

## Job Opportunity with GMPA: Business Development Executive

We are seeking a Business Development Executive to support the growth of the organisation and lead on generating training, event and consultancy income. The role will suit someone who is excited by supporting the development of the organisation and growing our network and reach both within and beyond Greater Manchester. Further information, the job description and person specification can be found [here](#). The deadline for applications is 5pm on April 19th, 2023 but we will be considering applications as they are submitted and may recruit ahead of the deadline if the right candidate is identified so we encourage early application.

## Coping with an impossible situation: How organisations and individuals are struggling to respond to the fuel poverty crisis in Greater Manchester

By Anna Lopez, GMPA Policy & Research Assistant

The cost-of-living crisis is forcing ever greater numbers of people into fuel poverty. In Greater Manchester (GM) and across the UK, skyrocketing energy and food prices are impacting on individuals on low incomes and the organisations that seek to support them.

GMPA's [new report](#), published last week, explores the impacts of rising fuel poverty across the city region. It relies on research collected over the latest winter and seeks to lay bare the extent of fuel poverty in GM. Its findings include that fuel poverty appears to be rising across the city region, with demand for support increasing significantly since the same period last year; high energy costs are negatively impacting the daily lives and health of people living on low incomes in GM and organisations that provide support to people on low incomes in GM are unable to meet demand, with the majority surveyed being forced to turn people away due to a lack of capacity or resources.

### Rising Fuel Poverty

From our survey we found that 77% of those working for organisations supporting people in poverty said their organisation was unable to meet all the requests for help that it received due to limited capacity or resources. Many also reported difficulties referring clients to other providers which could support them. As a result, people in need of support risk being bounced between organisations, further increasing barriers to accessing help.

Organisations are unable to meet demand and are forced to turn people away who urgently need support with energy bills.



### Impacts of Fuel Poverty

Our research suggests that rising energy bills have significant impacts on low income households. Research participants spoke of fuel poverty impacting on their daily lives and mental and physical health. Among the effects listed were pervasive worry and stress, constant cold, difficulty sleeping and physical tension. Rising bills also impacted on some participants' ability to afford 'little extras', such as days out with their children or celebrating holidays in the way they would have liked to.

### Recommendations for local and national government

This [report](#) aims not only to explore the challenges facing people on low incomes and the organisations that support them, but also to consider ways forward. These recommendations, advised by survey respondents and focus group participants, focus on immediate financial support to households, improved signposting of places to access help and a wider strategic focus on poverty at a local and national level.

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In addition, the [report](#) suggested a number of specific priorities for local and national government to tackle fuel poverty.

#### Priorities for Local Authorities

- Direct financial support for individuals.
- Council co-ordination of VCSE sector delivered support in GM.
- Improved signposting to advice and support.
- Ensuring council support is accessible without internet access.
- Provision of welfare rights and debt advice.

#### Priorities for National Government

- Direct financial support for individuals.
- Cap on energy prices.
- Installation of energy saving measures in homes.
- Alternative energy generation.
- Provision of advice to households.
- Regulation of the housing sector.



Rising fuel poverty is a significant issue across Greater Manchester, damaging the health and daily lives of people on low incomes while overstressing the VCSE sector in the city region. Despite the increases seen thus far, fuel poverty, and poverty in general, can be tackled, and there has never been a more urgent time to do so.

## Safe Sick Pay Campaign - Take Action with us!

By the Centre for Progressive Change

Currently one in three people in the UK struggle on Statutory Sick Pay when they are unwell, meaning they earn only £99 a week and lose 3 days pay before receiving any sick pay. A further 2 million do not qualify for sick pay at all, often those who work multiple or part-time jobs like cleaners, carers, and parents.

Statutory Sick Pay is a broken system that does not effectively support workers, public health or growth in our economy. The equivalent of £2.76 an hour, this is not enough to pay for rent, bills and food and can push working people into debt and poverty within days of being unwell. Workers on SSP are more likely to be low-paid or in insecure work and therefore less likely to have savings to support them during this time, forcing many to decide whether to miss work, therefore losing income or going to work sick, risking the spread of illness and denying them the rest and treatment they need to get better quickly.

Three-fifths of respondents surveyed by mental health charity Mind stated that the reduction in income as a result of SSP negatively impacted on their mental health, with a quarter adding that this impact had slowed down their recovery. Two-thirds of respondents surveyed said that receiving SSP had caused them financial problems. For some it had caused them to go into debt. A quarter of respondents specifically mentioned that SSP had impacted on their ability to buy food or pay their bills.

As highlighted by a member of our campaign: *“When I suffered a stroke at age 39 I nearly lost my house as the support I received was nowhere near enough to pay the bills. I had to return to work before I'd recovered properly just so I could start earning some sort of a wage to keep my family from being homeless.”*

The Safe Sick Pay campaign is a community organising campaign aiming to transform the sick pay system and improve our physical and mental wellbeing and safety. We want to ensure that sick pay is available to everyone, from the first day that they are sick, and paid at a rate that means people can take the time off they need and still make ends meet. Our national supporters include the Bishop of London, Young Lives vs. Cancer, Mind, TUC, Disability Rights UK and a cross-party group of MPs.

We are bringing together a broad community alliance across Greater Manchester to empower those who have been affected by this issue to take action to change it. Organisations can take part in the local coalition in a variety of ways including supporting us to engage your membership to share their stories, taking part in local alliance meetings, and representing your community at a meeting with the local MP.

If this is an issue for you or the people you work with [please get in touch](#).

## Greater Manchester Real Living Wage Campaign Update



### Update on numbers of Real Living Wage Employers In Greater Manchester

In November 2021 the Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham launched the action plan to make Greater Manchester a Real Living Wage City Region. At that time the number of Real Living Wage accredited employers in Greater Manchester was around 250. The action plan set a target of 650 by September 2024. In November 2022 we saw the figure reach 500 with the accreditation of the Octagon Theatre in Bolton. We are pleased to announce that at the time of this newsletter that figure currently stands at 628. That means that as a result of those 628 employers becoming Real Living Wage accredited employers, around 23,000 employees have received pay increases.



Discussions are currently underway to reset that target. This is fantastic news for the campaign against low pay in Greater Manchester.

More information about the local campaign can be found on GMPA's website [here](#).

Best Wishes,

[John Hacking](#)

Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign Coordinator

You can follow the GM Living Wage Campaign on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

The Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign is run by Greater Manchester Poverty Action.

## Policy and Research updates



We are providing a summary of the latest news and policy developments to keep you up to date with what is happening across the UK.

Seven in ten school children on Universal Credit are not eligible for free school meals. [Read more.](#)

A new survey by financial advisers My Pension Expert which included 2,000 UK adults found that 61% of working women believe the [cost-of-living crisis](#) has made retirement impossible, compared to 49% of men. Only 29% of women are confident that they will be able to retire at their desired age under the current financial situation, compared to 40% of men who feel the same way. [Read more.](#)

Generation Z children born into the poorest fifth of families in the UK are 12 times more likely to experience a raft of poor health and educational outcomes by the age of 17 compared to more affluent peers, according to a new report co-authored by University of York researchers. [Read more.](#)

Results from the second wave of the PBE and Nottingham Trent University National VCSE Data and Insights Observatory quarterly VCSE Sector Barometer reveal the extent of the charity sector's recruitment and retention challenges. The survey finds that over eight in ten (82%) charity employers have tried to recruit paid staff in the past year, with over seven in ten (71%) saying that recruitment has been difficult. More than half of charity employers (54%) reported that they currently have vacancies, with over eight in ten (83%) saying those vacancies are proving hard to fill. [Read more.](#)

Public satisfaction with the NHS has slumped to its lowest level ever recorded since the [@NatCen](#) British Social Attitudes survey began in 1983. [Read more.](#)

'Good Food for All Londoners 2022: Tracking council action on food' Sustain's latest report sets out a number of recommendations for tackling food insecurity beyond food banks including cash first responses on page 15. [Read more.](#)

DMU research shows free breakfasts dramatically improve scores in the 3 Rs for the poorest primary school children. [Read more.](#)

Chronic increase of 'hidden homelessness' in the countryside fuelled by cost-of-living crisis, study shows. [Read more.](#)

UK life expectancy growing at slower rate than rest of G7, research shows. [Read more.](#)

The cost-of-living crisis will continue to intensify as inflation soars and government support lags. Organisations and campaigners must continue to call on the government to do more to tackle the harsh economic realities for the most vulnerable. More articles are available on our [website](#).

## Government HBAI Statistics Released

By Aisha Muhammad, GMPA Public Policy Officer

On March 23rd, 2023, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) released their annual Households Below Average Income (HBAI) [report](#). The report details the number of people experiencing poverty in the UK for the year up to the end of March 2022.

The key findings highlight an increase in relative poverty (the main measure of poverty used by GMPA, government and campaigners), with 14.4 million people living in relative low-income (after household cost are taken into account – referred to as ‘AHC’) between April 2021 and March 2022. A total of 8.1 million working-age adults were living in relative poverty (AHC) - an increase from 2.1 million the previous year – with those in families where no one is in work being more likely to be in poverty (38%) than those where at least one person is in work (10%).

The percentage of pensioners in relative poverty (AHC) increased to 18% – with 2.1 million pensioners living in below the poverty line. This continues an upward trend in relative poverty for pensioners seen over recent years.

<b>29%</b> of all UK children were living in poverty.	<b>71%</b> of children growing up in poverty were living in working families.
<b>44%</b> of children growing up in poverty were in lone parent families.	<b>36%</b> of children living in families where someone has a disability were living

Just under three in ten children (29%) in the UK were living in relative poverty, 4.2 million children in total (an increase of 350,000 on the previous year). This large increase is, in part, likely to have been driven by the ending of the £20 Universal Credit uplift in October 2021. Of the number of children facing poverty, the majority (71%) were living families where at least one adult is in work.

The statistics illustrate what many organisations are seeing on the ground, with certain family types accounting for large proportions of those experiencing poverty. For example, among children experiencing poverty, 44% were in lone parent families, 42% were in families with 3 or more children, and 36% in families where someone has a disability

The reports details some of the experiences and consequences of poverty across the UK. Children in relative poverty were identified to be less likely to live in a ‘food secure household’ compared with working-age adults and pensioners in low-income households, highlighted by the report findings that 800,000 children lived in households that needed food from a foodbank between 2021-2022. An estimated 750,000 pensioners were identified in a state of material deprivation.

The report identified disparities based on ethnicity; 47% of children from Asian and British Asian families, 53% of children from Black/African/Caribbean and Black British families, and 25% of children in White families were living in poverty.

These statistics are stark and concerning. Whilst the government recognises that poverty rates are increasing, there is still no appetite for meaningful strategic action on poverty in Westminster. Governments, both national and local, must implement robust responses to poverty with a key focus on boosting household income and prioritising cash over other forms of welfare support.

The full report ‘Households Below Average Income: An Analysis of the UK Income Distribution: FYE 1995 to FYE 2022’ can be accessed [here](#).



Aisha Muhammad

### 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](#).

**NB** GMPA does not have full-time dedicated administrative support so please do not expect an immediate response.

