

BIG ISSUE IN THE NORTH VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT CELEBRATED

A front line volunteer responsible for setting up and running The Big Issue in the North's new Hull sub office has won the organisation's first volunteer award.

The Big Issue in the North has just celebrated its first volunteers' award ceremony, with Hull church leader Steve Whittington winning the overall prize.

The magazine's sub office in west Hull, was set up after local church leader Steve Whittington got talking to magazine vendors on the streets of Hull City Centre.

Steve said: "I talk to quite a few vendors regularly and when I found out they make a 130 mile round trip to the Leeds office to buy their stock of magazines I knew I could be of help."

Using a room within the Jubilee Church, Steve and his team of eight volunteers are open Tuesday and Thursday mornings for vendors to not only buy magazines but also to listen to any problems they may be facing, receive customer feedback from the public and also to carry out outreach work – where volunteers visit vendors on their sales pitches to ensure the service is running well and to check on their welfare..

Steve and his team are supported once a month with a visit from the Leeds Big Issue in the North Co-ordinator Claire Dormand.

Claire said: "Steve and his team have done such a brilliant job setting up the Hull sub office and running it – entirely free of charge to us. They have shown real commitment to Hull vendors, not only working positively with them on Big Issue in the North matters but also inviting them to events they are running such as coffee morning and free meals.

She added: "They are a wonderful and inclusive group of people who it is a pleasure to work with!"

Steve said: We're grateful to The Big Issue in the North for giving us a window into the world of helping the most vulnerable people in society and supporting us through this."

Notes to Editors:

Every vendor signs up to a code of conduct when they start to sell *The Big Issue in the North* which governs the way vendors sell the magazine. Vendors buy the magazine for £1 and sell it for £2.

Vendors must only sell on authorised pitches. All vendors wear an ID badge. Please only buy the magazine from badged vendors. For more information visit www.bigissueinthenorth.com

For press information please contact Dawn Bunnell, Communications Officer on 0161 227 0205, 07723997113 or email dawn.bunnell@thebiglifecompany.com