

A new measure of poverty

By Graham Whitham

Another week, another story about [high levels of poverty](#) in the UK. This time from the [Social Metrics Commission](#) who have developed a new measure of poverty. You might understandably ask whether we needed a new measure of poverty but bear with me, this one has a backstory.

Back in 2010 the Labour Government passed the Child Poverty Act. It set in stone four child poverty reduction targets to be met in 2020/21. Fast-forward a few months and the incoming Coalition Government and think tanks such as Policy Exchange, set out concerns about the way in which poverty was being measured. The argument was that the previous government's approach had been too narrow. Those making such arguments often undermined their position by referring to 'the child poverty measure', when in fact four measures had been adopted and sometimes by a simple failure to understand the difference between mean and median averages.

Things came to a head in 2012 when the Government published a poorly written consultation on child poverty measurement. It was [rightly panned](#). The government had reached a dead-end; critical of the measures as set out in the Child Poverty Act, but unable to set out an adequate replacement.

Iain Duncan Smith scrapped the 2020 targets and, in their place, came a duty to report on levels of educational attainment and the number of children in workless households. Given that neither of these things are measures of child poverty, it didn't exactly solve the problem of government having no meaningful measure or measures of poverty in place around which it could build a coherent strategy.

To overcome the impasse, former special adviser to IDS - Philippa Stroud - set up the Social Metrics Commission. She brought together a panel of experts to establish a new measure of poverty around which a consensus could be reached.

The results were published last week, showing more than 14 million people, including 4.5 million children, are living in poverty in the UK. The new measure does some things the measures in the 2010 Act don't, for example taking into account savings as well as income and looking at household outgoings.

Whether this has all been worthwhile is another question. It is hoped that it will act as a catalyst for the Government to re-establish a meaningful agenda on poverty. Eight years have been wasted arguing about how poverty should be measured, and these arguments are part of the reason why there is a such a vacuum when it comes to government policy. Only radical steps to halt soaring child rates will have made the work of the Social Mobility Commission worth it.



Graham Whitham



Food Poverty Surveys

We are [running two surveys](#) until Wednesday 10th October, about action on food poverty across Greater Manchester - one survey about [provision during school holidays \(to tackle 'holiday hunger'\)](#) and one survey about [coordination of the response to food poverty](#) in each borough. If you are involved in either, please fill out the survey to help us in our coordination of the Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance

Filling the vacuum – the need for local child poverty strategies

On Friday October 26th, 2018 from 1.30pm - 3.30pm at Kelloggs, Orange Tower, Media City UK, Salford M50 2HF



There is currently a sizeable policy vacuum in respect of tackling family poverty in the UK. The UK government no longer has a child poverty strategy in place. The 2020 child poverty targets and the requirement on councils to have local poverty strategies were both scrapped by the Coalition Government.

With child poverty currently increasing and expected to reach 5.2 million by 2022, urgent action is needed locally to mitigate the impact of central government policy. Local authorities and their partners in different parts of the country have begun filling this vacuum through the implementation of child or family poverty strategies and initiatives such as poverty truth commissions.

In Scotland, the Scottish Government has introduced its own child poverty reduction targets and is asking local authorities to create Child Poverty Action Plans.

At this event we will discuss how we can ensure Greater Manchester is at the forefront of tackling family poverty. We will also explore how we can work together across public, private and VCSE sectors to ensure that all parts of the city region have comprehensive poverty strategies in place.

Speakers:

Graham Whitham, Greater Manchester Poverty Action;
Louisa McGeehan, Child Poverty Action Group;
Angela Harrington, Manchester City Council;
Lisa Nandy, Member of Parliament for Wigan;
Andrew Lightfoot, Greater Manchester Combined Authority;
John McKendrick, The Scottish Poverty and Inequality Unit



Lisa Nandy MP

[Places are limited so please book](#)

Manchester Credit Union Gold Saver Deposits

Written by Christine Moore, Manchester Credit Union (MCU)



Manchester Credit Union's Gold Saver accounts pay 1.5% over and above the dividend on their normal instant access accounts.

This year they are expecting to pay a 1% dividend on all instant access accounts which means that the Gold Saver account will be 2.5%.

They are offering this enhanced dividend to attract more savings into the credit union, which helps them to reach more people in need of affordable credit and will contribute towards the alleviation of poverty and the regeneration of the community.

MCU has a new family loan which is helping thousands of struggling families across Greater Manchester and the High Peak. A family loan with the credit union saves over £350 in interest compared to a loan from a doorstep lender and the family loans work on a 'save as you borrow' basis, which helps to develop good savings habits, and moves them towards financial resilience in the future.

All savings in the credit union up to £85,000 are fully protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme and the first £5,000 is also covered by a free life savings insurance, which means your beneficiary would receive up to double your savings if anything happened to you.

MCU hope you will consider saving with them, and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Christine by [email](#): or call 07912 790115

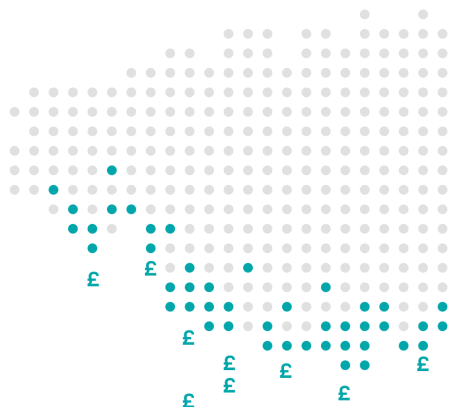
The decline of crisis support in England

By Graham Whitham

Last week we launched [new research](#) looking at local welfare assistance schemes across England. The research was covered by local TV and radio stations and also [online](#).

When they were introduced in 2013, the Government said they wanted local welfare assistance schemes to be the first port of call for people facing a financial crisis, but a lack of ring-fenced funding or guidance from central government has led to a collapse in this vital crisis support in many parts of the country with 22 local authorities not having schemes in place.

Our research found that here in Greater Manchester all ten local authorities operate schemes. However, as with the rest of the country, the level of funding for schemes and the amount and type of support they provide varies massively from one local authority to the next.

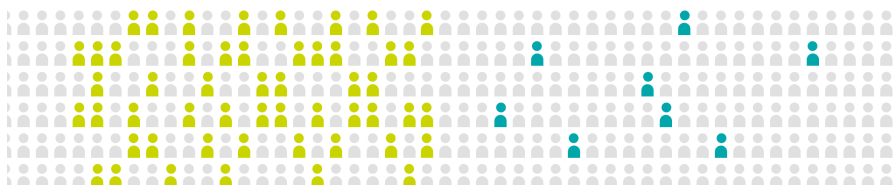


Local welfare assistance schemes were intended to replace Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans which were part of the old Discretionary Social Fund (abolished in 2013). The Fund was the safety net below the safety net. Now the safety net below the safety net is too often VCSE lead provision – such as foodbanks. The response of the voluntary sector to increased hardship and need, in an environment of scarce funding, has been nothing short of remarkable. That said, the state cannot absolve itself of responsibility to support the most vulnerable in our society. We need to see ring-fenced funding from government and support for local authorities to operate effective schemes.

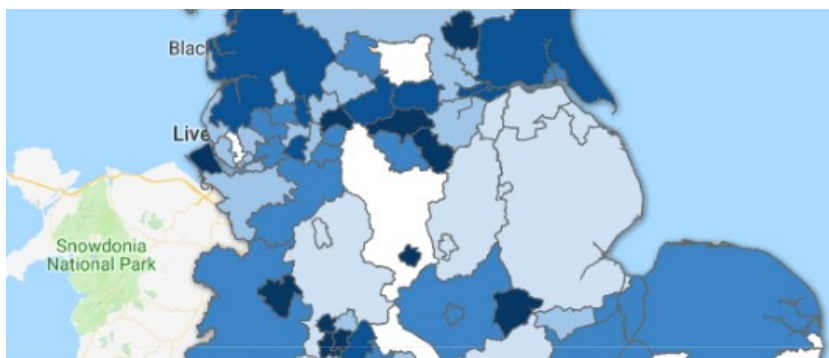
Crisis support in England has collapsed

Over **1.3 million** crisis support awards were made through the old Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants system in **2010/11**.

In **2017/18** there were just **160k** successful applications for crisis support through local welfare assistance schemes.



As part of our research we mapped local welfare assistance scheme budgets over the last three years. The map categorises areas and shows those places that don't have schemes in place and those where schemes are 'under threat'.



Forthcoming events

Save the Date for the huge Tesco Food Collection 2018

The Tesco Food Collection is one of the biggest and best opportunities to get involved and help FareShare and the Trussell Trust feed people across the UK. Between 26 November and 1 December 2018, volunteers will be asking Tesco customers to donate items in store to boost the stocks of non-perishable products in the run-up to Christmas. Three hours of volunteering time brings in enough for, on average, 600 meals!



FareShare ask for donations of long-life food such as tea, pasta, rice, long-life milk and juice, tins of veg, fruit and tomatoes etc, to supplement the fresh food they deliver to over 7,000 charities and community groups across the country. It helps to provide a nutritional and well-balanced meal to vulnerable people. You can volunteer [here](#)

The Trussell Trust are also looking for non-perishable items that can be distributed through their network of food banks across the country. In the Greater Manchester area they have over 50 distribution points so every tin or packet helps. If you'd like to volunteer please contact [your local food bank](#) to find out where the nearest collection will be held.



Tesco also donate a 20% financial top-up on all the food that is donated.

Manchester BME Network and Greater Manchester BME Network will be holding their next joint networking event on Thursday 27th September 2018 at St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Ardwick, M12 6FZ starting promptly at 10am (registration from 9.30am). Further details and to book online please click [here](#)

End Hunger UK campaign conference 2018

On Tuesday October 16th, 2018 from 11am - 4pm at Central Hall Westminster, Storey's Gate, Westminster, London SW1H 9NH

Come together with other campaigners and food poverty activists for a UK where everyone has access to good food and no-one has to go to bed hungry.

Speakers include: Emma Lewell-Buck MP who has worked extensively on household food insecurity; Rt Rev Tim Thornton, Bishop at Lambeth and Trustee of Feeding Britain; Alison Garnham, Chief Executive of Child Poverty Action Group; Ann Jones, vice chair of the National Federation of Women's Institutes; Professor Jon May, Chair of Trustees, the Independent Food Aid Network; Emma Revie, new Chief Executive of the Trussell Trust; Laura Sandys, Chair of the Food Foundation and many others, including people who have first-hand experience of being caught up in hunger and those who work on the frontline tackling it.

Debates will include discussion of what it will take to end hunger, ensuring children get food 365 days a year, the future of our benefits system, and the need to measure household food insecurity. There will be workshops on activism, the right to food and working in your community.

Tickets cost £10 - £55 [More information and book](#)



Launch event: Poverty Proofing the school day in the North West

On October 16th, 2018 from 9.30am - 3.30pm at Manchester Hall, 36 Bridge Street, Manchester M3 3BT



Currently 4 million children in this country are living in poverty and it is predicted that this will continue to rise dramatically in the coming years with over 5 million children set to be living in poverty by 2022; this will inevitably have a dramatic impact on schools and classrooms across the country. Poverty Proofing the school day is an innovative programme that identifies barriers to learning for students who do not have the same financial resource as their better off peers. This conference will explain the poverty proofing ethos sharing best practice from schools and delivery partners across the country, as well as looking at the evaluation completed by Newcastle University identifying a wide spectrum of positive impact on the school day around inclusion, attendance and attainment. The conference will consider how schools in the North West can respond to the poverty proofing work and explore how it can be best implemented in the region.

£50 per delegate. Lunch will be provided. To register for the day please email: donna.botham@children-ne.org.uk

Harpurhey Together

Tuesday October 16th, 2018 from 12.30 - 3.30pm at Harpurhey Neighbourhood Centre, Carisbrook Street, Harpurhey M9 5UX.

Bringing together local people, North Mancunians with new residents from Central and Eastern Europe sharing ideas, experiences and future plans. A partnership project between Parasol - bringing hope and friendship for European nationals and Harpurhey Neighbourhood Project - working with the community for 40 years.

To book a free place contact Graeme on 07460 988361 or email : harpurhey@aol.com Free lunch on arrival and free parking

Immigration detention: Get Informed and Take Action

On Tuesday 16th October 16th, 2018 6 - 8pm at Theatre A, University Place, University of Manchester, 176 Oxford Rd, M13 9PL



Every year, around 30,000 people in the UK are locked up in prison-like conditions, with no time limit. Staff and students at the University of Manchester, These Walls Must Fall, Medact and the Northern Postcolonial Network are bringing together a panel of practitioners, academics and experts by experience to raise awareness of immigration detention and look at what we can do to take action. The event is free but please [register](#) to attend

Embarrassment and gratitude: The experience of food bank use in England

On Thursday October 18th, 2018 from 12 - 2pm at Allerton L417, University of Salford, Frederick Road Campus, Salford M6 6PU

Speaker: Alan Connolly, PhD student, Lancaster University. Alan's research examines the rise in demand for food bank services in England over the past decade, utilising the Liverpool City Region, the city with the highest use of food banks in England, as a case study. [More information and to book](#)

Course in October



TRAINING

Greater Manchester Poverty Action provides training to organisations working to address poverty across the city region and the rest of the UK. We aim to support organisations to better understand some of the complexities around poverty. This includes training in how poverty is measured and how to identify data, to understanding the recent history of welfare reform and how it affects different groups of people.

One course is open for booking: Exploring the poverty premium, a half day course on October 18th. [More information and booking](#) (The September course on Understanding poverty data, is fully booked but do let us know if this course is of interest to you as we are likely to be offering it again.)



At Manchester Cathedral on November 9th, 2018 to raise funds and awareness to support people experiencing homelessness in Manchester.

Last year, 400 people braved the cold and rain to raise a stunning **£120,000!** This year, they are asking you to help them smash that figure. Sleep out for one night so others don't have to every night.

[Register now](#) The money we raise allows us to provide fresh, healthy meals every week, offer expert advice and a huge range of arts and activities to improve wellbeing and self-esteem

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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