

Money Advice Referral Tool – Initial Evaluation

Organisations in Tameside are better able to help people to access the support that's right for them as a result of GMPA's Money Advice Referral Tool project.

GMPA's Money Advice Referral Tool is currently in place in Tameside and Oldham. The Tool supports people to access advice and maximise their income by improving referral and signposting between different agencies. The aim is to help people get all the money that they are entitled to, and to reduce the need for referrals to food banks, by increasing access to other kinds of support.

ICF Consulting Services has been commissioned to support GMPA to evaluate the pilot stage of the programme. As part of this, ICF recently undertook a rapid process evaluation of the pilot roll-out of the Money Advice Referral Tool in Tameside.

The evaluation was informed primarily by:

- Qualitative interviews with those responsible for designing the tool and four support services listed on the tool (Citizens Advice Tameside, Tameside Welfare Rights, GM Law Centre, Christians Against Poverty).
- Interviews and focus groups with 16 stakeholders in 11 different referral organisations (two food banks, a housing association, social prescribers, a church, Jobcentre, a local charity, and a range of council services) to understand their awareness and experiences of the tool.

The interviews provided illustrative insights into how the tool has been accessed and received. Here are some of the comments about the Money Advice Referral Tool made by those interviewed:

"I think its very, very useful because when you speak to your clients, they might come across with money issues or benefits issues... I always say to them I'm going to send some information to you to read through and there's something there that's possibly specific to your need. There's a contact number, get in touch with them and see if they can sort the issue out." (Referrer)

*"Its self-descriptive, it signposts well and people know how to refer to us."
(Organisation listed on the tool)*

"It's effective in having those early conversations ... supporting multi-agency working, the tool really joins us together." (Referrer)

"My team use it a great deal for information purposes... Its just useful." (Referrer)

"It is great it is on one page for frontline staff to have this information to hand. They are more likely to say, you know, what's your concern, what's going on for you? And then just direct them from the information they know." (Referrer)

The Money Advice Referral Tool appears to have been well-received among services in Tameside. Positive feedback was provided about the layout and functionality of the tool, particularly that information was provided on one-sheet (with further information available online) and it was clear what services could provide support based on the numbering format used. Interviewees generally felt it was simple and easy for a range of people (professionals and non-professionals alike) to use. Some even described the tool as empowering, at when given to people in need of support, it enabled them to take charge of their own situation.

Many of the interviewees could describe the potential benefits the tool might have in Tameside, including supporting faster referrals and establishing better links between organisations.

It was felt that there was scope to develop the tool further, by evolving the functionality of the tool (e.g. by translating it into a mobile app format) and to use it as the basis to create a system to make referrals between organisations in Tameside.

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Several early lessons can also be shared from the pilot:

A formalised and clear **dissemination strategy** (which includes considerations for branding, training modules on how to use the tool, outreach plans to increase access to different communities) will help to spread awareness of the tool and ensure end-users understand its purpose and how it should be used. This could also help to track who is using the tool, which in turn can help measure its impact.

The tool requires **regular updating** to ensure it can keep up any changes in who is offering advice and support, and what is most relevant for the tool. Consideration should be given to how this may practically work, to help support the sustainability of the tool.

Continued **monitoring and evaluation** of the tool will help to identify what impact it is having. It will also identify if there are any gaps in services, if the tool should be updated, and how else the tool might be improved.

The ICF Team are now continuing their evaluation, focusing on the implementation of Oldham's Money Advice Referral Tool pilot.

Commenting on the evaluation, GMPA's Graham Whitham said, 'We're delighted with the way the Tool has been received by agencies in Tameside. The Tool is helping to ensure that organisations can help low income residents maximise their incomes and access advice and support appropriate to their needs. ICF's initial evaluation is helping us understand how we can develop the Tool further and achieve maximum impact through its implementation as we seek to rollout it out in a further four boroughs this year'.

Greater Manchester Real Living Wage Campaign Update



The work to make GM a Real Living Wage City Region is continuing apace. A number of subgroups continue to meet to progress work in various sectors including the Campaign subgroup which is co-chaired by GMPA and GM Citizens. It met on the March 23rd and is planning a series of actions and events during the remainder of 2022. If you are interested in finding out more about how to get involved in the Campaign subgroup please contact GM Living Wage Campaign Co-ordinator John Hacking.

On the April 5th John Hacking met with Sophie Little from the [Living Wage Foundation](#) to get an update on progress being made to achieve the targets set for the GM City Region Real Living Wage Action Plan. Sophie said: "This past month we've seen a brilliant increase in the number of accredited Living Wage employers in Greater Manchester, with 22 new accreditations and a grand total of 466 accredited employers. Notable new accreditations include The Fed and Neil Johnson Cleaning Ltd., where most of the workforce will receive an uplift to the Real Living Wage." The number of accredited Living Hours employers in Greater Manchester is also growing. To find out more about Living Hours click [here](#).

The Fed Becomes an Accredited Real Living Wage Employer. As reported in previous newsletter updates the GMLWC is pleased to have played a part in the journey that the large social care provider, [The Fed](#), has been on to become the latest Real Living Wage accredited employer in Bury. It's great news that on the April 4th that journey culminated in an event where The Fed received their official accreditation and celebrated over 280 of their workforce receiving an uplift worth an average of £1602 per annum. Members of The Fed's Porters, Catering, and Care teams cut a commemorative cake to mark The Fed's inclusion as a Real Living Wage employer. Mark Cunningham The Fed CEO reflected on the difference the Real Living Wage will make to staff and the organisation as a whole. "We are one of around 20 employers in Bury now paying the real living wage and we are hoping to see that figure increase, but we're setting an example and leading the way."



Best Wishes and Stay Safe.
Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign Co-ordinator
[John Hacking](#)

Twitter: [@GMLivingWage](#) Facebook: [facebook.com/gmlivingwage](#)

How do we end the need for food banks?

By Zhané Edwards, Parliamentary Assistant, Child Poverty Action Group

In his spring statement, the Chancellor added £500 million to the household support fund, which started out as a pot of money given to councils to support families during the pandemic. This was an insufficient response to the challenges families are facing, given prices are rising at pace and benefits will not increase at the same rate. But what is the role of this type of support? And how should it be delivered? That was what our Ending the need for food banks project [set out to answer](#).

Emergency support can in no way be treated as a replacement for an adequate social security system, but it does play a vital role in that system. It should help families through one-off shocks that cause a sudden drop in income or increase in costs, such as the onset of a health problem or the washing machine breaking down. In practice, however, many families are not getting the support they need when they need it. This is contributing to the rising demand for food banks.

Emergency support varies greatly across the UK. Both Scotland and Wales have a centrally coordinated emergency hardship fund: the Scottish welfare fund and discretionary assistance fund, respectively. In comparison, England puts the onus on local authorities to provide emergency support, but because provision isn't statutory and budgets are already stretched, many local authorities simply do not run a scheme. Access to emergency support in England is therefore a postcode lottery. [At least 32 local authorities, one in five, now have no scheme whatsoever](#). Even when there is a local welfare assistance scheme, the reach is limited due to chronic underfunding, especially in comparison to Wales and Scotland. Before the pandemic, spending in England per capita was far lower than in Scotland and Wales.



The UK government did give local authorities more money to support people in the pandemic, including via the household support fund, but these pots of money have all been short term and ad hoc. They have provided no security to local authorities nor their residents who need this crucial support.

How can we improve this picture? We need a long-term funding settlement for emergency support. And we need changes to the way emergency support is delivered too.

Something that kept coming up in our research was the importance of dignity. Many people in poverty feel shame when going to a food bank. If properly funded emergency support was in place, people in crisis would be able to receive a cash grant from their local authority to give them the flexibility and agency in a financial emergency.

"People asking for emergency help have been through enough without being made to feel like we don't trust them to choose the right baked beans." – Citizens' jury participant

"Choice is what gives us dignity, don't take that choice away from people." – Citizens' jury participant

We are calling for a review into emergency support in England and Wales (Scotland has already commissioned a review), and for best practice to be shared among local authorities. It's also essential that the support on offer across local authorities in England is made more consistent.

As we brace ourselves for a further rise in the cost of energy, food and other basics, we must ensure that benefits rise in line with inflation. Social security adequacy needs addressing at a fundamental level. Extending the household support fund was a completely inadequate response to the challenges low-income families are facing. But a properly funded emergency support system must also be there to help families when they face an income shock and provide them with the support they need so they don't have to resort to a food bank.

You can read the project's final report [here](#).

Be Smoke Free, Manchester

By Katie Burke, Community and Engagement Lead, Change Grow Live

With the cost of living on the rise, many people living in Greater Manchester are looking for ways to reduce their outgoings. April 1st saw the cost of electricity rise by approximately 50%, motorists are finding themselves spending more at the petrol station due to rises in fuel prices, and we've seen our weekly shop get gradually more expensive in recent months.

If you smoke, cutting back or quitting cigarettes can be a great way to save money. The table below illustrates the average cost per year for smoking, depending on the price and number of cigarettes smoked. The figures are startling – imagine the things that can be done with that sort of money!

We know that we're living through stressful times, and many smokers in Greater Manchester smoke to relieve that stress. Because of this, you might be thinking "No way can I give up the fags!", but fear not, because free stop-smoking support is available.

Cost of smoking per year per person	At £10 per 20	At £11.50 per 20	At £13 per 20
5 cigarettes per day	£912.50	£1,049.38	£1,186.25
10 cigarettes per day	£1,825	£2,098.75	£2,372.50
15 cigarettes per day	£2,737.50	£3,148.13	£3,558.75
20 cigarettes per day	£3,650	£4,197.50	£4,745
30 cigarettes per day	£5,475	£6,296.25	£7,117.50
40 cigarettes per day	£7,300	£8,395	£9,490

BE SMOKE FREE | Provided by **Change Grow Live**

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changegrowlive.org/be-smoke-free

Be Smoke Free is a specialist nurse-led tobacco addiction service powered by Change Grow Live, in partnership with Manchester Health Care Commissioning Service and Manchester City Council. Be Smoke Free's aim is to raise awareness of the negative effects of smoking and to support individuals in quitting smoking. The service was born in April 2020, and since then has supported over 700 people to successfully quit after four weeks, and over 400 people to successfully quit over twelve weeks.

As the table demonstrates, quitters can make life-changing savings to their expenditure alongside the well publicised health benefits of going smoke free.

Be Smoke Free supports people 12 years+ who live in Manchester or are registered with a Manchester-based GP to stop smoking via evidence-based treatment. When working with Be Smoke Free the individual receives:

- A free and direct supply of nicotine replacement therapy and medication (including vapes), without the need for a prescription or GP appointment.
- A dedicated Tobacco Addiction Specialist Nurse who will provide ongoing behavioural support during bi-weekly appointments.
- Treatment that typically lasts twelve weeks, with medication and nicotine replacement therapy provided free of and delivered to the individual's home.

Our service is completely free of charge, so if you, or somebody you know, is ready to start their stop-smoking journey and save money in the process, you can contact Be Smoke Free directly on 0161 823 4157 or visit their website www.changegrowlive.org/be-smoke-free to access the direct self-referral form.



Spirit of Manchester Grants 2022

Five £1,000 Spirit of Manchester grants are available to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in the city that work with refugees and asylum seekers. The aim of this fund is simply to put some much needed resources into those organisations and capture stories which will raise awareness of the issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers and the work which is being done to provide support, safety and welcome. Apply [here](#). Deadline April 28th 12pm.



Greater Manchester Community Response Fund: Ukraine Crisis

In response to the crisis in Ukraine, 10GM and partners are working together to put in place welcome and support for people arriving in Greater Manchester, working alongside local authorities and those who are offering to accommodate people arriving from Ukraine.

To help this work Macc have launched the Greater Manchester Community Response Fund: Ukraine Crisis. This fundraising campaign will raise money to create a hardship fund for people arriving from Ukraine and to provide small grants to local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations that are playing an active, practical role in providing support.

You can help by donating [here](#) and sharing with your friends, family and colleagues.



Project Worker job opportunity

Cornerstone Day Centre is a community centre for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness based in Hulme, Manchester. The Centre has recently undergone extensive building work and the service has been re-launched post Covid and we are now recruiting Project Workers to help support the re-modelled service.

The Project Workers will work on a co-production basis using strength-based approaches with people who visit Cornerstone to design, deliver and evaluate the service and ensure that it is meeting their needs. More information and an application form [here](#). Closing date April 18th, 2022 at 5pm. Interview April 25th, 2022.

FareShare Greater Manchester job opportunities

Based at FareShare Greater Manchester, New Smithfield Market, Manchester M11 2WJ
Full-time, permanent contracts; 37.5 hours per week, Monday to Friday.



Food Allocations Operative The Food Allocations Operatives allocate FareShare food to Greater Manchester community food members (CFMs), working closely with the Warehouse team. Applicants will need strong communication skills, attention to detail, the ability to juggle priorities calmly and effectively, and a positive can-do attitude to succeed in this role. You'll also need to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and the ability to build the trust and engagement of our CFMs. Closing date: Tuesday April 19th 2022

Corporate Visitors and Office Coordinator This new role will help FareShare GM develop relationships with existing and new corporate supporters, alongside providing office support to the Operations team. You will need excellent communication, time management and organisation skills to ensure corporate supporter visits run smoothly. Working as a key member of the Operations team, the successful candidate will also spend part of each week ensuring the effective fulfilling of customer accounts. Closing date: noon on Monday April 25th 2022

For further information and an application pack please email recruitment@emergemanchester.co.uk

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.