



Join the Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance

The proliferation of food banks and other social food providers has been one of the largest movements of this decade – now we must work together for a Greater Manchester in which no-one has to go hungry.

With lower incomes and higher costs, many people are struggling to put food on the table, and a healthy, balanced diet may be even further from their reach. Many are also limited by inadequate cooking facilities. The explosion in the number of [social food providers](#) – [we have mapped 171 of them across the city region](#) – shows that the people of Greater Manchester share our concern and are taking action.

Some of these efforts are coordinated on the ground, for example in Wythenshawe and Stockport, and there is some over-arching coordination by the likes of The Trussell Trust, Independent Food Aid Network and Greater Together Manchester. However many gaps remain, for example valuable data remains uncollected by many food banks, in some areas public sector and social sector responses are not joined up, and the role of much of the private sector is significantly underdeveloped.

We believe that this is the time for strategic action to bring out the best in Greater Manchester's response. The first aim of the Alliance will therefore be to co-produce a Food Poverty Action Plan for Greater Manchester. The plan will set achievable actions, to:

- Reduce and prevent food poverty
- Build resilience and support communities to plan and adapt to the challenge of food poverty
- Address structural and economic issues that underlie food poverty, such as the benefits system and precarious and low-paid employment

I also made a pledge at the Mayor's Green Summit last week that the Alliance will consider the environmental impact of its recommendations, while also challenging those who lead on environmental issues to consider the impact of their work on people in poverty.

Participants can be in the public, private or social sectors, and they can be leaders in positions of power, on-the-ground practitioners or people with lived experience of food poverty. This alliance will have a place for people from all walks of life, all across Greater Manchester, as long as they want to work with others towards a more coordinated and strategic long-term approach to addressing food poverty in our city region.

We ask every organisation that works with people who have lived experience of food poverty, to encourage some of them to attend the meeting. The Alliance, and the Action Plan, will be stronger and have greater integrity if co-produced with people who are 'experts by experience'.

You can join the alliance by attending our launch event:

Time: 1pm - 4pm **Date:** Tuesday May 8th 2018

Venue: Main Hall, [Methodist Central Hall, Oldham Street, Manchester, M1 1JQ](#).

[Please book in advance, and share this invitation with others who might be interested](#)

If you cannot attend the event but would like to be included in future communications about the Alliance, please email [Tom](#) with 'FPA Sign-up' in the subject line.



Tom Skinner
Director of GMPA

The Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance, convened by Greater Manchester Poverty Action and the [Food Poverty Special Interest Group](#), is part of the national [Food Power](#) program.

National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage

HMRC wishes to raise awareness of the new rates of pay that will come into force when the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage increase on 1 April 2018 to ensure that all employers are at least paying their staff the legal minimum.

A [website](#) to assist employers is available and employers and employees can contact [Acas for advice and support](#) on a wide range of employment rights and responsibilities (or call 0300 123 1100 from Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm but check your call costs first as they vary from 3p to 40p per minute).

HMRC also want to encourage low-paid workers to come forward to make sure they are getting the wages they are legally entitled to. They are looking to raise worker's awareness of their entitlement and asking them to report any under-payments for HMRC to investigate if necessary.

HMRC believe that many people who are paid the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage still lose out on their full entitlement because of a series of common errors made by their employers. Workers often don't realise that they are being short-changed and that it's possible for them to get back the money they are owed.

The new rates of **pay per hour** after 1 April 2018 will be:

For Apprentices in their first year or under 19:	£3.70	For employees under 18:	£4.20
For employees aged 18 – 20:	£5.90	For employees aged 21 – 24:	£7.38
For employees 25 and over:	£7.83		

Comment from GMPA, "*Under-payment of the minimum wage is a major issue of in-work poverty, particularly exploiting workers from marginalised groups. We fully support HMRC in encouraging low-paid workers to come forward to make sure they are not being underpaid. However we take issue with the description of the minimum wage as a "National Living Wage", which is misleading and confusing for employers and the wider public and does not reflect what is needed to achieve a decent standard of living.*

The real Living Wage is an hourly rate independently calculated to be enough for a decent minimum standard of living. That rate is £8.75/hr outside London, a new rate is calculated and announced every November in Living Wage Week, and we encourage employers to voluntarily commit to paying all of their staff that rate, and to become [accredited as Living Wage Employers](#). Almost 150 employers across Greater Manchester have been accredited as Living Wage Employers, including Salford City Council, the GM Chamber of Commerce, and many businesses and charities.

The so-called National Living Wage is a rebrand of the minimum wage, but it is not a living wage as it is not based on the cost of living. It could also be argued that it is not truly national as it does not apply to people under the age of 25. This distinction is important because both the minimum wage and the real Living Wage are valuable tools in the bid to end in-work poverty, and should not be allowed to confuse or to distract from each other. Please see the [Living Wage Foundation's explanation](#) for further information."



Is Low Pay Good for Business? (2)

Successive UK governments have encouraged business models that rely on people being willing to work for low pay. Our economy is hooked on cheap labour. The government subsidises low pay through the benefits system, at great cost to the Exchequer, allowing businesses to get away with offering staff poor terms and conditions. Many employers

recognise the short-sightedness of this approach, but business generally still sees wages as a burden rather than an investment. Here is the second of our series of articles in 2018.

This enquiry concerns employee and customer churn. A recent study found that the turnover rate for the restaurants and accommodations sector was 72% in 2015. (CoreHR.com*) That means a regular customer to a restaurant will notice that the friendly, competent person who waited on them last time has probably left.

Does this affect customers? Of course. My wife and I had the bizarre experience of opening our own wine in a restaurant because the waiter did not know how to do it. In a French restaurant! We've never been back. There are hundreds of such establishments. Many serve good food and drink. The differentiator is service. Losing good staff and replacing them with new, inexperienced hires loses customers. Cost saving? Or business suicide?

John Leigh, GM Living Wage Campaign

* [Feel the Churn: Tackling High Turnover Rates in Hospitality and Retail](#)

If you have any questions, queries, comments or suggestions for the GM Living Wage Campaign, please get in touch via an email to [Lynn](#) or call 07948 549 485.



John Leigh

Furniture Poverty

**FURNITURE
POVERTY HUB**

Waste is a poverty issue and it's a central theme of Greater Manchester's new [Furniture Poverty Hub](#).

In the UK, we throw away 10 million items of furniture and electrical appliances each year. It's estimated that nearly 6 million items are repairable or reusable. Furniture poverty charities need a constant supply of reusable items to pass on to low income households. Their affordable, ethical and environmental approach helps reduce household debt and improve financial and social inclusion. It means these households can avoid the rent-to-own market, payday lenders and loan sharks.

It also means the charities are diverting thousands of tonnes of household waste from landfill or incineration and reducing CO₂ emissions. For example, 1 tonne of sofas, salvaged for reuse, means 1.5 tonnes less CO₂ released into the atmosphere. With better strategic partnership working between the public, private and third sectors to improve resource management, the furniture poverty sector can make a vital contribution to meeting Andy Burnham's recently announced carbon neutrality targets for GM by 2040; and creating inclusive growth jobs in the process.

Furniture Poverty charities working to alleviate material poverty are needed more than ever.



Tackling the threat of homelessness is a top priority; in some poorer areas of Greater Manchester, over 40% of children are living in poverty, and austerity continues to impact upon household and public sector budgets. With the reduction in local authority funding and as demand for help from communities increases, these organisations are an essential resource and partner to meet the region's many challenges and opportunities.

The Furniture Poverty Hub supports these organisations to build resilience and capacity, to do more for their communities.

The first meeting of furniture poverty charities in Greater Manchester will be taking place on Thursday April 12th, 2018. If your charity, social enterprise or community group is using pre-used furniture to supply to low income households, for skills development purposes or to subsidise other charitable activities in support of your communities, they'd really like you to come along. Please email [the Furniture Poverty Hub](#) for more information. More information is available on their [website](#)

Struggling families disqualified from justice despite Supreme Court verdict

This was the headline for an article published by the Law Society last week.

"Poverty-hit families are being denied vital help to fight eviction, tackle severe housing disrepair and address other life-changing legal issues, the Law Society of England and Wales revealed today."

The article went on to report that last year the Supreme Court declared employment tribunal fees unlawful for households on low income because of the sacrifices they would have to make to be able to afford legal costs.

The Law Society president Joe Egan said: *"No-one in modern society should have to choose between accessing the justice system and a minimum living standard. The financial eligibility test for civil legal aid is disqualifying people from receiving badly-needed legal advice and representation, even though they are already below the poverty line."*

He was speaking on the [publication of a new report](#) commissioned by the Law Society and produced by Professor Donald Hirsch of Loughborough University.

Professor Hirsch said: *"Millions of households in Britain today struggle to make ends meet, even when they include someone in work, often because of part-time, low-wage or irregular earnings. Yet in general, the legal aid system requires working people to pay their legal costs, either in full or by making a contribution that low earners would find hard or impossible to afford. Those who are out of work are generally covered by legal aid but may be excluded if they own their homes. The assumption that someone could sell their home to cover a legal bill is out of line with other forms of state means-testing – such as help with care costs, where the value of your home is ignored if you or your partner still live in it."*

The Law Society is asking the government to restore the means test to its 2010 real-terms level, and to conduct a review to consider what further changes are required to address the problems exposed by this report.

[Read the full report](#)



Forthcoming Events:

Volunteer Wellbeing Champion Induction Day



Thursday March 29th, 2018 from 10am - 4pm at the Training Room, Salford CVS, Eccles Old Town Hall, 5 Irwell Place, Eccles M30 0FN

Are you interested in volunteering in Salford? Then do come along to this day of learning and sharing about Salford CVS 's Volunteer Wellbeing Champion roles. They have a team of volunteers across Salford delivering projects supporting older people. They are looking for more enthusiastic volunteers from all walks of life to take part. [More information and booking](#)

Being seen, being heard: young people's politics in devolution deals

Film screening and workshop On Friday April 6th, 2018 from 2 – 4pm at HOME Manchester, Tony Wilson Place, Manchester M15 4FN

Are we doing enough to ensure young people are represented in decisions that will affect their future? [More info & Book](#) Password 'teamfuture'

All our Futures - Creating a healthy built environment for older people

by Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing
Thursday April 19th, 2018 from 12noon - 4.30pm at Jean McFarlane Building, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PY

Topics include: The health impacts of housing; austerity urbanism: experience of neighbourhood regeneration in peripheral towns; are urban designers equipped to design for older people; inclusivity and accessibility in the built environment - the role of regulations and standards. [More info and book](#)



Legal Aid and the Future of Free Access to Justice

An event by the Greater Manchester Law Centre

Friday April 20th, 2018 from 6pm - 8pm at The University of Law - Manchester, 2 New York Street, Manchester M1 4HJ

With Lord Bach, Shadow Justice Secretary Richard Burgon, and Young Legal Aid Lawyers Vice-Chair Siobhán Taylor-Ward

Everyone is welcome: lawyers, campaigners, students and everyone else interested in access to justice. Join us as we discuss the current state of Legal Aid, the impact of the political changes, the challenges faces by the next generation of social welfare lawyers and GMLC's hope for the future.

Cost £10 - £30 [More information and to book](#)

Do you have any events that you'd like GMPA to publicise? Please [Email us](#) with the details.

Emergency Food Providers Map

After launching our third map, we are conscious that the Emergency Food Providers map is now a year old. We have started to check all the information on the map but would welcome your help. Do you use a food bank or a pantry, or perhaps you regularly recommend one nearby? Could you take just a few minutes to [look at the map](#) and check the information for the ones you are familiar with? Are there new ones we've missed or ones that have closed? If any entries need updating please email [Chris](#) with the correct details. Your help is much appreciated. *Many thanks.*

Local Elections

will be held on Thursday May 3rd 2018

Are you registered to vote?

If not, it's very easy and you only need to do it once (unless you change your address, name or nationality).

Go to this [website](#) to register.

You can vote at a polling station, by post or by proxy (someone else is authorised to vote for you).

Let's use our voices and vote.

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 for inclusion in a newsletter please [get in touch](#)

For more information please contact us by [email](#) or call 07419 774537 and we will reply as soon as possible.

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.