

Big reset needed for a resilient society

by Barry Knight, a frequent contributor to [Rethinking Poverty](#)

RETHINKING POVERTY

THE WEBB LEGACY

My favourite history book, [The Sleepwalkers](#), tells the story of how the great powers drifted into the First World War without reason or regard to consequences. This is a common pattern, repeated many times since. For example, by blindly giving priority to economic growth, we have walked lemming-like towards the pandemic, the economic crash, the climate disaster, and the racism crisis. Yet, half a century ago, the [Club of Rome report](#) set out the social and environmental limits to growth and predicted the consequences of ignoring them.

The consequences are now becoming clear, exemplified in the dramatic rise in poverty. Since March 2020, we have witnessed the [fastest increase](#) in the number of people claiming working-age social security benefits in the UK since records began. In parts of Manchester, up to [40 per cent](#) of children now grow up in poverty.

And this is just the start. Planned redundancies are running at [twice the level](#) of the 2008 financial crash. According to estimates by the Trussell Trust, destitution rates are [set to double](#) by Christmas, while the crisis of food poverty is becoming a [‘national scandal’](#). Footballer [Marcus Rashford speaks](#) for many when he says:

‘I have no interest in party politics. Letting millions of children in the UK go hungry at night is only an issue of humanity. We need to do better.’

The pandemic has exposed a critical weakness in the systems we use to support society. We have relied on a [‘just in time’](#) approach, with no spare capacity, so that systems collapse as soon as unusual events occur. Successive governments have downgraded the importance of building infrastructure for the long term, preferring the quick-fix magic-bullet policy designed to address short-term symptoms.

So, the main lesson from the pandemic is the importance of planning for resilient systems. The concept of a planned society was a key factor in the success of social and economic policy in the 30 years since the Second World War, but has now been more or less abandoned.

A much-needed national plan would develop a ‘big reset’ for our society. There would be two main goals: first to rescue the millions of people now living in poverty and second to reform the operating principles for society.

Taking rescue first, the plan needs to stabilise our society by guaranteeing a basic income for everyone. This can be done in many ways, but the simplest and most respectful solution is through a [universal basic income](#). This is needed because jobs are scarce and Universal Credit barely meets people’s subsistence requirements.

Turning to the development of new operating principles, the plan should use the idea of wellbeing as its goal. Wellbeing means that people feel good, have robust physical and mental health, and find fulfilment in their work, leisure and family lives. The Carnegie UK Trust has developed a [framework](#) for how to develop wellbeing in society.

The plan would involve substantial reforms to the way we generate, tax and distribute wealth in society. Rather than having a society driven by profit, the plan would build on the [surge in community spirit](#) produced by the pandemic to foster solidarity where everyone has enough, but no one has too much. This would require a sustainable economy that enhances the natural world, while creating meaningful work. The plan would examine each and every government policy to ensure that it is life enhancing, so that, for example, education produces enthusiastic lifelong learners who can develop meaningful lives rather than people who can pass SATS tests.



Barry Knight

Given the upheaval caused by the pandemic, there is the opportunity to [#BuildBackBetter](#). This will require countercyclical investment, including borrowing to pay for it, but the alternative will be increasingly ineffective crisis interventions to compensate for our years of sleepwalking. Let’s wake up.

Greater Manchester Real Living Wage Campaign Update



The last few days has seen the really good news that Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) has been accredited by the [Living Wage Foundation](#) as a Real Living Wage Employer. MMU joins The University of Manchester, Salford University and Bolton University as accredited Real Living Wage Employers in the Higher Education sector. This means that all four of Greater Manchester's universities are now accredited Living Wage Employers. Read more details about MMU's accreditation [here](#). A big thanks, and well done, to all who have campaigned to achieve this outcome and bring real benefits to some of Greater Manchester's low paid workers.

Over the previous few months we have been discussing with our partners and supporters of the GM Living Wage Campaign, a range of issues relating to the impact of the pandemic and the lockdown on our GM economy and what the future looks like and how we #buildbackbetter. We have developed a series of podcasts which we hope will stimulate debate about how we put the #better into #buildbackbetter. These podcasts are in a series of three entitled 'Decent Work, Poverty, and the Real Living Wage in the Post Lockdown GM Economy'. The first of these podcasts featuring GMLWC Coordinator John Hacking in conversation with GM Mayor Andy Burnham has been available for a few weeks. The remaining two podcasts are now available to listen to on our website in the section '[Podcasts](#)'. One of the new podcasts is an interview with Graham Whitham about our work across GMPA and the Living Wage Campaign and the second podcast is GMLWC Co-ordinator John Hacking in conversation with representatives of the Manchester Poverty Truth Commission about the impact of the pandemic, and the lockdown, on those with lived experience of poverty. There is an additional podcast available in which Professor Ed Heery, a leading expert on the Living Wage, talks about its extent and impact.

All GMPA podcasts can be found [here](#).

Just a note for your diaries. Living Wage Week this year will take place week commencing November 9th and as always the GMLWC will be involved in a range of events. Although it promises to be different from previous years, we are still looking forward to getting involved and we would like to hear from you about any plans or ideas you have. Please contact GMLWC Co-ordinator [John Hacking](#).



Best Wishes and Stay Safe.

[John Hacking](#),

Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign Co-ordinator

Follow the campaign on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

The Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign is a GMPA programme

Organisations Leading Good Employment Movement in Greater Manchester

By Julia Shepek, Good Employment Charter Implementation Unit

The Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter is proud to announce nine new Members of the Charter. These employers have achieved membership status through their commitment to putting good employment into action and being exemplars of employment excellence, even through these challenging times. The employers to go from 'Supporters' to 'Members' of the Charter are The Co-operative Bank, Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation (GMCVO), KPMG, Macc, Michael Page, Peel L&P, Pozzoni Architecture, Unlimited Potential and William Hare Ltd.



Over 100 prominent businesses have already become Supporters, including ITV, Lloyds, Manchester Airport Group and GMCA. In total, the Charter has over 200 engaged employers across Greater Manchester, and its supporters cover over 200,000 employees.

The aim of the Good Employment Charter is to improve employment standards across the city region, engaging with employers of all size, sector, or geography. Among other characteristics of Good Employment, these improvements include measures such as paying the real living wage, implementing flexible working options, and supporting employee health and wellbeing. Organisations from all sectors can sign up as Supporters, with the goal of becoming Members. Learn more [here](#)

Child poverty rising sharply in the North and Midlands

By Graham Whitham



New research published this week by [End Child Poverty](#) finds that child poverty has risen most sharply in parts of the Midlands and Northern towns and cities in the past four years.

The research looks specifically at child poverty rates after housing costs are taken into account. Measuring poverty in this way often highlights the impact high housing costs have on household income, with many of the areas with the highest after housing cost poverty rates not surprisingly being in London. However, over the five years leading up to 2018/19, rents in other parts of the country have risen by the same amount as in the capital. This is acting to drive up poverty rates in places across the North. Increasingly this means that families are finding that, once their housing costs are paid, they do not have enough money to meet their children's needs and are left no option but to turn to crisis help, like food banks, and are increasingly reliant on free school meals.

Manchester and Oldham are among the areas that have seen the highest increases in child poverty rates after housing costs in the country. The table below shows the child poverty rates in each of Greater Manchester's ten boroughs in 2014/15 and 2018/19, and the increase between those years. Child poverty increased in all but one Greater Manchester borough during that period. The areas in our city region with the lowest child poverty rates in 2014/15 either saw relatively small increases in the five years up to 2018/19 (Stockport seeing an increase of 0.2% and Wigan an increase of 1.7%), or a decrease (Trafford seeing a fall of 0.9%). In contrast, Manchester had the highest child poverty rate in Greater Manchester in both 2014/15 and 2018/19 and saw the second highest increase over this period (7%).

Local authority	Child poverty (measured after housing costs) rate in 2014/15	Child poverty rate in 2018/19	Percentage point change (2015-19)
Bolton	32.7%	39.0%	6.3%
Bury	30.9%	33.8%	2.9%
Manchester	33.6%	40.6%	7.0%
Oldham	31.8%	39.9%	8.1%
Rochdale	32.4%	37.7%	5.3%
Salford	32.5%	34.8%	2.3%
Stockport	25.7%	25.9%	0.2%
Tameside	31.4%	34.8%	3.4%
Trafford	24.0%	23.1%	-0.9%
Wigan	29.1%	30.8%	1.7%

These differences are largely explained by variations in wage growth and housing costs. They also illustrate concerns that government policies that are acting to drive up poverty (e.g. cuts and reforms to benefits) are driving up poverty in already disadvantaged areas.

In response to the research, End Child Poverty is calling for a government strategy for tackling child poverty. GMPA is supporting this call, and the following asks:

- Uprating of housing assistance in line with inflation;
- Retain the £20 uplift in Universal Credit introduced at the start of the pandemic, which the Government has indicated will end in April 2021;
- End the benefit cap and the two-child limit on benefits;
- Invest in all children with an increase to child benefit;
- Extend Free School Meals to all families in receipt of Universal Credit and those with No Recourse to Public Funds.



Graham Whitham,
GMPA Director

You can read the full report and download the data from the End Child Poverty [website](#).

GMPA is a steering group member of End Child Poverty.

The Bond Board is taking on a pending tsunami of evictions

By Thomas Ingham, Housing Adviser, The Bond Board Ltd



It's common knowledge that Covid-19 has had a severe effect on the Private Rented Sector for both landlords and tenants. It has been estimated that over 174,000 tenancies have been threatened with eviction with 227,000 tenants in the UK admitting they are in rent arrears. Greater Manchester Combined Authority Leaders say they fear "homelessness could return to the streets of Greater Manchester on a scale not seen since the 1930s" if rapid and decisive action is not taken to avert a crisis. The legislation seems to be changing so regularly it is hard to keep up and as a result both landlords and tenants are struggling to understand what their rights are.

Tenants are also finding themselves more frequently in a position of financial insecurity which is often not only putting their tenancy at risk but potentially affecting the landlord's finances too. Though the government has put large notice periods in place for most evictions, this does not solve the problem and only delays it. At some point there is potential for a large wave of private rented evictions to take place. We, at [The Bond Board](#), have recognised this growing issue and we believe that tackling these issues sooner rather than later can prevent potential evictions.

With funding from The National Lottery and the Greater Manchester Mayoral Fund we have successfully put together a specialist housing advice service to tackle these issues within Oldham, Wigan, Rochdale and Bolton. We are offering 1 to 1 support with any private rented tenant living within these areas that are at risk of losing their tenancy and are on a low income. We will offer support with a variety of issues ranging from advice on legal possession notices and what their rights are, rent arrears, complex issues regarding illegal evictions and many more. We have partnered with the National Housing Advice Service and Shelter to assist us with any cases that demand additional specialist support to ensure that all our clients have the best chance of getting back on track.

For instance, in a recent case we offered support to we found that the Section 21 notice the tenant received was produced on the wrong document and therefore would have not been legal. This caused stress for the tenant and meant they could not go on a priority banding with their local housing provider. Through landlord and tenant mediation we managed to discuss the reasons for the eviction and we have helped manage the tenancy to a point where the eviction is no longer necessary. The landlord has been given advice on Section 21's so that in the future both landlord and tenants have a clearer understanding. We hope we can ensure that we exhaust all options before any eviction and we can prevent a potential tsunami in evictions in the upcoming 12 months.

However, we also understand that a significant number of landlords have also been affected by Covid-19 and may be struggling with income or ever changing legislation. Thanks to funding from The Nationwide Foundation and their Fair Housing Futures project, we are offering support, advice and training to landlords who may need advice around their rights, information around Universal Credit, updates on changes to housing legislation and eviction proceedings. This is a valuable free service that can offer long term 1 to 1 support that is rarely available and continues The Bond Board's objectives of a Private Rented Sector that works for all.



Thomas Ingham

If you would like to refer to either of our services then please [email](#) and request a referral form. If you would like to spread the word to your colleagues or clients then please get in touch on the same email and we can send over both referral forms and leaflets for you to share, as well as answering any burning questions.

A Winter Plan for Children



Save the Children have publishing a new briefing, [A Winter Plan for Children:](#)

Why families on low incomes shouldn't be left out in the cold this winter, after conducting research with families on low incomes to ask about their experiences of the past few months. They found that families are starting the winter already struggling with lack of money. Parents are relying on help from charities for food and clothes, they are taking on debt, and struggling to afford food and other basic essentials. Their aim is to keep the issue of child poverty in the public debate, following on from the work of the [Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Keep the Lifeline campaign](#), the [Resolution Foundation's The Winter \(Economy Plan\) is coming](#) and [End Child Poverty's](#) launch of local statistics.

Policy North Training are providing two full day virtual training courses (using Zoom) in November:



Identifying poverty data in Greater Manchester on Wednesday November 4th, 2020

Understanding poverty measurement, definitions and data on Wednesday November 18th, 2020

For more information and to book please go to the [webpage](#).

Race Equality Panel for Greater Manchester

Applications are currently open from individuals interested in joining a Race Equality Panel for Greater Manchester with a deadline of October 18th, 2020.

The Greater Manchester Race Equality Panel aims to address the systemic inequalities, racism and discrimination which disadvantage the people of Greater Manchester because of their culture, ethnicity or race. The purpose of the panel is to advise and challenge Greater Manchester public sector bodies on their work to tackle systemic inequalities, racism and prevent discrimination and increase the visibility of issues relating to race, and be involved in co-designing and implementing the solutions. Please visit the [website](#) to apply online

Job at Lifeshare: Multiple disadvantage outreach worker



To work in collaboration with Lifeshares partners and stakeholders to provide street outreach, to identify new and entrenched young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. For more information and a full job description, please go to the [website](#).

To apply you will need to submit a covering letter explaining your suitability for the role and a current CV by [email](#) before November 2nd, 2020, interviews will take place November 5th, 6th and 9th 2020.

Job at Seeds for Change

Seeds for Change is a small training collective looking for a new member who is actively involved in grassroots campaigns for ecological or social justice.

The role involves designing and delivering training and facilitation and creating resources for campaigns and co-operatives. Topics covered include consensus decision making, direct action, anti-hierarchical organising and campaign strategy. The aims are to help groups increase their skills, strategy and empowerment to confront injustice, and to organise in ways that put the core values of equality, freedom and solidarity into practice.

It is essential that a new member is willing and able to play a role in the running of the workers' co-op itself. Deadline: 9am October 26th, 2020. For more information and to apply please go to the [website](#)



The Coronavirus outbreak and how it relates to GMPA's work

As the effect of the Coronavirus outbreak impacts people's lives across the city region, our small team at GMPA will be doing what we can to highlight consequences of the virus on people experiencing poverty and on efforts to tackle poverty.

We will be working to ensure tackling poverty is at the forefront of people's minds when thinking about how Greater Manchester rebuilds and recovers after the pandemic. Please check on the [Covid-19](#) page of our website over the coming weeks for further details. The page also provides links to useful resources including local authority hubs, national agencies and VCSE infrastructure organisations. Please take every possible care and thank you for all that you are doing.



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 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](#)

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.