



BIG ISSUE NORTH

THE INDEPENDENT STREET PAPER | WORKING NOT BEGGING

Impact report 2016

Introduction

Big Issue North is an independent street paper published weekly and distributed across the north of England. It is sold for profit on the streets by people excluded from other means of earning an income.

Big Issue North Trust (registered charity no. 1056041) helps some of the most marginalised people, and provides support to help vendors improve their lives.

In Liverpool, we run supported housing projects: intensive support is offered through 20 flats in the Harvey Project, and low level housing support offered in ten self-contained flats.

Big Issue North manage two service user engagement programmes – Independent Voices, which gives services users a real say in drug and alcohol services in Liverpool and Liverpool Waves of Hope, which engages people with a combination of issues, such as homelessness, mental health and substance misuse.



Placements and volunteering



"I chose Big Issue North as homelessness is an issue that I feel strongly about. I was very appreciative for this experience as I am not a journalism student and I understand that it can be very difficult to source experience within this industry."

"I wasn't expected to make tea or clean the office; the editor gave me multiple opportunities to write and photograph, which has given me something substantial to add to my CV."

"Surprisingly, I thoroughly enjoyed the writing side of the experience. It was very fulfilling to complete short arts previews or news articles that would be featured in the magazine."

"The greatest skill I have gained is probably interviewing – my interview with Ciara Leeming gave me such a valuable insight into life as a freelancer."

Big Issue North offered 14 valuable editorial placements to people interested in magazine writing and production, 4 social work student placements, and 3 volunteering opportunities.



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THE BIG ISSUE **north**
 AUTHORIZED VENDOR
 LEEDS CITY CENTRE
 FROM: M&S
 TO: all day
 TRADE EXPIRES: 01/03/2016
 JOB NUMBER: 71
 IN THE NORTH



Our Vendors

From April 2015 to March 2016 our average weekly sales of magazines was **11,373**, and we had an average of **257** vendors selling the magazine each week.

We supported **58** vendors into accommodation, **35** into work, volunteering, education or training and **36** to access drug or alcohol treatment.

We also dealt with:

- **503** housing enquiries
- **305** requests to help vendors sort out their benefits and tax
- **377** requests for help to access health services
- **36** requests for help to access drug or alcohol services

I started selling Big Issue North in October last year. I was sofa surfing at friends' houses and had no income when I first came to the Leeds office. I attended an initial assessment where the sales team explained to me how Big Issue North can help me.

A coordinator went with me for a homelessness assessment and helped me to get in touch with private landlords. I went to a few viewings but was let down, then I went to a letting agency in Beeston. On Thursday I got in touch with them, and on Friday I did the viewing and got the keys straightaway! It's amazing, I've not had a tenancy in my name since 1998!

I moved into my new bedsit in January and have since been able to register as self-employed. I'm an official sole trader! I now hope to look at applying for assistance with my rent and Working Tax Credits.

*Staff at the office have given me the motivation to get my life back on track. I wouldn't have done any of the things I've achieved recently – they've given me that confidence. I want to say thank you to the staff for their support and help. - **Chris, a Leeds vendor***

#Vendorweek

In February, Big Issue North participated in #Vendorweek for the International Network of Street Papers (INSP) during which **16** business people, musicians, MPs and other well-known people from throughout our region spent an hour selling the magazine alongside **13** regular vendors.

Guest sellers included Maxine Peake, Lemm Sissay, Jon McLure and Gary Millar, Lord Mayor of Liverpool.

The week raised **£11,000** for INSP, enabling them to support and develop more than **110** street papers in **35** countries.

During Vendor Week Big Sell, we were able to spread our message further and gained **141** new followers on social media. We achieved more than **20,198** engagements (people retweeting, liking and mentioning @bigissuenorth) and we reached over **250,000** people.





CROSS

CASH
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Good
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north
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Building Society

Columbia

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Community Voice

249

Community Voice provided a platform for **249** service users to share their views on drug and alcohol services in Liverpool.

This year, **14** service users were recruited as volunteers, to take part in service evaluations, facilitate service user feedback meetings and work in the office.

14

8

Community Voice held **8** events in local service venues to enable people to give feedback in their local communities. Community Voice also undertook **4** service evaluations, and this year captured service user feedback on behalf of Liverpool City Council regarding barriers to services. This informed the council's commissioning intentions.

Altogether, Community Voice engaged with service users on **600** occasions, which included participation in monthly meetings, wellness assessments over the phone, support in benefit appeals, and volunteering opportunities.

600



liverpool waves of hope

This year, we began delivering service user engagement for Liverpool Waves of Hope, which engages people with a combination of issues, such as homelessness, mental health, substance misuse, and reoffending.

“I’ve had 41 years of services, I was born in ‘61 started taking drugs when I was 13 I’ve been in and out services mental institutions and every time I came out, there was nothing there. It took 41 years to find a service that works. Somebody gave me a card for Waves of Hope. I rang them up, got an induction and joined the team. They helped me tremendously with mental health, kept me clean. I’ve been on interview boards, I was a junkie, they said I was untreatable, and two and a half years later I was interviewing people.”

Graham, Forum Co-Chair

Supported Housing

The Harvey Project provides 24-hour supported accommodation in **20** self-contained flats across two sites, one which provides support to single men and couples and one which is a women only building. We stopped delivering the Harvey Project in April 2016.

The Harvey Project provided a place to live for **43** people in total last year.

- **100%** of residents had complex needs including substance misuse, mental health problems, long-term homelessness and a history of offending.
- Each client has a support plan, **55%** of which involve other agencies
- **60%** of residents were street homeless
- **760** key work sessions were held
- **58%** of residents reported improvements in Quality of Life.
- **61%** of residents who moved on did so in a planned way
- **72%** of residents who had substance misuse issues accessed drug or alcohol treatment
- **10** residents became drug or alcohol free.

Our dispersed accommodation at two other venues – Belmont House and Kremlin Road – offer a more independent option to single people and couples through 10 self-contained flats, with one-to-one support from a Housing Outreach Worker.

This year, **11** people were accommodated in Belmont House and Kremlin Road.





Dave and Emily have been a couple for six years, and living at the Harvey Project for seven months. Both were rough sleeping before Emily got a place at the project.

Dave continued sleeping rough, but kept sneaking in to try and stay with Emily, so staff at Harvey gave them a room together.

Dave said: *“We are planning to get married once we’ve sorted our lives out, so it’s great that they accept couples here. I’d not heard of other places letting couples share rooms. Our drug use has gotten a lot more under control since we’ve moved in.”*

“With the help of staff at Harvey I’m now attending Genie in the Gutter, and Emily has joined Fallen Angels Dance Company. We’re doing a lot more positive things.”

Emily said: *“I used to be in and out of jail a lot, and we both lost kids. I started injecting heroin when I was 13 and Dave when he was 19. It’s not a happy life using drugs.”*

“Here, we have somewhere nice and secure to help you stay away from the drugs. It really helps that many of the staff who work here have personal experience of what we’re going through. They can get you on the right track.”

Both Dave and Emily are sure that Harvey has been a really positive influence on their life. *“We really enjoy having a flat just for us with a kitchen. It’s safe here. Without Harvey I might be dead, or in jail.”*



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