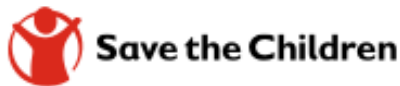


Leading organisations are coming together to support GMPA – will you join them?

*Could your organisation contribute to the long-term sustainability of GMPA?
Could you enable GMPA to do more to bring likeminded people together to collectively address poverty and to raise the profile of the issue across the city region? Are you in a position to help us drive down poverty in Greater Manchester?*



GMPA needs your help so that we can achieve even more. We are inviting organisations to join our Principal Partners Scheme. The Principal Partners Scheme enables organisations to support GMPA with larger pledges of funding and support. We are delighted to announce a number of organisations have already joined the scheme. These include:



You can see quotes from some of our Principal Partners on our [website](#) and we're inviting more organisations to join the Scheme. If you answered yes to one of the questions above then maybe your organisation could be one of them? As well as larger pledges of funding and support, Principal Partners will join GMPA's new advisory board and be given a GMPA 'Principal Partner' logo for use on their website. Your contribution will help us to achieve our objectives and enable GMPA to move onto a more sustainable footing. We want to confirm our 2018 Principal Partners by the end of the financial year, so please get in touch. For further details and to discuss this opportunity, please email [Graham](#).

Alternatively, as we mentioned in our last newsletter, organisations can sign up to our Supporters Scheme through [smaller pledges of funding](#).

Coming up

We are pleased to announce that in the next issue of our Newsletter (February 14th) we will be launching our third map. This will be showing where Greater Manchester people can access advice, information and guidance. You can access our popular Emergency Food Providers and Household items and repairs maps via our [website](#)



The End Child Poverty coalition last week published new figures on the levels of child poverty in the UK. These reveal that there are now constituencies within the UK where more than half of children are growing up in poverty, compared to one in ten, in the areas with the lowest child poverty rates. The full report and data are available on their [website](#)

Among the twenty parliamentary constituencies with the highest levels of childhood poverty, seven are located in London, three in Birmingham, and **three in Manchester**.

Sam Royston, Chair of End Child Poverty and Director of Policy and Research at the Children's Society said "No family in modern Britain should be struggling to put food on the table, heat their homes and clothe their children. End Child Poverty is calling on the Chancellor to end the freeze on children's benefits, and to invest in interest free credit for low income families, to ensure that poverty doesn't result in spiralling debt."

Greater Manchester Parliamentary Constituency figures, showing the level of child poverty in that area:

Altrincham & Sale West 14.2%	Ashton in Makerfield 22%	Ashton under Lyne 31.6%
Blackley & Broughton 44.7%	Bolton North East 35.5%	Bolton South East 39.5%
Bolton West 24.4%	Bury North 27.7%	Bury South 26.5%
Cheadle 16%	Denton & Reddish 25.8%	Hazel Grove 18.8%
Heywood & Middleton 28.6%	Leigh 24.3%	Manchester Central 47.5%
Manchester Gorton 48%	Manchester Withington 33.5%	Oldham East & Saddleworth 37.4%
Oldham West & Royton 45.6%	Rochdale 41%	Salford & Eccles 31.2%
Stalybridge & Hyde 30.1%	Stockport 27%	Stretford & Urmston 30.3%
Wigan 27.3%	Worsley & Eccles South 29.6%	Wythenshawe & Sale East 30%



We need your help! Do you know of an employer that is paying the Living Wage, but is not yet accredited?

According to the [Living Wage Foundation](#):

- ★ 86% of employers have reported that being accredited has enhanced their reputation.
- ★ 80% reported that they saw an increase in the quality of work.
- ★ 75% reported improved staff retention and motivation.

So, if you know an employer, that now needs to apply to become an accredited employer, please ask them to contact the Living Wage Foundation, to begin the process.

Alternatively, just let us know and we will get in touch with them, and refer them to the Living Wage Foundation.

These are exciting times and together we can make a real difference to people working in Greater Manchester. Also, please remember that the next meeting of the Campaign Group will take place on March 14th 2018. Further details will be available in the very near future.

In the meantime, if you need to get in touch, please contact Lynn via [email](#) or call 07948 549 485.

Greater Manchester Housing Action & Tenants Union UK present

MANCHESTER RENTERS FORUM

1st March 6.30-9PM
Mechanics Institute M1 6DD



Thursday March 1st, 2018 from 6.30 - 9pm at The Mechanics Institute, 103 Princess Street, Manchester M1 6DD

Led by renters for renters, the forum is an opportunity to reflect on experiences of renting in the city, and make collective demands for safe, secure and affordable housing, both now and into the future.

At the forum attendees who struggle to access or live in private rented housing can speak directly to policy makers. The initiative has received the support of Andy Burnham, GM Mayor and Paul Dennett, Salford City Mayor and GMCA's lead for Housing who will be attending the event to listen to the concerns of renters.

The Renters Forum aims to combat private renting issues, by building a platform on which those struggling to rent or those renting privately can voice their difficulties to council leaders. It aims to empower renters and forge greater cooperation and dialogue between them, landlords, council leaders and local support agencies.

Food and refreshments will be provided.

The Forum has been arranged by a coalition of organisations including Greater Manchester Housing Action, Tenants Union UK, GM Shelter and Acorn Communities Manchester. This Forum will be limited to residents of Manchester, it is hoped that further meetings will be planned for other Greater Manchester council areas.

Tickets are free and available via [Eventbrite](#) but booking is essential. Tickets have been reserved for support services, so that staff can encourage clients and volunteers to attend - these will need to be booked with the organisers via [email](#)

Fuel Poverty Awareness

Victoria Egerton leads on Research & Campaigns at Citizens Advice Manchester and is a member of GMPA's Fuel Poverty Special interest Group. This article outlines some of the issues behind Fuel Poverty, the support that people need, and invites you to a morning of training and discussion on Fuel Poverty Awareness Day, 23rd February 2018.



With the rollout of Universal Credit, low wages and zero hour contracts, the freeze on working age benefits, inflation, high energy costs and energy inefficient homes, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to afford to adequately heat their homes.

Fuel Poverty Awareness Day is a national day to raise awareness of the impact of fuel poverty.

In December 2017 alone our energy advice team at Citizens Advice Manchester advised 118 clients on 562 issues. We regularly support people that are unable to afford to top up their pre-payment meters, have exacerbated health problems due to cold homes and those that are having to choose between eating and heating their homes.

Working together to reduce fuel poverty in Greater Manchester

As part of our delivery on the Big Energy Saving Network Campaign we are inviting front line workers and volunteers from across Greater Manchester to join us for a fuel poverty awareness training event on February 23rd 2018. We will raise awareness of key issues and discuss how we can work together to reduce fuel poverty in Greater Manchester.

The event will include:

- Training on energy efficiency, payment methods, discounts and tariffs, switching supplier, SMART meters, dealing with energy debt and ensuring advice is holistic
- Discussions and debates on key issues: Self disconnection of pre-payment meters, heating or eating
- Ask the adviser Q and A
- Working together to reduce fuel poverty in Greater Manchester

[You can book your place here](#)

Big Energy Saving Week

During Big Energy Saving Week we campaigned across Manchester at supermarkets, shopping centres and hospitals to help people check, switch and save: check that they are on the best deal, switch supplier and save money on their energy bills. It was a great way to reduce fuel poverty and raise awareness of the support available with energy arrears.

To make a referral to our energy team for energy arrears you can either send an [email](#) or call 01616721234.

For more information on our research and campaigns work contact [Victoria Egerton](#)



Fuel poverty in England is measured using the Low Income High Costs (LIHC) indicator. Under the LIHC indicator, a household is considered to be fuel poor if they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level) or were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

According to the Government's Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report 2017, in 2015, the proportion of households in fuel poverty in England was estimated at 11% (approx. 2.5 million households). This is an increase of 0.4 per cent from 2014.

The level of fuel poverty is highest in the private rented sector (21.3 % of households) compared to those in owner occupied properties (7.4%). Those in the private rented sector also tend to be deeper in fuel poverty, with an average fuel poverty gap of £410, compared to £175 for those in local authority housing.

When considering household composition, those living in 'multi-person (adult) households' are deepest in fuel poverty with an average fuel poverty gap of £493 compared to a single person under 60 (£227). However, the highest prevalence of fuel poverty is seen for lone parents with dependent child(ren) (23.6%). [More information](#)

Back to Basics: What is Universal Credit and what are the problems? A Quick Guide by The Guardian

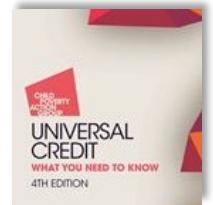
Universal Credit (UC) is the supposed flagship reform of the benefits system, rolling together six benefits into one online-only system (including unemployment benefit, tax credits and housing benefit). The theoretical aim, for which there was general support, was to simplify the benefits system and increase the incentives for people to work, rather than stay on benefits.

How long has it been around? The project was legislated for in 2011. The plan was to roll it out by 2017. However, a series of management failures, expensive IT blunders and design faults have seen it fall at least five years behind schedule.

What is the biggest problem? The original design set out a minimum 42-day wait for a first payment to claimants when they moved to UC. In the autumn 2017 budget the wait was reduced to 35 days from February 2018. The wait has led to rent arrears (and in some cases to eviction), hunger (food banks in UC areas report almost 17% increases in referrals), use of expensive credit and mental distress. Ministers have expanded the availability of hardship loans (now repayable over a year and resulting in reduced UC payments) to help new claimants while they wait for payment. Housing benefit will now continue for an extra two weeks after the start of a UC claim. Critics want the waiting time reduced to two or three weeks.

Are there other problems? Yes. Multibillion-pound cuts to work allowances imposed by the former chancellor mean UC is far less generous than originally envisaged. According to the Resolution Foundation thinktank, about 2.5m low-income working households will be more than £1,000 a year worse off when they move on to UC, reducing work incentives. Landlords are worried that the level of rent arrears racked up by tenants on UC and the whole system is not very user-friendly: claimants complain the system is complex, unreliable and difficult to manage, particularly if you have no internet access.

The Child Poverty Action Group produce a “Universal Credit: what you need to know” guide for both advisers who need to know how and when universal credit will affect their clients, and for those currently claiming benefits themselves. It is filled with clear advice and lots of useful examples. [The current guide is the 4th edition, is 159 pages and costs £15](#) ISBN: 978 1 910715 33 8



Universal Credit: Can we fix it? Should we fix it? Excerpt from an article by Professor Jane Millar, University of Bath

“The Work and Pensions Select Committee in a new phase of their enquiry into the rollout of Universal Credit, identifies a list of ‘priorities’: self-employment; free school meals and passported benefits; work incentives, including both the work allowance and the taper rate; the locally delivered Universal Support system; and support for childcare costs in Universal Credit. The list does not tackle some of the most challenging changes such as the monthly assessment and the impact of a single monthly payment. Nevertheless, these are some major areas at the heart of Universal Credit, not just issues at the margins.

This follows hot on the heels of the Resolution Foundation’s ‘remedy’ report, which sets out 16 recommendations under four main headings: implementation; generosity of support; financial incentives to enter work; and financial incentives to progress. And this is not the end; there are many other people and organisations with ideas about how to fix Universal Credit. Gingerbread, for example, identifies seven areas particularly related to the needs and circumstances of lone parents.

There is, of course, quite a lot of overlap in the proposals. But still, that’s a lot of fixing. One might be forgiven for thinking that something that needs quite so much fixing is, perhaps, not really fit for purpose in the first place.

Should we fix it? The government says yes because Universal Credit will ensure that work always pays and will achieve three important goals: it will make people out of work search harder for jobs; it will increase the number of people in employment; and it will improve employment retention and progression.

But there is very little solid evidence so far to judge these claims.

And what of in-work progression? In many ways, this is the top prize. If Universal Credit can help low-paid workers improve their wages, and their jobs more generally, this would be an important outcome that could really improve incomes and lives. But we should be cautious about whether this is likely to happen. The Social Security Advisory Committee recently published a report on in-work progression and Universal Credit. This points out that ‘there is very little evidence as to what can be done to advance earnings progression’ – and that the DWP Randomised Control Trial, which is the main source of evidence so far, ‘has mostly involved single childless people who have progressed from unemployment into low paid work’.

There is a big policy and research agenda here, and ensuring that all Universal Credit recipients receive the best possible advice and support will be a major challenge.”

[Full article](#)

Forthcoming Events:

Bolton needs a Law Centre

Friday, February 2nd, 2018 from 7pm to 8pm, at the Lecture Theatre Bolton Central Library Le Mans Crescent, Bolton BL1 1SE



Public meeting with Maxine Peake and Yasmin Qureshi MP. Come along if you agree and want to get involved. You can register for the event on [Facebook](#) or please just come along.

Businesses tackling homelessness in GM

Wednesday February 7th, 2018 from 10am - 12.30pm at KPMG, 1 St Peter's Square, Manchester M2 3AE

How can we work together as a city to address the rising issue of homelessness? Alongside the work of Manchester Homelessness Partnership, social impact consultancy Noisy Cricket will be exploring the systemic, cultural and personal issues contributing to the growing issues of homelessness and the impact its having at home and across the UK.

This is a free event. [More information and book](#)

GM Law Centre Ceilidh fundraiser Saturday February 10th, 2018 from 7pm at Saint Ninian's United Reformed Church, 515 Wilbraham Road, Manchester M21 0UF



Entrance fee: £10 waged/£5 unwaged.

Please bring your own drinks. Great music, great atmosphere, great raffle. You do the dancing! You can register on [Facebook](#), or just turn up! All for a great cause! Please [contact us](#) for donation of raffle prizes (how about donating any Christmas presents you – secretly – don't want to keep).

Raising Awareness and Overcoming Homelessness Film

On Thursday March 15th, 2018 from 6 - 9pm at The Longford Centre, 37 Edge Lane, Chorlton, M21 9JU



This film created by community members who are experiencing, have been, or are on the brink of becoming homeless will be launched. We have worked with the Homelessness Partnership Group, Mustard Tree, Booths Centre, Lifeshare and Coffee 4 Craig in order that the voices & stories portrayed in the film convey a true reflection of the current situation.

Food will be provided for everyone, cooked by residents of the hostel with the support and guidance of Cracking Good Food. The food will be provided by Fareshare Greater Manchester. Donations greatly appreciated on a pay as you feel able basis.

[More information and to book](#)

Do you have any events in 2018 that you'd like GMPA to publicise? [Email us with the details](#)

2018 Conference on Food and Poverty

Multi-disciplinary research conference on food and poverty in the UK: taking stock, moving forward.

This event is in London but we felt that it was worth sharing information with you.



With the increasing recognition of the problem of household food insecurity in the UK, there has been a growing amount of research focused on the inability of people to afford sufficient food and experiences of food in poverty. From in-depth ethnographic research within foodbanks, policy analyses of welfare reform and their impacts on the ability for people to afford food, studies of child feeding programmes, and new analyses of survey data, this is a quickly growing and multi-disciplinary field of research.

In April 2018 this conference on household food insecurity in the UK will be hosted at King's College London, bringing together leading researchers and third-sector organisations to share research on this important and pressing issue of increasing concern.

Conference hosts: Dr Rachel Loopstra and Dr Hannah Lumbie-Mumford

[More information and booking from February](#)

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.