

The Mayor's focus on school readiness highlights the need for good practice sharing and promotion

By Graham Whitham

Last week Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, set out his plan to focus on early years and ensure that children have the skills and support they need to do well at school. Despite improvements across Greater Manchester, the city region still lags behind the national average when it comes to the proportion of children who are 'school ready' (the government's measure of whether children have certain basic skills when they start primary school). The evidence suggests that improvements in school readiness aren't evenly spread across different households, with children from low income households still much more likely to lack basic skills when they are four and five.



Andy Burnham



GMPA welcomes the Mayor's focus on this agenda. A collaborative and joined up approach across GM can ensure that childcare providers, schools, parents and other stakeholders can work together to ensure children in our city region get the best start in life. There are already examples of good practice within and outside GM, and GMPA would like to see more being done to ensure local authorities and others are able to evidence and promote good practice. This extends beyond a focus on early years, to wider family and child poverty strategies and initiatives. Too often, good practice in one part of the country remains under the radar or, where there is awareness of it, can't be replicated in other areas due to lack of funding.

Fostering a culture of good practice sharing and replication in GM would help the Mayor achieve his aim of illustrating to the rest of the country how public services delivery can be done in a more joined up and preventative way.

GMPA launches the 'Household items and repairs' map

Back in January GMPA launched [the Emergency Food Providers map](#), a Google map showing the location of all the foodbanks, pay-as-you-feel cafés, food clubs and pantries that we could find. We are very grateful to everyone who helped us to gather the data - especially Greater Together Manchester. We added more pins and made any necessary amendments over the past 9 months. Since its launch this map has had over 6,400 visits and we hope that it will continue to be a really useful resource.

Our second map shows '[Household items and repairs](#)' and includes organisations that provide reconditioned, refurbished and repaired furniture, white goods and smaller electrical items for a fraction of high street costs, some that are even able to offer a limited number of these items free of charge. We've included the local Freecycle groups that simply advertise everything, including occasionally the kitchen sink, that is available for free from the current owners who no longer need the item. Also shown are a few organisations that can provide some practical support in the home for those on low-incomes, the elderly and the disabled.



We would welcome **your** help improving this map. Who have we missed off? Are the details we've gleaned completely accurate? Please [email us](#) with any additions and corrections. The more accurate it is, the more useful it will be.

As soon as we are happy that this map is working well, we'll launch the next one! If you ever lose the link to either of these maps, you can always access them via our [website](#).



Living Wage Week – [the annual celebration of the Living Wage movement in the UK](#) – commences on Sunday November 5th. We will be supporting the creation of the GM Good Employment Charter by running some public engagement events. We hope you will come along to one of these events and have your say about what the Charter should contain and how it should work.

We already have one engagement event planned for the **Thursday November 9th, 8 - 10am**, venue to be confirmed.

There's much more planned for the Week – look out for full details in following newsletters. You may also know of, or be involved in, plans for another Living Wage Week event. If so please do let us know, so that we can help you share the details of your event, via: our webpage, our regular news slot in this Newsletter, and via our social media.

To help you get involved in local Living Wage Week activities and events, there will be a Campaign meeting on October 10th, 2 - 4pm, on the 3rd Floor at Church House, 90 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2GH, so please ensure you are signed up to receive details of this meeting, by contacting me on 07948 549 485 or email Lynn.Sbaih@gmlivingwage.org



Lynn Sbaih

Community Reporters needed to help Manchester's Homeless tell their stories

Reach out to the Community, Cracking Good Food and Macc are looking for Community Reporters to help Manchester's homeless tell their stories.

If you work with an organization that helps those most in need, why not join the FREE training coming up from the September 25th, 2017, to become that reporter.



Homelessness and food poverty are growing problems. Manchester has a number of projects supporting homeless people and we feel that the public need to hear their stories. How did they end up in this situation? The reasons are very complex.

We will together, through support, video training and food, bring the voices of those most in need to life in short 1 minute films. These will be edited and added to by a filmmaker, enabling an overview of Manchester's homelessness to emerge but most importantly the ways in which we can all help. We will launch this film on Saturday October 7th, at Reach out to the Community's new hub at 448, Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton M21 0BQ from 12 – 3pm, inviting Andy Burnham, GM's Mayor, with a view to making positive changes to eradicate this situation. We'll cook a one pot nutritious dinner, with help from volunteers, which will be delivered directly to charities in town feeding those in need and we will also be outlining the many other ways in which help is urgently needed.

[More information about the Community Reporting training.](#)

Contact details:

Steph at Reach out to the Community: ReachOutCommunity@yahoo.com

Adele at Cracking Good Food: adele@crackinggoodfood.org

Lesley at Manchester Community Central lesley@macc.org.uk

TAKING ACTION ON RACE INEQUALITY

Friday September 22nd, 2017 2 - 4pm at the Manchester BME Network, Mauldeth House, Nell Lane, Chorlton, M21 7RL



The Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG), with support from the national Coalition of Race Equality Organisations (CORE), is proposing to establish a shared website to link and support organisations that are taking action on race inequality in the UK.

They want to hear your views on:

- Whether this proposal will help organisations, individuals and communities to take effective action on race inequality
- How you might use or contribute to a shared website
- Whether there might be other, more effective ways that race equality organisations can work together, and with local communities, to take action on race inequality

Please come along to a **consultation event**. They want to hear from everyone who thinks that taking action to end race inequalities is their business, including race equality organisations, voluntary and community groups, public sector agencies, private sector companies and individual.

Please contact Fiona for more information or to book to attend this event. office@manchesterbmenetwork.co.uk 0161 860 6842 / 07811531160

Tackling fuel poverty across Greater Manchester

Electricity North West, the region's power network operator, is represented by Jonathan Collins in GMPA's Fuel Poverty Special Interest Group. Here, his colleague Lauren Webb writes about their work with Energy Saving Trust and the development of a referral network to provide support for fuel poor households in Greater Manchester.



Electricity North West has collaborated with Energy Saving Trust to investigate the ways in which they can help tackle fuel poverty in the region. The aim of the project, which originated from a recent stakeholder advisory panel, was to gain a vital understanding of fuel poverty at a local, regional, and national level, including identifying households living in fuel poverty, government programmes, and local authority schemes.

With this insight in mind, Energy Saving Trust has developed a series of options which can be implemented by Electricity North West. These options included developing a referral network which would provide customers with energy saving advice and welfare and debt advice as well as provide customers with funding for energy efficiency improvements for their homes, including cavity wall and loft insulation. Energy Saving Trust also suggested working closely with the Government to develop future fuel poverty and energy efficiency programmes.

The main findings of the research were:

- ✦ Within Electricity North West's operating region, 50% of fuel poor households live within the Greater Manchester area.
- ✦ Within the Manchester City Council area 15% of households are defined as fuel poor.
- ✦ There is an urban/rural split in the reasons for fuel poverty. In urban areas, such as Greater Manchester, the main reason for fuel poverty is low income whereas in more rural areas, such as Kendal, the reason is the size and age of homes which are harder to heat.
- ✦ Government and Local Authority fuel poverty schemes are often limited to households who are either elderly, on benefits or on a low income.
- ✦ Future Government policy such as the Industrial Strategy, Emissions Reductions Plan, Energy Company Obligation 3 and the roll out of smart meters will help tackle some of the issues related to fuel poverty, however the potential outcomes for customers are unknown.
- ✦ Other distribution network operators deliver two types of schemes:
 - Community investment funds for community groups to deliver energy efficiency schemes.
 - Referral networks where customers are given advice and support on fuel poverty issues including energy saving advice and welfare and debt advice.

A recent YouGov study commissioned by Electricity North West supports this research. The study revealed that:

- Within the Greater Manchester area 12% of people surveyed felt they could not heat their homes adequately.
- Of this 12%, 55% said that the reason for this was that they could not afford their energy bills.
- 21% of respondents living in the Manchester City Council area felt they could not heat their homes adequately. This is a 6% difference compared to Energy Saving Trust's findings which may be due to peoples' perception versus the Government definition.



The Government defines fuel poor households as those living below the poverty line whilst having fuel costs above the average (median) in order to heat and light their home adequately.

Energy efficiency is one way that can alleviate fuel poverty. The research highlights that 'improvements to energy efficiency provides long term protection against fuel poverty, as they shield the household from changes in fuel prices and income'. However, according to the YouGov study 71% of respondents within the Greater Manchester area have not previously sought energy saving advice.

Energy Saving Trust states within its report that previous energy efficiency and fuel poverty alleviation programmes have varied across different local authority areas having different levels of success. These schemes have often been stop-start in nature where there is an increase in activity to meet funding requirements which is then followed by a fall in activity as funding for schemes have ended. This has made it difficult for customers, supply chain and other organisations to know the best option available for customers.

Energy Saving Trust believes that a distribution network operator-led programme could offer a level of coordination to make best use of existing local, regional and national funding and schemes. It could also provide greater consistency and stability to the delivery of fuel poverty programmes. Electricity North West is currently working with Energy Saving Trust in the development of a referral network to provide support for fuel poor households living in our region.

More information about [Electricity North West](#) More information about the [Energy Saving Trust](#)



AGM 2017

Thursday September 28th, 2017 starting at 6.30pm and to be held at the Mechanics Institute, 103 Princess Street. M1 6DD

Fighting together to change Government welfare reform policies

We now need to use our Law Centre to challenge the Government 'so-called' welfare reforms. We will link with other campaigns and use legal campaigning to make a reality of strategic litigation. Our keynote speaker is **Rebekah Carrier**, solicitor and director of Hopkin Murray Beskine. She recently [hit the headlines](#) when she represented a group of single mothers bringing a successful challenge against the government's benefit cap, which limits the income certain families receive in benefits. The damning judgment declared that the cap illegally discriminated against single parents with young children, who could not work because of childcare demands.

Everyone is welcome to attend. [More information about the GM Law Centre](#)

Official launch of the Greater Manchester Sustainable Food Vision

Thursday October 19th, 2017 from 7pm at Bridge 5 Mill, Ancoats, Manchester



A celebration for all your hard work in contributing to the sustainable food vision. They will have copies of the final sustainable food vision hot off the press. There will also be a lovely photo exhibition about local sustainable production in England and Wales that they are hosting at Bridge 5 Mill. More information [link](#). If you would like to come along please RSVP to emily@kindling.org.uk

Forthcoming Events:



Ambition for Ageing for All

Tuesday September 26th, 2017 10.15am - 3pm at the Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS

Are you keen to make Greater Manchester a better place to grow old? Are you interested in how inequalities and discrimination shape old people's experiences? This is the first public event hosted by the Ambition for Ageing Equalities Board. [More information and to book.](#)

Re-thinking Poverty: Webb Memorial Trust at 2017 Party Conferences

Monday October 2nd, 2017 from 12.30 - 2.00 pm (open to the public) at the Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 5NS

How do we end poverty when the traditional means of doing so no longer work? The Webb Memorial Trust makes the case that rather than addressing what we don't want – poverty – we need to develop what we do want – a society without poverty. **Speakers:** Barry Knight, Director, Webb Memorial Trust; Kevin Hollinrake MP, Chair, APPG on Poverty; Andy Cook, CEO, Centre for Social Justice. No booking required.

The Octogenarian Cooks

Wednesday October 4th, 2017, from 3 –5pm at the Manchester Food and Drink Festival in Albert Square

This interactive cooking demonstration and taster session will bring together organisations involved in tackling food poverty, reducing food waste and older people sharing their recipes and cooking skills. Come along to try cooking some of the recipes and to taste the food!

End Hunger UK Conference 2017

Tuesday October 17th, 2017 from 10am—3.30pm at Central Hall, Westminster, London. [More information](#)

Any events you'd like GMPA to publicise? [Email us with the details](#)

For more information about Greater Manchester Poverty Action

please visit our [website](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) or visit our [Facebook](#) page.

We want to celebrate our successes, find new ways of working together and provide a voice for the people living in poverty in our region. But we can only do this with your help and support.

For more information or to share your news please contact [Chris](#)

Copies of previous newsletters are available on our [website](#)

If you would like to contact us or submit an article for inclusion in a newsletter please get in touch in one of the following ways:

Post: c/o 5th Floor Church House, 90 Deansgate, Manchester M3 2GH

Or contact Chris [Email](#) or 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.

