

Out of Pocket

How banking systems fail the poorest.

**THE BIG
ISSUE**
IN THE NORTH



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IN THE NORTH
T R U S T

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION
2. WHAT WE'RE CALLING FOR
3. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS
4. BIG ISSUE IN THE NORTH VENDOR SAVINGS ACCOUNTS
5. ACCOUNTS
6. SOURCES OF CREDIT
7. KEEPING MONEY
8. CHEQUE CASHING
9. FINDING SOLUTIONS: A CITIZENS' JURY ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
10. CONCLUSIONS
11. METHODOLOGY

APPENDIX

A. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

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1. Foreword

Congratulations. If you're reading this report, the chances are that you've got a bank account, that you pay for your shopping with 'plastic' and that you've borrowed money to buy a house, a holiday and a car. You probably use standing orders or direct debits to pay your bills. Your possessions, and maybe even your life, are almost certainly insured. When you retire you are likely to live off the income from a pension that you or your employer has contributed to. Most people probably don't even give these services a second thought. Yet in Britain today, 3 million people don't even have a bank account. They are Britain's financially excluded. People who are homeless are more likely than others to be financially excluded.

This report describes how Big Issue in the North vendors are excluded from even basic financial services and what the effects of that exclusion are. But it also describes what our vendors think some of the solutions might be.

The Big Issue in the North was established to give homeless people a legitimate opportunity to involve themselves in economic activity and work their way out of poverty. Yet as soon as vendors start earning money, they are penalised by high street banks and building societies. And why? It's usually because they don't have the right ID to open an account. So they struggle to keep hold of their money on the street or in insecure, and often dangerous, hostel accommodation, squats or flats. Saving for a deposit on a house or flat becomes impossible, while cashing a cheque often means paying a hefty fee at a high street exchange shop. They are penalised by and excluded from so many activities most of us take for granted. And sadly, all too often, vendors also fall prey to thieves who know they are carrying their earnings. The Government wants to achieve a "substantial decline" in the refusal of bank accounts because of "non-standard identity documentation". Yet the British Banking Association, which represents high street institutions, says its members are prevented from relaxing those very same regulations because of the laws governing money laundering. Under the 1994 Money Laundering Act bank staff and the financial institution could be prosecuted if accounts are opened where there is any suspicion of money laundering.

The other hurdle is to ensure homeless people feel they have a place in high street banks. When asked in the report what they would do to get £100 for furniture for a new home, just nine per cent of vendors said they would get a bank loan. Two per cent said they would turn to prostitution. For that two per cent, selling their body may already be a career choice. Yet they still considered it easier than walking into a bank and asking for credit.

2. What are we calling for?

So once you've read our report, what can you do to help? Find out what your bank or building society is doing to help the people who need it most. The 1994 Money Laundering Act is archaic and must be modernised so the poorest in society are not punished even more. Banks can be more flexible whilst also taking reasonable steps to ensure criminals cannot set up accounts in false names to launder money. Even the British Banking Association's leaflet 'You and Proving Your Identity' tells would-be customers not to be put off by "mention of passports and driver's licences". If the Government is really committed to giving everyone access to banks and building societies, then it should start by removing the simplest hurdle, while the banks and building societies should be brave enough to interpret legal requirements in favour of their customers.

Thank you for your support

Anne McNamara,

Co-Founder of 'The Big Issue in the North' and
Chairman of The Big Issue in the North Trust

3. Summary of research findings

We interviewed all of current vendors during March and April 2000. 341 interviews were completed: 128 in Leeds, 58 in Liverpool and 155 in Manchester.

We also facilitated a Citizens' Jury in July 2000 whereby fourteen Big Issue in the North vendors made recommendations on how vendors could get better access to financial services.

The main findings are shown below.

Just 29% of vendors have a bank or building society account of any kind.

80% of those with an account opened it before they became homeless.

Ninety vendors (26%) had tried to open an account since they became homeless. These 90 vendors reported 139 separate occasions when they had tried to open an account. Only 17% of vendors' attempts had been successful compared to 75% for the general public.

Not having sufficient ID was by far the most frequent reason given when a request to open an account was refused. Respondents said that they were told that acceptable ID included utility bills, a passport and wage slips.

Vendors said they would go about getting £100 at short notice by "selling more magazines". Vendors were also likely to turn to the Social Fund, voluntary organisations or friends and family. Banks and building societies were mentioned by a small minority.

Nearly three-quarters of vendors simply carry their earnings around with them. 88% of vendors who slept rough the previous night said they did this. Only one person who slept rough deposited their money in an account of any type.

81% said that they were happy with their arrangements for keeping money. Even amongst those who carry their earnings around, 78% said this. This apparent high level of satisfaction may be due to low levels of expectation amongst vendors and a lack of experience of using financial services in the past.

The Citizens' Jury made a number of recommendations. One of the most significant was that banks should be more flexible about the ID they accept. This would probably require a change to the money laundering regulations, something which Government policy is not addressing.

4. Big Issue in the North Vendor Savings Accounts

4.1. Introduction

This section describes the Vendor Savings Accounts that we provide for our vendors and the extent to which they are used.

4.2. Vendor Savings Accounts

The Big Issue in the North allows vendors to keep money in a Vendor Savings Account. This is a very basic account which does not allow vendors to go overdrawn or to earn interest on their savings. These were introduced in 1993. Vendors have a Savings Book which records their deposits and withdrawals. We explain to all vendors that we operate these Accounts when they first start selling the magazine. As Table 4.1 shows, most vendors understand that they exist.

Table 4.1.
Vendors who are aware of Vendor Savings Accounts.

% aware of Vendor Savings Accounts		
Leeds	93%	n=108
Liverpool	74%	n=50
Manchester	84%	n=135
All	85%	n=293

Note: only respondents who were already selling the magazine are included here. See section 11.

"n" indicates the number of people who answered the question.

However, not all vendors actually have one of these accounts. Table 4.2 shows that just under a third of all vendors actually have a Vendor Savings Account. Liverpool vendors were much less likely to have an account than the vendors in other cities.

AWARENESS IS HIGH BUT LESS THAN A THIRD HAVE A VENDORS SAVINGS ACCOUNT

Vendors tend to use these accounts to store small amounts of cash on a short-term basis rather than to build up savings over a long period. For example, in Manchester at the end of June 2000, 29 vendors had active accounts but the total amount stored in these accounts was only £404: an average of just £13.93 per account.

Table 4.2. Vendors who said they have a Vendor Savings Account.

% with a Vendor Savings Account		
Leeds	39%	n=108
Liverpool	12%	n=50
Manchester	30%	n=135
ALL	30%	n=293

Note: only respondents who were already selling the magazine are included here. See section 11.

5. Accounts

5.1. Introduction

This section contains information on how many vendors have accounts with different types of financial institution. It also describes what happened when vendors have tried to open accounts.

5.2. Vendors who have an account

We asked vendors whether they had an account with any of a range of different types of financial institution. Table 5.1 shows the results. Just 29% have an account of any kind.

LESS THAN A THIRD OF VENDORS HAVE AN ACCOUNT.

Some of these have Vendor Savings Accounts so they do have access to, albeit very limited, financial services. If Vendor Savings Accounts are also considered, 45% of vendors have some form of account. Leeds vendors are more likely to have some form of account (54%) than vendors in other cities. The figure in Liverpool is 34% and, in Manchester, 42%.

Vendors were more likely to have bank account than an account with any other type of organisation. Leeds vendors were most likely to have some kind of account.

Table 5.1. Vendors who have accounts with financial institutions.

Type of institution	Leeds	Liv	Man	ALL
Any account	34%	26%	26%	29%
Bank	27%	10%	16%	19%
Building Society	10%	12%	10%	11%
Post Office	2%	3%	7%	4%
Credit union	0%	0%	3%	1%

We asked those people who had an account about the facilities that their account provided. Even the small proportion of vendors who do have accounts appear to suffer from a very limited range of facilities offered by the account. Most of the accounts offer interest and access to cash machines. However, few allow vendors to write cheques, apply for a loan or have an overdraft.

Success in Scotland

The Big Issue Scotland and the Bank of Scotland have a successful partnership which has enabled over 200 vendors to open a bank account since 1993.

Vendors can use ID such as a letter from The Big Issue Scotland, a Big Issue badge, an NHS medical card and a birth certificate. They are then able to open an Easi Cash account.

The account offers a debit and cash card, balance enquiries over the phone and facilities for standing orders and direct debit. Although there is no overdraft on these accounts, there is a £10 "buffer" zone so that vendors can still withdraw cash when they have less than £10 in their account. Vendors can have their statements sent to a Big Issue Scotland office and collect them there. Why can't it be done in England? The banking laws are just the same.

Vendors have not always been homeless and Table 5.3 shows that the vast majority (80%) opened these accounts before they became homeless. This is particularly true in Leeds. Liverpool vendors were more likely to have opened an account since they became homeless, but the numbers involved are very small (5 vendors).

Table 5.2. Facilities offered by accounts held by vendors.

Type of institution	Leeds	Liv	Man	ALL
Cash machine	75%	53%	70%	70%
Overdraft	9%	13%	13%	11%
Apply for a loan	23%	7%	20%	19%
Write cheques	39%	13%	30%	31%
Get interest	61%	67%	63%	63%
	n=44	n=14	n=38	n=96

Table 5.3.
When vendors opened their account.

Type of institution	Leeds	Liv	Man	ALL
Before homeless	91%	64%	74%	80%
After homeless	9%	36%	26%	20%
	n=44	n=14	n=38	n=96

80% OF THE VENDORS WITH AN ACCOUNT OPENED IT BEFORE THEY BECAME HOMELESS

5.3. What happens when people who are homeless try to open an account?

We asked vendors whether they had ever tried to open an account since they became homeless. Ninety vendors (26%) had tried to do this and the following section concentrates on the experiences of this group.

These 90 vendors reported 139 separate occasions when they had tried to open an account. Only 24 (17%) of these attempts had been successful. Overall, around three-quarters of all attempts to open a bank account are successful¹ so it is clear that vendors are much more likely than other people to be rejected.

ONLY 17% OF VENDORS' ATTEMPTS TO OPEN AN ACCOUNT HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL. THE FIGURE FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS 75%.

It is not clear from the responses when vendors had tried to open an account and whether they had appropriate ID.

No one single bank stood out as being particularly willing to allow homeless people to open an account. Four vendors had opened an account at the Post Office and three at the Abbey National and Yorkshire Bank.

However, certain banks were mentioned frequently by people who had not been allowed to open an account. Nineteen vendors tried to open an account at Nat West but none were successful. Other institutions mentioned frequently by vendors are shown in Table 5.4.

Vendors reported a variety of reasons why they had been refused. These are summarised in Table 5.5. Not having enough ID was by far the most frequent reason given when a request to open an account was refused.

¹ "Access to financial services."
Report of PAT 14, HM Treasury, November 1999.

Table 5.4. Outcomes when vendors tried to open an account.

	Successful	Unsuccessful	TOTAL
Nat West	0	19	19
TSB	2	15	17
Hallfax	2	12	14
Barclays	2	16	18
Abbey National	3	13	16

Note: only banks approached by more than 10 vendors are included in the table.

Respondents said they were told that acceptable ID included utility bills, a passport and wage slips. Homeless people are less likely to have these.

MOST VENDORS LACK THE ID THAT THE BANKS WANT.

Also mentioned frequently was the fact that many institutions require a stable address. Responses indicated that this was a barrier since an address is required for statements and other literature to be sent to. In addition, acceptable ID included utility bills so that the lack of an address is a double disadvantage.

Table 5.5. Reasons given for refusing to allow homeless people to open an account.

	Number of vendors
Insufficient ID	70
No permanent address	19
Minimum balance required	10
No regular income	8
Bad credit rating	7
None given	5
Other	11

A small number of respondents said that financial institutions appeared, at times, to demonstrate a judgmental attitude toward homeless people, rather than to refuse an application on objective grounds. The following are some of the things that homeless people reported being told:

"Sorry sir, we don't have any accounts here."

"Because I was homeless they said go to the Post Office"

"Sorry sir, you don't have an address, try somewhere else."

"You're obviously homeless and don't have any money. Please try somewhere else."

6. Sources of credit

6.1. Introduction

We asked vendors a hypothetical question in order to explore with them where they would go in order to obtain a relatively small sum of cash (£100). Their responses reveal something about their knowledge of potential sources of credit.

6.2. Sources of credit

In order to explore the sources of credit that vendors perceive to be available to them, they were asked a hypothetical question: "What would you do if you were moving into a flat and needed, say, £100 to buy a few things for it?"

VENDORS WOULD SELL MORE MAGAZINES TO RAISE MONEY AT SHORT NOTICE

Their responses are summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1. Ways in which vendors would try to obtain £100.

	Leeds	Liv	Man	ALL
Sell more Big Issues	88%	59%	81%	80%
Apply to the Social Fund	70%	67%	63%	66%
Ask friends or family	56%	24%	33%	40%
Pawn belongings	16%	10%	16%	15%
Sell belongings	16%	10%	14%	14%
Bank loan	13%	10%	6%	9%
	n=128	n=58	n=155	n=341

Note: columns do not add up to 100% as more than one answer could be given.

Big Issue in the North vendors are perhaps more fortunate than other homeless people since selling the magazine gives them a legitimate income and it was selling more that was the most frequent answer to this question. Using private sector financial institutions was mentioned by a small minority. Vendors were much more likely to say they would try the Social Fund, voluntary organisations or friends and family.

Although the numbers involved were relatively small, it is worrying that 10% (4 people) of female vendors said they would raise the money through prostitution.

7. Keeping money

7.1. Introduction

As Section 5 showed, only 45% of vendors have an account where they can deposit cash. Yet, Big Issue in the North vendors earn money from selling the magazine. This section explores how vendors store their money in the absence of banking services.

7.2. Where vendors keep their money

We asked respondents where they keep the money they earn from selling The Big Issue in the North. Table 7.1 shows that nearly three-quarters simply carry their earnings around. 88% of vendors who slept rough the previous night said they carried their earnings around. Only one person who slept rough the previous night deposited their money in an account of any type. This puts vendors in a very vulnerable position.

THREE-QUARTERS OF VENDORS SIMPLY CARRY THEIR MONEY AROUND WITH THEM

A recent report² has shown that people who sleep rough are twice as likely as other people to be the victims of crime. Over half have suffered from personal theft and 42% were repeatedly stolen from. Women are particularly at risk. Anecdotally, we regularly hear from vendors who have been mugged or "taxed" on the streets.

OVER HALF OF HOMELESS PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ROBBED WHILE ON THE STREETS

Despite the fact that 45% of vendors have access to some form of account, only 20% actually use these accounts for depositing their earnings. Vendors who have their own home were more likely to use an account (14% of this group).

There was some evidence from the responses to this question that some temporary accommodation providers have secure places, such as a safe, where residents can keep money or other valuable belongings.

8. Cheque cashing

Table 7.1.
Where vendors keep their earnings.

	Leeds	Liv	Man	ALL
Carry it around	82%	58%	72%	73%
At home*	19%	32%	28%	26%
Vendor Savings Acc	15%	6%	8%	10%
Bank, building society or other account	8%	10%	12%	10%
With friends or family	10%	6%	6%	8%
	n=108	n=50	n=135	n=293

Note: only respondents who were already selling the magazine are included here. See Section 11.
* Vendors who keep money at temporary accommodation are included here.

Anecdotally, some vendors describe how having money in their pocket makes it more likely that they will waste their money and makes it more difficult for them to resist the temptation of buying alcohol or drugs.

We asked vendors whether they were happy with their arrangements for keeping the money they earn. Perhaps surprisingly, 81% said that they were happy. Even amongst those who carry their earnings around, 78% said this. This apparent high level of satisfaction may be due to low levels of expectation amongst vendors and a lack of experience of using financial services in the past.

8.1. Introduction

Cashing a cheque is no problem if you have a bank account. But what do you do if you have no bank account? This section describes how vendors would deal with cashing a cheque.

8.2. Cashing a cheque

Vendors were asked where they would go to cash a cheque (not a giro). Table 8.1 shows their responses.

Almost as many would go to a private company as to a bank or building society to get their cheque cashed. Included here are cheque cashing agencies and shops such as Cash Generator. Cashing a cheque this way usually means paying a fee. For example, Cash Generator charges 5% of the cheque value plus £1.50 to cash a cheque of under £100. So, a substantial proportion of vendors would face losing some of their money in order to be able to cash a cheque.

A high proportion (20%) said that they did not know how they would cash a cheque. There was also evidence that some vendors do not fully understand how bank accounts work. 14% said that they would give the cheque to a friend or family member and ask them to pay it into their account.

Table 8.1.
Where vendors would get a cheque cashed.

	Leeds	Liv	Man	ALL
Bank or Building Soc	38%	19%	36%	33%
Private agency*	28%	43%	28%	31%
Don't know	22%	28%	16%	20%
Pay it in someone else's account	16%	12%	14%	14%
Post Office	1%	0%	7%	4%
Other	3%	0%	6%	4%
	n=128	n=58	n=155	n=341

Note: * includes cheque cashing agencies, pawnbrokers and shops such as Cash Generator.

- The Big Issue in the North Trust should identify the sources of financial information and advice in each city and consider how vendors could get access to this advice.
- If there is sufficient demand, The Big Issue in the North Trust should arrange for financial advice and information sessions to be held in Big Issue in the North offices rather than merely referring vendors to services. These could be held at regular times on a drop-in basis.

9.2.4 Business advice and support

Although only a small proportion of vendors wish to set up their own business, this should be recognised as a potential source of employment. There are sources of free advice, support and training in all three cities.

Recommendations

- The Big Issue in the North Trust should do research on how many vendors wish to start business in order to avoid setting up services that will only be used by a small number of vendors.
- If there is demand, The Big Issue in the North Trust should investigate the feasibility of setting up a Vendors' Investment Club. Vendors would contribute money each week and would seek other sources of funding in order to build a larger pot. The money would be used to finance vendors' business ideas and to pay for training related to running a business. The Club would be run on a democratic basis with the members deciding how the money was used. The jurors felt that such a club would need to be run across the three cities rather than in each one separately, thereby taking advantage of economies of scale. The jurors were also aware that this idea needed much more deliberation before it could be formally launched.
- The Big Issue in the North Trust should continue to assist vendors develop practical skills which could help vendors to start a business, such as driving, by contributing towards the costs.
- The Big Issue in the North Trust should arrange for business advisors or mentors to visit our offices at set times if there is sufficient demand. Alternatively, one-to-one support should be arranged for those vendors who are serious about self-employment.

9.2.5 LETS and alternative forms of money

The Jury was enthusiastic about the concept of LETS and similar schemes such as time banks. They can provide a way of vendors building skills and experience as well as receiving goods and services without a need for cash.

However, some members of the Jury were concerned about some of the practicalities of LETS such as the lack of protection or insurance for scheme members should a job go wrong. This was felt to be particularly important where people had work done to a property under a LETS scheme.

Recommendations

- The Big Issue in the North Trust should investigate the feasibility of creating its own LETS scheme involving vendors, readers and other supporters of the organisation. This could provide a broad range of people and skills.
- Vendor Support Team staff should advise vendors on how to get involved in existing LETS schemes. In order to be able to do this, the Trust needs to identify the schemes that are running in each city.
- The Big Issue in the North Trust should investigate with other organisations whether vendors could offer time and skills in the community in return for things like rent payment, a reduction of rent arrears or transport. This could be piloted in Liverpool where the local authority has a LETS Development Team.

9.3 Other information gathered during the Jury

During the course of the Jury, other information came to light that reflects vendors' experiences of money and their attitudes to financial services. This is summarised here.

On the second day, jurors took part in a role play exercise which asked participants to devise a situation where they were experiencing problems with money. It was striking that most of the scenarios involved physical violence, or the threat of it, between two people where one had lent money to other or where a mugging was taking place.

The participants were asked to come up with two lines of dialogue to accompany their scenario. These were:

A vendor is trying to buy something in a shop:

"It's all pound coins."

"I haven't got a note."

A mugging:

"Give me the wallet."

"Aargh."

Someone is trying to get money back that they have lent:

"I've got the £20 I owe you but I can only pay £10 of it now."

"OK."

Same scenario:

"It's 2pm, where's my money."

"Go to fuck."

And again:

"I want my £20."

"Well you can't take the knickers off a bare arse."

And yet again:

"Give me my money, bum."

"Take it."

These illustrate very well that vendors' financial problems can often lead to problems between friends when people lend money to one another. Their money problems are often tied up with threats of violence rather than mere inconvenience.

It was also interesting that none of the pairs came up with a scenario involving an institution or organisation of any kind. Money problems were portrayed as problems between individuals who through force of circumstances must lend each other relatively small sums of money in order to get through the day.

In other exercises, some members of the Jury expressed access to financial services would make them feel socially included. One juror, recalling the days when he had a bank account said "When I had a VISA card, I felt special." Another said "If you don't have a cash card, you're socially excluded. Nobody uses cash in shops anymore and it's getting so you won't be able to soon." However, not all the jurors felt that access to financial services would mean social inclusion. In talking about the importance of having a passport, driving license, a bank account and so on one juror commented "You can have all those things and still feel excluded."

It was evident throughout the Jury that vendors felt a real anger about not being able to open a bank account. A subject that many may think of as boring sparked genuine passion among the jurors, many of whom found it inconceivable that banks did not want their money.

A lot of this anger was also due to banks' insistence on the importance of the money laundering regulations which they said prevented them from being more flexible in terms of ID requirements. Despite the existence of an "exceptional procedures" clause designed to help customers who cannot provide the preferred ID, it appeared that few banks actually operated these in practice. It appeared to vendors that the banks were hiding behind these regulations rather than seeking to take advantage of the existence of exceptions procedures.

10. Conclusions

Most Big Issue in the North vendors are financially excluded, yet another barrier to them moving away from the streets. A low proportion have a bank account and this research has shown how difficult it can be to open an account once you are homeless.

The question of ID is the most important barrier facing vendors in this respect and it is not clear how any of the Government's initiatives on financial exclusion will tackle this. The introduction of basic bank accounts and the proposed Universal Bank do not alter the Money Laundering Regulations so vendors will still find it difficult to gain access to these new products when they are launched. Any attempt to end to end financial exclusion must grasp this nettle.

One of the Citizens' Jury's most important recommendations was for these Regulations to be amended. The Jury also showed that Big Issue in the North vendors have wide-ranging and imaginative ideas for how financial services can work better for people who are homeless. They were prepared to think freely not only about conventional services but also about more innovative approaches such as credit unions and LETS. It is that sort of free thinking that is needed to tackle this problem.

We will now be seeking partners to take practical action to deliver services to vendors and we will campaign for change so that the type of financial exclusion revealed in this report becomes a thing of the past.

11. Methodology

11.1. Introduction

This section describes how the survey and the Citizens' Jury were conducted.

11.2. The survey

The survey was conducted as part of the annual re-badging process, whereby all vendors must prove that they are eligible to sell the magazine in order to receive a new badge which enables them to continue selling. This took place during March 2000. Vendors were given three weeks notice that they needed to provide evidence of their homelessness, validated by another organisation.

The Financial Exclusion questionnaire was attached to another longer questionnaire which gathered information about other aspects of the vendor's background and circumstances.

11.2.1. Sample

The aim of the study was to interview all current vendors. In order to achieve this, vendors were only given a new badge if they completed a questionnaire. No incentives were paid to vendors. In practice, virtually all regular vendors completed a questionnaire. In addition, 48 people who are homeless joined The Big Issue in the North during the survey and they also took part although they did not answer some questions, particularly about our services and where they kept money from selling the magazine.

341 interviews were completed: 128 in Leeds, 58 in Liverpool and 155 in Manchester.

11.2.2. Fieldwork

A briefing paper giving advice on how to use the questionnaire was produced and circulated to the three offices, along with copies of the questionnaire. Interviewers were also briefed in person. All interviews were completed by staff.

The confidential nature of the survey was stressed and all interviews took place in a separate office, in a private space.

All interviews were completed during March 2000.

11.2.3. Data preparation and analysis

All completed questionnaires were input into SPSS (a statistical computer software package). Direct entry of questionnaires minimised any possible inaccuracies and ensured confidentiality within the organisation.

11.3. The Citizens' Jury

Citizens' Juries are designed to allow participants an opportunity to devise solutions to complex problems. They provide ample time to think about a problem and an opportunity to hear from expert speakers so that participants can hear a range of opinion and different perspectives. Running a Citizens' Jury with Big Issue in the North presents particular challenges but the Jury was designed to minimise those and bring vendors face-to-face with some of the most important thinkers on financial services in Britain today.

11.3.1 Background and objectives

The survey of vendors provided us with a better understanding of the nature of financial exclusion among vendors. However, a questionnaire survey is not an ideal vehicle for generating new ideas since participants have no time to prepare and must think on their feet without an opportunity to consider an issue particularly deeply. A conventional focus group allows participants more time to discuss ideas but does not always provide any sources of new ideas from outside the group.

Therefore, in order to enable vendors to make informed recommendations we decided to use the Citizens' Jury method. We facilitated a Jury on drug treatment in November 1999 so were able to plan this one using our experiences from that project.

Juries are becoming an increasingly popular method of consultation but we have adapted the standard approach to suit the needs of people who are homeless.

11.3.2 Recruitment

In all three of our offices posters advertised the Jury and application forms were available for vendors to complete. The Jury was also promoted to the Women's Group in order to improve on the last Jury where only one woman had been involved.

The application forms explained the nature of the project and asked vendors to provide their name, gender, whether they had a bank account, whether they had ever tried to open one and whether they were interested in self-employment. The intention was to ensure that the Jurors represented a mix of people with different experiences and aspirations.

The Jury was held in Manchester and, in order to minimise logistical problems, twelve participants were selected from Manchester and two each from Leeds and Liverpool. In order to create a balanced Jury, we over-sampled women so that six were chosen, all from Manchester. The sixteen who were selected had a variety of experiences of banking so there was no need to select other participants to provide more balance.

All participants who were selected had to meet with a member of staff who described the project in more detail and stressed key messages such as the importance of punctuality. Two vendors did not attend this meeting by the specified date. They were removed from the Jury and replaced by two reserves.

Speakers were recruited to reflect a range of issues relevant to financial exclusion and possible solutions. We aimed to cover banking, access to credit, LETS and alternative forms of money, financial advice and business support and were successful in attracting speakers to cover these areas. The speakers were a mix of national policy experts and people working locally to deliver financial services.

11.3.3 Format and facilitation

The Jury ran over five days with a short review meeting one week later. The programme was shown below:

MON 24th JULY

10-4 Introductory groupwork.

Official launch featuring Hazel Blears MP and Val Chinn, Chief Executive of The Big Issue in the North Trust.

Agreement of ground rules for the week in threes and feedback to the main group.

Dice game. Participants answer questions on money and friendship depending on a role of the dice. This developed listening skill.

Gambling game. Four groups bet money on the answers to questions. This developed skills in making a group decision under pressure.

Business game. Four groups each get a business idea and must create arguments about why theirs is best. The whole group nominates the winner. Develops further skills in listening and small and large group decision making.

TUES 25th JULY

10-4 Story game. The group tells a story with each person contributing a sentence and passing it on to the next person. Develops listening skills.

Introduction to drama. Participants create individual, still-life representation of an emotion (e.g. you've just found £20). Participants work in pairs in still-life to represent a scenario (e.g. a mugging).

Appendix A

Financial Services

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE MUST BE FILLED IN BY
A MEMBER OF STAFF, NOT A VENDOR

1. Did you know that The Big Issue operates vendor savings accounts?

Yes No (go to q3)

2. Do you have a vendor savings account at The Big Issue?

Yes No

3. Do you currently have an account with any of the following?

(Read each out and tick those that apply)

Bank

Building society

Post Office

Credit union

Other sort of account (What is it?)

4. Does the account allow you to ...

(Read each out and tick those that apply)

use a cash machine?

write cheques?

have an overdraft?

get interest on your savings?

apply for a loan?

5. Did you open this account before or after you became homeless?

Before After

6. Since you became homeless, have you been to a bank or building society and tried to open an account?

Yes No (go to q10)

7. Which bank or building society have you been to?

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)

8. Did they allow you to open an account?

- a) Yes No
- b) Yes No
- c) Yes No
- d) Yes No
- e) Yes No

9. What reason did they give you for not allowing you to open an account?
(If rejected by any)

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)

10. Would you like to have a bank or building society account?

(Ask only those who don't already have an account).

Yes No

11. What would you do if you were moving into a flat and needed, say, £100 to buy a few things for it? (Do not prompt. Ask until they say "no". Tick all that apply).

Try to get a loan from a bank,
building society or credit union

Apply for a loan from the Social Fund
(This includes community care grants,
budgeting loans and crisis loans)

Go to a voluntary organisation or charity

Ask friends or family

Go to a loan shark or private finance company

Commit crime

From prostitution

Sell more Issues

Sell some belongings

Pawn some belongings

Don't know

Other (What?)

12. At the moment, where do you keep the money you earn from selling The Big Issue? (Do not prompt. Ask until they say "no". Tick all that apply)

- Carry it around
- At "home"
- Vendor savings account
- With a friend or family
- Bank, building society or other account
- Elsewhere (Where?)

13. Are you happy to keep money there?

Yes No

14. If someone wrote you a cheque, not a giro, where would you get it cashed? (Do not prompt. Ask until they say "no". Tick all that apply)

- Bank, building society or credit union
- Go to a loan shark or private finance company
- Don't know
- Other (Where?)