



THE BIG ISSUE IN THE

# north

impact report  
April 2012 - March 2013

# introduction

**The Big Issue in the North publishes a weekly magazine, distributed across the north of England and sold for profit on the streets by people excluded from other means of earning an income. The Big Issue in the North Trust (registered charity no.1056041) helps some of the most marginalised people by providing support to help vendors improve their lives. The Big Issue in the North also manages the Harvey Project and Community Voice.**

Through the Harvey Project, we provide 24-hour supported accommodation in self contained flats to drug and alcohol users. The Harvey Project provides first class accommodation to people struggling to live with addiction, supporting tenants to live independently and to reduce the harm caused by drug and alcohol use.

Community Voice is a user-led forum run by people who have been affected by drug or alcohol use. It engages service-users and enables them to have a real say in the drug and alcohol services available in Liverpool and to highlight gaps in service provision.



Gordon, Big Issue in the North Vendor



**From April 2012 – March 2013:**

Vendors sold **620,132** magazines.  
Our average weekly circulation was **12,476**.  
We had an average of **251** active vendors  
selling the magazine every week.

**We supported:**

**73** vendors to move into education or training  
**22** into employment  
**16** into volunteering  
**98** into secure accommodation.

*“I was made redundant at 60, and was initially reluctant to start selling the magazine. I used to class selling the Big Issue as begging and thought I’d never lower myself to it. I’ve been in catering my whole life and was working as a chef before I lost my job. It was hard finding work at 60 and eventually I decided to give selling the mag a go.*

*I started selling outside Sainsbury’s in Heaton Park, the staff warmed to me immediately. I help out by keeping the area around my pitch presentable, bringing abandoned trolleys with me if I find them on the way to my pitch and regularly watching dogs for customers while they do their shopping.*

*I look after my regulars, I keep a note of what days they buy the mag so I’m not pestering them all the time. I really feel like part of the community here now and I got 52 Christmas cards from customers last year. Many of them didn’t know my name but just wrote little thank yous for always being outgoing and polite.”*

Gordon - Big Issue in the North Vendor



# Our Vendors

"I am from Romania. Last July I found an announcement for an agency advertising work in construction in the UK. I went to the agency and gave them all my paperwork and paid a 300 euro agency fee. I made travel plans and I arrived in UK in August 2012. When I got to Liverpool I realised that there was no work lined up for me. I rang the company in Romania. There was no answer. I realised that the company was a fake. I had some money with me but not enough to return home. I ended up sleeping rough. After one month on the streets in Liverpool I made some friends and a few days later they told me about **The Big Issue in the North** and that they might be able to help.

I've started to sell the magazine in September. The help I had from support workers at **The Big Issue in the North** has helped me gain the confidence to go on courses and obtain a CSCS card (health and safety on building sites). I have also had help looking for other work. Selling the magazine is the first step for me to get into work. It has helped me to get some money and it has helped me to regain hope."



## work placements

**The Big Issue in the North offers valuable editorial placements to people interested in magazine writing and production.**

*"I did a two week placement at **The Big Issue in the North**, at the start of my final year in uni doing English Literature. A lot of magazines are based in London where it probably would've cost me a couple of hundred pounds just to stay for a week, so it was a big help that **The Big Issue in the North** is Manchester-based.*

*I'd had a bit of experience working on the school newspaper and had some experience of radio journalism. It was useful to learn the differences between magazine journalism and what I knew of newspaper and radio. I learned how to source content and put professional articles together. I started work editing a trade magazine as soon as I finished at uni. I definitely credit the time I spent at the TBITN with getting me where I am." Tim Wood*

# The Harvey Project

A large, abstract orange splatter graphic composed of numerous overlapping circles and dots of varying sizes, located on the right side of the page.

The Harvey Project provided a place to live for **60** people last year

**48%** of tenants were male and **52%** were female.

**30** of our tenants were drug users.

**53** of our tenants had an alcohol problem.

**27** tenants were involved in criminal behaviour before moving to Harvey.

**12** rough sleepers were taken in from the street.

**14** of our tenants were involved in sex work.

**60%** of tenants with drug or alcohol addiction engaged in a treatment programme for at least 12 weeks.

**62%** of tenants were supported to gain greater skills around independent living.

**4** tenants ended their involvement in sex work and **5** have been helped to reduce sex work.

***“When I came to the Harvey Project I’d been living on the streets. I was a chronic alcoholic. The staff here are very non-judgemental and they’ve always kept an eye out for me and encouraged me. Here it’s more homely than a typical hostel, the staff always give you a ring if you stay out to check if you’re okay. Whether you’re in a good mood or a bad mood it doesn’t seem to bother them, they’re always the same, asking what you’re up to and if there’s anything they can do to help. The accommodation is second to none, I’ve got everything I need and when I got here I had nothing. I’ve been abstinent for four months now and I’m looking for my own place. This is longest time I’ve stayed in accommodation. I’m happier here, you’re treated alright.”***

# community voice

**Community Voice provided a platform for 156 service users to share their views on services in Merseyside and created opportunities and training for 20 volunteers.**

In 2012, we launched a new drop-in service where anyone affected by drugs or alcohol can come for help and advice from staff and volunteers who have personal experience of what they are going through.

With more than 30 drug and alcohol services in Liverpool it is often difficult for people to begin to navigate their way around services and get their voices heard, so we held the **Your City, Your Services** event to promote the drug and alcohol support services on offer in Liverpool. This was attended by **400** people including service users, support workers, and people affected by drug and alcohol addictions, including relatives.

People using Community Voice told us that there was a lack of joined up working amongst services in the city. Because of this we also ran a **Frontline Workers Conference** which was attended by **175** frontline workers and commissioners from across Merseyside. The event, at Liverpool Hope University, provided workers with the opportunity to network and share ideas about best practice.

*“Eleven years ago when I came out of detox, all the talk about social care and service provision focussed on ‘user involvement’. Looking around Liverpool I found that there were no such services for people with drug and alcohol issues, most seemed to concentrate on people with mental and physical health difficulties. Me and some other people formed a group and started to meet once or twice a week in an aftercare centre which was soon closed down. We were reluctant to work with partner agencies because we thought our unique vision might be diluted. Having established the project on a voluntary basis, we began working with The Big Issue in the North and with additional support and funding, we were able to develop the service. The support and supervision provided by The Big Issue in the North and The Big Life group has helped me to excel in my work and stay focussed in my recovery.”* Maggie - Community Voice





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[www.bigissueinthenorth.com](http://www.bigissueinthenorth.com)



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**The  
BigLife  
group**

business changing lives

Big Issue in the North is part of The Big Life group of social businesses and charities