessness when they happen. Homelessness prevention should be about proactively building wellbeing and participation, as well as taking steps to respond effectively when people need help. GMCA are keen to get input from Greater Manchester residents and stakeholders on the strategy so that your views influence the plans and inform decision making.

To take part in this consultation please complete the online survey [here](#) by Saturday June 26th, 2021

## Manchester Credit Union introduces BEESMART

Manchester Credit Union (MCU) has recently become a Principal Partner of GMPA and we look forward to supporting them and the fantastic work they do in Greater Manchester to tackle the root causes of poverty. We believe everyone is entitled to a secure job which pays enough to live on, without constantly struggling to make ends meet.

As a business that shares similar values as GMPA, we would like to share some information about what we do and in particular, tell you about a free benefit that local employers can offer to their staff to improve their financial wellbeing.

MCU, a financial co-operative, started life in 1991 in Beswick as part of the council's anti-poverty strategy, and we recently celebrated our 30th anniversary of providing savings and affordable loans to people who live and work in Manchester, Bury, Rochdale, Tameside, Trafford, Stockport and the High Peak. We have grown our membership to over 32,000 and so far this year have opened 1200 saving accounts and provided over 11,000 affordable loans to people in the local community who might struggle to access a small loan elsewhere without paying extortionate rates of interest.

Over the last 12 months, we have helped hundreds of members who have been affected by the pandemic by offering payment holidays, reducing payments on loans and most importantly, keeping in touch with members so they know we are there for them to help them through this difficult time. Members who need to borrow from us are encouraged to save a small amount each week whilst they are repaying their loan, which helps them become more financially resilient for the future.

There can be no doubt that financial worries are one of the main causes of stress and it is becoming increasingly evident that this can translate into how an individual performs at work. The impact of poor financial health can lead to a lack of productivity and absence from work. So how can responsible employers who care for their staff help them to build financial resilience?

Recent research by the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals (CIPP) has found that 55% of employees would like a savings and borrowings solution provided by their employer. Sadly, many businesses do not offer such a solution but we can help as we provide a payroll service for local businesses called BEESMART.

This is a free benefit with no risk to employers. Staff are encouraged to save regularly by having a sum of money deducted from their payroll. We will place the funds into a savings account on their behalf and also provide free life savings insurance on those savings. Saving directly through your pay is proven to make it easier to save regularly and having something put by for a rainy day can reduce financial stress which will in turn have a positive impact on the wellbeing of employees.

Staff will soon see their savings grow and have the comfort of knowing that their savings are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. An additional benefit is that once employees are saving, we can then provide affordable loans which can often be more competitive than High Street Banks and payday or doorstep lenders.

BEESMART is a simple, safe and flexible scheme which will help people get back into a savings habit and there is no cost to an employer to set it up. We would encourage any local employer to contact us so we can help you support your staff.

We are on a mission to help our local community through the services we offer, and make people better off.

For further information on the services offered by Manchester Credit Union, please visit our [website](#)

If you are an employer in the Greater Manchester area and are interested in the **BEESMART** payroll service, please visit [this webpage](#) or [email](#) for further information on how to set it up free of charge.



## Sian Mullen

We want to thank Dr Sian Mullen, our outgoing Food Security Programme Coordinator, for her work for Greater Manchester Poverty Action over the last year. The work that Sian has done, particularly in the [food security pilot projects in Tameside and Oldham](#), will have a long-lasting impact in those places, and we hope, wider application in the future.

## Trafford Housing Trust

### Employment and Skills service supports customers seeking training and job opportunities

Trafford Housing Trust (THT) customers seeking employment and training opportunities can find support in the organisation's Employment and Skills service.

The service is available to all THT residents and members in their household who are unemployed or working less than 16-hours per week and over the age of sixteen.

Working with over 50 organisations, THT customers can gain access to existing employment and training support programmes and find sustainable employment that suits their ambitions.

THT residents can contact the THT specialist Employment and Skills Advisor, who will assess an individual's employment and skills needs and provide signposting and advice. The service can be accessed for up to six months to navigate between support services and a pathway into employment.

THT residents who contact the specialist Employment and Skills Advisor will work on a personalised action plan outlining links to relevant organisations offering support based on an individual's needs.

The service also includes goal and ambition setting, assistance sourcing and applying for training, education and job opportunities, CV writing, tips on preparing for an interview and help to navigate a pathway for a career change. Those using the service can also seek help accessing financial support for travel expenses and access to work clothes.

Since launching in late 2020, the service has helped 29% of THT residents using the service start work. It has also assisted 73% of these residents move closer to employment and 27% have started a course.

THT customers can contact our specialist Employment and Skills Advisor, Nikki Mosley, via [email](#) or phone 0300 777 7777. For more information visit our [website](#).



## Tesco to hold extra summer food collection for children and families

During the collection, which will take place in large Tesco stores from July 15 - 17th and in Express stores from July 12th to August 28th, customers will be encouraged to donate long-life food to the Trussell Trust and FareShare to help them in their vital work to support families in communities across the UK. Tesco will once again be topping up all customer donations with a 20% cash donation to the two charities.

Charities FareShare and the Trussell Trust have welcomed the announcement. Emma Revie, Chief Executive of the Trussell Trust, said: "No one should face the indignity of needing emergency food. Yet in the last year, food banks in our network provided record numbers of emergency food parcels to people struggling to afford the essentials. This is not right but we know we can build a better future. Every donation makes a difference and helps food banks provide the best possible emergency support while we work together towards building a hunger free future."

To help the collection, simply visit your local Tesco store and donate an item or two (or more!). You can find your nearest store and the items most needed in your local community via this [link](#). You can support your local food bank by giving up just a few hours of your time to volunteer in a Tesco store, by helping to spread the word, creating awareness or by encouraging donations via your social media accounts.



## **TOMORROW: Greater Manchester Real Living Wage Campaign Online Meeting**

On Thursday June 24th, 2021 from 2pm



We are working closely with our partners and colleagues to develop the Action Plan to make Greater Manchester the first Real Living Wage city region in the UK. Part of GMPA's role in this Action Plan is delivering the Campaign sub-group in partnership with GM Citizens.

In order to engage with as many potential contributors to the Campaign sub-group as possible, we are holding a GM Living Wage Campaign meeting to focus on how you can get involved in the Action Plan over the next few months and will look at our priorities for the sectors, places, and events where we want to see action. To register for the meeting please go to this [Eventbrite booking page](#).

## **You are invited to an online celebration event for the Manchester Poverty Truth Commission**

On Thursday July 8th, 2021 from 11am – 12 noon

Book your free place [here](#)



This event will celebrate the work of the Manchester Poverty Truth Commission over the past two years, since its launch in July 2019. We will hear from some of Commissioners, the issues they have explored together in relation to child poverty, welfare and exploitation, the actions they have taken together, and their reflections on the process, during this most challenging of times.

Come prepared to be challenged to think afresh about the truth of poverty in Manchester, and inspired to act in new ways in playing your part in tackling poverty in the city in future.

## **Social Prescribing in Manchester - A VCSE manifesto**

Online on Wednesday July 14th, 2021 from 1.30 - 3.30pm

Social prescribing (Be Well) is now operating across Manchester. A core element of the social prescribing model is linking people with long-term needs to neighbourhood organisations and assets, many of which are VCSE organisations. It is good that the value of the VCSE sector is being recognised by the statutory sector as essential to people's health and wellbeing. However, this is also highlighting a number of issues including;

- Lack of capacity in the VCSE sector;
- One-way referrals
- Inequality of access to VCSE support across neighbourhoods;
- Inequality of access to VCSE services for the diverse communities of Manchester.
- Poor information sharing
- Role of city-wide VCSE sector



The aim of this Voluntary Sector Assembly is for the VCSE sector to discuss and agree what it wants and needs in order to increase the impact and effectiveness of social prescribing. Together we will write a manifesto which will be presented by representatives of the assembly to senior representatives of Manchester Health and Care Commissioning and Manchester Local Care Organisation.

Join in for an afternoon of discussion and debate to help shape the future of social prescribing in the city.

Bookings are now open for this event on the [registration page](#).

## **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.