

Join us on 25th September for our Understanding Poverty Data course

Graham Whitham

A number of people have already booked onto our [two training courses](#) taking place in the autumn. The first of the two is our full day [Understanding poverty measurement, definitions and data](#) course taking place on Tuesday 25th September in central Manchester. The aim of the course is to equip people with the knowledge they need to quickly access poverty and related data to support them in their work – this might be for those writing funding bids, those designing programmes or those looking to shape policy.



A multitude of data is available that helps quantify poverty, but that wealth of data can make finding the most useful and best supporting evidence difficult. By the end of this one-day course participants will have developed an understanding of what key poverty data sets tell us, how best to access data sources and how to use this knowledge to support the work that they do.

The course will also explore debates about the way poverty is defined and measured. This is an important foundation for those seeking to address poverty here in Greater Manchester, and across the UK as whole.

In full, the course will cover:

- Concepts of poverty – relative poverty versus absolute poverty.
- Common measures of poverty used in the UK.
- Recent trends in poverty in the UK.
- Why is understanding poverty data and how we measure poverty important to your organisation?
- What does government data tell us about poverty levels in the UK?
 - Sourcing national poverty data
 - Effective use of national poverty data
 - Risk of poverty among different groups of the population
 - Limitations of national data.
- Understanding poverty at a regional and local level
 - Sourcing local poverty data
 - Effective use of local poverty data.

Whether working in the VCSE/third sector, public sector or private sector, this course will help participants deepen their understanding of how poverty in the UK is defined and measured and support them to access reliable, accurate and up-to-date data to help strengthen the case for their work with funders, supporters and policy makers. It is also suitable for researchers who wish to develop a baseline understanding of debates about how poverty is measured and commonly used datasets.



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If you're planning on attending, [please book on now](#) as places are limited.

Please note we operate tiered booking rates for VCSE/third, public and private sector organisations. If you can't attend on 25th September but are interested in this course, please get in touch so that we can plan in further course dates later in the year.

Food Poverty Alliance

Please tell us about action on holiday hunger and strategic work on food in each borough



GMIPA's Food Poverty Alliance already has over 100 organisations working together on a Food Poverty Action Plan for Greater Manchester – you can [join us here](#) if you haven't already – so we have a good understanding of the range of actions on food poverty across the city region. However, there are two areas that we need to understand better at this stage, so have worked with Greater Together Manchester and FareShare Greater Manchester to produce **two surveys** and are asking everyone who might have relevant information to respond and share widely:

1 School Holiday Activities and Food Provision

Holiday hunger is a situation that occurs when a child's household is, or will become, food insecure during the school holidays. It is estimated that 3 million children are at risk of holiday hunger in the UK. We want to find out more about the organisations providing school holiday activities and food provision across Greater Manchester. We will use the information provided in this questionnaire to better understand the scope of current provision and how this relates to the areas of greatest need. We will also be able to look strategically at gaps in provision and work with partners to address this. Please fill in and share the survey [here](#)

2 Addressing Food Poverty – Existing Strategic Work

We know that a great deal of strategic and coordination work is carried out in many boroughs of Greater Manchester, however food is often addressed in policies that primarily focus on other topics. We therefore want to understand all of the existing strategic policy and coordination work that mentions or includes food in any way. We will use the information provided in this questionnaire to understand how food policy is embedded in other policies, and what coordination work is carried out in each borough, so as to better work together and develop complementary strategies. Please fill in and share the survey [here](#)



Group discussion at the launch of the Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance

Goodbye from Lynn as GM Living Wage Campaign Coordinator



Lynn Sbaih

I will be stepping down from the Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign Coordinator role in mid-July to spend more time developing my community business, so this is my last news item for this column.

I have enjoyed working with the Campaign Group, as well as with colleagues from the Living Wage Foundation, GM Citizens and many other local partners, over the last twelve months. We have all made much progress in this time including crowd-sourcing a comprehensive set of recommendations to the GM Good Employment Charter and setting the plans and actions in place for the coming months. Already it looks like this year's Living Wage Week will be great and will mark the fifth anniversary of the GM Living Wage Campaign.

Greater Manchester Poverty Action will be working with the Campaign activists to take this work forward, so watch this space for developments and ways in which you can continue to get involved.

As for me, I will be developing my community business and will also continue to raise the profile of the real Living Wage, and good employment charter, with my corporate and social enterprise colleagues in Stockport.

Wishing you all the best and hope all your Living Wage and good employment work continues to go from strength to strength.

GM Poverty Action want to thank Lynn for strengthening the campaign group, signing up many local businesses to become accredited Living Wage employers, influencing the Greater Manchester-wide agenda for good employment, and for being a great team member. We will miss Lynn and wish her all the best with her community business, and of course in her ongoing support in a personal capacity for the real Living Wage.



Making the difference!

By Chris Smallwood, Director, Anchor Removals



It is one of the most frustrating statements politicians hear from their electorate - "What difference does my vote make?"

I don't agree with the sentiment or the statement, but I do share the sense of disenfranchisement. Let's face it, when you have a family – mum, dad and two little infants running around, you are struggling to pay a bill or don't know where your next earnings are coming from – why would you feel politics has any value to you?

Poverty isn't new but according to Joseph Rowntree Foundation, after 20 years of falling poverty rates we are now seeing a trend upwards. Whilst I am no statistician and I am certainly not an academic, I am an employer and I can see around me in Salford more people on the streets living rough and more families struggling to survive. I wasn't happy just dropping the odd tin of beans in for the foodbank at my local supermarket. As an employer I knew I had the power to change things even in my business of just 10 employees.

So, what can a small business like mine do to make a difference? Since 2016 we have paid the real living wage as a minimum and we don't operate zero hours contracts. In effect all our team are salaried with the minimum 40-hour week currently earning £18,200 per year. It's not a lot but when you compare it with the widely feted "gig" economy – it is a game changer!

So, what is the "gig" economic model? It is companies employing people as sub-contractors, so they are not directly employed by the company, therefore any equipment, resources, holidays, National Insurance contributions and taxes are managed by the employee not the employer. The terms of any Service Level Agreement (SLA) will often have punitive measures for the employee in the event of a failure to deliver the SLA, this can be as basic as a day off sick. It is also fair to say that many of these sub-contractors (whilst bright and effective operators in their specialist trade) are not trained or equipped as business owners and very often fail to understand the hidden costs of keeping account of the business expenses, tax and other requirements. This often drives people into poor health and welfare (long hours, no holidays and barely seeing the family) or debt and the employee must wait for work to come in, which can mean no income at all. You can't claim benefits if you are classed as working or self-employed and this is getting much worse thanks to the welfare and reform work act 2016 where the benefits cap has been substantially reduced (but it is a commonly held belief that there are a large number of "gig" workers on less than the minimum wage).

The current government see the new ways of employing as "entrepreneurial" but as an entrepreneur myself, I object to the comparison. It is a dereliction of duty for employers when they know they can employ on a full-time basis but choose not to. The government instead of encouraging better wages and a more stable working environment for employees, chooses to use the stick of reduced benefits, forcing people into impossible life choices.

Don't get me wrong, it isn't easy being a good employer and it doesn't guarantee you good employees. But it is no coincidence that in a small business like ours, staff turnover is very low. They love the company and they are proud of what we do!

The public and our customers want to see good practices like "fair trade", and in our case fair employment terms. Overall, it produces happier staff and better customer service, society benefits with more people in the community employed, the government benefits from more taxes and the families of our employees benefit from less financial stress and regular working hours. The idea that you can't make money is refuted by the fact that we have been a socially responsible, profit making business for 3 years now! Having spoken to many employers, they do see the benefits of what we are achieving but they look at what the bigger organisations in our industry are doing and they want to be competitive. However, it is worth noting that in 2017 small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) employed 16.1 million people; that is **60%** of all private sector employment in the UK* and they constitute over half of all accredited Living Wage employers**



Members of the team: L to R Billy Dean, Reece Jones, Paul Doxey and Gavin Ryan

*https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663235/bpe_2017_statistical_release.pdf

** <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/sites/default/files/University-of-Middlesex-Putting-the-Living-Wage-to-Work-October-2016.pdf>

Space in Common: Help build better conversations about the plan for Greater Manchester

After a controversial consultation, Greater Manchester's Spatial Framework is being re-drafted, with a new consultation now scheduled for October.

In the build-up GMCVO are asking: how can we make more constructive and inclusive conversations about the shape of our city region? To do so, they are recruiting 12-15 people with a stake in the topic for a variety of reasons and access to wider networks for building change. They hope to mix housing developers with campaign groups, transport charities with businesspeople, and economists with activists. Across four workshops GMCVO will discuss previous experiences, consider what is needed for a better conversation, and explore possibilities to pursue this together. Findings will be widely promoted, including via relationships with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Housing, Planning and Homelessness Commission. Practical support is also available to help participants take actions themselves. Space in Common is delivered by [The Democratic Society](#) and a group of academics and practitioners called the Action Research Collective. It is part of the [Jam and Justice](#) research collaboration. If you are interested in taking part, please [email](#) for more information. More details are in [this blogpost](#).



The gmmpa Newsletter

Just to let you know that we'll be taking a few short breaks over the summer. The next Newsletter will be issued on August 8th and then we'll be back with our regular fortnightly issue in September.

All our previous newsletters are available in our [online archive](#). This year so far we've featured many writers and even more organisations, so why not dip in to our Beyond Poverty stories; Working Wardrobe; the GM Living Wage Campaign and the Good Employment Charter; the GM Law Centre's campaigns and activities; homelessness and Love for the Streets; Universal Credit and other 'benefits'. We've had editorials, blogs, updates, events, job opportunities and most recently coverage of GMPA's exciting Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance and there's much more to come.

Forthcoming Events:

Festival of Ageing

until July 15th, 2018 across Greater Manchester



The Festival of Ageing is aimed at all those over 50 and living in GM. There'll be a range of activities on offer: music, dancing, hobbies, physical activities and lots of opportunities to join in with events both local to you and further afield.

If you work with anybody aged over 50 or are aged over 50 yourself, then get involved! There will be an event in most Boroughs and small neighbourhood events and activities. You can find more details on the [webpage](#)

Tackling community loneliness through short film workshops

Tuesday July 17th 2018 from 10am - 12 noon at Federation House, 2 Federation Street, Manchester M4 4BF

Being lonely is different from being alone. This Silent Elephant Project is part of a nationwide objective of reducing loneliness in the UK. [More info and book](#)

Welfare Conditionality: Sanctions, Support and Behaviour Change

[SHUSU, University of Salford](#) Wednesday July 18th, 2018 from 1 - 4 pm at the Old Fire Station, The University of Salford M5 4WT

This project has created an international and interdisciplinary focal point for research on welfare conditionality, providing a new and wide-ranging evidence base on the impact and ethicality of welfare conditionality across a range of policy areas. This event provides an opportunity to discuss the research findings and how they can feed into the work and welfare agenda across GM. [More info and book](#)



Do you have any events that you'd like GMPA to publicise? Please [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 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.



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