

A photograph of two women embracing joyfully. The woman on the left is wearing a pink top and a colorful necklace. The woman on the right is wearing a black sari with gold polka dots. They are both smiling broadly. The background is decorated with red and blue streamers.

The Big Lifegroup Impact Report 2009 - 2010

“Before I came to Sure Start Longsight Children’s Centre, I was desperate. I was from a small village in Bengal and I didn’t speak English, and I was pregnant, but hadn’t been to see a doctor. Then I was introduced to the centre. They put me in touch with health services, helped me learn English and introduced me to some more local women. I’m so proud of my life now.”

Salma
Sure Start Longsight
Children’s Centre user

The Big Life group creates opportunities for people to change their lives for the better. The group was formed in 2002 and now includes five businesses and three charities: **The Big Life Company, The Big Issue in the North, Aisha Childcare, Big Life Employment, Open Door, The Big Issue in the North Trust, Big Life Centres** and **Self Help Services**.

These businesses and charities offer a range of services in areas across the North of England including:

Production and distribution of The Big Issue in the North magazine which provides **socially excluded people** with the chance to **earn an income** and signposting them to services to help them move on in life

Providing **training and employment opportunities** to people who face additional barriers to employment

A **mentoring project** for young people involved in crime or gangs

Delivery of eight **health and community resource centres** offering a range of health and well being services

Delivery of **mental health services** including self-help groups, structured self-help programmes and computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy packages and counselling

Supported Housing schemes, including Summergrove in Liverpool for parents who have had a drug or alcohol dependency in the past to be re-united with their children and supported to stay together, and a domestic violence Sanctuary project

Delivery of **Sure Start Children's Centres**, family intervention and outreach services

High quality **childcare** delivered from day nurseries and mobile crèche services

Delivery of a range of **complementary therapies** including massage and homeopathy

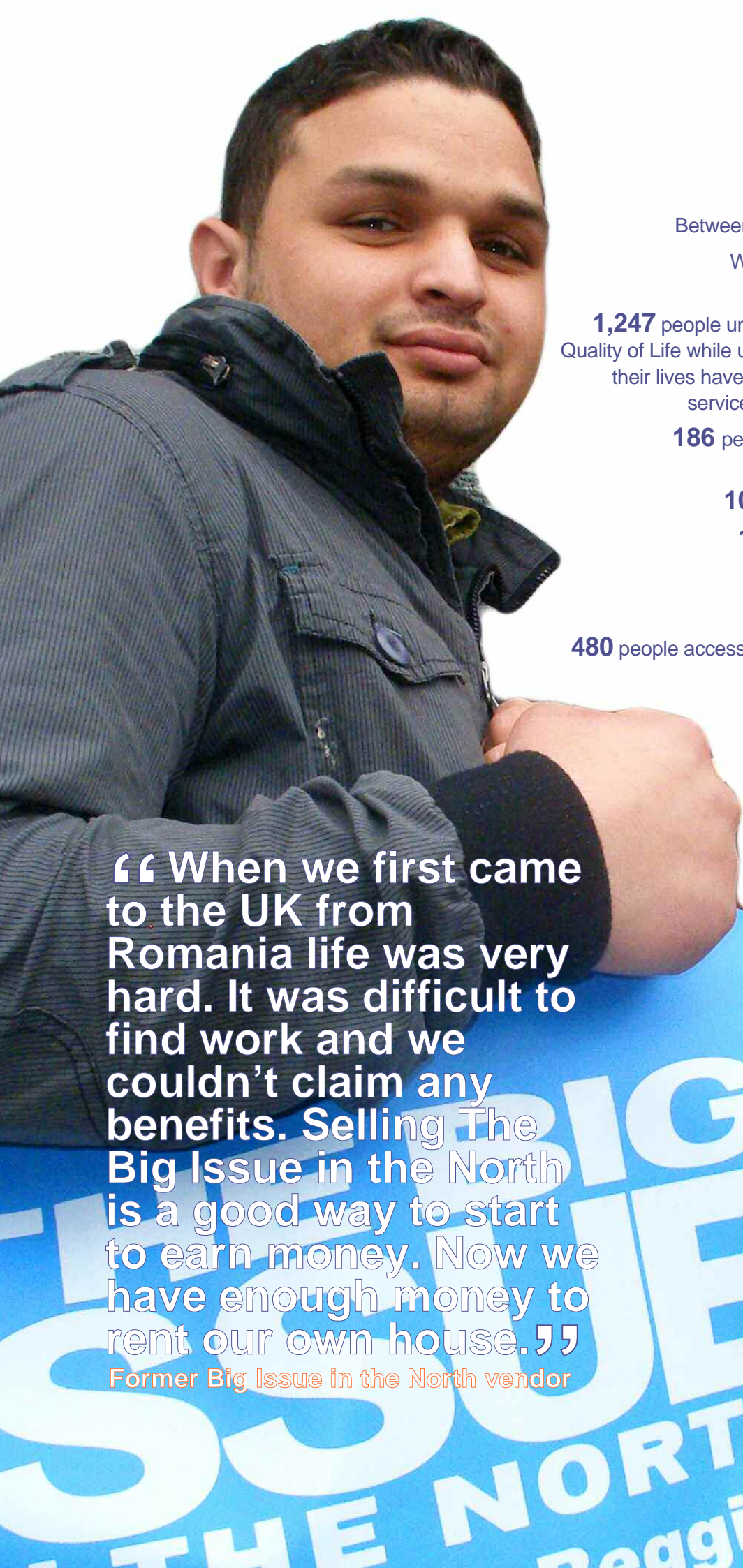
An award winning **primary and social care practice** delivering services to 1,000 of the most vulnerable people in Grimsby.



Who we work with

Between April 2009 and March 2010 over 22,655 people used services provided by The Big Life group.

Where ethnic origin was monitored, 30% of people accessing our services came from Black or Ethnic Minority communities.



Outcomes

Between April 2009 and March 2010:

We supported **22,655** people through our services

1,247 people undertook assessments of their Quality of Life while using our services. **85%** said their lives have improved and they found our services helpful or extremely helpful

186 people moved into temporary or permanent accommodation

106 people found employment

1036 people took up training

158 gained a qualification

7 people became volunteers

480 people accessed complementary therapies.

“When we first came to the UK from Romania life was very hard. It was difficult to find work and we couldn't claim any benefits. Selling The Big Issue in the North is a good way to start to earn money. Now we have enough money to rent our own house.”

Former Big Issue in the North vendor

Our centres

The Big Life group manages **eight** health and community resource centres

Between April 2009 and March 2010 our centres received over **194,000** visits and nearly **40,000** telephone calls

The centres ran **109** events this year including health and well being days, open days and summer events which were attended by over **1,000** people from local communities

Nearly **12,000** people attended courses run at our centres, including "Walk-a-Weigh" weight management and Parenting Skills classes


83% of people using our centres and completing an evaluation, say their lives have improved.

“ Seeing my daughter taken back to foster carers was heart wrenching. On Mothers Day last year my dreams came true and she moved into Summergrove with me. We're free to be together now and I am enjoying being the mum I should have been all along. ”

Sharon

Summergrove Resident

Summergrove: a place for families to be re-united



“ I started coming to the Energise Centre to use their services. I’m a single mother and at the time, I was at a low point in my life. I started volunteering at the centre which instantly gave me a boost in self-confidence. Now I’m employed as a volunteer co-ordinator and am really enjoying helping others to get the same out of volunteering that I did. ”

Pia Richardson

Volunteer Co-ordinator
Energise and Willow Tree

Volunteers and placements

Between April 2009 and March 2010 The Big Life group had **810** volunteers who worked in a variety of roles, such as running self-help groups, delivering training and complementary therapies, working with Big Issue in the North vendors on their pitches and supporting clients

36 volunteers moved into work during this year and **25** went on to do further training courses

131 people were on work placements within the group during this year and 2 of those moved into work or onto further training courses.



Our staff

In 2009/10 we had **277** staff, an increase of 11 on the previous year, of these:

32% of our staff are from BME communities - reflecting the communities in which we work

2% have a disability and **10%** have mental health needs

46% of our staff have childcare responsibilities and **20%** are carers

43% of our staff live within a 2 mile radius of work - reflecting our commitment to local employment

Sickness

This year we had a sickness absence rate of **3.4%**, compared to the 3.3% national average, 3.4% North West average and 5.3% rate in the public sector

Flexible working

92% of staff feel able to work flexibly when they need to and 89.5% feel they are provided for as a parent and carer

Commitment to the organisation

Our staff survey showed that **96%** of staff are committed to the success of The Big Life group and 97.5% would recommend our services to people they know.

Big Life group staff on a team building day



The Big Boat: our Healthy Living Centre on water

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