

Leadership Group updates – May 2020

The GM Social Enterprise Network (GMSEN) is open to social enterprises and networks across GM. It exists to showcase social enterprise across GM and to connect social enterprises with each other, with the networks and organisations who can support them and with opportunities for business and growth.

GMSEN is led by the GMSEN Leadership Group who meet monthly to discuss current social enterprise issues, share knowledge, opportunities and offer peer support.

How do I get involved?

- If you are interested in attending a Leadership Group meeting or raising an issue for a meeting, please email Owen Hewson at info@gmsen.net who would love to hear from you.
- You can stay in touch with GMSEN on Twitter ([@GMSE_Network](https://twitter.com/GMSE_Network)) and keep up to date via the [News section on our website](#)
- Register your social enterprise for free on the [GMSEN social enterprise directory](#) – a growing online resource showcasing Greater Manchester's social enterprise movement.

The GMSEN Leadership Group last met on **April 21st 2020**:

Leadership Group – May meeting updates for sharing

- GMCVO have secured an additional £500k to invest over the next 12 months (until July 2021) through their social investment fund, [GM Social Investment](#). Please spread the word for any social enterprises considering social investment as their next step
- Salford Social Enterprise City are running ['Buy Social' working lunch events](#) throughout the year (next on the 25th June confirmed), exploring how to open up and build markets for social enterprises and how social enterprises can enhance corporate supply chains.
- Flourish CIC are recruiting for the next cohort for their 'Time To Grow' programme. The aim is support 25-30 women with enterprising solutions to social issues and inequalities. For all the info [click here](#). They are also running [peer-learning and networking events online](#) and continue to build their [social enterprise-themed podcast library](#).
- Check the events page for upcoming events at [Manchester Social Entrepreneurs](#)
- The GM BAME Social Enterprise Network continues to grow. To get involved with the network, [follow this link](#). Please help spread the word to help grow this important new network for GM.

Key discussion points for sharing

Meeting discussions continued with the focus on the difficulties faced by Greater Manchester social enterprise in response to the ongoing Coronavirus crisis, with the following key issues raised:

- Difficulties accessing support offered by government. Organisations either not eligible or support not suitable.
- Social enterprises experiencing a sudden drop in income and simultaneously a surge in demand in response to Coronavirus. Particularly for community businesses working on the front lines in response to the crisis – do you furlough and save your business (but stop delivering when your services are most in need), or do you keep going and burn through reserves / cash flow? Putting some social enterprises in a very difficult position. What

organisations really want is government subsidy to continue working, rather than subsidy to stop under the furlough scheme.

- Lots of organisations have moved what they can deliver online, but this is often provided for free, but then asking for donations to help keep them afloat. Whilst there is definitely an increase in online trading, a lot of organisations are now doing what they can online, for free.
- The change in funding focus to just funding projects that directly address the Coronavirus crisis has led to setbacks for organisations in the process of applying for funding for other projects not Coronavirus-related.
- Pressure from having to manage large groups of volunteers all of a sudden to deal with the surge in demand.
- Difficulties managing both family and business pressures from Coronavirus. Mental health issues related to covid-19 seem to be well recognized, but it doesn't make it any easier.
- There's so much more social enterprises could be helping to provide in response to Coronavirus. [The response around food has had some good press](#), but there are other areas (e.g. mental health and well-being support and the supply of PPE)
- The distribution and management of Coronavirus resources is very centralized and 'broad-brush', often insensitive to cultural and specialist needs which are being overlooked

Key things to share since the meeting on April 21st...

Save our Social Enterprises national campaign - #BuildBackBetter #SaveOurSocEnts

At the start of May, Social Enterprise UK published their research findings from the national survey – [Social Enterprise and COVID-19](#). The report shows how social enterprises are at the forefront of solutions to the crisis and how they are falling through the cracks in existing support schemes.

If you haven't already, make sure to sign the [Save our Social Enterprises campaign letter](#) to the Chancellor, written by social enterprise sector bodies to urge Government to do more to support social enterprises and co-operatives.

SEUK are continuing to gather info from social enterprises about the impact of COVID-19 and what the recovery will look like for social enterprises.

The SEUK survey link remains live for you to input to the growing evidence base. [You can access the survey via this link](#).

Alternatively, you can share your story directly by emailing covid19@socialenterprise.org.uk



Letter from GM VCSE leaders asking the Government for urgent help

GMSEN, along with [GMCVO](#), the [GM VCSE Leadership Group](#), [GM BAME Network](#) and [GM BAME SE Network](#) have written to the Chancellor, asking for more support for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, in response to covid-19.

[Click here to read the letter](#) and please help share with your local MP and ask them to lobby the Chancellor on our behalf.