

Annual Survey of The Big Issue in the North

# Vendors

## 2000

**THE BIG  
ISSUE**  
IN THE NORTH



**THE BIG  
ISSUE**  
IN THE NORTH  
T R U S T

# Contents

1. INTRODUCTION
2. SUMMARY
3. WHO ARE OUR VENDORS?
4. BECOMING HOMELESS
5. VENDORS' EMPLOYMENT HISTORY
6. VENDORS' HOUSING SITUATION
7. PROBLEMS FACING VENDORS
8. SELLING THE BIG ISSUE IN THE NORTH
9. VENDORS' PERCEPTIONS
10. REGIONAL DIFFERENCES
11. METHODOLOGY

## APPENDIX

- A. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

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# 1. Introduction

We carried out this survey in March 2000. Each year, The Big Issue in the North Trust conducts an Annual Audit, which includes the Annual Survey, of all its current vendors in order to:

- produce statistical information about vendors which can be compared to previous research;
- provide information to assist us to develop our policies so that we can provide informed, practical services for vendors;
- collect information to support our strategy for attracting funding;
- check on each vendor's housing situation so that only those who are eligible to sell the magazine are doing so;
- act as an opportunity for staff to talk to vendors about the services we offer.

The last Audit was conducted in February 1999. Prior to that we conducted Audits in October 1997 and October 1996.

This year's Annual Survey contains a lot of information that can be compared with previous years. We have also added new questions on rough sleeping, employment history and on the length of time vendors have been selling *The Big Issue in the North*. Vendors' responses to these provide new and interesting information that is important not only for us but for national debates about how best to tackle homelessness.

## 2. Summary

### 2.1. Introduction

This section describes the key findings to emerge from this year's survey. More detail is contained in the chapters that follow.

### 2.2. How many Big Issue in the North vendors are there?

- The Audit provides a snapshot figure. In March 2000, we had 362 vendors, in February 1999 when there were 300. The Audit lasted slightly longer this year so the figures are not directly comparable.
- There were 156 vendors in Manchester, 130 in Leeds and 76 in Liverpool. Not all these vendors actually sell The Big Issue in the North in these cities. The magazine is sold across the whole of the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside in 90 different locations.
- Between February 1999 and March 2000, 1,416 vendors joined The Big Issue in the North. Between October 1997 and February 1999 the figure was 1,370 vendors.

### 2.3. Who are our vendors?

- The results from this year's survey are broadly similar to those from 1999.
- 88% of our vendors are male and 12% are female. The proportion of female vendors has increased slightly over the last year.
- 90% of our vendors are white. This is a very similar proportion to that in previous years.
- 25% of our vendors are under 25 years old, whilst 79% are under-35. These are very similar figures to 1999. Our first survey in 1996 showed a younger age profile as 43% were under 25 years old and 87% were under-35.
- The proportion of vendors who had spent time in care as a child was 27%, exactly the same as last year. In previous years, the figure was higher: 31% in 1997 and 34% in 1996.
- This year's study again showed that vendors who had been in care were more likely than other vendors to:
  - have a disability or long term illness;
  - have been homeless for a longer period
  - have become homeless at a younger age;
  - have slept rough during the last 12 months;
  - have never had a formal, paid job.

### 2.4. Becoming homeless

- 58% of vendors became homeless before they were 25 years old. This figure has declined from 65% in 1999 and 1997 and 78% in 1996.
- Women were more likely to have become homeless at a younger age, with 49% becoming homeless before they were 21 years old, compared to 32% of men. This reverses last year's findings but is similar to those from 1997.
- 27% became homeless because they split up with their partner. 24% became homeless due to leaving the family home because of problems and these were also the two most frequent reasons in previous surveys.
- 39% of vendors have been homeless for at least 3 years, similar to 1999 but lower than the figure of 50% in the 1996 study.

### 2.5. Employment history

- 79% of vendors have had a formal paid job at some point in the past. The figure in 1996 was 67%.
- 84% of Leeds vendors and 71% of Liverpool vendors have worked. Manchester was close to the average.
- 70% of these have not worked in a formal, paid job for at least two years. 40% have not worked for at least five years.
- The jobs vendors have done were concentrated in three main occupational areas, particularly Craft and Related Occupations (eg, jobs in construction or engineering). The other frequent categories were Personal and Protective Service Occupations (eg, bar or waitressing work, security guards or catering) and Other Occupations (mainly general labouring work).

### 2.6. Vendors' housing situation

- 14% of vendors had slept rough the previous night, slightly higher than last year's figure of 11%.
- 30% are currently staying in hostels, the most frequent type of current accommodation.
- 20% have moved into their own home and 18% are staying with friends. 4% are staying in squats and 3% are in bed and breakfasts. Overall, these figures are similar to last year.
- Men were less likely to be staying with friends (19% of men, 32% of women) and more likely to have slept rough the previous night (15% compared to 9% of women).
- In Liverpool, only 4% of vendors were sleeping rough. In Manchester the figure was 20% and in Leeds 12%.

- These figures are similar to last year's although the proportion sleeping rough in Manchester rose from 15% to 20%.
- Liverpool vendors were most likely to be living in hostels (40%) and to have their own home (28%). A relatively low proportion of Manchester vendors were in their own home (14%). Leeds vendors were most likely to be staying with friends (28%).
- 75% of vendors had slept rough during the last 12 months. This is similar to the 1999 figure but less than 1997's figure of 81%. There were relatively small differences between the three cities in this respect but Manchester vendors were most likely to have slept rough (79%) and Liverpool the least likely (70%).
- There was a large increase in the proportion of women who had slept rough, from 59% in 1999 to 79% this year.
- Most rough sleeping was relatively short term although there was a small group of long term rough sleepers. 51% of those who had slept rough spent less than a week on the streets the last time they slept rough. 88% spent less than six months on the streets. 7% spent over a year sleeping rough.
- Vendors slept rough for a variety of reasons. The most frequent were that there were no empty hostel beds (25%) and that they considered hostels unattractive place to stay (22%).
- In 1997, those vendors who had slept rough during the last 12 months said they faced more problems with drugs. This pattern was again evident this year.

## 2.7. Problems facing vendors

- 44% of vendors described themselves as having a disability or long term illness, slightly higher than 1999 and 1997 (39%).
- When vendors were asked to list the problems they faced, 59% mentioned accommodation, 58% said financial problems and 57% said drugs. These were similar to last year's figures.
- 81% of those who said they had a drug problem said that their drug problem came before their homelessness.
- Vendors selling on Out-of-town pitches were less likely to experience problems than vendors who sell in city centres. This is probably associated with the greater level of organisation, such as budgeting and planning required to sell successfully Out-of-town.

The likelihood of having accommodation, financial and offending problems decreased with length of time selling *The Big Issue in the North*. The likelihood of having problems with drugs and health, on the other hand, increased.

## 2.8. Selling *The Big Issue in the North*

- 30% first sold the magazine within the last six months. 35% first sold the magazine more than two years ago and 11% had first become a vendor over 5 years ago.
- Some vendors may not have sold the magazine consistently over these time periods so they were asked for how long they have been selling regularly. 39% have been selling the magazine for less than six months. 22% have been selling for more than two years. 4% have been selling for more than five years.
- 58% of vendors had a regular pitch from where to sell *The Big Issue in the North*, lower than last year's figure of 65%.
- 65% of Liverpool vendors had a regular pitch, compared to 80% last year. 51% of Manchester vendors and 62% of Leeds vendors sold from a regular pitch.
- 72% of vendors considered themselves to have regular customers, slightly lower than last year (78%).
- 85% of female vendors had regular customers, compared to 77% of male vendors, reversing the gender difference in last year's figures.
- 70% of vendors said selling *The Big Issue in the North* had improved their self confidence and 70% believed it had improved their motivation to actually change things in their life. Only 3% said that selling had lowered their self-confidence and 2% said it had lowered their self esteem.
- 51% sell on Out-of-town pitches (suburban locations and pitches in other towns and cities away from our offices). 21% sell in Zone 1 (mainly new vendors) and 29% in Zone 2 (other city centre pitches).

## 2.9. Vendors' perceptions

- Most vendors want to move away from a life on the streets and can foresee a time when they no longer need to sell *The Big Issue in the North*. 77% agreed that homeless people should do more for themselves.
- 91% agreed with the statement "I want to be drug free", exactly the same as last year.
- Just over 50% of vendors expressed an interest in having more of a say in how *The Big Issue in the North* is run, higher than last year when 40% said this. 83% of vendors agreed that *The Big Issue in the North* is a good read.
- Vendors in 2000 expressed similar levels of optimism and confidence about their futures as in 1999. Vendors

## 3. Who are our vendors?

in 1996, however, were significantly more optimistic and confident about their futures.

### 2.10. Regional differences

- Leeds vendors, again, experienced a rise in drug problems. In other areas, however, the picture is more positive.
- In Liverpool, the findings are more positive in many areas than they were last year with exception of problematic drug use which continues to be more prevalent than in other cities.
- There is a great deal of continuity in the findings for Manchester vendors. Problematic drug use is lowest here but rough sleeping appeared to be on the increase.

### 3.1. Introduction

This section describes the main characteristics of our vendors, particularly in relation to gender, ethnicity, age and length of homelessness.

### 3.2. How many vendors are there?

The survey provides a snapshot of the number of vendors in March 2000. We badged up 362 vendors during the survey period compared to 300 in February 1999. However, it is difficult to make a direct comparison since the Audit was organised slightly differently this year.

There were 130 vendors in Leeds, 76 in Liverpool and 156 in Manchester. Not all these vendors actually sell *The Big Issue in the North* in these cities, however, so it is not true to say, for example, that there are 156 vendors selling in the city of Manchester. Vendors are recorded at the office from which they buy their magazines. The magazine is sold on the streets of towns and cities across the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside.

Between February 1999 and March 2000, we badged up 1,416 vendors: 559 in Leeds, 271 in Liverpool and 586 in Manchester.

### 3.3. Gender

The vast majority of vendors are male (88%).

There are small regional differences, as the table below shows. Liverpool has the smallest proportion of female vendors.

Table 3.1 Gender by office

				2000	1999
Gender	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Total	Total
Female	13%	5%	14%	12%	9%
Male	87%	95%	86%	88%	91%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=130	n=76	n=156	n=362	n=300

### 3.4. Ethnicity

90% describe their ethnicity as 'white'. This is lower than last year's figure of 97%, largely owing to the introduction of a new category: "Irish". In Liverpool, 9% of vendors described themselves as "Irish".

**Table 3.2 Ethnicity by office**

Ethnicity	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	2000	1999
				Total	Total
White	95%	86%	88%	90%	97%
Black other	-	1%	1%	1%	-
Irish	2%	9%	5%	5%	na
Other	4%	3%	6%	5%	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=130	n=76	n=156	n=362	n=300

### 3.5. Age of vendors

Comparisons between this year's survey and last year's show that the age profile of our vendors is similar. 26% are aged under-26. As a group, our vendors are relatively young with 79% aged 35 or under.

Female vendors as a whole were younger than their male counterparts, 52% of women under-25 compared to 22% of men. This pattern has been evident in other surveys but the difference was much smaller last year when the figures were 33% of women and 28% of men. This year's results are more similar to those in 1997.

**Table 3.3 Age of vendors, by gender**

Age	Female	Male	2000	1999
			Total	Total
16-20	26%	4%	7%	7%
21-25	26%	18%	19%	22%
26-30	21%	30%	29%	22%
31-35	19%	25%	24%	23%
36-40	5%	14%	13%	12%
41-45	5%	4%	4%	7%
46-50	0%	3%	2%	2%
Over 50	0%	2%	2%	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=43	n=319	n=362	n=300

**Table 3.4 Age of vendors, by office**

Age	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Total
16-20	8%	0%	9%	7%
21-25	24%	9%	19%	19%
26-30	25%	43%	25%	29%
31-35	23%	24%	26%	24%
36-40	13%	18%	10%	13%
41-45	5%	1%	6%	4%
46-50	2%	1%	3%	2%
Over 50	1%	3%	3%	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=130	n=76	n=156	n=362

Last year, Liverpool had the oldest age profile and Leeds the youngest. This year, Leeds and Manchester were similar and Liverpool, again, had relatively few vendors under-26. 32% of Leeds vendors and 28% of Manchester vendors were under-26. In Liverpool the figure was only 9%. Liverpool vendors were heavily concentrated in the 26-40 category (85%) whereas the proportion of this age in Leeds and Manchester was 61%.

### 3.6. Local authority care

The same proportion of vendors had spent time in care as in last year's survey: 27%. In previous years the figure has been higher: 31% in 1997 and 34% in 1996.

Last year, virtually all of the vendors who had been in care were men. This year, 90% were men, which mirrors the overall population of vendors.

As last year, Leeds and Liverpool had lower proportions of vendors who had been in care (24% and 22% respectively) compared to Manchester (33%).

Previous surveys have highlighted the association between spending time in care and problems later in life. This year's study again showed that vendors who had been in care were more likely to:

- have a disability or long term illness (56% compared to 40% of those who had not been in care);
- have been homeless for more than five years (30% compared to 21%);
- have become homeless at a young age (11% of care leavers became homeless before they were 16 and 40% before they were 21);
- have slept rough during the last 12 months (82% compared to 72%);
- have never had a formal, paid job (35% compared to 16%).

Section 7 contains more information on the problems facing vendors.

## 4. Becoming homeless

### 4.1. Introduction

People become homeless for many different reasons. This section describes, in broad terms, how and at what age vendors became homeless.

### 4.2. Age at which vendors became homeless

Most of our vendors first become homeless at an early age. 58% of vendors became homeless before they were 25 years old, but the trend seems to be for fewer vendors to become homeless at an early age. Last year the figure was 65% and 78% in 1996.

Women were more likely to have become homeless at a younger age, with 49% becoming homeless before they were 21 years old, compared to 32% of men. This is similar to the findings from 1997 but reverses last year's results.

Differences between offices were also identified. As in previous years, vendors in Liverpool became homeless at an older age than those in Manchester and Leeds. Vendors in Manchester were more likely to have become homeless when aged under-16.

**Table 4.1 Age vendors became homeless, by office**

Age	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Total	Total
<16	7%	1%	14%	9%	13%
16-20	30%	11%	29%	25%	30%
21-25	25%	25%	22%	24%	22%
26-30	17%	30%	15%	19%	16%
31-35	12%	22%	11%	14%	9%
36-40	5%	8%	3%	5%	6%
41-45	5%	-	3%	3%	2%
46-50	-	1%	1%	1%	1%
Over 50	-	1%	2%	1%	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=130	n=76	n=156	n=362	n=300

### 4.3. How vendors become homeless

Vendors were asked to describe in broad terms how they became homeless.

As previous years, two routes into homelessness stood out. The most frequent way that vendors became homeless was because they split up with their partner. The other important cause of homelessness was vendors leaving the family home because of problems. This largely reflects the experience of young people who find it impossible to continue living with their parents.

There were few differences between the three cities although in Liverpool, a relatively high proportion of vendors had become homeless through eviction.

There was only significant difference between men and women in how they became homeless. 33% of women were evicted compared to only 8% of men. This has not been evident in previous surveys.

The proportion who were 'kicked out by family' fell from the 1999 figure and is similar to that recorded in 1997.

**Table 4.2 How vendors became homeless, by office**

	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Total	Total
<b>Split up with partner</b>	25%	21%	31%	27%	27%
<b>Left home due to problems</b>					
Evicted	12%	16%	8%	11%	4%
Kicked out by family	12%	4%	10%	9%	15%
Leaving prison	7%	11%	9%	9%	8%
Leaving care	2%	7%	3%	3%	6%
Travelling	3%	1%	3%	3%	na
Moved to another area	2%	4%	2%	2%	na
Left an institution*	2%	3%	1%	2%	na
<b>Repossession of home</b>					
Other	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=130	n=76	n=156	n=362	n=300

Note: \* not including prison or care.

### 4.4. Length of homelessness

Vendors were asked how long they had been homeless or experienced unsettled housing. The surveys carried out in 1996 and 1997 both showed that around 50% of vendors had been homeless for at least three years. For the last two years, the figure has been 39%.

Last year, there was a significant gender difference in terms of length of homelessness with women much more likely to have been homeless for a shorter time. This was the first time that our annual surveys had shown this pattern. This year, once again, there were relatively few differences by gender in this respect. Men were, however, more likely to have been homeless for over ten years (12% compared to 5%).

## 5. Vendors' employment history

Last year, Manchester vendors were the most likely to have been very long-term homeless (over 5 years) and this is again evident this year.

Last year, the proportion who were very recently homeless (less than six months) was very similar. However this year, Liverpool vendors were much more likely to be very recently homeless than vendors in Manchester.

**Table 4.2 Length of homelessness, by office**

Length of homelessness				2000	1999
	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Total	Total
<3 months	8%	9%	6%	7%	6%
3-6 months	13%	16%	8%	11%	7%
6-12 months	9%	10%	12%	11%	9%
1-2 years	18%	20%	13%	16%	22%
2-3 years	13%	13%	20%	16%	16%
3-5 years	19%	12%	13%	15%	13%
5-10 years	10%	10%	17%	13%	15%
10+ years	10%	10%	12%	11%	11%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=130	n=76	n=156	n=362	n=300

### 5.1. Introduction

This year, we included some questions about vendors' employment history. This section describes what jobs vendors have done in the past and how long it is since they were in employment.

### 5.2. Time since vendors had a job

Most vendors (79%) have had a formal, paid job at some point before selling The Big Issue in the North. In 1996, the figure was lower (67%).

Leeds had the highest figure (84%) and Liverpool the lowest (71%). In Manchester 78% have had a formal paid job.

Table 5.1. shows that 71% of vendors have not had a formal paid job in the last two years and 40% have not worked in the past five years. Just 7% have worked in the past six months.

Over half (54%) of Liverpool vendors have not worked in the past five years, the highest proportion of the three cities.

**Table 5.1 Time since vendors had a formal paid job**

Problem	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	TOTAL
Less than 6 months	11%	4%	6%	7%
>6-12 months	7%	13%	8%	8%
>1-2 years	21%	2%	14%	15%
>2-3 years	14%	13%	13%	14%
>3-5 years	13%	15%	21%	17%
>5-10 years	21%	26%	23%	23%
Over 10 years	14%	28%	16%	17%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=130	n=76	n=156	n=362

Note: figures refer to those vendors who have had a formal paid job.

### 5.3. Types of jobs vendors have worked in

We asked those vendors who had worked in a formal, paid job to describe the last job they had done. Table 5.2. shows that vendors were concentrated in a small number of occupational areas. 40% worked in Craft and Related Occupations (eg, jobs in construction or engineering). The other frequent categories were Personal and Protective Service Occupations (eg, bar or waitressing work, security guards or catering) and Other Occupations (mainly general labouring work).

Only 6% worked in a professional or managerial position.



## 6. Vendors' housing situation

### 6.1. Introduction

**Homelessness does not always mean that someone is sleeping on the streets and by no means are all vendors rough sleepers (by sleeping rough we mean sleeping on the streets, in car parks, in cars or in other unconventional settings). However, those who do have accommodation are mostly in temporary or unstable accommodation. This section examines vendors' housing in more depth.**

### 6.2. Current accommodation

14% of vendors had slept rough the previous night, slightly higher than last year (11%).

The types of housing that vendors are living in is broadly similar to last year. 31% are in a hostel, higher than last year. 21% were living in their own home. 21% were staying with friends, but the majority were not happy with this situation. 80% of those living with friends said accommodation was a problem for them. Only squatters (92% said accommodation was a problem) and rough sleepers (81%) were more likely to say that accommodation was a problem. This would seem to imply that staying with friends is not a long-term solution to most vendors' homelessness.

There are few differences between men and women's accommodation. Men were less likely to be staying with friends (19% of men, 32% of women) and more likely to have slept rough the previous night (15% compared to 9% of women). Last year, the only significant difference was that men were more likely to be in a hostel.

All three cities showed a concentration in these three SOC categories. However, Liverpool stands out as not having had a single vendor previously employed in a managerial or professional job.

**Table 5.2. Vendors' last job, by Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)**

SOC	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	TOTAL
<b>Managerial</b>	1%	0%	2%	1%
<b>Professional</b>	3%	0%	0%	1%
<b>Associate Professional &amp; Technical</b>	4%	0%	5%	4%
<b>Clerical</b>	7%	7%	3%	5%
<b>Craft &amp; Related</b>	44%	43%	35%	40%
<b>Personal &amp; Protective Service</b>	13%	26%	26%	21%
<b>Sales</b>	5%	6%	1%	3%
<b>Plant operative</b>	4%	7%	4%	5%
<b>Other</b>	20%	11%	25%	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=107	n=54	n=122	n=283

Note: figures refer to those vendors who have had a formal paid job.

**Table 6.1 Last night's accommodation by office**

Last night's accommodation	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	2000 Total	1999 Total
<b>Sleeping rough</b>	12%	4%	21%	14%	11%
<b>Squatting</b>	2%	5%	5%	4%	4%
<b>Bed &amp; Breakfast</b>	1%	4%	6%	4%	8%
<b>Hostel</b>	27%	40%	31%	31%	24%
<b>Friend's home</b>	31%	12%	17%	21%	25%
<b>Own home</b>	24%	29%	14%	21%	18%
<b>Other</b>	4%	6%	5%	4%	11%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=130	n=76	n=156	n=362	n=300

There were differences between the cities as Table 6.1 shows. Manchester vendors were most likely to have slept rough the previous night, as last year. The level of rough sleeping in Manchester increased from 15% to 21%. A relatively low proportion of Manchester vendors were in their own home. Liverpool vendors were most likely to have their own home, very different from last year when the opposite was true. Leeds vendors were most likely to be living with friends.

There was an association between accommodation and the zone in which vendors sell. The zone system is fully explained in Section 7, but Zone 1 vendors are new vendors in city centres, Zone 2 are other city centre vendors and Out-of-town vendors sell in suburban locations or in towns other than Leeds, Liverpool or Manchester.

Only 6% of Out-of-town vendors slept rough the previous night compared to 17% of Zone 1 vendors and 21% of Zone 2 vendors. Out-of-town vendors were much more likely to have stable accommodation. 31% of Out-of-town vendors had their own home compared to 11% of Zone 1 vendors and 21% of Zone 2 vendors.

There is a clear association between the time spent as a vendor and the likelihood of having slept rough the previous night. 24% of new vendors had slept rough compared to 12% of those who had been vendors for over three years. 26% of those who had been vendors for three years had their own home compared to 13% of those who had been selling for less than 6 months.

### 6.3. Rough sleeping in the last 12 months

Vendors were asked whether they had slept rough during the last 12 months. The majority of vendors, even if they are not currently sleeping rough, do sleep rough from time to time. 75% of vendors had slept rough during the last 12 months. This is similar to the last year's figure (72%). The difference between the cities was relatively minor but Manchester vendors were most likely to have slept rough (79%) and Liverpool the least likely (70%). In Leeds, 72% had slept rough in the past 12 months.

Last year, men were much more likely to have slept rough than women (73% compared to 59%). This year, the likelihood of men sleeping rough has stayed constant but this year, many more women have slept rough. In fact, women were slightly more likely to have slept rough (79% of women compared to 74% of men).

**Table 6.2 Proportion who have slept rough in the last twelve months by length of time as a vendor.**

Length of time as a vendor	% who slept rough in last 12 months
New vendor	87%
<6 months	83%
6-12 months	74%
1-2 years	70%
2-3 years	65%
3 years	49%
<b>ALL</b>	<b>75%</b>
	n=362

There was an association between the zone in which vendors sell and whether they had slept rough. 62% of Out-of-town vendors had slept rough compared to 84% of Zone 1 vendors and 82% of Zone 2 vendors.

There was also a clear association between the amount of time spent as a vendor and the likelihood of having slept rough as Table 6.2 shows.

The 1997 survey showed that vendors who had slept rough during the last 12 months were more likely to say they had problems with accommodation and drugs or alcohol (although this was not the case in 1999). This relationship was again apparent this year. 66% of those who had slept rough compared to 39% of those who had not said that accommodation was a problem. 62% of those who had slept rough compared to 43% of those who had not said that drugs were a problem.

Those vendors who had slept rough in the previous twelve months were asked how long they had spent on the streets the last time they slept rough. Most rough sleeping was relatively short term although there was a small group of long term rough sleepers. 51% of those who had slept rough spent less than a week on the streets the last time they slept rough. 88% spent less than six months on the streets. 7% spent over a year sleeping rough.

Short-term rough sleeping was more common amongst Leeds vendors and long-term rough sleeping was most frequent amongst Manchester vendors.

**Table 6.3. Number of consecutive nights vendors' spent sleeping rough the last time they slept rough**

Number of nights	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Total
<b>1</b>	15%	4%	16%	13%
<b>2-7</b>	50%	37%	29%	38%
<b>8-14</b>	9%	11%	12%	11%
<b>15-30</b>	7%	11%	5%	7%
<b>1-2 months</b>	10%	9%	9%	9%
<b>2-6 months</b>	4%	19%	9%	9%
<b>6 months - 1 year</b>	2%	6%	8%	5%
<b>1-2 years</b>	1%	4%	4%	3%
<b>2-5 years</b>	1%	-	5%	3%
<b>5 years</b>	1%	-	2%	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=94	n=54	n=130	n=278

Vendors slept rough rather than find temporary accommodation for a variety of reasons. It is important to note that the vendors did not necessarily sleep rough in the Leeds, Liverpool or Manchester areas, so their comments do not necessarily refer to the situation in these cities.

The most frequent reasons for not staying in temporary accommodation were that there were no empty beds available (25%) and that they considered hostels unattractive places to stay (22%).

Only 2% of vendors said that they liked living on the streets. National-level research in 1993 found that 5% of rough sleepers slept rough by choice<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 6.4. The reasons vendors who slept rough did not stay in temporary accommodation the last time they slept rough**

Main reason	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Total
Hostels were full	35%	22%	19%	25%
Hostels are unattractive	15%	25%	25%	22%
Didn't know how or where to find one	9%	13%	14%	12%
Banned	12%	18%	10%	12%
There weren't any hostels	5%	8%	4%	5%
Knew rough sleeping was short term	8%	3%	2%	4%
Hostels don't allow pets	3%	-	6%	4%
Like it on the street	3%	-	3%	2%
Too expensive	-	-	4%	1%
Didn't have ID	-	-	3%	1%
Other	9%	10%	10%	10%
	n=94	n=54	n=130	n=278

It was clear that for many of those who said that the hostels were full, their need for temporary accommodation came about unexpectedly and they found themselves in need of a direct access service.

Those who said they found hostels unattractive often described them as violent or threatening places. Many vendors who were seeking to stop using drugs described how the level of drug use in many hostels put them off staying there. The following quotes from vendors convey the main themes which emerged from this question:

*"I'm trying to stay off drugs. If I went to a hostel it would be impossible to stop".*

*"I'm trying to avoid heroin, hostels are rife with users".*

*"I do not like hostels, I don't feel safe".*

*"I've experienced bullying in hostels".*

*"Didn't like going in hostels, some are rougher than the streets".*

*"Because I'm part of a couple and we want to be together. Hostels and shelters separate people".*

*"I suffer from depression, hostels make me worse, they're full of heroin addicts, it's better to find a corner and close your eyes".*

<sup>1</sup>Anderson, I., Kemp, P.A. and Quilgers, D (1993) *Single homeless people*, London: HMSO.

## 7. Problems facing vendors

### 7.1. Introduction

This section examines in more detail the problems that vendors face and provides information about the number of vendors who perceive themselves to have a disability or long term illness.

### 7.2. Disability and long term illness

44% of vendors described themselves as having a disability or long term illness, up from 39% last year. This compares to a figure of just 6% for the general population of the same age group (1991 Census, 16-54 year-olds).

Not all disabled people are in poor health but 53% of those vendors with a disability or long-term illness said that their physical health was a problem for them. This compares to 12% of other vendors. 41% of vendors with a disability said that their mental health was a problem compared to 17% of other vendors.

This year, as in 1997, there were no significant differences between the three offices or between men and women in the prevalence of disability. Last year, 50% of women said they had a disability compared to 38% of men.

Leeds vendors were much less likely to report having a disability than those in other cities. The figures are 29% in Leeds, 55% in Liverpool and 52% in Manchester.

Those who had been in local authority care were more likely to have a disability or long term illness (56% compared to 40% of others).

### 7.3. Problems in life

Vendors were asked whether they were currently experiencing problems in a range of areas. It is important to bear in mind that these were the vendors' own perceptions. There are a whole range of reasons why vendors may not say they, for example, have a problem with their mental health. These could include an unwillingness to admit to a problem or a lack of awareness of their mental health.

The results show that, overall, the most problematic areas of life for vendors are:

- accommodation;
- financial problems;
- drugs.

These were problems in each of the cities and this mirrors the findings from previous surveys. The proportion citing financial problems rose by 9% between 1997 and 1999 and has risen a further 8% in the last year.

There were some differences in the type of problems mentioned by vendors in the different offices. Overall, Leeds vendors were more likely to mention having problems. In particular, they were much more likely to

mention Employment, Education & Training and Financial problems than vendors in other cities.

Last year, Liverpool vendors appeared to be facing more problems than those in other cities. This year, they mentioned most problems less frequent than other vendors. The exception was drug problems which have historically been more prevalent in Liverpool.

As in previous years, drugs were mentioned more than alcohol as a problem. Vendors in Leeds and particularly Liverpool were most likely to identify drugs problems. There has been a steep rise in the last two years in the number for Leeds vendors reporting a drug problem. In 1997, in Leeds, 37% said they had a drug or alcohol problem. Alcohol was mentioned more in Manchester, although vendors there still referred to drugs more frequently.

Problematic drug use was mentioned relatively frequently by all age groups but those aged 26-30 were more likely to have done so than older vendors. 60% of those under-40 said that drugs were a problem compared to 25% of those over-40.

Table 7.1. Vendors' problems by office

Problem	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	2000 Total	1999 Total
Accommodation	66%	62%	52%	59%	53%
Drugs	64%	72%	44%	57%	51%
Alcohol	18%	7%	22%	17%	22%
Employment	67%	46%	39%	51%	45%
Financial	68%	41%	59%	58%	50%
Education or training	32%	18%	22%	25%	18%
Offending	9%	5%	8%	8%	12%
Physical health	29%	3%	32%	3%	*
Mental health	32%	18%	28%	27%	*
	n=130	n=76	n=156	n=362	n=300

Note: percentages total more than 100% as more than one response could be given.

\* Last year, there was no distinction between physical and mental health. 41% of vendors said their health was a problem for them.

No-one from the youngest age group (16-20 year-olds) perceived themselves to have a problem with alcohol. 25% of the over-30s mentioned alcohol as a problem compared to 11% of the under-30s.

Last year, there appeared to be, on the one hand, a drug-using younger group and, on the other, an older group whose substance misuse revolves around alcohol. While there was some evidence of this, the findings this year did not show such a strong relationship between age and substance misuse.

Vendors were asked what came first: their drug problem or

their homelessness. 81% said that their drug problem preceded their homelessness. There was very little difference between the three cities in this respect.

Last year, health problems were closely related to age, but this year this pattern was not evident.

There are some differences in the responses given by men and women. Women were more likely to mention mental health (37% compared to 26% of men), drugs (67% compared to 56%). Men mentioned employment as a problem more frequently than women (52% compared to 40%).

Analysis was also conducted to identify any relationship between current housing situation and problems faced by vendors. On the whole, there were few clear trends. However, those who slept rough the previous night were more likely than other vendors to have problems with accommodation (81%) and committing crime (15%).

For the first time we asked which zone vendors sell in. Pitches are in one of three zones. Zone 1 pitches are in the city centre and usually reserved for new vendors. Zone 2 pitches are also city centre pitches but are usually a little further from our office. Out-of-town pitches are in suburbs or in other towns.

Looking at the problems experienced by vendors who sell in different zones reveals some interesting comparisons. Table 7.2 shows that Out-of-town vendors are less likely to report most of these problems. Selling Out-of-town requires a higher degree of budgeting and organisation than selling in city centres and it is perhaps no surprise that they appear to be a more stable group with fewer problems. Selling Out-of-town is often more financially rewarding than the city centre which may also contribute to vendors' well-being and, particularly, relatively low level of financial problems. Section 3 described how Out-of-town vendors were more likely to have their own home and less likely to sleep rough.

**Table 7.2. Vendors' problems by zone in which they sell**

Problem	Zone 1	Zone 2	Out-of-town	Total
Accommodation	69%	68%	44%	59%
Drugs	69%	74%	46%	57%
Alcohol	11%	15%	24%	17%
Employment	63%	53%	44%	51%
Financial	64%	64%	47%	58%
Education or training	17%	27%	24%	25%
Offending	5%	10%	3%	8%
Physical health	20%	42%	31%	3%
Mental health	23%	33%	29%	27%
	n=64	n=87	n=156	n=307

Note: percentages total more than 100% as more than one response could be given. This table does not include vendors who joined The Big Issue in the North during the Audit.

Zone 2 vendors were most likely to report problems on a number of these areas. Zone 2 vendors are more likely to be long-term vendors (see Section 8) but have not moved Out-of-town. This failure to move Out-of-town may well be associated with their higher level of problems.

## 7.4. Problems in life and length of time as a vendor

For the first time, this year's Annual Survey allows an analysis of the association between length of time spent as a vendor and the likelihood of reporting problems in life.

The data suggests that for some areas of life, the length of time spent as a vendor has a positive impact, while for others it is negative. The likelihood of vendors reporting problems with the following reduced with time spent selling The Big Issue in the North, suggesting that being a vendor has a positive impact on:

- accommodation;
- finances;
- offending.

These areas of life are related to the income that selling that magazine brings. Vendors are likely to be diverted from crime if they are earning a wage and there appears to be an immediate effect here. Partly through earning a wage but also through the Trust's services, vendors are likely to be able to find suitable accommodation. Section 5 showed how longer-term vendors were less likely to sleep rough.

**Table 7.3. Vendors' problems by length of time as a vendor**

	New vendor	< 6 mths	6-12 mths	1-2 yrs	2 yrs	ALL
Accommodation	76%	65%	45%	67%	44%	59%
Drugs	48%	52%	58%	70%	60%	57%
Alcohol	11%	15%	18%	19%	24%	17%
Employment	50%	53%	56%	47%	44%	51%
Financial	76%	58%	53%	63%	44%	58%
Education or training	30%	22%	27%	26%	21%	25%
Offending	22%	6%	4%	7%	6%	8%
Physical health	22%	23%	29%	42%	39%	3%
Mental health	19%	23%	26%	39%	34%	27%
	n=54	n=107	n=73	n=57	n=70	n=361

## 8. Selling *The Big Issue* in the North

However, the results also showed that in some areas of life, vendors were more likely to report problems the longer they remained as a vendor. These were:

- drugs;
- physical health;
- mental health;
- alcohol.

It is likely that these are inter-related and that health suffers as substance misuse takes place over prolonged periods of time.

The table also shows that in many areas of life (including accommodation, drugs, financial, physical health and mental health) vendors are likely to experience a deterioration in their second year before an improvement after two years. This may be a genuine deterioration or may be due to vendors' shifting perceptions of what constitutes a problem for them. For example, moving into a B&B may be an improvement for a rough sleeper but after, say, a year living there, they may wish to move so they, once again begin to perceive accommodation as a problem.

These findings suggest that a long-term career as a vendor is not necessarily beneficial for all areas of life and that selling *The Big Issue of the North* should continue to be seen as a stepping stone to better things rather than becoming a permanent job.

### 8.1. Introduction

We asked a number of questions about selling *The Big Issue in the North*, including whether vendors have a regular pitch from which they sell, whether they have regular customers and what effect selling the magazine has had on their self-confidence and motivation to change things in their life. We also added some extra questions this year about the length of time vendors have sold *The Big Issue in the North*.

Not all vendors sell from the same pitch all the time. Those who do must use it regularly or they can lose the pitch. Therefore, vendors who have regular pitches are often those with more stable circumstances and lifestyles.

### 8.2. Length of time as a Big Issue in the North vendor

This year we asked new questions about how long vendors have been selling *The Big Issue in the North*. Because vendors may have spells when they do not sell the magazine, we asked them two questions. Firstly, when did they first sell the magazine? Secondly, how long have they been selling the magazine, this time around if they have had more than one spell as a vendor?

Table 8.1 shows that just under half (48%) of the vendors first sold the magazine less than a year ago. Just over a third (36%) first sold the magazine over 2 years ago.

Liverpool has a higher proportion of relatively new vendors than the other two cities and, correspondingly, a smaller proportion of vendors who first sold the magazine over two years ago. Manchester has the largest proportion of vendors who first sold the magazine over two years ago.

**Table 8.1. Time when vendors first sold *The Big Issue in the North***

	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Total
<b>Less than 6 months ago</b>	24%	36%	21%	25%
<b>6-12 months ago</b>	16%	25%	21%	20%
<b>1 - 2 years ago</b>	27%	13%	14%	18%
<b>2 - 3 years ago</b>	9%	8%	15%	12%
<b>3 - 5 years ago</b>	18%	9%	12%	14%
<b>Over 5 years ago</b>	7%	9%	17%	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=109	n=64	n=134	n=307

Note: This table does not include vendors who joined *The Big Issue in the North* during the Audit.

Because some vendors have had more than one spell of selling the magazine, we asked how long they had been selling the magazine for in this spell. Table 8.2, therefore, shows the length of time that vendors have been selling on a consistent basis.

This shows that the majority of vendors have been selling for a relatively short time. 61% have been selling for less than a year. 22% have been selling for more than two years.

The three cities are relatively similar in the proportion who have been selling for less than a year, although the figure in Manchester (56%) is a little lower than Leeds (61%) and Liverpool (63%). The proportion of long-term (over two years) vendors is significantly higher in Manchester (29%) than Leeds (14%) and Liverpool (23%).

**Table 8.2. Length of this spell selling *The Big Issue* in the North**

	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Total
<b>Less than 6 months</b>	37%	41%	31%	35%
<b>6-12 months</b>	24%	22%	25%	24%
<b>1 - 2 years</b>	26%	14%	15%	19%
<b>2 - 3 years</b>	6%	9%	13%	10%
<b>3 - 5 years</b>	6%	9%	10%	9%
<b>Over 5 years</b>	2%	5%	6%	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=109	n=64	n=134	n=307

Note: This table does not include vendors who joined *The Big Issue* in the North during the Audit.

### 8.3. Where vendors sell the magazine

As Table 8.3 shows, around half of vendors sell from Out-of-town pitches in all three cities (see Section 7.3 for a description of the pitch system). The most significant difference between the cities is that Manchester has a low proportion selling in Zone 1 and a high proportion in Zone 2. This is largely due to a recent review of pitches. In Manchester this disproportionately affected Zone 1 where a number of pitches were removed.

**Table 8.3. Where vendors sell *The Big Issue* in the North**

Pitch	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Total
<b>Zone 1</b>	27%	27%	13%	21%
<b>Zone 2</b>	20%	25%	37%	29%
<b>Out-of-town</b>	53%	48%	50%	51%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	n=109	n=64	n=134	n=307

Note: This table does not include vendors who joined *The Big Issue* in the North during the Audit.

There were no differences between men and women in terms of the zone in which they sold.

63% of vendors have a regular pitch from where to sell *The Big Issue* in the North, similar to the figure of 65% last

year, with a marked decline in Liverpool. 72% of vendors considered themselves to have regular customers, again slightly lower than last year (78%).

Last year, Liverpool had the highest proportion of vendors with a regular pitch. This year, there was little difference between Leeds and Liverpool. 70% of Liverpool vendors had a regular pitch (the figure was 80% last year), compared to 71% of Leeds vendors and 53% of Manchester vendors.

There were few differences between the offices in terms of the proportion who have regular customers although Manchester's figure is surprising since it has the lowest proportion with a regular pitch. Overall, 96% of those vendors with a regular pitch have regular customers compared to 45% of other vendors.

Last year, women were more likely to have regular customers than men. This year, 78% of both sexes said they had regular customers. There is despite the fact that more male (65%) than female (50%) vendors had a regular pitch.

There was a clear link between the zone in which vendors sell and having regular customers and a regular pitch.

**Table 8.4. Regular customers and pitches, by zone**

	Zone 1	Zone 2	Out-of-town	ALL
<b>Regular pitch</b>	33%	46%	85%	63%
<b>Regular customers</b>	47%	72%	93%	72%
	n=64	n=87	n=156	n=307

Note: This table does not include vendors who joined *The Big Issue* in the North during the Audit.

### 8.4. Improving self-confidence and motivation

Vendors were asked two questions: What effect has selling *The Big Issue* in the North had on your self-confidence and What effect has selling *The Big Issue* in the North had on your motivation to change things in your life? The questions were re-phrased slightly from last year to reduce any possible bias in the answers (the old questions were Has selling *The Big Issue* in the North increased your self-confidence / motivation?). Even allowing for the fact that some vendors may have felt obliged to answer "yes", since it was our staff who conducted interviews, the results are encouraging.

## 9. Vendors' perceptions

**Table 8.5. Impact of selling *The Big Issue in the North* on vendors, by office**

Improvement in ...	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	All
<b>Self-confidence</b>	73%	79%	76%	76%
<b>Motivation</b>	79%	70%	73%	75%
	n=109	n=64	n=134	n=307

Note: This table does not include vendors who joined *The Big Issue in the North* during the Audit.

76% of vendors said selling *The Big Issue in the North* had improved their self-confidence and 75% believed it had improved their motivation to change things in their life. Only 3% and 2% respectively said that selling *The Big Issue in the North* had reduced their confidence or motivation. Around 20% in each case said that it had had no effect.

There were only small differences between women and men in this respect. However, those vendors aged over-25 were much more likely to have said that being a vendor had improved their self-confidence. 81% of this group said that compared to 58% of younger vendors. There was no clear association between length of time as a vendor and changes in self-confidence and motivation.

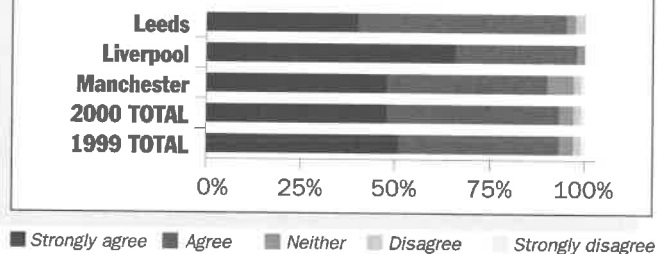
### 9.1 Introduction

Vendors were asked a series of questions about their attitudes to themselves, their future and *The Big Issue in the North* more generally. Some of these questions were asked to vendors in previous surveys so we can make comparisons with these findings. Vendors were read a series of statements and asked to say how strongly they agreed or disagreed with them.

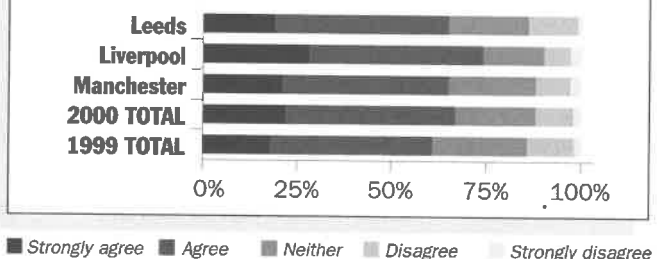
### 9.2 Vendors' self-perceptions

One set of questions was related to vendors' perceptions of their own future. These showed that most vendors want to move away from a life on the streets and can foresee a time when they no longer need to sell *The Big Issue in the North*. This year a similar proportion agreed that I want more from life than selling *The Big Issue in the North* as had done so in 1996 and 1999 (Table 9.1). However, in 1996, a much greater proportion had "strongly agreed". Liverpool vendors felt more strongly about this question than vendors in other cities.

**Table 9.1. "I want more from life than selling *The Big Issue in the North*"**



**Table 9.2. "I feel I have a good future ahead of me"**

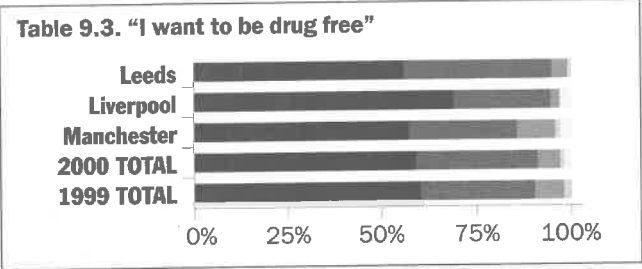


Vendors were a little more optimistic about their future than they were last year (Table 9.2) but were still less optimistic than they had been in 1996. This year, 22% "strongly agreed" that I feel I have a good future ahead of me. There were only minor differences between cities.

As Section 7 shows, 57% of our vendors say they have a problem with drugs. Those vendors who reported having a problem with drugs were asked how they felt about the statement 'I want to be drug free'. As Table 9.3 shows, the vast majority (91%) agreed with this statement, the same as last year. It is again encouraging that Liverpool, where problematic drug use is most frequent, has the



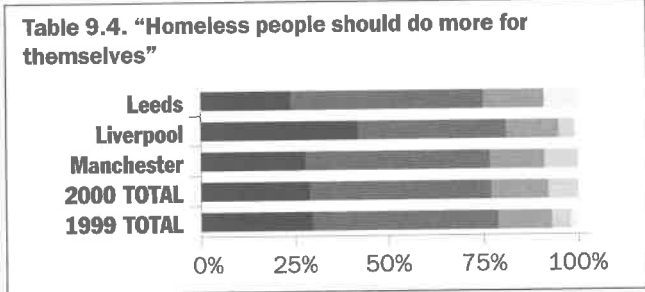
highest proportion who want to be drug free. In 1996, the figures were similar.



Legend: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither, Disagree, Strongly disagree

Note: only those who said they had a problem with drugs were asked this question.

Finally in this set of questions, there was a more general statement: "Homeless people should do more for themselves". Over three-quarters agreed with this and very few disagreed. Liverpool vendors were much more likely to "strongly agree" than those in other cities.



Legend: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither, Disagree, Strongly disagree

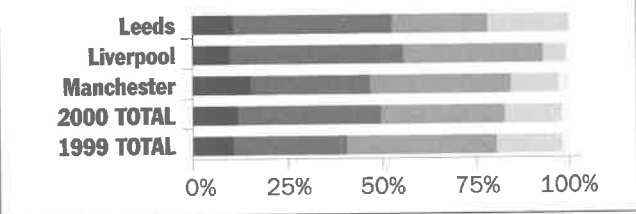
The responses to this set of questions seem to indicate that the majority of vendors do envisage a more positive future for themselves, both in general terms and in moving away from drugs. The findings were very similar to those last year but vendors were less optimistic about the future than they had been in 1996.

### 9.3 Vendors' perceptions of The Big Issue in the North

Vendors were also asked for their reactions to a set of statements about The Big Issue in the North.

Just over 50% of vendors expressed an interest in having more of a say in how The Big Issue in the North is run, an increase from 40% last year. However, the proportion who felt very strongly about this remained relatively low, however, so it is unlikely that 50% would actually wish to be actively involved.

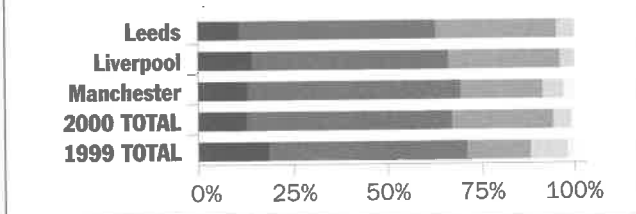
**Table 9.6. "I want more of a say in how The Big Issue in the North is run"**



Legend: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither, Disagree, Strongly disagree

Vendors were asked how strongly they agreed with the statement "The public are generally supportive of The Big Issue in the North". The majority agreed that this was the case but, this year, vendors were slightly less confident of public support than they had been last year. In 1996, a much higher proportion had "strongly agreed".

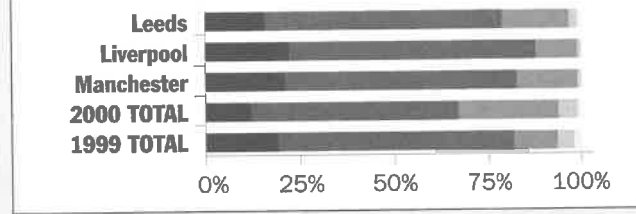
**Table 9.7. "The public are generally supportive of The Big Issue in the North"**



Legend: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither, Disagree, Strongly disagree

Finally we asked vendors for their view of the magazine that they sell. Overall, the vast majority agreed that *The Big Issue in the North* is a good read and only 2% disagreed. The figures were similar across the three cities.

**Table 9.8. "The Big Issue in the North is a good read"**



Legend: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither, Disagree, Strongly disagree

This set of questions reveals that most vendors are happy with the magazine that they sell.

We regard the fact that around 50%, an increase from last year, wished to have more of a say in how The Big Issue in the North is run as a positive sign. Whenever vendors wish to take more control of their own lives it is encouraging.

While most vendors feel that the public generally support

## 10. Regional differences

The Big Issue in the North, this view was less strongly felt than in 1996. Added to the findings in Section 9.2, this seems to imply that vendors in 2000 feel less optimistic and less confident about their futures than they did in 1996, although the situation has altered little in the past year.

### 10.1. Introduction

**One of the interesting aspects of this and previous year's surveys are the differences between the three offices in Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester. This section provides a summary of the position in each city and how this has changed.**

**There are a lot of similarities between the three cities as the other sections in this report make clear and in many ways, the similarities are more striking than the differences. Furthermore, when the prevalence of a particular problem is referred to as relatively low amongst vendors, it will generally still be much higher than in the general population. For example, Leeds vendors have a relatively low rate of disability, but the figure is 29%, nearly five times higher than the general population.**

### 10.2. Leeds

Last year's Annual Survey found a growing drugs problem amongst Leeds vendors which seemed to threaten their reputation as the most stable group of vendors. This year, the proportion with a drug problem is even higher and continues to cause concern.

In other respects, the situation in Leeds is more promising. A high proportion have experienced formal, paid employment, the rate of disability is relatively low and rough sleeping amongst Leeds vendors was more short-term than in the other cities.

Some statistics that at first may appear to be negative may actually indicate a more positive picture. For example, a high proportion of Leeds vendors said they had problems with employment, education and training. This may be an indication that vendors are not content with selling *The Big Issue in the North* and wish to move on to more formal employment or training.

### 10.3. Liverpool

Historically, drug use and other problems have been particularly prevalent among Liverpool vendors. Last year there were some more positive signs such as a reduction in rough sleeping and an increase in the proportion reporting improved self-confidence.

This year, there is a high proportion of new vendors in Liverpool. The rate of problematic drug use remains high and a relatively low proportion had worked before selling the magazine. Of those who had worked, long-term unemployment was more common than in Leeds or Manchester.

However, Liverpool vendors this year reported fewer problems in other areas of life relative to the other cities. Once again, Liverpool vendors appeared to be motivated to move away from *The Big Issue in the North* and to take more responsibility for doing this themselves.

# 11. Methodology

## 10.4. Manchester

Last year, there was a mixed picture in Manchester. Vendors were most likely to have been in care, to be rough sleepers and to be long-term homeless. However, there was an improvement in the proportion with drug and alcohol problems.

This year, the level of drug use was relatively low but the other indicators mentioned above were still worse in Manchester than in Leeds or Liverpool. A high proportion slept rough the previous night and long-term rough sleeping was more common in Manchester. A lower proportion owned their own home in Manchester.

The proportion of long-term vendors was highest in Manchester so it is perhaps unsurprising that many of these indicators are little changed.

## 11.1. Introduction

**This section describes how the audit was conducted.**

## 11.2. Process

This year's audit built on the experience of previous years. The survey was conducted as part of the 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.

Vendors were interviewed after they had been told they could have a new badge. This removed any potential for vendors to exaggerate their current circumstances (eg, to say they were rough sleepers) in an attempt to gain a badge.

## 11.3. 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 were badged up and completed a questionnaire.

## 11.4. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was based on last year's to enable year-on-year comparisons to be made although a small number of questions were changed following consultation with staff. The questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

## 11.5. 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.

## 11.6. 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.

## 11.7. Report writing

A draft report was produced and circulated amongst staff. Following this consultation a final report was produced. The report deliberately follows last year's format for ease of comparison.

# APPENDIX A

## Annual Audit Questionnaire

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Ref (leave blank) \_\_\_\_\_

Office:  Leeds  Liverpool  Manchester

1. What is your full name? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Current Badge Number (enter "999" for new vendor) \_\_\_\_\_

3. New Badge Number \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your date of birth? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Gender

Male  Female

7. What is your address?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Contact phone number in case of emergency \_\_\_\_\_

9. Name/address of next of kin in case of emergency (optional)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. How would describe your ethnic origin?

White  Black Car/bean  Black African  Black Other  
 Indian  Pakistani  Bangladeshi  Chinese  
 Asian Other  Irish  Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

11. How long have you been homeless or experienced unsettled housing?

Less than 3 months  12 months to 2 years  5 to 10 years  
 3 to 6 months  2 to 3 years  Over 10 years  
 6 to 12 months  3 years to 5 years

12. How old were you when you first became homeless?

Under-16  16-20  21-25  26-30  31-35  
 36-40  41-45  46-50  50+

**13. How did you first become homeless? (tick one)**

- Left care                       Split up with partner                       Left parents' home due to problems  
 Kicked out by parents    Evicted     Left prison  
 Other, please state \_\_\_\_\_

**14. Have you slept rough at any time in the last year?       Yes       No (go to q17)**

**15. Thinking about the last time you slept rough, how many consecutive nights did you sleep rough for?**

- 1 night                       2-7 nights                       8-14 nights                       15-30 nights  
 > 1 month - 2 months                       > 2 months - 6 months                       > 6 months - 1 year  
 >1 year - 2 years                       > 2 years - 3 years                       > 3 years - 5 years  
 > 5 years - 10 years                       >10 years

**16. What was the main reason you slept rough rather than got a place in a hostel or night shelter?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**17. Where did you sleep last night?**

- Slept rough                       B & B                       Own home                       Squat  
 Hostel                       Night shelter                       Friend's place                       Other

**18. Were you ever in care as a child?       Yes       No**

**19. Have you ever had a formal, paid job?       Yes       No (go to q22)**

**20. When did your last formal paid job end?**

- less than 3 months ago       3-6 months ago       6-12 months ago       1-2 years ago  
 2-3 years ago                       3-5 years ago                       5-10 years ago                       Over 10 years

**21. What was the job? (Find out what they actually did, not who they worked for)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Leave these blank, they will be filled in later**

- Managerial                       Professional                       Assoc Professional                       Clerical  
 Craft                                       Protective                                       Sales                                       Plant operatives  
 Other

**22. Do you have a disability or long term illness that limits your daily activity?**

- Yes       No

**23. Are you experiencing problems in your life with any of the following (read out each in turn and tick those that apply):**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment    | <input type="checkbox"/> Education or training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical health                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health | <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Money         | <input type="checkbox"/> Committing crime      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other areas of life (Please describe) _____ |  |  |

**24. (if drug use is a problem) When did your drug use first become a problem for you, before you became homeless or afterwards?**

- Before       After

**25. When did you first start to sell The Big Issue in the North?**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than 6 months ago | <input type="checkbox"/> 6-12 months ago | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years ago    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 years ago          | <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 years ago   | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 5 years ago |

**26. How long have you been selling The Big Issue in the North for (this time around if more than one spell selling)?**

- |   |                                      |                                       |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than 6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 6-12 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 years          | <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 years   | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 5 years |

**27. Do you have a regular pitch for selling The Big Issue in the North?**

- Yes       No

**28. Which zone do you sell in at the moment?**

- Zone 1       Zone 2       Out-of-town

**29. Do you have regular customers who buy The Big Issue in the North from you?**

- Yes       No

**30. What effect has selling The Big Issue in the North had on your self-confidence?**

- Increased it       Made it worse       No effect

**31. What effect has selling The Big Issue in the North had on your motivation to change things in your life?**

- Increased it       Made it worse       No effect

**I AM NOW GOING TO READ YOU SOME STATEMENTS AND I WANT YOU TO SAY HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THEM. CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER FROM THE LIST.**

**32. I want to be drug free (ask only if a drug user)**

- Strongly agree       Agree       Neither       Disagree       Strongly disagree

**33. I want more from life than selling The Big Issue in the North**

Strongly agree     Agree     Neither     Disagree     Strongly disagree

**34. I feel I have a good future ahead of me**

Strongly agree     Agree     Neither     Disagree     Strongly disagree

**35. The public are generally supportive of The Big Issue in the North**

Strongly agree     Agree     Neither     Disagree     Strongly disagree

**36. I want more of a say in how The Big Issue in the North is run**

Strongly agree     Agree     Neither     Disagree     Strongly disagree

**37. The Big Issue in the North magazine is a good read**

Strongly agree     Agree     Neither     Disagree     Strongly disagree

**38. Homeless people should do more for themselves**

Strongly agree     Agree     Neither     Disagree     Strongly disagree

**ALL VENDORS**

**MONITORING SCORES**

Housing \_\_\_\_ Drugs & Alcohol \_\_\_\_ Health \_\_\_\_ Finance \_\_\_\_ EET \_\_\_\_ Pers Dev \_\_\_\_

**Read this statement to the vendor and ask them to sign if they agree.**

**The information you have given us will be held by The Big Issue in the North Company and Trust. We will use it for research and to help us provide you with a better service. We may, in exceptional circumstances, pass information about you to a third party. This will only be done if we consider that you, or someone else, is at risk or in immediate danger.**

**I consent to The Big Issue in the North Trust holding and processing personal data about myself for the above purposes**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

