

Last week GMPA launched Greater Manchester's first ever Food Poverty Action Plan to a packed hall in Manchester. The Action Plan was the culmination of 10 months work by over 100 people and organisations, which I have had the privilege of coordinating.

With over 600,000 people, including 200,000 children, living in poverty in Greater Manchester and food bank use higher in the city region than most other parts of the country, the plan calls for action by organisations across all sectors to help prevent people falling into poverty, and to support people relying on food handouts out of poverty through advice, support and signposting.



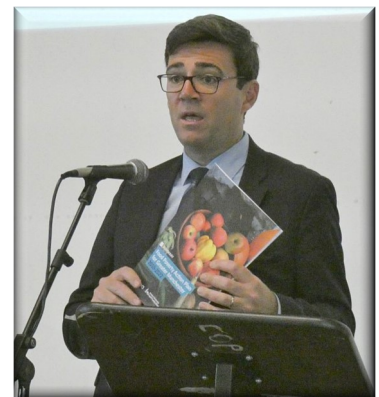
  
Over 100 organisations have come together in the last year to set out how we're going to end food poverty in Greater Manchester – the Food Poverty Action Plan.



Many people and organisations pledged to take action and help make the plan a reality, including FareShare, Kellogg's, Pledge, the Health & Social Care Partnership, Church Action on Poverty and End Hunger UK and local authorities.



You can read more about the charity Pledge's commitment on p4.



Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, who [wrote the foreword](#) for the Action Plan, spoke at the event and pledged that he would write to every public body in Greater Manchester, asking them to implement this plan at the local level.



GMPA Director  
Tom Skinner



Some of the chairs of the Food Poverty Alliance's nine sub-groups took questions from the audience



Among many other things, the action plan calls for:

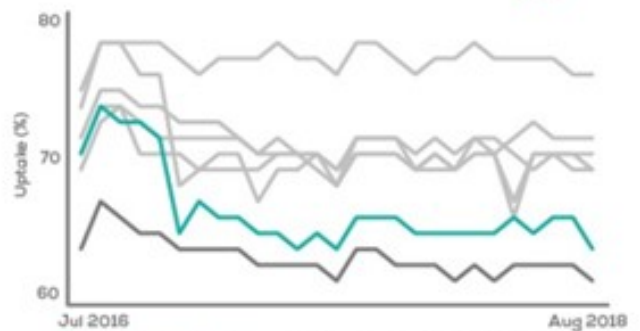
- A joined-up response on the ground – the provision of debt, welfare advice and other support alongside the provision of food handouts and support, so that people get the most appropriate help as quickly as possible;
- More longer-term options for people in need of food support, such as food clubs, pantries and community grocers, to match the level of support provided for people in moments of crisis;
- A lead for poverty to be appointed by the GM Combined Authority and each of Greater Manchester's ten councils;
- Schools to increase uptake of free school meals, and to work with local businesses and charities to run breakfast clubs, while supporting coordinated action on holiday hunger;
- A campaign to increase uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers, an NHS scheme that supports parents on low incomes to buy healthy food for their young children. GMPA estimates around £3.6million worth of vouchers went unclaimed in Greater Manchester last year;
- Health services to expand social prescribing for healthy food-related activities such as cooking classes and food growing, and to work with charities and businesses to promote healthy food.

Food banks help people in moments of crisis while food clubs offer longer term support through a membership scheme.

Our Action Plan calls for local partnerships to set up more food clubs, especially in areas that lack affordable healthy food.



### £3.6m unclaimed every year



The full plan has more than 70 actions, including something for each organisation in every sector and every borough of Greater Manchester to do, to play their part in tackling food poverty. You can find both the [summary](#) and the [full Action Plan](#) (the more detailed full version will evolve as the plan is implemented, hence the more minimalist presentation) [here](#), along with more information about the Food Poverty Alliance and how it has co-produced the Action Plan.

To continue coordinating the work of the Food Poverty Alliance, we also need to secure additional project funding and are asking organisations across Greater Manchester to pledge financial support to help us recruit a full-time project worker who will:

- Drive forward the recommended actions in the Action Plan, working with partners and allies across all sectors and in all boroughs to encourage action and to provide support and advice;
- Convene open meetings between all stakeholders who are taking action on food poverty, to encourage a joined-up response and evidence-based action;
- Work with the food support sector (food banks, food clubs etc) to ensure provision matches people's and communities' needs;
- Ensure that food poverty action is joined up with other action on food.

A funding proposal and budget is available on request from [food@gmpovertyaction.org](mailto:food@gmpovertyaction.org).

**With the plan launched, now we need to make it a reality, with joined-up efforts to reduce and prevent food poverty for thousands of people all across Greater Manchester. More than 50 pledges have already been made by people and organisations across Greater Manchester. Can you pledge to take action on food poverty by starting to implement one or more of the actions in the Plan? Please email [food@gmpovertyaction.org](mailto:food@gmpovertyaction.org)**

## Addressing the underlying causes of food poverty

By Dr Mags Adams

[Dr Mags Adams](#) is Senior Research Co-ordinator at UCLAN's Institute of Citizenship, Society and Change. She chaired one of the sub-groups of the Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance, which recommended actions for the [Food Poverty Action Plan](#) to address the underlying causes of food poverty. You can read the recommended actions, all of which were included in the Action Plan, and discuss them, [here](#).

Food insecurity in the UK is on the rise as evidenced by the increased use of food banks across the country<sup>1</sup> and the increasing number of deaths from malnutrition (up by more than 30% between 2007 and 2016<sup>2</sup>). At a time when Greater Manchester is performing well economically in terms of job creation and private sector business growth, low pay and low skills mean many people are not benefiting from the region's success; median full-time wages are £50 per week lower in Greater Manchester (£494) than they are nationally (£545), and 23% of workers are paid below the voluntary Living Wage<sup>3</sup>. Universal credit was piloted in Tameside in Greater Manchester before being rolled out to Oldham and further afield. It replaced six means tested benefits with one single payment. It has been highly criticised due to effects on housing rights, evictions and homelessness<sup>4</sup>. In October 2017 it was reported that 80% of claimants in some housing associations had fallen behind with rent because of delays in receiving their payments<sup>5</sup>. This new benefit has an inbuilt six-week delay in receiving payments, allegedly to mirror being paid monthly in the workplace (However, it should be noted that many of those earning under £10,000 per annum are actually paid weekly<sup>6</sup>). In reality delays of ten and twelve weeks are not uncommon before payments are received<sup>7</sup>.

Many additional factors are also at play in determining why people experience food poverty. For example, food prices fluctuate, the UK is a net importer of food<sup>8</sup> and the fall in the pound since the EU referendum has pushed the cost of living upwards<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, housing prices are disproportionately higher than in other European countries.

Child poverty in Manchester is one of the highest rates by local authority area; 35.5% of children under 16 live in poverty with 69.4% of them living in workless households<sup>10</sup>. Many people living in poverty are in part-time and low paid work.



Photo: Cracking Good Food



Dr Mags Adams

By addressing the underlying causes of food poverty, we can ensure that everyone in Greater Manchester is food secure and has 'adequate access at all times to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life'<sup>11</sup>. Many of the problems associated with food poverty, including hunger and malnutrition, are problems caused by poverty. Addressing this will mean that households have a real living wage for a decent quality of life, that homelessness becomes a thing of the past, that children can focus on their education rather than their hunger, and that everyone has an affordable place to live.

Mags is seeking people to apply for a fully-funded PhD on the topic of "Local food systems and local economic democracy: a framework for delivering food security?" Full details [here](#)

1 Bulman, M. (2018, 24 April). Food bank use in UK reaches highest rate on record as benefits fail to cover basic costs. Independent. Available [here](#)

2 British Specialist Nutrition Association (2018). Forgotten not Fixed: A Blueprint to Tackle the Increasing Burden of Malnutrition in England. Available [here](#)

3 Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2017). 100-day countdown: Greater Manchester mayor must get to grips with region's in-work poverty problem. Available [here](#)

4 Greater Manchester Law Centre (2017). "We demand: no evictions as a result of Universal Credit delays" says GMLC, Disabled People Against the Cuts, Acorn tenants' union and others. Available [here](#)

5 Williams, J. (2017, 19 Oct). Families are 'being made homeless' by Universal Credit - but its rollout will continue. Available [here](#)

6 Institute for Government (2017). The problems with Universal Credit. Available [here](#)

7 See Institute for Government (2017) above.

8 Gov.UK (2017). Food Statistics in your pocket 2017 - Global and UK supply. Available [here](#)

9 Jackson, G. (2017, 14 Nov). UK food prices rise at fastest rate in four years. Financial Times. Available [here](#)

10 Manchester City Council (2017). Manchester City Council Report for Resolution Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022. Available [here](#)

11 World Food Programme (2018). What is food security? Available [here](#)

### Office and Business Support Manager (18 hours per week, working in the Manchester Office)

To manage the facilities and services to ensure the smooth running of the Manchester office and linked financial administration, with business support to the UK Programme staff in the England Team.

Closing date for applications March 25th 2019, more information [here](#)





More than 50 pledges have been made by people and organisations across Greater Manchester, to implement the recommended actions in the Food Poverty Action Plan. Here Mylo Kaye from the charity "Pledge" talks about action that he is taking to tackle food poverty. Can you pledge to take action on food poverty by starting to implement one or more of the actions in the Plan? Please read the Action Plan and [email](#) to tell us what you will do to make the Food Poverty Action Plan a reality.

## From earth to table, how local allotment growing is feeding people in poverty

By Mylo Kaye, CEO of Pledge

On an allotment in Stretford, a group of friends led by Kal Gill-Faci are spending most weekends clearing, weeding and getting the ground ready to sow fruit and vegetables that will soon make their way to the tables of Greater Manchester people. This natural, healthy, nutritious food is helping to combat food poverty.

Humphrey Park allotments are home to [Pledge, a local charity helping people living in poverty](#). The charity, started last year is focused on ending poverty for those living across Greater Manchester.

For the past year, food grown has been harvested and donated to other local charities such as Cornerstone, The Longford Centre, Barnabus, Mustard Tree, Reach Out to the Community & The Globe Food Pantry. These partnerships are vital to the success of 'Plot for Poverty' and the initiative couldn't happen without them.

Over 7,400 meals will have been delivered to hungry people across our region by the Autumn, and with the only cost being time, it's a win-win for local people in need and the charities cooking the fresh food. Typical fruit and veg that is grown are things like Kale, Potatoes, Cauliflower, Onions and Grapes, plus many more. The food makes its way from earth to table in a matter of hours.

Local children are also actively involved in the growing. Education around food poverty amongst people who are homeless is essential, these young people are our leaders of tomorrow and we need them to get involved and make their own change.



Kal Gill-Faci delivers fresh produce to Reach out to the Community



Milo Kaye

Individuals, groups and allotments across Greater Manchester are encouraged to get involved to help end food poverty in the region, by either starting their own 'Plot for Poverty' or by offering time and resources to Pledge to maximise growing efforts in the run-up to the Autumn months.

We can all make a massive impact by finding intuitive ways to help people living in poverty, but we can only do this by working together.

[You can see a video of the project here](#)

## From poverty to prosperity for all - a one day conference (2nd April 2019)

On 2nd April the Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit (IGAU) and GMPA are hosting a joint conference exploring what more we can do to tackle poverty at local- and city-region level, with a particular focus on Greater Manchester.

Greater Manchester can tell an impressive 'growth story', but poverty continues to exist across the city region and on a large-scale. More than 600,000 people are living on low incomes, with child poverty rates of over 40% in some areas. Meanwhile a growing share of people are in in-work poverty and welfare reforms and a freeze on working-age benefits have taken £100s if not £1,000s out of the pockets of the poorest families. We need to understand how we can respond to these challenges across the city region.

The conference builds on the [local poverty strategies](#) event GMPA held at Kellogg's in October 2018 and is being held at the Mechanics Institute in Manchester. Please book your place [here](#).



Keynote Speaker: Katie Schmuecker, Joseph Rowntree Foundation





### FareShare Warehouse Manager Job Vacancy

37.5 hours per week £ 22,093 per annum

Based on New Smithfield Market, FareShare Greater Manchester re-distributes surplus good food to frontline charities, schools and good causes who help thousands of people in need.

The individual we are looking for will have experience of running a warehouse, understand food safety regulations, and will work well with a diverse team of volunteers and staff. To find out more and request a job pack contact Anna on 0161 223 8200 ex 111 or [email](#) Closing date March 27th 2019, interviews week commencing April 1st, 2019.

## Forthcoming events

### Know your rights: Ways to challenge disability discrimination with the UoM Pro Bono Law Society



On Monday March 25th, 2019 starting at 2pm at the Windrush Millennium Centre, 70 Alexandra Road, M16 7WD

Learn how to challenge disability discrimination, and what your legal rights are. eg general principles underpinning disability discrimination law; how to challenge discrimination in employment; how to challenge discrimination in education (including in vocational training and on placements); how to challenge benefits decisions.

Please let them know about any access requirements, [More info and to book](#) 0161 636 7534 Mobile for texts: 07508 537561

### Greater Manchester Law Centre manifesto launch

On April 11th, 2019 from 6 - 8pm  
at Thompsons Solicitors, 55 King Street, Manchester, M2 4LQ



Access to legal advice, representation and justice can empower people, reduce homelessness and poverty, challenge the hostile environment against claimants and migrants, enforce people's rights and prevent inequality and exclusion.

The manifesto will set out their demands for change, declare what they stand for, celebrate their work so far and call on others to fight with them for free access to justice. Get your £5 ticket [here](#)

### Understanding Food Poverty and the Transitional Behaviour of Vulnerable Individuals

On Thursday April 25th, 2019 from 3.30 - 7pm  
at Media City UK, University of Salford M50 2HE



University of  
**Salford**  
MANCHESTER

As almost a fifth of the UK population live in poverty and emergency food access is increasing year-on-year, our event reports on the temporal experience of austerity and food access exclusion in the Greater Manchester and city of Birmingham regions with the purpose of helping vulnerable individuals to navigate their way out of food poverty.

In addition to disseminating their key findings and policy summaries from local government, the event features an open Q&A panel with leading thinkers from Greater Manchester Poverty Action, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Birmingham Food Council and Salford City Council.

The event is free to attend but pre-registration is compulsory via [Eventbrite](#) where you will also find more information.

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

### Support us

Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) exists because of the support of likeminded organisations and individuals across Greater Manchester, and beyond, who share GMPA's desire to see an end to poverty in our city region.

There are three ways you can support GMPA's work, either through individual donations, signing up as a supporter or becoming a GMPA Principal Partner.

[More information](#)

### 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](#)

For more information please contact us by [email](#) 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.