

Thank you, Chris

By Graham Whitham, CEO, GMPA

Chris Bagley has supported GMPA since our inception, building the network, setting up our website and compiling and distributing our fortnightly newsletter. Chris has supported a range of other tasks, such as running events, supporting recruitment and, not least, maintaining [GMPA's maps of support services](#). This includes the map of the city region's food providers, a vital resource that has been accessed tens of thousands of times since it was launched in 2017.

It is no exaggeration to say that, without Chris, GMPA wouldn't exist. Chris is now stepping back from her voluntary role with the organisation. We wish Chris well on her second retirement, with huge thanks from everyone in the team and our network. I will miss her hugely.

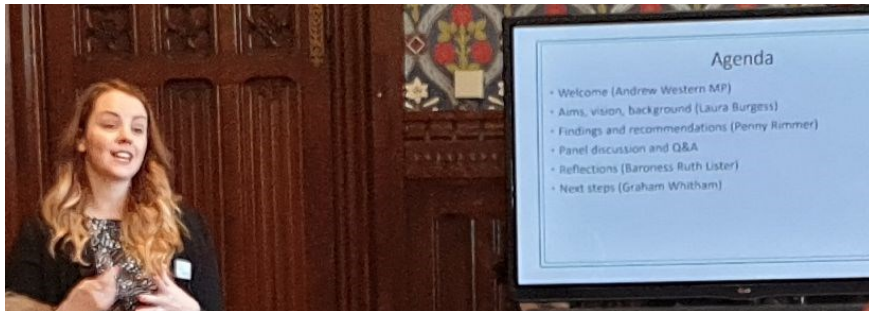
Going forward much of Chris' work will be taken on by Hollie Griss (please see her profile on the following page). Hollie joined us last week in the new Communications and Media Officer role, having worked previously at Mind in Bradford. From the next issue the newsletter will be distributed by Hollie. To ensure that it doesn't go into your spam folder, please add hollie@gmpovertyaction.org to your address book.

Taking GMPA's work to Parliament

By Graham Whitham CEO, GMPA

Last Thursday Greater Manchester Poverty Action held our first event in London as we took our report, [Local anti-poverty strategies: Good practice and effective approaches](#) to Parliament.

We were joined in a packed Jubilee Room by national think tanks and NGOs, London based councils and VCSE sector organisations and members of our Greater Manchester network.



Laura Burgess

Penny was then joined by Sabine Goodwin from the Independent Food Aid Network, Claudia Sumner from Child Poverty Action Group and Steph Lloyd from the public affairs company Lexington to discuss the report findings and the need to win the argument on poverty both locally and nationally. There were some great questions and contributions from the audience, covering issues around cash-first approaches and ensuring people with lived experience are supported to influence local policy and practice.

At the event we talked through the report findings. Our Senior Policy and Research Advisor Laura Burgess emphasised why it is more important than ever to support localities to introduce impactful approaches to tackling poverty. Our Policy Officer, Penny Rimmer introduced the findings and recommendations from the report.



Penny Rimmer introducing the report's findings.

A big thank you to Andrew Western MP for sponsoring and opening the event, and to Baroness Ruth Lister, co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty, who gave her reflections on the discussion.

We know there's more to be done to support localities in the fight against poverty in Greater Manchester, but we're also determined that our work has impact across the country.

To download the report and access other resources click [here](#).

We are delighted to welcome a new member to the GMPA team.

Hollie Griss - Communications and Media Officer

Hollie has joined GMPA and now leads on the delivery of all communications, including the website, newsletter and social media activity.

Prior to joining GMPA, she worked in the communications team at mental health charity Mind in Bradford for two and a half years.

Hollie is passionate about producing creative and impactful communications and is excited to be working with GMPA to help prevent and reduce poverty in Greater Manchester.



One million families claiming tax credits to receive Cost-of-Living Payment from May 2nd, 2023



HM Revenue
& Customs

One million eligible claimant families receiving tax credits, and no other means-tested benefits, will get the first [2023-24 Cost-of-Living Payment](#) from Tuesday 2nd May 2023, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has confirmed.

The £301 government payment will be paid automatically into most customers' bank accounts between 2nd and 9th May 2023 across the UK. Only eligible families who receive tax credits and no other means-tested benefits will receive the payment from HMRC.

This is the first of three payments totalling up to £900 for those eligible in 2023-24.

The payment will show as 'HMRC COLS' in customers' bank and building society accounts, so that they know the money is cost-of-living support.

For tax credit-only customers to be eligible for the £301 Cost of Living Payment, they must have received a payment of tax credits in respect of any day in the period 26 January to 25 February 2023, or later be found to have been entitled to a payment for this period.

Eligible customers do not need to apply or contact HMRC to receive the payment.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) recently announced that eligible households receiving DWP means-tested benefits will receive their first 2023-24 payment between Tuesday 25 April and Wednesday 17 May. This includes tax credit claimants who also receive other income-related benefits from DWP.

The payments are part of a package of wider government support to tackle the cost-of-living in 2023-24, including:

- a £300 Cost-of-Living Payment for eligible families in autumn 2023, with a payment of £299 in Spring 2024
- a £150 Disability Cost-of-Living Payment for eligible disabled people to be paid during summer 2023
- a £300 Pensioner Cost-of-Living Payment to be paid during winter 2023-24.

Including both DWP and HMRC payments, the latest Cost-of-Living Payment will see more than 8 million households across the UK receive their £301 cash boost by mid-May 2023.

For joint claimants, where one claimant receives Working Tax Credit and the other claimant receives Child Tax Credit, payments will be made into the same bank account as the Child Tax Credit.

Receiving a previous Cost-of-Living Payment does not mean you will be entitled to a future one. You will need to meet the separate eligibility criteria for each payment. You do not need to apply for this payment.

The government is offering [help for households](#). Check to find out your eligibility.

Guarantee our essentials campaign

Over 90 organisations have asked politicians what they intend to do to help the millions of households still going without essentials.



In a letter to all UK political party leaders, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), the Trussell Trust and other NGOs, charities and professional bodies **including GMPA** say that, despite living in one of the wealthiest countries in the world, nine in ten low-income households on Universal Credit are currently going without essentials. The letter comes as the Trussell Trust is due to reveal how many emergency food parcels were distributed by food banks in its network over the past year.

The cost-of-living crisis, which has seen the prices of everyday items like food and clothing soar since 2021, has made this problem worse. But the UK's inadequate social security system hasn't provided enough help for years. 2.4 million people experienced [destitution](#) at some point in 2019, up 54% since 2017.

[Research](#) by JRF and the Trussell Trust published earlier this year showed how the shortfall between the basic rate of Universal Credit and [the cost of essentials, such as food](#), bills and vital household items, is a key driver behind increasing levels of hardship. The standard allowance of Universal Credit is only £85 a week for a single adult. That's at least £35 a week below a conservative estimate of what's needed to afford these essentials. Often people receive even less as they face deductions from their support which are automatically taken at unaffordable rates.

It's why so many organisations from those helping single parents of young children to others helping people with mental health problems or long-term disabilities want the governments of the UK to back the Essentials Guarantee. This means ensuring that the basic rate of Universal Credit at least covers the cost of life's essentials, with support never being pulled below that level. For more information, read our report, Guarantee Our Essentials, [here](#).

Over two thirds of people in poverty (69%) would gain from the Essentials Guarantee which would benefit everyone in receipt of Universal Credit. It would also lift around 1.8 million people out of poverty altogether, including 600,000 children. Read more [here](#).

New report from the Samaritans: Inequality and Suicide

By Adele Owen QPM, Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention & Bereavement Support Programme Manager, NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care



With our partners in the [Suicide Prevention Consortium](#), we have been exploring the relationship between economic disadvantage, suicide risk and self-harm in people's own words.

We heard about experiences of economic disadvantage and how they relate to suicide, self-harm and bereavement by suicide. People told us about what they have found helpful, including a sense of community belonging, as well as changes they would like to see. Together with people with lived experience we developed recommendations that focus on creating a more human and person-centred whole system approach. We also need a system that is more aware of mental health issues and the economic challenges people face.

Three key changes we would like to see:

Better understanding in health services of self-harm and suicide risk: People expressed that neither their attitudes and beliefs, nor the complexities around suicide and self-harm were consistently taken into consideration as part of their care within the health system.

Suicide and self-harm awareness training within social security systems: People shared that their experiences of engaging with the benefits system were particularly difficult when they were in distress. There is an urgent need for increased understanding of self-harm and suicide by social security providers and for them to take an approach that is based on believing people's experiences of distress.

Comprehensive funding and resources are needed for community based support: People shared the importance of inclusive support within their local areas, but expressed a lack of availability of appropriate support for them. They also highlighted the role of meaningful relationships as key protective factors for staying well and the need to increase opportunities to develop these.

Read more in our report: [Insights from experience: economic disadvantage, suicide and self-harm](#).



Policy and Research updates

We are providing a summary of the latest news and policy developments to keep you up to date with what is happening across the UK.

Almost one in four Brits (23%) are 'financially vulnerable' according to research released by open banking platform Tink. Moreover, the majority (56%) expect their situation to worsen over the next year. [Read more.](#)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said the jobless rate rose from 3.7% due to a surge in the number of people unemployed for more than six months. [Read more.](#)



Poverty has increased across two-thirds of communities in the UK, as millions go without heat and skip meals, a poll by [Christians Against Poverty](#) suggests. [Read more.](#)

According to the survey, 10% of people live in poor quality housing (defined as living in homes that are not in a good state of repair, where heating, electrics or plumbing are not in good working order, and where damp is present), with people from more disadvantaged groups more likely to live in poor quality housing. The Resolution Foundation says one in six 18 - 34-year-olds are affected, a total of 2.6 million people. Among 18 - 24-year-olds the figure is even higher at 26%. [Read more.](#)



DWP study finds that lowering the benefit cap led to some moving into paid work, some moving onto an exempting disability benefit and some moving home. [Read more.](#)

In a survey of several countries, UK parents were the most likely to find it hard to meet soaring childcare costs - with 74% saying they found it challenging. [Read more.](#)

UK poverty remains the most urgent cause to support among the public, research suggests, but is slowly losing priority. The research reports a gradual shift towards other issues, such as animal and pet charities, as well as nature and the environment, which saw a significant rise in October. Support for war and disaster relief has also seen a rise, driven by global events such as the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. [Read more.](#)

More than 80% of families struggled to pay utility bills and afford food last year, a survey has revealed. [Read more.](#)

People are turning to gambling to help them with the cost-of-living crisis – from trying to win money to pay bills to using betting shops as warm banks, GamCare has said. [Read More.](#)

A report entitled 'Devolving English government' provides a wide-ranging and evidence-based evaluation of some of the key problems and weaknesses affecting the governance of England, discusses the history of attempts in recent decades to reform local government and establish new combined authorities. It concludes by making the case for a number of institutional reforms at the heart of central government and calls on both main parties to commit to the establishment of a devolved tier of administration across England by 2030. [Read more.](#)

78% of teachers surveyed by NEU told them that they or their school is providing help with uniforms for disadvantaged pupils, as well as free breakfasts (55%), extra food during the day (58%), toiletries (31%) and period products (68). [Read more.](#)

The government has missed its target to increase the take-up of [NHS](#) healthy food vouchers aimed at vulnerable parents of young children, it has emerged, despite soaring grocery prices and rising food poverty. (This emphasises the need for a cash-first approach!). [Read more.](#)



More than half of UK adults feel the cost-of-living crisis has made it more difficult to stay healthy, an issue that could have an impact on the long-term health of the workforce. More than half (54%) of UK respondents said staying healthy is becoming "too expensive". [Read more.](#)

The cost-of-living crisis will continue to intensify as inflation soars and government support lags. Organisations and campaigners must continue to call on the government to do more to tackle the harsh economic realities for the most vulnerable. More articles are available on our [website](#).



Good Employment Week 2023

Good Employment Week is an annual week of activities, that aims to raise awareness of good employment across the city-region. It will take place from 19th -24th June 2023. For the inaugural year, the GM Good Employment Charter team are engaging with employees – and asking the question ‘how good is your job?’ through a short, interactive [quiz](#).

The aim is to raise awareness of what good work looks like and share information on the employment standards that the people of Greater Manchester deserve.

GMPA’s Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign will be holding an event during the week, so look out for further information in the newsletter.

For more information about the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, visit the [website](#).

Shared Health is hosting a Doctors in Deprivation training day

June 27th, 2023 10am - 4pm at The LifeCentre 235 Washway Road, Sale M33 4BP

The pressures on Primary Care have increased year on year, and there is no sign of this stopping, especially in areas hit the hardest by the pandemic lockdowns, and the rise in cost-of-living. Amongst talk of “levelling up” and targets to “reduce health inequalities” – what is it we can actually do?

This event will explore the challenges faced by those working in areas of deprivation and disadvantaged communities and share the hopeful work organisations in Greater Manchester and beyond are doing to reduce health inequalities and the impact of poverty on health.

Get to grips with the health inequalities that many people face, and how you can help put things right. Learn about the causes and effects of health inequalities, and find out about the ways in which GPs and healthcare staff can do their bit to make a difference.

Come and receive clinical training, find your tribe and work together to tackle health inequalities in our city region. Tickets are free, book your place [here](#)



Job opportunities



Caritas aims to help those across the Diocese of Salford, experiencing poverty, disadvantage and discrimination to transform their lives with dignity. They provide a practical response to those in crisis, suffering hardship or who are at risk. There are currently three job opportunities: Project worker (Bolton), Bank English Tutor (Ancoats) and Bank Art/Activity Tutor (Manchester).

More information [here](#). Applications will be reviewed as they are received, and they reserve the right to interview/appoint before the closing date. Early applications are therefore strongly encouraged.

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](#).

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.