# ANNUAL SURVEY OF THE BIG ISSUE IN THE NORTH VENDORS: 2005

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This year's survey, which is the seventh annual audit of our vendors, took place during October 2005. Every year *The Big Issue in the North* and The Big Issue in the North Trust carry out such a survey in order to:

- provide data to assist us to develop our polices so that we can offer informed, practical services to our vendors;
- contribute to local and national debates on tackling homelessness, and campaign on behalf of our service users;
- gather together information to support our strategy for attracting funding for future service provision.

This year's audit contains a good deal of information that can be compared with the results of our previous surveys. We have added new sections on vendors' family situation; their experience of crime (as victims, as well as perpetrators of crime); their voting habits; their social and leisure activities; their experience of debt; and their aspirations for the future. These sections were negotiated in partnership with our stakeholders who identified areas of information that they would find useful. We have also expanded the section on drug and alcohol use.

## 2. SUMMARY

This section outlines some of the key findings from the survey. More detailed information is contained in the pages that follow.

- vendors are mostly white males in their 20s and 30s (section 3)
- more than 4 in 10 consider themselves to have a disability or long-term illness that limits their day-to-day activity (section 3)
- almost a quarter spent time in local authority care before becoming homeless (section 3)
- 1 in 7 have served in the armed forces (section 3)
- more than four-fifths have had paid employment other than selling *The Big Issue in the North*, although nearly three-quarters of these have not worked in the last three years (section 3);
- the most common reason for first becoming homeless was splitting up with a partner (section 4);
- almost half have been homeless for more than three years (section 4);
- 1 in 8 vendors had spent the night before the survey sleeping rough, and almost two-thirds had slept rough at some point in the last year (section 5);
- half of the vendors have children, but 1 in 2 of these have no contact with their children (section 6);

- nearly three-quarters said their main reason for signing up with The Big Issue in the North was to earn some money (section 7);

- 4 in 5 vendors are registered with a GP, but only a fifth are registered with a dentist (section 8);

- nearly four-fifths are using illicit drugs (section 9);

- two-thirds of vendors were involved in some form of criminal activity before they signed up with The Big Issue in the North, but more than 90% of these said the amount of crime they committed had decreased since they had been selling the magazine (section 10);

- 3 in 5 had been a victim of crime in the last 12 months (section 10);

- more than 1 in 7 had been excluded from services or medical treatment because they were homeless (section 10);

- almost half of vendors have voted in a general election, but only a fifth voted in May 2005 (section 11);

- 1 in 10 have never been on holiday (section 12);

- nearly two-fifths have no conventional form of identification (section 12);

- half the vendors have some kind of financial account in which they can deposit money (section 13);

- more than half are in some form of debt (section 13);

- the three main barriers preventing vendors from making changes in their lives were their drug and alcohol use, housing, and financial situation (section 14).

## 3. WHO ARE OUR VENDORS?

This section describes the main demographic characteristics of our vendors. It also looks at whether they spent time in local authority care as a child, served in the armed forces, and worked prior to selling *The Big Issue in the North*.

### 3.1 How many vendors are there?

In the week prior to the start of the survey, a count was made of the number of vendors who bought magazines from each of our four offices. There were 248 vendors in total: 85 in Leeds, 68 in Liverpool, 70 in Manchester, and 25 in Sheffield. This figure will change from week to week, but it represents the number of active vendors we had at the start of October 2005.

Not all of the vendors actually sell *The Big Issue in the North* in these four cities - the magazine is sold on the streets of more than 120 towns and cities across the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside - but vendors are recorded at the office from which they buy their magazines.

This year we badged up 215 vendors during the survey (compared to 304 in last year's audit, and 308 in 2002). Given the number of active vendors we had in the week prior to the start of the survey, this suggests that the figures are a fair representation of vendors in each of the cities, although vendors from Sheffield are slightly over-represented in the overall results.

### 3.2 Gender

The majority of vendors are male, as Table 3.1 shows. The proportion of female vendors has been falling gradually in the last three years, and at 7% is once again at its lowest level since we started the annual audit (last seen in 2001). For the first time Manchester has the smallest proportion of female vendors, although the difference between the cities is not statistically significant.

*Table 3.1: Gender by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **male** | 92% | 91% | 96% | 90% | **93%** | 91% |
| **female** | 8% | 9% | 4% | 10% | **7%** | 9% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=72 | n=56 | n=57 | n=30 | n=215 | n=304 |

### 3.3 Age

In contrast to the stability shown in previous audits, the age profile of vendors has changed this year. In 2004 almost two thirds of our vendors were aged between 21 and 35, but now just over half fall into this group. Vendors over 40 years of age now make up almost a quarter of the total, nearly double the proportion we saw in 2004.

*Table 3.2: Age by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **17-20** | 1% | - | 4% | 3% | **2%** | 3% |
| **21-25** | 11% | 7% | 4% | 14% | **8%** | 14% |
| **26-30** | 32% | 11% | 9% | 31% | **20%** | 23% |
| **31-35** | 24% | 25% | 30% | 28% | **26%** | 29% |
| **36-40** | 21% | 21% | 23% | 17% | **21%** | 18% |
| **41-45** | 10% | 23% | 19% | 3% | **15%** | 9% |
| **46-50** | 1% | 9% | 9% | 3% | **6%** | 2% |
| **51-55** | - | 2% | - | - | **1%** | 2% |
| **over 55** | - | 2% | 4% | - | **1%** | n/a |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=1) | n=72 | n=56 | n=57 | n=29 | n=214 | n=304 |

As in previous years, Leeds and Sheffield have a younger vendor age profile than Liverpool and Manchester.

### 3.4 Ethnicity

The majority of vendors describe their ethnicity as White British, as they have done in all our surveys to date. This proportion rose slightly in 2005, to reach the level last seen in 2001. In contrast to previous years, none of the vendors reported coming from an Asian or Asian British background.

*Table 3.3: Ethnic background by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **White British** | 94% | 88% | 89% | 87% | **90%** | 85% |
| **White Irish** | 1% | 2% | 4% | - | **2%** | 3% |
| **any other White** | 1% | 5% | 2% | 3% | **3%** | 5% |
| **mixed White & Black Caribbean** | 1% | - | - | - | **<1%** | 1% |
| **mixed White & Black African** | - | - | - | 3% | **<1%** | - |
| **any other mixed** | - | - | - | - | **-** | 1% |
| **Black Caribbean** | - | 2% | 2% | 3% | **1%** | - |
| **Black African** | - | 2% | - | - | **<1%** | 1% |
| **Bangladeshi** | - | - | - | - | **-** | <1% |
| **any other Asian** | - | - | - | - | **-** | <1% |
| **any other ethnic background** | 1% | 2% | 2% | - | **1%** | 5% |
| **not stated** | - | - | 2% | 3% | **1%** | 1% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=72 | n=56 | n=57 | n=30 | n=215 | n=298 |

### 3.5 Disability

In contrast to 2004, when the figure was the lowest it had been since we started our annual surveys (at 28%), this year almost half the vendors reported having a disability or long-term illness that limits their daily activity, as Table 3.4 shows. This percentage looks particularly high when compared to the figure of 18% for the population overall, and 13% of those of working age (UK Census 2001).

Vendors in Liverpool and Manchester were least likely to say they had a disability, although as in 2004, the differences between the cities are not significant.

*Table 3.4: Vendors with a disability or limiting long-term illness by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **no disability** | 51% | 63% | 60% | 52% | **56%** | 72% |
| **disability** | 49% | 37% | 40% | 48% | **44%** | 28% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=4) | n=71 | n=54 | n=57 | n=29 | n=211 | n=304 |

While disability is not the same as ill health, a significantly higher proportion of vendors with a disability said their health problems were preventing them from moving on in their lives (see Table 14.1 in section 14). 51% said their physical health was a barrier - compared to 10% of vendors without a disability - and 42% said their mental health problems were stopping them moving on, in contrast with 12% of other vendors.

### 3.6 Time spent in local authority care

For the second year in a row, the proportion of vendors who spent time in care before becoming homeless has fallen slightly, and now stands at less than a quarter. Only 2% said they first became homeless on leaving local authority care (see Table 4.1).

As in 2004, vendors in Liverpool were least likely to have spent time in local authority care in the past, although the differences between the offices are not significant.

*Table 3.5: Experience of local authority care by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **been in care** | 24% | 20% | 23% | 23% | **22%** | 25% |
| **not been in care** | 76% | 80% | 77% | 77% | **78%** | 75% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=72 | n=56 | n=57 | n=30 | n=215 | n=298 |

## 3.7 Time spent in the armed forces

For the first time this year, we asked vendors whether they had ever served in the armed forces, as this has been identified as a contributing factor to homelessness by other agencies. 1 in 7 had done so, although only 1% of vendors overall first became homeless on leaving the armed forces (see Table 4.1).

*Table 3.6: Service in the armed forces by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **served in armed forces** | 18% | 18% | 11% | 7% | **14%** |
| **not served in armed forces** | 82% | 82% | 89% | 93% | **86%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=72 | n=56 | n=57 | n=30 | n=215 |

Vendors in Sheffield were least likely to have served in the armed forces in the past, but not significantly so.

## 3.8 Previous employment

As has been found in previous audits, the majority of vendors have had a formal paid job other than selling *The Big Issue in the North*, as Table 3.7 shows.

*Table 3.7: Whether vendors have worked prior to selling the magazine, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **had a job before** | 93% | 79% | 89% | 87% | **87%** | 75% |
| **not had a job before** | 7% | 21% | 11% | 13% | **13%** | 25% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=1) | n=71 | n=56 | n=57 | n=30 | n=214 | n=304 |

This proportion has risen again in 2005, breaking the pattern seen in the last three years, when the figure had slowly declined. Once again vendors in Leeds are most likely, and vendors in Liverpool least likely to have worked in the past.

*Table 3.8: Length of time since vendors had a job by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **in the last 6 months** | 5% | 7% | 4% | 4% | **5%** | 11% |
| **6-12 months ago** | 8% | 5% | 6% | - | **5%** | 13% |
| **1-2 years ago** | 8% | 9% | 8% | 12% | **9%** | 11% |
| **2-3 years ago** | 8% | 12% | 10% | 15% | **10%** | 15% |
| **more than 3 years ago** | 72% | 67% | 73% | 69% | **71%** | 50% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=64 | n=43 | n=51 | n=26 | n=184 | n=228 |

Note: only includes vendors who worked prior to selling *The Big Issue in the North* (missing=3).

Almost three quarters of those vendors who had worked prior to selling the magazine have not done so in the last three years, compared to half in 2004, although a rise is probably to be expected given the increase in the proportion of vendors who have been with us for more than two years (see Table 7.3).

Having jumped to almost a quarter last year, the percentage of vendors who had had a job within the last twelve months has returned to the level seen in 2002.

## 4. BECOMING HOMELESS

As previous experience has shown, people can find themselves without a home for many different reasons. This section looks at how vendors became homeless, and how long they have experienced unsettled housing.

### 4.1 How vendors became homeless

We asked vendors to describe in broad terms how they first became homeless - in other words, the event or process that was involved, rather than the underlying reason for this (for example, "My parents told me to leave" rather than "I was always in trouble with the police").

*Table 4.1: How vendors first became homeless by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **left care** | - | 5% | 4% | - | **2%** | 6% |
| **split up with partner** | 37% | 24% | 39% | 32% | **34%** | 26% |
| **told to leave by parents** | 11% | 12% | 7% | 5% | **9%** | 20% |
| **left home due to problems** | 13% | 7% | 11% | 14% | **11%** | 18% |
| **evicted** | 7% | 5% | 13% | 14% | **9%** | 7% |
| **left prison** | 13% | 10% | 4% | 5% | **9%** | 9% |
| **left the armed forces** | 2% | - | - | - | **1%** | <1% |
| **other** | 17% | 38% | 22% | 32% | **26%** | 15% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=54 | n=42 | n=46 | n=22 | n=164 | n=295 |

Note: 2005 data excludes vendors in a council/housing association tenancy, or a private rented tenancy (missing=5); 2004 data includes all vendors

The breakdown of a relationship has been the most common reason given for a number of surveys now, and 2005 was no different - indeed splitting up with a partner accounted for a third of vendors for the first time this year. The proportion who left home due to problems, or were kicked out by their parents, fell quite steeply, as did the percentage who first became homeless on leaving care.

### 4.2 Length of homelessness

Vendors without their own tenancy were also asked how long they had been homeless or experienced unsettled housing. Almost half (45%) have been homeless for more than three years, continuing the reversal in trend that started last year, when for the first time since the annual survey began the proportion of long-term homelessness amongst vendors rose rather than fell.

The differences between the cities are not statistically significant, although Sheffield vendors are more likely to have been homeless for less than 12 months, and Manchester vendors are more likely to have been homeless for over 5 years, as they have been in the previous two surveys.

*Table 4.2: How long vendors have been homeless by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| less than 3 months | 7% | - | 2% | 9% | **4%** | 14% |
| 3-6 months | 9% | 9% | 4% | 18% | **9%** | 14% |
| 7-12 months | 11% | 7% | 13% | 32% | **13%** | 18% |
| 1-2 years | 15% | 14% | 13% | 14% | **14%** | 14% |
| 2-3 years | 13% | 28% | 10% | - | **14%** | 12% |
| 3-5 years | 24% | 21% | 27% | 9% | **22%** | 12% |
| 5-10 years | 17% | 16% | 15% | 9% | **15%** | 10% |
| more than 10 years | 4% | 5% | 17% | 9% | **8%** | 8% |
| TOTAL | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=54 | n=43 | n=48 | n=22 | n=167 | n=251 |

Note: excludes vendors in a council/housing association tenancy, or a private rented tenancy (missing=2)

## 5. HOUSING SITUATION

Being homeless does not necessarily mean someone is sleeping on the streets, and previous surveys have shown that by no means all of our vendors are rough sleepers. However the majority of those who have had accommodation in the past have tended to be in unstable or temporary accommodation, although some vendors will have been supported in moving into their own tenancies since starting to sell *The Big Issue in the North*.

This section explores vendors' current housing situation, examines the extent of rough sleeping in the last 12 months, and looks at the barriers preventing vendors from moving into their own accommodation.

### 5.1 Registration with the local authority

For the first time this year, we asked vendors whether they were registered as homeless in the area in which they lived currently. Whilst almost two thirds were registered with their local authority, more than a quarter were not, and nearly 1 in 10 were unsure either way.

*Table 5.1: Vendors registered as homeless with the local authority by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| registered | 63% | 61% | 61% | 63% | **62%** |
| not registered | 30% | 34% | 21% | 33% | **29%** |
| not sure | 7% | 5% | 18% | 3% | **9%** |
| TOTAL | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=1) | n=71 | n=56 | n=57 | n=30 | n=214 |

While the results for vendors registered in each of the cities are fairly similar, vendors in Manchester were less likely to know whether or not they were on the homelessness register.

### 5.2 Rough sleeping in the last 12 months

All vendors were asked if they had slept rough at any time during the last year. Previous experience has shown that most vendors will sleep rough from time to time, even if they are not currently doing so.

*Table 5.2: Rough sleeping in the last 12 months by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **had slept rough** | 62% | 50% | 68% | 83% | **64%** | 74% |
| **had not slept rough** | 38% | 50% | 32% | 17% | **36%** | 26% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=3) | n=69 | n=56 | n=57 | n=30 | n=212 | n=304 |

Just under two thirds of vendors (64%) confirmed that they had slept rough at some point in the last year. This represents a change from recent surveys, when consistently around three quarters of vendors had done so. The Liverpool office shows the biggest fall, since 71% of Liverpool vendors had slept rough in 2004.

Vendors in Sheffield were much more likely, and vendors in Liverpool less likely to have slept rough in the last 12 months than vendors elsewhere. As in previous years, vendors who have been selling the magazine for less than a year are significantly more likely to have slept rough: 82% had done so in the last 12 months, compared to 50% of longer-term vendors. Similarly city centre vendors were much more likely to have slept rough in the last year: 69% had done so, in comparison with 53% of out-of-town vendors.

### 5.3 Current accommodation

Vendors were most likely to have stayed with family or friends the night before they took part in the survey, continuing the pattern seen in recent audits (see Table 5.3). Overall the figures are similar to those from 2004, although slightly more vendors have their own tenancy this year (22% compared to 16% last year - the first time this percentage has increased in three years), and being a tenant has overtaken staying in a hostel (20%) as the second most common form of current accommodation.

*Table 5.3: Previous night's accommodation by office*

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Leeds</th><th>Liverpool</th><th>Manchester</th><th>Sheffield</th><th>2005 total</th><th>2004</th></tr>
<tr><td>slept rough</td><td>11%</td><td>9%</td><td>12%</td><td>17%</td><td>12%</td><td>15%</td></tr>
<tr><td>council/HA tenancy</td><td>18%</td><td>9%</td><td>11%</td><td>17%</td><td>14%</td><td rowspan="2">16%</td></tr>
<tr><td>private rented tenancy</td><td>6%</td><td>13%</td><td>4%</td><td>10%</td><td>8%</td></tr>
<tr><td>shared house with support</td><td>3%</td><td>-</td><td>9%</td><td>-</td><td>3%</td><td>n/a</td></tr>
<tr><td>homeless hostel</td><td>10%</td><td>38%</td><td>16%</td><td>10%</td><td>19%</td><td rowspan="2">21%</td></tr>
<tr><td>bail/probation hostel</td><td>-</td><td>2%</td><td>2%</td><td>3%</td><td>1%</td></tr>
<tr><td>bed & breakfast</td><td>3%</td><td>2%</td><td>5%</td><td>3%</td><td>3%</td><td>5%</td></tr>
<tr><td>squat</td><td>1%</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3%</td><td>1%</td><td>6%</td></tr>
<tr><td>night shelter</td><td>3%</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3%</td><td>1%</td><td><1%</td></tr>
<tr><td>family/friend's place</td><td>42%</td><td>27%</td><td>30%</td><td>30%</td><td>33%</td><td>34%</td></tr>
<tr><td>other</td><td>3%</td><td>2%</td><td>12%</td><td>3%</td><td>5%</td><td>4%</td></tr>
<tr><td>TOTAL</td><td>100%</td><td>100%</td><td>100%</td><td>100%</td><td>100%</td><td>100%</td></tr>
<tr><td>(missing=1)</td><td>n=71</td><td>n=56</td><td>n=57</td><td>n=30</td><td>n=214</td><td>n=304</td></tr>
</table>

Even though the proportion has fallen slightly this year, nearly 1 in every 8 vendors still spent the previous night sleeping rough (this includes sleeping on the streets as well as in warehouses, cars or other settings which are not designed for sleeping).

Vendors in Liverpool were more likely to have spent the night in a hostel for the homeless, and vendors in Leeds were more likely to have been staying with family or friends, than vendors elsewhere.

As in previous surveys, it was clear that most vendors staying with family or friends did not see this as a long-term solution: two thirds (66%) of these said their housing situation was a barrier that was preventing them from making changes in their lives (see section 14). Only those vendors sleeping rough, in a hostel or in a B&B were more likely to say that their housing situation was problematic.

Once again, vendors who had been selling the magazine for more than a year were significantly more likely to have their own tenancy (30% compared to 10% of shorter-term vendors); as were out-of-town vendors (30% were tenants, in comparison with 16% of city centre vendors).

### 5.4 Why vendors slept rough

Vendors who slept rough the night before the survey were asked if they had tried to find a place in a hostel or night shelter instead. Almost a third had done so, as Table 5.4 shows. Vendors in Manchester and Sheffield were less likely to have tried than vendors in Liverpool or Leeds.

*Table 5.4: Whether vendors who slept rough tried to get a hostel place by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **tried to get a place** | 38% | 40% | 29% | 20% | **32%** |
| **didn't try to get a place** | 62% | 60% | 71% | 80% | **68%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=8 | n=5 | n=7 | n=5 | n=25 |

Note: only includes vendors who slept rough the night before the audit.

The same vendors were also asked why they had slept rough, rather than getting some form of overnight accommodation. The most common reason given was that the hostels were all full, followed by not knowing where to find a bed for the night.

*Table 5.5: Main reason vendors slept rough by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **hostels all full** | 38% | 40% | 14% | 40% | **32%** |
| **didn't know where to look** | 12% | - | 29% | - | **12%** |
| **don't like hostels** | 12% | - | - | - | **4%** |
| **barred from hostels** | 12% | - | 14% | - | **8%** |
| **using alcohol or drugs** | 12% | 20% | - | - | **8%** |
| **own a pet** | - | 20% | - | - | **4%** |
| **part of a couple** | - | - | 14% | - | **4%** |
| **had rent arrears** | 12% | - | - | - | **4%** |
| **wanted to avoid drug users** | - | - | - | 20% | **4%** |
| **problems getting referred** | - | - | - | 20% | **4%** |
| **other** | - | 20% | 29% | 20% | **16%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=8 | n=5 | n=7 | n=5 | n=25 |

Note: only includes vendors who slept rough the night before the audit. 'Other' reasons included: not being able to find anywhere; not liking the alternatives that were available.

None of the vendors who had slept rough the night before the survey said it was because this was what they preferred to do.

## 5.5 Vendors' experiences as tenants

Vendors with a council or housing association tenancy were asked whether they were given a choice about the area they lived in, and the type of accommodation they had. Less than half had been able to choose either, as Table 5.6 shows.

Although the differences between the cities are not significant, vendors in Liverpool were more likely to have been given a choice than vendors elsewhere.

*Table 5.6: Vendors' choices about area and type of accommodation by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **choice about area** | 31% | 60% | 50% | 20% | **38%** |
| **choice about type of accommodation** | 39% | 80% | 40% | 20% | **43%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=1 for accommodation type) | n=13 | n=5 | n=6/5 | n=5 | n=29/28 |

Note: only includes vendors with a council or housing association tenancy

We also asked vendors how long they had maintained their tenancy (whether this was with the council, a housing association, or privately rented). A third had been tenants for six months or less, while just over half had had their tenancy for up to a year.

*Table 5.7: How long vendors had maintained their own tenancy by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **less than 3 months** | - | - | 13% | 13% | **5%** |
| **3-6 months** | 31% | 30% | 38% | 13% | **29%** |
| **7-12 months** | 31% | 10% | 13% | 13% | **19%** |
| **1-2 years** | 31% | 30% | 25% | 63% | **36%** |
| **more than 2 years** | 6% | 30% | 13% | - | **12%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=16 | n=10 | n=8 | n=8 | n=42 |

Note: only includes vendors with a council/housing association tenancy, or a private rented tenancy (missing=3)

Only 2 out of every 5 tenants said they had been given any support in keeping their tenancy on. Vendors in Sheffield were least likely to have been supported in this context, although the differences between the cities are not significant.

*Table 5.8: Whether vendors had any support in maintaining their tenancy by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **had support** | 44% | 36% | 50% | 25% | **40%** |
| **didn't have support** | 56% | 64% | 50% | 75% | **60%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=16 | n=11 | n=8 | n=8 | n=43 |

Note: only includes vendors with a council/housing association tenancy, or a private rented tenancy (missing=2)

## 5.6 Barriers preventing vendors from moving on

Finally, we asked vendors without a tenancy what they thought was the main barrier stopping them from moving into their own accommodation. Overall drug and/or alcohol use was the most frequently mentioned obstacle, followed by not having a deposit to put down, not being able to afford the rent, and physical and/or mental health problems.

A significantly higher proportion of vendors in Liverpool than vendors elsewhere said the lack of a deposit was holding them back in this context.

*Table 5.9: Main barrier preventing vendors moving into a tenancy by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **excluded from housing list** | 6% | - | 13% | 10% | **7%** |
| **lack of a deposit** | 19% | 32% | 13% | 5% | **18%** |
| **can't afford rent** | 19% | 5% | 11% | 10% | **12%** |
| **drug/alcohol use** | 17% | 32% | 17% | 29% | **22%** |
| **physical/mental health problems** | 11% | 14% | 9% | - | **10%** |
| **don't know where to get support** | 2% | 3% | 4% | - | **3%** |
| **difficulty filling in forms** | 8% | 3% | 2% | - | **4%** |
| **don't know how system works** | 2% | 5% | 2% | 10% | **4%** |
| **own a pet** | - | 3% | - | - | **1%** |
| **other barriers** | 32% | 16% | 47% | 39% | **34%** |
| | n=53 | n=37 | n=47 | n=21 | n=158 |

Note: data excludes vendors in a council/housing association tenancy, or a private rented tenancy (missing=11); percentages add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed for. The main 'other' barriers included: waiting lists (n=9); rent arrears (n=4); not being able to cope on own (n=3); not being a priority for housing (n=3); not being able to find suitable accommodation (n=3).

When asked why they were currently excluded from the housing list, all of the vendors who gave a reason said this was because of previous rent arrears.

## 6. FAMILY SITUATION

For the first time in this year's audit, we asked vendors about their family situation. This section focuses on how many children vendors have, and whether or not they are in contact with their children.

### 6.1 How many vendors have children?

*Table 6.1: Whether vendors have children by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **have children** | 51% | 57% | 39% | 66% | **51%** |
| **don't have children** | 49% | 43% | 61% | 34% | **49%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=1) | n=72 | n=56 | n=57 | n=29 | n=214 |

A little over half of our vendors are parents. Vendors in Sheffield are most likely, and vendors in Manchester least likely to have children, although the differences between the offices are not statistically significant.

*Table 6.2: Number of children vendors have, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1 child** | 36% | 29% | 36% | 47% | **36%** |
| **2 children** | 33% | 39% | 32% | 37% | **35%** |
| **3 children** | 19% | 19% | 14% | 5% | **16%** |
| **more than 3 children** | 11% | 13% | 18% | 11% | **13%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=36 | n=31 | n=22 | n=19 | n=108 |

Note: only includes vendors with children (missing=2)

Just over a third of vendors who are parents have a single child, while just under a third (29%) have three or more children (see Table 6.2). While most of these have between three and five children each, one vendor told us he had 15 children whose ages ranged from 4 weeks to 24 years old.

*Table 6.3: Whether vendors live with their children by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **live with all of their children** | 3% | 3% | - | 5% | **3%** |
| **live with some of their children** | 3% | 9% | 9% | - | **6%** |
| **don't live with their children** | 94% | 88% | 91% | 95% | **92%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=36 | n=32 | n=27 | n=19 | n=109 |

Note: only includes vendors with children (missing=1)

Less than 10% of vendors live with all, or some of their children (see Table 6.3 above). Vendors in Liverpool are slightly more likely to have their children with them, although the results are fairly similar for the four offices.

Nearly half of those vendors who are separated from their children have no contact with them at all, as Table 6.4 shows.

*Table 6.4: Whether vendors have regular contact with their other children by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **have contact with all of them** | 46% | 48% | 36% | 50% | **45%** |
| **have contact with some of them** | 6% | 3% | 14% | 6% | **7%** |
| **have no contact with them** | 49% | 48% | 50% | 44% | **48%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=35 | n=31 | n=22 | n=18 | n=106 |

Note: excludes vendors who live with all of their children

## 7. SELLING THE BIG ISSUE IN THE NORTH

This section focuses on vendors' experiences of selling *The Big Issue in the North*, what they think of the magazine themselves, and who their customers are.

### 7.1 Finding out about *The Big Issue in the North*

*Table 7.1: How vendors first found out about The Big Issue in the North, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **from a friend** | 55% | 60% | 49% | 55% | **55%** |
| **seen vendors in the street** | 30% | 26% | 37% | 21% | **29%** |
| **referred here** | 3% | 10% | 2% | 3% | **4%** |
| **used to buy the magazine** | 3% | 2% | 2% | - | **2%** |
| **other way** | 10% | 4% | 11% | 21% | **10%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=3) | n=71 | n=55 | n=57 | n=29 | n=212 |

Note: 'other' ways included: used to sell elsewhere (n=5); through another agency (n=4); walked by the building (n=3); approached by outreach worker (n=2); told about it by another vendor (n=2); word of mouth (n=2).

For the majority of vendors, their initial contact with *The Big Issue in the North* was via a friend, or through seeing other vendors in the street. Very few were referred to us by another agency, as Table 7.1 shows.

### 7.2 Signing up with *The Big Issue in the North*

Almost three quarters said that the opportunity to earn a regular income was a major factor in their decision to register as a vendor. Finding accommodation, and accessing help or support more generally, were identified as important reasons in a quarter of cases overall. Vendors in Manchester were much less likely to say that earning money was a significant factor in this context than vendors elsewhere.

*Table 7.2: Main reason for signing up with The Big Issue in the North by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **earn some money** | 79% | 73% | 56% | 83% | **72%** |
| **find a place to live** | 39% | 20% | 25% | 23% | **28%** |
| **get help/support** | 26% | 13% | 33% | 30% | **25%** |
| **other reason** | 3% | 5% | 9% | 10% | **6%** |
| | n=72 | n=56 | n=57 | n=30 | n=215 |

Note: multiple responses were possible, so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100%.

### 7.3 Length of time as a vendor

In 2004, following the replacement of a two-year limit on selling the magazine for all vendors with time limits set according to individual circumstances, the proportion of vendors who had been selling *The Big Issue in the North* for over a year more than doubled. Whilst this figure has risen only slightly in 2005 (standing at 55%, compared to 48% in 2004), the profile of these longer-term vendors has changed, and now almost a third of vendors have been selling the magazine and receiving support in a range of areas - including accommodation; health; substance use; finances; training, education and employment; and personal development - for more than two years. In contrast, the profile for shorter-term vendors remains relatively unchanged from the previous survey.

*Table 7.3: How long vendors have been selling the magazine by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **started today** | 13% | - | 14% | 7% | **9%** | 9% |
| **less than 3 months** | 6% | 5% | 5% | 22% | **8%** | 11% |
| **3-6 months** | 14% | 18% | 7% | 26% | **15%** | 16% |
| **7-12 months** | 15% | 11% | 12% | 19% | **14%** | 16% |
| **1-2 years** | 24% | 27% | 21% | 19% | **23%** | 27% |
| **more than 2 years** | 29% | 39% | 40% | 7% | **32%** | 21% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=3) | n=72 | n=56 | n=57 | n=27 | n=212 | n=302 |

Vendors in Sheffield are more likely to be shorter-term vendors, although the difference with the other offices is not statistically significant.

### 7.4 Selling the magazine

Although *The Big Issue in the North* has four main offices, the magazine is sold in more than 120 towns and cities across the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside. Vendors who sell on the streets of Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester or Sheffield are 'city centre' vendors, while those who sell in other locations are known as 'out of town' vendors. Vendors with an out of town pitch tend to be the more regular sellers who need less day-to-day support from *The Big Issue in the North* staff.

*Table 7.4: Where vendors sell, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **in the city centre** | 41% | 46% | 53% | 60% | **48%** |
| **out of town** | 59% | 54% | 47% | 40% | **52%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=63 | n=55 | n=49 | n=25 | n=192 |

Note: excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=1)

As Table 7.4 shows, the overall proportions of city centre and out of town vendors are very similar. Vendors who have been selling the magazine for more than a year are significantly more likely to have an out-of-town pitch (59% compared to 42% of vendors who have been selling for less than 12 months).

### 7.5 Who buys *The Big Issue in the North*?

In the past we have carried out readership surveys to find out who buys the magazine and what they think about it, but for the first time this year we asked our vendors who they considered to be their main customers.

*Table 7.5: Who their customers are by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **mainly male** | - | 13% | 8% | 5% | **7%** |
| **mainly female** | 51% | 60% | 40% | 74% | **53%** |
| **both** | 49% | 27% | 52% | 21% | **41%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=63 | n=55 | n=48 | n=25 | n=185 |

Note: excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=8)

Just over half said it was mainly women who bought the magazine, although two-fifths felt their customers were reasonably mixed (see Table 7.5). Very similar proportions to these thought their customers fell mainly into either the 26-45 or 46-65 age groups - far fewer said that it was the under 25s or over 65s who were most likely to buy the magazine, as Table 7.6 shows.

*Table 7.6: What age groups most customers fall into by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **25 & under** | 19% | 9% | 10% | 4% | **12%** |
| **26-45** | 60% | 40% | 57% | 71% | **55%** |
| **46-65** | 47% | 38% | 43% | 42% | **43%** |
| **over 65** | 32% | 9% | 10% | 8% | **17%** |
| **all of these** | - | 9% | 8% | 8% | **6%** |
| | n=63 | n=55 | n=49 | n=24 | n=190 |

Note: excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=3). Multiple responses were possible, so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100%.

Customers in Sheffield were much more likely to be aged 26-45, and in Leeds to be over 65, than customers elsewhere.

Less than a third of vendors overall (31%) said they considered at least half of their customers to be 'regulars' i.e. people who buy the magazine from them each week. This suggests that the majority of vendors rely on passing trade, or on customers who buy the magazine regularly, but not always from the same vendor.

*Table 7.7: Percentage of customers who are 'regulars' by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0-25%** | 34% | 33% | 28% | 35% | **32%** |
| **26-50%** | 36% | 37% | 34% | 50% | **37%** |
| **51-75%** | 29% | 7% | 26% | 15% | **20%** |
| **76-100%** | 2% | 22% | 13% | - | **11%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=59 | n=54 | n=47 | n=20 | n=180 |

Note: excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=13)

There were marked differences in this context by office and by pitch. Vendors in Sheffield were less likely to have regular customers than vendors in the other cities, while out-of-town vendors were more likely to have a higher percentage of people who bought from them regularly: 41% of out-of-town vendors said that more than half of their customers were regulars, compared to 20% of city centre vendors.

*Table 7.8: Whether customers always take the magazine after paying for it, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yes** | 27% | 37% | 47% | 29% | **35%** |
| **no** | 73% | 63% | 53% | 71% | **65%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=63 | n=54 | n=49 | n=24 | n=190 |

Note: excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=3)

Only a third of vendors (35%) said that their customers always take the magazine once they have paid for it.

When asked why they thought customers didn't take the magazine, the three reasons vendors mentioned most often were that people didn't like the content (22%), they wanted the vendor to be able to sell the magazine on to someone else (15%), or they just wanted to give the vendor some money (12%). Other possible reasons included not wanting to read it; wanting to help the vendor out; not having time to read it; not wanting to carry it around; and having a copy already.

Linked to this is the proportion of income vendors estimate they earn from 'drops', where customers overpay or give them money without taking a magazine. Nearly 2 in every 5 vendors overall (38%) said they earned at least half of their money in this way, rather than from magazine sales, as Table 7.9 shows.

While the differences between the offices are not statistically significant, vendors in Liverpool were more likely to earn at least half their income through drops.

*Table 7.9: Percentage of vendors' income from sales and drops, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **20% sales / 80% drops** | 5% | - | 2% | - | **2%** |
| **25% sales / 75% drops** | 3% | 2% | - | 5% | **2%** |
| **30% sales / 70% drops** | 3% | 4% | 2% | - | **3%** |
| **40% sales / 60% drops** | 10% | 6% | 2% | 5% | **6%** |
| **50% sales / 50% drops** | 19% | 44% | 18% | 9% | **25%** |
| **60% sales / 40% drops** | 7% | 9% | 7% | 14% | **8%** |
| **65% sales / 35% drops** | - | 5% | 2% | - | **2%** |
| **70% sales / 30% drops** | 18% | 9% | 11% | 18% | **14%** |
| **75% sales / 35% drops** | 8% | 7% | 13% | 14% | **10%** |
| **80% sales / 20% drops** | 11% | 7% | 13% | 14% | **11%** |
| **85% sales / 15% drops** | 2% | 2% | 7% | - | **3%** |
| **90% sales / 10% drops** | 10% | 4% | 11% | 18% | **9%** |
| **95% sales / 5% drops** | 3% | 2% | 9% | - | **4%** |
| **100% sales / 0% drops** | 2% | - | 2% | 5% | **2%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=62 | n=55 | n=45 | n=22 | n=184 |

Note: excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=9)

Since the audit was carried out, we have run an advertising campaign in *The Big Issue in the North* and with Liverpool and Leeds local authorities to explain to customers why they should always take the magazine, rather than simply giving money to vendors, and it will be interesting to see what impact this has on the ratio of sales to drops in next year's survey.

### 7.6 Do vendors read the magazine?

*Table 7.10: Vendors who read The Big Issue in the North by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **always** | 44% | 42% | 53% | 44% | **46%** |
| **sometimes** | 46% | 47% | 37% | 40% | **43%** |
| **never** | 10% | 11% | 10% | 16% | **11%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=63 | n=44 | n=49 | n=25 | n=192 |

Note: excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=1)

The majority of vendors said that they always, or sometimes read *The Big Issue in the North* themselves, as Table 7.10 shows. The figures differ little between the offices, although vendors in Sheffield are slightly less likely to read the magazine than those in the three other cities. We also asked them what changes they would make to the magazine, and the results have been fed into editorial discussions about the magazine's content.

## 8. VENDORS HEALTH

This section looks at whether vendors are registered with a GP or dentist, and whether they were actively engaged with a health-related service at the time of the audit.

### 8.1 Registration with a GP

The proportion of vendors registered with a GP rose again this year, after falling quite sharply in 2004. Although it now stands at 4 in every 5 vendors (81%), this figure is still low in comparison with the population as a whole, in which over 99% are registered with a general practitioner (Health and Personal Social Statistics: Department of Health 2002).

*Table 8.1: Vendors registered with a GP by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **registered** | 88% | 79% | 79% | 77% | **81%** | 71% |
| **not registered** | 12% | 20% | 19% | 23% | **18%** | 28% |
| **don't know** | - | 2% | 2% | - | **1%** | 1% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=72 | n=56 | n=57 | n=30 | n=215 | n=297 |

Half of the vendors who were registered with a GP said that this was with a dedicated homeless or NFA practice in their local area.

*Table 8.2: Vendors registered with a homeless/NFA doctor by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **with homeless team** | 54% | 60% | 39% | 48% | **50%** |
| **not with homeless team** | 46% | 40% | 61% | 52% | **50%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=56 | n=25 | n=36 | n=23 | n=140 |

Note: only includes vendors registered with a GP (missing=35)

Unlike in 2004, longer-term vendors were not significantly more likely to be registered with a GP this year (85% were, compared to 78% of vendors who had been selling the magazine for less than 12 months). This is disappointing given that registration with a GP is one of the compulsory milestones of our resettlement and support programme for vendors.

## 8.2 Registration with a dentist

*Table 8.3: Vendors registered with a dentist by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **registered** | 21% | 26% | 19% | 23% | **22%** | 28% |
| **not registered** | 79% | 71% | 79% | 73% | **76%** | 70% |
| **don't know** | - | 4% | 2% | 3% | **2%** | 2% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=1) | n=72 | n=55 | n=57 | n=30 | n=214 | n=297 |

In contrast, the proportion of vendors registered with a local dentist has fallen slightly for the second year running, and also compares unfavourably with the 48% of the general population who are registered with a dental practice (General Dental Service - Selected Statistics for England: Department of Health 2002).

## 8.3 Current contact with health services

The proportion of vendors overall who were seeing a health professional at the time of the audit has increased slightly this year to 56% (in the last two surveys, just under half were doing so). Vendors were most likely to be receiving treatment from a GP, as Table 8.4 shows.

*Table 8.4: Vendors seeing someone about a health problem currently by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GP/doctor** | 48% | 30% | 50% | 33% | **42%** |
| **hospital** | 11% | 16% | 16% | 7% | **13%** |
| **nurse** | 4% | - | 4% | 7% | **3%** |
| **counsellor** | 35% | 4% | 13% | 13% | **18%** |
| **complementary therapist** | 4% | 2% | 2% | - | **2%** |
| **other** | 16% | 9% | 14% | 13% | **13%** |
| **not seeing anyone** | 31% | 57% | 39% | 57% | **44%** |
| | n=71 | n=55 | n=54 | n=30 | n=210 |

Note: multiple responses were possible, so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100% (missing=5). Only 3% of vendors were seeing an in-house counsellor (n=38; missing=5); and 1 of 5 vendors was seeing an in-house complementary therapist.

A significantly higher proportion of vendors in Leeds were seeing a counsellor, while vendors in Liverpool and Sheffield were much less likely to be engaged with health services than vendors elsewhere.

Somewhat worryingly, 31% of vendors who felt their physical or mental health was a barrier to moving on in their lives were not seeing a health professional about these problems, while 39% of those whose drug or alcohol use was a barrier were not engaged with a health service.

### 8.4 Exchanging money for sex

For the first time this year, in an attempt to gauge the need for related services, we asked vendors whether they had ever been in a situation where they had exchanged money for sex. Only a tiny minority said they had been, although it should be acknowledged that this is a sensitive issue and may not be the kind of thing that people are happy to report in a survey like this.

*Table 8.5: Whether vendors have exchanged money for sex by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **have exchanged money for sex** | 6% | 2% | - | - | **2%** |
| **have not exchanged money for sex** | 94% | 98% | 100% | 100% | **98%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=5) | n=72 | n=54 | n=54 | n=30 | n=210 |

## 9. DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

This section focuses on vendors' substance use. It describes which drugs (legal and illegal) they are using, how often, and by what route; whether they are sharing, or have ever shared drugs paraphernalia; their experiences of overdose; and their access to treatment services now and in the past. This is the first time since 2001 that we have asked vendors such detailed questions about their drug and alcohol use, and comparisons are made with the data from this previous survey where appropriate.

### 9.1 Drug use overall

For the first time this year we used a standard 'level of drug use' matrix in the annual audit (see Appendix). More than 90% of vendors told us that they were using at least one of the drugs it includes, as Table 9.1 shows.

*Table 9.1: Vendors using one or more of the drugs listed in the matrix by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **using drugs listed** | 92% | 96% | 98% | 90% | **94%** |
| **not using drugs listed** | 8% | 4% | 2% | 10% | **6%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=2) | n=72 | n=54 | n=57 | n=30 | n=213 |

It is important to note that the matrix asks about the use of legal as well as illegal substances, however. Just less than 80% of vendors reported that they were currently using illicit drugs, while 15% said they were using only drugs that were legal i.e. alcohol and/or tobacco, or legitimately prescribed (see Table 9.2).

Two-thirds (65%) of vendors overall felt that their drug or alcohol use was preventing them from moving on in their lives (section 14).

*Table 9.2: Type of drugs vendors are using by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **using illicit drugs** | 78% | 85% | 74% | 80% | **79%** |
| **using legal/prescribed drugs** | 14% | 11% | 25% | 10% | **15%** |
| **not using drugs** | 8% | 4% | 2% | 10% | **6%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=2) | n=72 | n=54 | n=57 | n=30 | n=213 |

While the differences by office and pitch are not statistically significant, vendors in Liverpool were most likely, and vendors in Manchester least likely to be using illicit drugs; whilst a higher proportion of city centre vendors were using illicit drugs (86% compared to 73% of out-of-town vendors).

## 9.2 Current and past drug use

With the exception of tobacco, the percentage of vendors who have ever used each of the drugs listed in the matrix is higher than the percentage of vendors using them currently, as would be expected (see Tables 9.3 and 9.4).

*Table 9.3: Vendors who have ever used each drug by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **alcohol** | 79% | 79% | 68% | 56% | **73%** |
| **amphetamines** | 56% | 52% | 32% | 7% | **42%** |
| **anti-depressants** | 42% | 54% | 34% | 7% | **38%** |
| **barbiturates** | 32% | 23% | 11% | 4% | **20%** |
| **cannabis** | 70% | 81% | 57% | 59% | **68%** |
| **cocaine** | 41% | 56% | 29% | 4% | **36%** |
| **crack** | 70% | 67% | 45% | 63% | **61%** |
| **hallucinogens** | 50% | 46% | 25% | 11% | **37%** |
| **heroin** | 80% | 85% | 59% | 44% | **71%** |
| **inhalants** | 24% | 21% | 14% | 11% | **19%** |
| **other opioids** | 61% | 65% | 32% | 37% | **51%** |
| **tobacco** | 80% | 94% | 75% | 78% | **82%** |
| **tranquillisers** | 29% | 25% | 9% | 7% | **19%** |
| | n=66 | n=52 | n=56 | n=27 | n=201 |

Note: only includes vendors currently using at least one of the drugs listed

The drugs that show the biggest differences in this context are those such as amphetamines, barbiturates, hallucinogens and inhalants, which tend to be experimented with at an early age but are generally less likely to be used in a prolonged and/or serious way.

The drugs most commonly used currently by vendors overall were tobacco (80%), heroin (58%), alcohol (51%), crack cocaine (49%) and cannabis (44%), as Table 9.4 shows.

This reflects the situation seen in 2001, when the three illicit drugs used by the highest proportion of vendors were also heroin, crack cocaine and cannabis - although the latter two drugs are used more now than they were then.

*Table 9.4: Vendors who are currently using each drug by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **alcohol** | 50% | 45% | 60% | 48% | **51%** |
| **amphetamines** | 10% | 2% | 2% | - | **4%** |
| **anti-depressants** | 22% | 22% | 22% | 7% | **20%** |
| **barbiturates** | 11% | 2% | 2% | 4% | **5%** |
| **cannabis** | 40% | 53% | 35% | 56% | **44%** |
| **cocaine** | 10% | 11% | 12% | 4% | **10%** |
| **crack** | 50% | 53% | 37% | 63% | **49%** |
| **hallucinogens** | 6% | - | 2% | 4% | **3%** |
| **heroin** | 60% | 74% | 50% | 38% | **58%** |
| **inhalants** | - | - | 2% | 7% | **2%** |
| **other opioids** | 51% | 47% | 22% | 37% | **40%** |
| **tobacco** | 78% | 92% | 74% | 78% | **80%** |
| **tranquillisers** | 17% | 10% | 5% | 7% | **11%** |
| | n=60-65 | n=47-52 | n=52-55 | n=26-27 | n=188-199 |

Note: only includes vendors currently using at least one of the drugs listed (missing=2-13)

This pattern of current drug use is fairly similar to that seen in each of the cities: the same five drugs are also those most commonly used in both Manchester and Sheffield (albeit that the order varies somewhat in each); while in Leeds and Liverpool, other opiate use appears in the 'top five' in place of cannabis and alcohol respectively.

However vendors in Liverpool were significantly more likely, and vendors in Sheffield less likely to be using heroin than vendors elsewhere; while a markedly lower proportion of vendors in Manchester were using other opiates.

### 9.3 Age of first use

Although the data on age of first use is somewhat limited, vendors generally started to use heroin, cocaine and crack at a later age, i.e. in their early to mid-20s, than they did other illicit drugs, tobacco or alcohol, as Table 9.5 shows. The use of prescription drugs (either legitimately or illegitimately) also started later, with the average age of first use of other opiates being the highest for vendors overall, at 28.

Again a similar pattern is seen across the cities, although vendors in Liverpool had started using hallucinogens, heroin and particularly crack at a slightly older age, while vendors in Sheffield had started using cocaine at a slightly younger age, than the average for vendors overall.

*Table 9.5: Average age of first use in years, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **alcohol** | 14 | 15 | 13 | 12 | **14** |
| **amphetamines** | 16 | 18 | 18 | 15 | **17** |
| **anti-depressants** | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | **23** |
| **barbiturates** | 18 | 21 | 19 | n/k | **19** |
| **cannabis** | 14 | 15 | 15 | 15 | **15** |
| **cocaine** | 22 | 24 | 25 | 20 | **23** |
| **crack** | 23 | 28 | 24 | 21 | **25** |
| **hallucinogens** | 16 | 21 | 18 | 17 | **18** |
| **heroin** | 22 | 24 | 22 | 20 | **22** |
| **inhalants** | 15 | 13 | 19 | 19 | **16** |
| **other opioids** | 26 | 29 | 26 | 29 | **28** |
| **tobacco** | 13 | 14 | 13 | 12 | **13** |
| **tranquillisers** | 21 | 23 | 21 | n/k | **22** |
| | n=8-45 | n=9-40 | n=2-37 | n=1-15 | n=26-137 |

Note: a high proportion vendors were not able to tell us the age at which they started using some of the drugs listed

## 9.4 Frequency of use

Of the five drugs currently used by the highest proportions of vendors overall, tobacco was the most frequently used, followed by heroin, crack, alcohol and cannabis.

*Table 9.6: Frequency of use by vendors overall*

| | 1 day in last month | 1-3 times a month | 1 day in last week | 2-3 times a week | 4-6 times a week | once a day | 2-3 times a day | 4 plus times a day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **alcohol** | 6% | 9% | 13% | 8% | 18% | 14% | 19% | 13% |
| **amphetamines** | 25% | 13% | 25% | - | - | 25% | - | 13% |
| **anti-depressants** | 13% | 3% | 8% | 5% | 21% | - | 44% | 8% |
| **barbiturates** | 20% | 10% | - | - | 20% | 10% | 20% | 20% |
| **cannabis** | 18% | 19% | 4% | 11% | 11% | 6% | 17% | 15% |
| **cocaine** | 33% | 11% | - | 11% | 17% | 11% | 11% | 6% |
| **crack** | 5% | 9% | 12% | 13% | 12% | 3% | 37% | 10% |
| **hallucinogens** | 17% | 17% | 67% | - | - | - | - | - |
| **heroin** | 5% | 6% | 4% | 10% | 12% | 4% | 46% | 13% |
| **inhalants** | - | - | - | 33% | - | - | 33% | 33% |
| **other opioids** | 4% | 1% | 10% | - | 26% | - | 46% | 13% |
| **tobacco** | 1% | - | 1% | - | 1% | - | 3% | 95% |
| **tranquillisers** | 19% | 14% | 5% | 10% | - | - | 38% | 14% |
| | | | | | | | | n=6-155 |

Note: percentages should be read **across** the table for each drug

As Table 9.6 shows, 98% of vendors currently using tobacco used it at least once a day; 63% of vendors currently using heroin used it at least once a day; and 50% of vendors currently using crack used it at least once a day. The equivalent percentages for alcohol and cannabis are 46% and 38% respectively.

## 9.5 Injecting, 'speedballing' and sharing

Half of the vendors overall who were using injectable drugs reported that they were currently injecting (see Table 9.7). In 2001, 50% of vendors had also injected in the last 4 weeks.

Vendors in Sheffield were more likely to be injecting than those in the other cities, although the difference is not statistically significant.

*Table 9.7: Vendors who are currently injecting by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **injecting** | 47% | 51% | 49% | 57% | **50%** |
| **not injecting** | 53% | 49% | 51% | 43% | **50%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=57 | n=43 | n=33 | n=21 | n=154 |

Note: only includes vendors currently using injectable drugs (missing=1)

Just over a third of vendors overall (35%) were currently 'speedballing', which is the practice of injecting two drugs - a stimulant and a depressant - simultaneously. Of these, the majority (95%) were speedballing heroin and crack, whilst 5% were using heroin and cocaine, and 4% were using heroin and speed (a small number of vendors were speedballing in more than one way, so the percentages add up to more than 100%).

*Table 9.8: Vendors who are currently speedballing by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **speedballing** | 26% | 48% | 29% | 46% | **35%** |
| **not speedballing** | 74% | 52% | 71% | 54% | **65%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=7) | n=54 | n=42 | n=41 | n=24 | n=161 |

Vendors in Liverpool and Sheffield were more likely to be speedballing their drugs than vendors elsewhere, but again the differences between the cities are not statistically significant. City centre vendors however were markedly more likely to be injecting (64% compared to 34%) and speedballing their drugs (55% compared to 16%) than vendors who were selling out-of-town.

The three most commonly shared items of drug paraphernalia (ever, and in the last 4 weeks) were spoons, citric and filters. In each case, these had been shared by just over a fifth of vendors overall in the month prior to the audit. The sharing of injecting equipment (needles, barrels and swabs) was relatively low, as Table 9.9 shows.

*Table 9.9: Vendors who have shared equipment ever, and in the last 4 weeks by office*

| | Leeds | | Liverpool | | Manchester | | Sheffield | | 2005 total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ever** | **4 weeks** | **ever** | **4 weeks** | **ever** | **4 weeks** | **ever** | **4 weeks** | **ever** | **4 weeks** |
| **barrels** | 17% | 7% | 17% | 5% | 9% | 3% | 14% | - | **15%** | **5%** |
| **citric** | 34% | 23% | 33% | 23% | 23% | 18% | 38% | 19% | **31%** | **21%** |
| **filters** | 34% | 21% | 28% | 23% | 21% | 18% | 38% | 19% | **30%** | **21%** |
| **needles** | 12% | 4% | 13% | - | 7% | 3% | 10% | - | **11%** | **2%** |
| **spoons** | 41% | 21% | 37% | 28% | 26% | 15% | 48% | 24% | **37%** | **22%** |
| **swabs** | 19% | 5% | 11% | 7% | 7% | 6% | 10% | - | **12%** | **5%** |
| **water** | 34% | 21% | 24% | 16% | 16% | 9% | 33% | 14% | **27%** | **16%** |
| | n=59 | n=59 | n=46 | n=46 | n=43 | n=43 | n=21 | n=21 | n=169 | n=169 |

Note: only includes vendors using illegal drugs (missing=1)

There were no significant differences between the offices in terms of sharing paraphernalia, either in the past or currently.

## 9.6 Breaks in using

More than four-fifths (84%) of vendors overall who were currently using drugs have had a break in their use. The figures for the four cities vary little.

*Table 9.10: Whether vendors have had a break in using by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yes, had a break** | 87% | 80% | 83% | 82% | **84%** |
| **no, not had a break** | 13% | 20% | 17% | 18% | **16%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=55 | n=41 | n=40 | n=22 | n=158 |

Note: includes all vendors currently using illicit drugs (missing=8)

Of those vendors who have had a break, less than two-fifths (38%) had done so in the last six months (see Table 9.11). Vendors in Sheffield were more likely, and vendors in Liverpool less likely than vendors elsewhere to have had a break in using drugs in the last six months.

*Table 9.11: When their last break in using was by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **in last 2 weeks** | 10% | - | 15% | 28% | **11%** |
| **in last month** | 8% | 6% | 6% | 6% | **7%** |
| **in last 3 months** | 6% | 9% | 18% | 11% | **11%** |
| **in last 6 months** | 10% | 6% | 3% | 22% | **9%** |
| **longer ago** | 65% | 79% | 58% | 33% | **62%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=48 | n=33 | n=33 | n=18 | n=132 |

Note: only includes vendors who had had a break in using

## 9.7 Experience of overdose

More than two-fifths of vendors (42%) said that they had overdosed at some point in their lives. The figures are very consistent across the four offices.

*Table 9.12: Vendors who have ever overdosed by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yes, at some point** | 42% | 41% | 41% | 45% | **42%** |
| **no, never** | 58% | 59% | 59% | 55% | **58%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=59 | n=44 | n=46 | n=20 | n=169 |

Note: includes vendors who have ever used any of the drugs except for alcohol, tobacco and cannabis (missing=4)

Of those who had overdosed, 1 in 6 (17%) had done so within the last six months. Vendors in Sheffield were more likely, and vendors in Liverpool less likely to have overdosed recently.

*Table 9.13: Vendors who have overdosed in the last 6 months by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **in last 6 months** | 16% | 13% | 18% | 25% | **17%** |
| **longer ago than this** | 84% | 87% | 82% | 75% | **83%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=25 | n=16 | n=17 | n=8 | n=66 |

Note: only includes vendors who have overdosed (missing=5)

Almost three quarters of vendors (72%) who had overdosed in the past had been with someone else on the most recent occasion, and in the majority of cases (70%) an ambulance had been called.

*Table 9.14: Whether vendors were in company the last time they overdosed by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yes, in company** | 68% | 81% | 59% | 89% | **72%** |
| **no, on their own** | 32% | 19% | 41% | 11% | **28%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=25 | n=16 | n=17 | n=9 | n=67 |

Note: only includes vendors who have overdosed (missing=4)

Although the results across the cities vary a good deal in both of these cases, the differences are not statistically significant.

*Table 9.15: Whether an ambulance was called the last time vendors overdosed by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ambulance called** | 84% | 50% | 69% | 67% | **70%** |
| **ambulance not called** | 16% | 50% | 31% | 33% | **30%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=25 | n=16 | n=16 | n=9 | n=66 |

Note: only includes vendors who have overdosed (missing=5)

Only just over half (51%) of all vendors who were using drugs were aware that the police are not routinely called to a 999 overdose call for an ambulance, unless children or the ambulance crew are believed to be at risk. Levels of knowledge varied across the cities, with vendors in Leeds and Sheffield being more aware that this was the case.

*Table 9.16: Whether vendors knew the police are not routinely called to an overdose*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **knew this** | 64% | 44% | 42% | 56% | **51%** |
| **didn't know this** | 36% | 56% | 58% | 44% | **49%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=59 | n=48 | n=55 | n=25 | n=187 |

Note: includes all vendors who have used drugs (missing=14)

### 9.8 Experience of treatment

Almost three quarters (71%) of vendors overall had accessed treatment for their substance use at some point.

*Table 9.17: Whether vendors have ever accessed drug treatment by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **have accessed treatment** | 75% | 70% | 65% | 73% | **71%** |
| **have never accessed treatment** | 25% | 30% | 35% | 27% | **29%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=61 | n=47 | n=55 | n=26 | n=189 |

Note: excludes vendors using tobacco only (missing=8)

The majority of these (61%) had had more than one treatment intervention, and more than a fifth (22%) had been in treatment on four or more occasions, as Table 9.18 shows. Vendors in Liverpool and Sheffield were more likely than those in Leeds and Manchester to have had just a single experience of treatment.

*Table 9.18: How many times vendors have accessed drug treatment, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **once** | 27% | 56% | 29% | 56% | **39%** |
| **2-3 times** | 45% | 31% | 41% | 38% | **40%** |
| **4-5 times** | 20% | 6% | 21% | - | **14%** |
| **6-10 times** | 7% | 3% | 6% | 6% | **6%** |
| **more than 10 times** | - | 3% | 3% | - | **2%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=44 | n=32 | n=34 | n=16 | n=126 |

Note: only includes vendors who have accessed treatment (missing=8)

Overall 51% of vendors who were using drugs were currently engaged with a drug treatment service of some kind. The differences between the offices are not significant, although vendors in Sheffield were more likely, and vendors in Liverpool less likely to be accessing drug services.

*Table 9.19: Vendors accessing drug treatment services by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **engaged with services** | 52% | 40% | 54% | 63% | 51% |
| **not engaged with services** | 48% | 60% | 46% | 37% | 49% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=66 | n=52 | n=56 | n=27 | n=201 |

Note: only includes vendors using drugs listed in the Christo inventory

Almost half the vendors (45%) who said their substance use was a barrier to moving on in their lives were not currently engaged with treatment services; while city centre vendors were significantly more likely than out-of-town vendors to be accessing drug treatment (64% compared to 37% of out-of-town vendors).

Those vendors who were not accessing services now but had done in the past were asked why their most recent episode had ended. Almost half (42%) said it was because they had completed the programme, as Table 9.20 shows.

*Table 9.20: Why vendors stopped attending their last treatment programme by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **finished programme** | 25% | 36% | 57% | 50% | **42%** |
| **didn't find service helpful** | - | 7% | - | - | **2%** |
| **moved away from area** | - | - | 14% | - | **7%** |
| **went to prison** | 13% | 36% | - | - | **13%** |
| **didn't get on with staff** | - | - | 14% | - | **2%** |
| **other reason** | 62% | 21% | 14% | 50% | **31%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=18) | n=8 | n=14 | n=7 | n=4 | n=33 |

Note: 'other' reasons included: started using during treatment; family reasons; lack of funding; making problem worse; didn't feel motivated; felt it wasn't working; missed appointments; getting the medication was enough; wanted to clean up for a while; doing it for a job that didn't materialise.

## 10. VENDORS EXPERIENCES OF CRIME

This section focuses on vendors' criminal experiences, both as past perpetrators, and as victims of crime. It also looks at when and where they feel safest in the light of these experiences.

### 10.1 Previous involvement in crime

Almost two thirds of vendors (65%) said that they had been involved in criminal activity of some kind before they signed up with *The Big Issue in the North.* While the differences between the cities are not significant, vendors in Sheffield are slightly less likely than those elsewhere to have been previously involved in crime.

Although the question was worded slightly differently this year, this proportion is similar to the 71% of vendors in 2004 who reported that they had been convicted of a criminal offence prior to selling the magazine.

*Table 10.1: Involvement in criminal activity prior to selling the magazine by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **was involved** | 68% | 67% | 65% | 57% | **65%** |
| **was not involved** | 32% | 33% | 35% | 43% | **35%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=5) | n=72 | n=54 | n=57 | n=30 | n=213 |

As in 2004, a higher proportion of longer-term than shorter-term vendors (71% compared to 59%), and a significantly higher proportion of vendors with drug or alcohol problems (71% compared to 54% of other vendors) said they had been involved crime prior to selling the magazine.

The majority of vendors had earned less than £500 per week on average from their criminal activities, as Table 10.2 shows. Almost 1 in 6 (16%) told us that they used to make more than £1000 a week through crime, however.

*Table 10.2: Amount previously earned through crime per week, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **less than £100** | 7% | 18% | 15% | - | **11%** |
| **£100-£500** | 63% | 52% | 33% | 54% | **52%** |
| **£500-£1000** | 14% | 9% | 7% | 15% | **9%** |
| **£1000-£2500** | 9% | 9% | 4% | 8% | **10%** |
| **£2500-£5000** | 2% | - | 7% | 8% | **3%** |
| **more than £5000** | 5% | - | - | 15% | **3%** |
| **don't know** | - | 12% | 33% | - | **11%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=43 | n=33 | n=27 | n=13 | n=116 |

Note: only includes vendors involved in criminal activity prior to selling *The Big Issue in the North* (missing=23)

We also asked vendors what sort of crime they had been involved in previously. Shoplifting was by far the most frequently mentioned, by 63% of vendors, followed by general theft (as distinct from theft of cars), and burglary.

*Table 10.3: Types of crime vendors were previously involved in by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **burglary** | 28% | 18% | 26% | 31% | **25%** |
| **theft (car)** | 17% | 6% | 17% | 19% | **15%** |
| **theft (general)** | 26% | 29% | 23% | 38% | **28%** |
| **shoplifting** | 70% | 68% | 54% | 50% | **63%** |
| **non-violent robbery** | 4% | 6% | 9% | 13% | **7%** |
| **violent robbery** | 2% | 15% | 9% | 19% | **9%** |
| **other** | 24% | 29% | 29% | 25% | **27%** |
| | n=46 | n=34 | n=35 | n=16 | n=131 |

Note: only includes vendors involved in criminal activity prior to selling *The Big Issue in the North* (missing=8). Multiple responses were possible so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100%. 'Other' crime included: drug dealing (n=11); fraud (n=5); begging (n=3); assault (n=3); benefit fraud (n=2); drug use (n=2); driving offences (n=2); trespassing; breach of ASBO; carrying a weapon; computer hacking; credit card scams; handling stolen goods (all n=1).

Whilst this general pattern is fairly similar in each of the cities, vendors in Liverpool were less likely to have been involved in burglary or car theft; vendors in Leeds and Manchester were less likely to have been involved in violent robbery; and vendors in Manchester and Sheffield were less likely to have shoplifted - although none of the differences are statistically significant.

## 10.2 What impact has selling the magazine had on vendors' criminal activity?

As we saw last year, the large majority of vendors said that selling *The Big Issue in the North* had had a positive impact on the amount of crime they committed. More than 9 out of 10 vendors overall (94%) reported that this had decreased since they had been selling the magazine; and 69% of these vendors said they had now stopped their involvement in crime completely.

*Table 10.4: Effect of selling on the amount of crime vendors commit by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **commit a lot more now** | - | - | - | - | **-** | 1% |
| **commit a bit more now** | - | - | - | - | **-** | - |
| **had no effect** | 5% | 3% | 11% | 14% | **7%** | 17% |
| **commit a bit less now** | - | - | 7% | 7% | **3%** | 3% |
| **commit a lot less now** | 95% | 97% | 82% | 79% | **91%** | 79% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=44 | n=34 | n=28 | n=14 | n=120 | n=184 |

Note: only includes vendors who were involved in criminal activity before they started selling *The Big Issue in the North*, and excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=7).

When asked why they committed less crime, the majority of vendors (70%) said it was because they had a legitimate income now, and were earning enough money from selling the magazine. Other reasons they gave included having an occupation and/or stable routine now; reducing or stopping their drug or alcohol use; not wanting to go back to prison; and getting support from The Big Issue in the North.

## 10.3 Prison experiences

This year for the first time we asked vendors whether they had ever been to prison. More than 8 out of 10 vendors (84%) who had been engaged in criminal activity prior to selling the magazine said that they had. The figures for each of the cities are fairly close to those for vendors overall.

*Table 10.5: Vendors experience of prison by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **been in prison** | 79% | 86% | 89% | 82% | **84%** |
| **not been in prison** | 21% | 14% | 11% | 18% | **16%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=48 | n=35 | n=37 | n=17 | n=137 |

Note: only includes vendors who were involved in criminal activity before they started selling *The Big Issue in the North*, and excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=2).

Just over three quarters of these vendors (78%) had been to prison before they were homeless (see Table 10.6), although only 13% of them, and 9% of vendors overall, said they first became homeless on leaving prison.

*Table 10.6: Prison experiences before or after becoming homeless by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **before becoming homeless** | 40% | 69% | 67% | 77% | **59%** |
| **after becoming homeless** | 32% | 24% | 12% | 15% | **22%** |
| **both** | 29% | 7% | 21% | 8% | **19%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=38 | n=29 | n=33 | n=13 | n=113 |

Note: only includes vendors who had been in prison (missing=2)

Vendors in Leeds were significantly more likely to have been imprisoned after becoming homeless.

We also asked how many vendors had been in prison recently, without asking them the reason for this. A quarter (24%) of vendors with prison experience had been in jail in the last 12 months, as Table 10.7 shows.

*Table 10.7: Time spent in prison in the last 12 months by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **been in prison in last year** | 32% | 30% | 15% | 14% | **24%** |
| **not been in prison in last year** | 68% | 70% | 85% | 86% | **76%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=38 | n=30 | n=33 | n=14 | n=115 |

Note: only includes vendors who had been in prison

A slightly higher proportion of vendors in Leeds and Liverpool had been in prison at some point in the last year.

### 10.4 Court orders

As we are currently running a Joseph Rowntree Foundation funded investigation of the effectiveness of coercive measures in moving people away from homelessness, this year we asked all our vendors if they were subject to a range of criminal and civil court orders, as listed in Table 10.8 below. Whilst 1 in 8 vendors were currently under a probation order, less than 10% in total were subject to a Drug Treatment and Testing Order (DTTO) or Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO), or involved in a Drug Intervention Programme (DIP).

*Table 10.8 Vendors subject to criminal and civil court orders by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ASBO** | - | 2% | 4% | - | **2%** |
| **DTTO** | 12% | 6% | 2% | - | **6%** |
| **probation order** | 18% | 8% | 12% | 7% | **12%** |
| **DIP** | 3% | - | - | 3% | **2%** |
| **criminal injunction** | 2% | - | - | 3% | **1%** |
| **civil injunction** | 2% | - | - | - | **<1%** |
| (missing=25) | n=60 | n=48 | n=52 | n=30 | n=190 |

## 10.5 Vendors experiences as victims of crime

In December 2004, Crisis published the results of a survey which found that people who are homeless are 13 times more likely to have experienced violent crime, and 47 times more likely to be the victim of theft, than members of the general population (Crisis, *Living in Fear* 2004), so this year we decided to explore whether if this was reflected in our vendors' experiences.

*Table 10.9 Crimes committed against vendors in the last year by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **burglary** | 11% | 19% | 9% | 3% | **11%** |
| **theft** | 24% | 33% | 25% | 17% | **26%** |
| **damage to property** | 20% | 15% | 9% | 13% | **15%** |
| **violence** | 39% | 35% | 32% | 40% | **36%** |
| **threats** | 49% | 46% | 35% | 33% | **43%** |
| **sexual assault** | 1% | 2% | - | 3% | **1%** |
| | n=71 | n=54 | n=57 | n=30 | n=212 |

Note: multiple responses were possible, so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100% (missing=3)

In the last 12 months, almost half (43%) had been subjected to threats, and more than a third (36%) had been the victim of a violent attack. Vendors also experienced high rates of property crime, with a quarter (26%) having things stolen from their person, more than 1 in 7 (15%) suffering damage to their property, and 1 in 9 (11%) being burgled. The figures for the four cities vary only slightly from the pattern for vendors overall.

Whilst these figures are slightly lower than those seen in the Crisis report, they are still very high compared to the figures for the general public. The British Crime Survey showed that in the last year, 4% of people had experienced a violent crime, 3% of households had been burgled, and less than 2% had suffered a theft, for example.

Overall, 61% of vendors had been a victim of one or more of the six listed crimes in the last 12 months. Vendors in Sheffield were slightly less likely to have been a victim than vendors elsewhere (50% had been, compared to 63% in Leeds, 63% in Liverpool and 61% in Manchester).

We also repeated the questions that Crisis had posed around harassment and intimidation by the general public, asking vendors if they had experienced similar problems in the last year. As Table 10.10 shows, they were more likely to be victimised for selling the magazine than they were for being homeless. For example, while 40% had been publicly insulted as a result of being homeless, 67% had been publicly insulted for being a vendor of *The Big Issue in the North*.

*Table 10.10 Public intimidation due to being homeless/being a vendor, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **publicly insulted** | 48% / 79% | 46% / 74% | 33% / 49% | 23% / 60% | **40% / 67%** |
| **harassed** | 39% / 55% | 35% / 50% | 30% / 35% | 7% / 27% | **31% / 44%** |
| **had things thrown at you** | 24% / 42% | 35% / 54% | 16% / 23% | 13% / 30% | **23% / 38%** |
| **intimidated** | 38% / 58% | 32% / 46% | 28% / 30% | 27% / 47% | **32% / 45%** |
| **urinated on** | - / - | 2% / 2% | 2% / 2% | 3% / - | **1% / 1%** |
| | n=66 | n=54 | n=57 | n=30 | n=207/212 |

Note: multiple responses were possible, so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100%

Vendors in Manchester were significantly less likely to have been publicly insulted or to have been intimidated because they were selling the magazine. Vendors in Sheffield were less likely to have been harassed because they were homeless, and less likely (with vendors in Manchester) to have been harassed because they were selling the magazine than vendors elsewhere, while vendors in Liverpool were more likely to have had things thrown at them while they were selling.

### 10.6 Reporting crimes to the police

Despite the high incidence of crimes committed against vendors, almost three quarters (72%) overall said that they never reported these to the police. Vendors in Manchester are most likely, and vendors in Leeds are least likely to report the crimes committed against them.

*Table 10.11: How often vendors report crimes committed against them by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **always** | 2% | 10% | 13% | 4% | **7%** |
| **sometimes** | 17% | 20% | 25% | 26% | **21%** |
| **never** | 82% | 70% | 63% | 70% | **72%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=24) | n=66 | n=50 | n=48 | n=27 | n=191 |

Note: missing responses are mainly from vendors who have not had any crimes committed against them

When asked why they didn't report crimes to the police, the most common responses vendors gave were that they didn't think that the police would do anything (28%), that the crimes weren't serious enough (12%), and that they would rather deal with it themselves (12%). Other reasons included thinking the police would not help someone who was homeless; having had a negative experience when they reported crimes in the past; not trusting the police; and being worried about reprisals.

### 10.7 Feeling safe

Given their experiences of crime and public intimidation and harassment, we asked vendors which times of the day they felt safest.

Overall, vendors were more likely to feel safe in the daytime than they were at night, and this general pattern was repeated across the four cities. While around two thirds of vendors felt safe during the morning or afternoon, only about a third felt safe in the evening or late at night. Although 1 in 8 (12%) said they didn't feel safe at any time, just over a quarter of vendors (27%) felt safe at all times of the day and night.

*Table 10.11: When vendors feel safest by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **morning** | 69% | 65% | 60% | 83% | **68%** |
| **afternoon** | 54% | 63% | 65% | 70% | **61%** |
| **early evening** | 35% | 37% | 32% | 67% | **39%** |
| **late evening** | 30% | 28% | 30% | 57% | **33%** |
| **night time** | 35% | 33% | 30% | 57% | **36%** |
| | n=71 | n=54 | n=57 | n=30 | n=212 |

Note: multiple responses were possible, so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100% (missing=3)

### 10.8 Being excluded from services

Finally on the theme of victimisation, we asked vendors about their experiences of exclusion from service provision. Overall 15% reported that they had been excluded from services or medical treatment as a result of being homeless. We also asked them which services they had been excluded from. The most commonly mentioned were GPs, hospitals, and housing support and advice services.

*Table 10.12: Exclusion from services due to being homeless by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **have been excluded** | 14% | 15% | 16% | 14% | **15%** |
| **have not been excluded** | 86% | 85% | 84% | 86% | **85%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=5) | n=71 | n=53 | n=56 | n=30 | n=210 |

Other services that vendors had been refused access to because they were homeless included dentists; hostels; pubs and restaurants; banks; drug treatment services; and veterinary services.

## 11. VOTING AND CITIZENSHIP

This section looks at whether vendors have ever voted in a general election, whether they did so in May this year, and (if not) when they last exercised their right to vote.

### 11.1 Have vendors ever voted?

*Table 11.1: Whether vendors have ever voted in a general election by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **have voted before** | 36% | 41% | 48% | 47% | **42%** |
| **have not voted before** | 64% | 59% | 52% | 53% | **58%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=3) | n=72 | n=54 | n=56 | n=30 | n=212 |

Almost half (42%) of vendors overall have voted in a general election in the UK at some point in their lives. The percentages for the cities vary little from the average in this context, as Table 11.1 shows.

When those vendors who said they had never voted were asked to explain why, the most common reasons given were: thinking it didn't make any difference which party was in charge; not being registered; not knowing they could; not being interested in either politics or voting; and not trusting politicians.

### 11.2 When was the last time vendors voted?

Earlier this year, we carried out a snapshot survey across the region to find out how many vendors intended to vote in the general election in May, and what changes they would like the new government to make. While 25% in this earlier survey told us they were planning to vote in 2005, only 20% actually did so - in comparison to 60% of the general population of voting age.

*Table 11.2: Whether vendors voted in the May 2005 election by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **voted in 2005** | 23% | 14% | 22% | 21% | **20%** |
| **didn't vote in 2005** | 77% | 86% | 78% | 79% | **80%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=26 | n=22 | n=27 | n=14 | n=89 |

Note: only includes vendors who have voted in a general election

Almost two thirds of vendors overall (59%) who didn't vote in the general election this year said that the last time they had voted was in either 2001 or 1997. It was only in Liverpool that vendors were more likely to have last voted prior to, than since, 1997.

*Table 11.3: When the last time was that vendors voted by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2001** | 40% | 26% | 48% | 64% | **42%** |
| **1997** | 25% | 5% | 19% | 18% | **17%** |
| **1992** | 20% | 5% | - | 9% | **9%** |
| **before 1992** | - | 47% | 14% | - | **17%** |
| **can't remember** | 15% | 16% | 19% | 9% | **15%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=20 | n=19 | n=21 | n=11 | n=71 |

Note: only includes vendors who have voted in an election, but didn't vote in May 2005

## 12. SOCIAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

In this section we ask vendors about some of the day-to-day activities that many of the rest of us take for granted, such as cooking a meal, reading a newspaper, or taking a trip to the cinema.

### 12.1 Daily activities

*Table 12.1: The last time vendors cooked themselves a meal by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yesterday** | 41% | 48% | 41% | 43% | **43%** |
| **last week** | 18% | 17% | 21% | 20% | **19%** |
| **last month** | 6% | 6% | 7% | 13% | **7%** |
| **last year** | 13% | 9% | 13% | 10% | **11%** |
| **can't remember** | 23% | 20% | 18% | 13% | **19%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=4) | n=71 | n=54 | n=56 | n=30 | n=211 |

Nearly two thirds of vendors (62%) had cooked themselves a meal in the week prior to the survey, and most of these had done so the previous night. Another third (30%), however, had either not cooked a proper meal in the last 12 months, or couldn't remember the last time that they had done so.

Just over half (53%) read a newspaper every day, and another third (31%) read one at least a couple of times a month. Vendors in Liverpool were slightly less likely to read a newspaper than vendors elsewhere, although the differences are not significant.

*Table 12.2: How often vendors read a newspaper by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **daily** | 56% | 46% | 58% | 53% | **53%** |
| **a couple of times a week** | 22% | 24% | 19% | 33% | **23%** |
| **a couple of times a month** | 10% | 7% | 11% | - | **8%** |
| **never** | 13% | 24% | 12% | 13% | **15%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=1) | n=72 | n=55 | n=57 | n=30 | n=214 |

Only a third of vendors overall (34%) estimate that on average they get the recommended eight hours of sleep per night. More than 1 in 10 said they usually sleep for three hours or less, although given the percentage that slept rough the night before the survey (12%) or at some point in the last year (64%), this figure is perhaps not surprising.

*Table 12.3: How many hours' sleep vendors get a night, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0-3 hours** | 11% | 9% | 13% | 7% | **11%** |
| **4-7 hours** | 58% | 54% | 60% | 45% | **56%** |
| **8 or more hours** | 31% | 37% | 27% | 48% | **34%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=5) | n=72 | n=54 | n=55 | n=29 | n=210 |

## 12.2 Leisure activities

While only 15% of vendors overall had been to see a film at the cinema in the last month, almost half (48%) said that they had played sport, or watched a live sporting event during the same period, as Tables 12.4 and 12.5 show.

*Table 12.4: The last time vendors went to the cinema by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yesterday** | 1% | - | - | - | **1%** |
| **last week** | 6% | 2% | 6% | - | **4%** |
| **last month** | 7% | 9% | 12% | 17% | **10%** |
| **last year** | 25% | 29% | 29% | 30% | **28%** |
| **can't remember** | 61% | 60% | 53% | 53% | **57%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=20) | n=71 | n=45 | n=49 | n=30 | n=195 |

By watching a live sporting event, we had meant actually being in the crowd at that event, but it appears that vendors included watching live sporting action on television when they answered this question. The fact that television is more accessible than the cinema to people on a limited income no doubt accounts in large part for the very different levels of participation in these two activities.

*Table 12.5: The last time vendors played sport or watched a live sporting event by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yesterday** | 9% | 15% | 16% | 7% | **12%** |
| **last week** | 28% | 30% | 22% | 13% | **25%** |
| **last month** | 11% | 9% | 14% | 7% | **11%** |
| **last year** | 4% | 20% | 14% | 10% | **12%** |
| **can't remember** | 48% | 26% | 33% | 63% | **41%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=11) | n=71 | n=54 | n=49 | n=30 | n=204 |

A quarter of vendors (25%) had been on holiday at some point in the last three years. Just under two thirds (65%) had either not had a holiday this recently or couldn't remember the last time they had been, however, and more than 1 in 10 vendors (11%) had never been on holiday in their life.

*Table 12.6: The last time vendors went on holiday by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **this year** | 7% | 16% | 9% | 7% | **10%** |
| **last year** | 4% | 2% | 6% | 10% | **5%** |
| **2-3 years ago** | 7% | 7% | 11% | 20% | **10%** |
| **more than 3 years ago** | 44% | 36% | 44% | 27% | **40%** |
| **can't remember** | 31% | 18% | 20% | 33% | **25%** |
| **never been on holiday** | 7% | 20% | 11% | 3% | **11%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=3) | n=72 | n=55 | n=55 | n=30 | n=212 |

### 12.3 Ownership of basic day-to-day items

Finally we asked vendors whether they owned either of two items that many of us could not imagine being without - a television and a mobile phone. In each case, just over half said they did, as Tables 12.7 and 12.8 show.

*Table 12.7: Vendors who own a television by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **own a TV** | 51% | 69% | 52% | 53% | **56%** |
| **don't own a TV** | 49% | 31% | 48% | 47% | **44%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=2) | n=72 | n=55 | n=56 | n=30 | n=213 |

Vendors in Liverpool are more likely to own a television, and vendors in Manchester are more likely to have a mobile than vendors in the other cities, although the differences are not significant in either case.

*Table 12.8: Vendors who own a mobile phone by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **own a mobile** | 49% | 47% | 65% | 53% | **53%** |
| **don't own a mobile** | 51% | 53% | 35% | 47% | **47%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=1) | n=72 | n=55 | n=57 | n=30 | n=214 |

While owning a mobile phone may appear to be more of a luxury, for someone who is homeless or in unsettled housing it can offer an effective and consistent way for services and potential employers to keep in touch. Indeed a homelessness agency in London was recently awarded a grant to provide mobile phones for all its service users.

### 12.4 Forms of identification

Past experience has shown that many vendors lack what are generally accepted as conventional forms of identification, and this can cause them problems in a variety of settings, including gaining access to financial services, as well as to some forms of temporary accommodation.

Last year for the first time, more than half the vendors had been in possession of at least one form of identification, and this year continues that trend, with 3 out of every 5 vendors (61%) currently having ID. As we have seen previously, vendors overall are still most likely to be in possession of a birth certificate, although this pattern is not repeated in all four of the offices; vendors in Leeds are more likely to have a medical card than any of the other forms of ID we asked about.

*Table 12.9: Vendors with conventional forms of identification by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **birth certificate** | 26% | 47% | 58% | 27% | **40%** | 35% |
| **passport** | 17% | 24% | 14% | 7% | **16%** | 16% |
| **driving licence** | 14% | 18% | 9% | 7% | **13%** | 8% |
| **medical card** | 28% | 35% | 33% | 27% | **31%** | 26% |
| **any of these** | **51%** | **69%** | **68%** | **53%** | **61%** | **53%** |
| | n=72 | n=55 | n=57 | n=30 | n=214 | n=298 |

Note: multiple responses were possible, so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100% (missing=1)

As in 2004, vendors in Leeds and Sheffield are less likely to have any ID, and significantly less likely to have a birth certificate, than vendors in either Liverpool or Manchester. The percentage of vendors with identification in Manchester has increased the most this year, from 55% in the previous survey.

## 13. FINANCES

This section focuses on the financial situation of vendors - if they have a financial account, how many of them are in debt, and whether they have ever had to beg.

### 13.1 Use of financial services

For the first time this year, more than half of vendors overall (51%) have some form of financial account in which they can safely deposit their money. Encouraging as this is, given the problems that vendors without such accounts can face, such as vulnerability to mugging and difficulty saving (as described in our *Out of Pocket* report in 2000), it is important that we continue to support vendors in accessing financial services.

Banks are still the most popular places to have an account, with the figures for other cities steadily catching up with those in Manchester, where previously a local Co-operative Bank scheme allowed vendors to access its services without an address or formal ID. Vendors in Leeds are still the most likely to have a credit union account - due in large part to a partnership agreement between The Big Issue in the North and Leeds City Credit Union.

*Table 13.1: Vendors with financial accounts by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **bank** | 31% | 24% | 35% | 23% | **29%** | 26% |
| **building society** | 6% | 4% | 2% | 13% | **5%** | 6% |
| **post office** | 28% | 13% | 18% | 13% | **19%** | 5% |
| **credit union** | 10% | - | 2% | - | **4%** | 4% |
| **any of these** | **65%** | **36%** | **51%** | **47%** | **51%** | **39%** |
| | n=72 | n=55 | n=57 | n=30 | n=214 | n=301 |

Note: multiple responses were possible, so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100% (missing=1)

Overall there is a significant difference between the offices, with vendors in Leeds for the first time being much more likely, and vendors in Liverpool much less likely to have a financial account of some kind. Unexpectedly a slightly smaller proportion of longer-term vendors has such an account; 51% do so, compared to 53% of vendors who have been selling for a year or less.

## 13.2 Money owed by vendors

Although finances and budgeting is one of the areas in which we provide support for our vendors, this is the first time we have asked questions in the annual audit about how many of them are in debt, and how they owe money.

*Table 13.2: Vendors in different forms of debt by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **credit card/s** | 6% | 11% | 4% | 3% | **6%** |
| **bank loan** | 4% | 7% | 2% | 7% | **5%** |
| **overdraft** | 7% | 13% | 2% | 10% | **8%** |
| **rent arrears** | 21% | 18% | 21% | 47% | **24%** |
| **store card/s** | - | 4% | 2% | 7% | **2%** |
| **catalogues** | 1% | 6% | 7% | 10% | **5%** |
| **family or friends** | 10% | 16% | 7% | - | **9%** |
| **social loan fund** | 33% | 35% | 26% | 47% | **34%** |
| **other** | 18% | 16% | 16% | 23% | **18%** |
| **don't owe money** | 42% | 46% | 46% | 27% | **42%** |
| | n=72 | n=55 | n=57 | n=30 | n=214 |

Note: multiple responses were possible, so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100% (missing=1). 'Other' ways included: court/fines (n=8); utility bills (n=3); council tax (n=2); drug dealers (n=2); students loans (n=2); to The Big Issue in the North (n=2); bank; child support; credit union; crisis loan; money lender; building society (all n=1).

More than half of vendors overall (58%) are in some form of debt. As Table 13.2 shows, the two most common ways in which they owe money are to the social loan fund (34%), and in the form of rent arrears (24%). This general pattern is repeated across the four cities, although vendors in Sheffield are more likely to be in debt, and significantly more likely to have rent arrears, than vendors elsewhere.

*Table 13.3: Whether vendors have had debt support by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yes, currently** | - | 3% | 3% | - | **2%** |
| **yes, in the past** | 12% | 7% | 10% | - | **8%** |
| **no** | 88% | 90% | 87% | 100% | **90%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=42 | n=30 | n=31 | n=22 | n=125 |

Note: only includes vendors who owe money

Only 10% of vendors who owe money have ever been provided with debt support services, and the majority of these are not receiving this support currently (see Table 13.3).

However of those who are not, less than a quarter (22%) said they would like to be offered some form of debt-related support. Vendors in Sheffield were most likely, and vendors in Manchester least likely to be interested in receiving debt support services, as Table 13.4 shows.

*Table 13.4: Whether vendors would like debt support now, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **would like support** | 18% | 28% | 11% | 36% | **22%** |
| **would not like support** | 82% | 72% | 89% | 64% | **78%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=40 | n=29 | n=28 | n=22 | n=119 |

Note: only includes vendors who owe money and who do not currently receive debt support (missing=4)

Whilst it would probably be expected that the majority got into debt before they became homeless, we know that in the past vendors have been approached by credit card companies, so we also decided to ask about their experience of this. Almost a quarter (23%) had been sent promotional literature encouraging them to take out credit, and a third (33%) had been approached on the street and offered a credit card, store card or loan, since they had become homeless.

*Table 13.5: Receipt of promotional literature about credit since becoming homeless by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **received literature** | 17% | 30% | 24% | 27% | **23%** |
| **not received literature** | 83% | 70% | 76% | 73% | **77%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=6) | n=72 | n=53 | n=54 | n=30 | n=209 |

*Table13.6: Vendors approached on the street and offered credit by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **offered credit on street** | 34% | 35% | 25% | 38% | **33%** |
| **not offered credit on street** | 66% | 65% | 75% | 62% | **67%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=6) | n=70 | n=54 | n=56 | n=29 | n=209 |

## 13.3 Begging

In 2004, in response to the government's increasingly hard line on begging, we asked vendors whether they had ever had to beg, and how long it was since they had done so.

*Table 13.7: Whether vendors had ever begged by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yes, have begged** | 60% | 41% | 56% | 67% | 55% | 58% |
| **no, have not begged** | 40% | 59% | 44% | 33% | 45% | 42% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=72 | n=56 | n=57 | n=30 | n=215 | n=297 |

The figures have changed little this year, with just over half (55%) of vendors overall telling us that they have begged at some point in their lives (see Table 13.7). Once again vendors in

Liverpool were less likely than those elsewhere to say that they had begged in the past. As in 2004, a significantly higher proportion of vendors who were having problems with their drug or alcohol use had begged before (60% compared to 46% of other vendors).

The results for when vendors had last begged were also very similar to those seen in the previous survey, as Table 13.8 shows. Just under a quarter of vendors (24%) who had begged before had done so within the last three months - a slight fall from last year - while just over half (55%) had not begged at all in the last 12 months, and more than a third (37%) had not done so for more than two years - with both of these figures being slightly higher than they were in 2004.

*Table 13.8: When vendors had last begged by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **less than 3 months ago** | 16% | 30% | 25% | 32% | **24%** | 29% |
| **3-6 months ago** | 12% | 9% | 16% | 11% | **12%** | 12% |
| **7-12 months ago** | 14% | 4% | 6% | 11% | **9%** | 10% |
| **1-2 years ago** | 26% | 22% | 6% | 16% | **18%** | 19% |
| **more than 2 years ago** | 33% | 35% | 47% | 32% | **37%** | 31% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=43 | n=23 | n=32 | n=19 | n=117 | n=168 |

Note: only includes vendors who have begged at some point (missing=1)

Although the differences between the cities are not significant, vendors in Leeds were less likely to report that they had begged in the last six months. A markedly higher proportion of city centre vendors had begged during the same period: 49% had done so, compared to 16% of vendors selling out-of-town.

A comparison of when vendors last begged with how long they have been selling *The Big Issue in the North* shows that 20% have not begged since they started selling the magazine, 32% have done so, and in 37% of cases it is not possible to say (because the time since they last begged and their length of time selling is the same). The remaining 12% were new vendors.

## 14. BARRIERS TO CHANGE

This section examines the main barriers that are preventing vendors from making changes in their lives. It is important to remember that these relate to vendors' own perceptions - there are understandable reasons why people may not recognise or acknowledge the obstacles presented by certain issues (for example, mental health problems).

### 14.1 Barriers to moving on

The three barriers to change that were most frequently mentioned by vendors overall were drug and alcohol use, housing, and financial situation (see Table 14.1). These were also the top three barriers for vendors in each of the cities, although in Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester their order of priority varies, and in Sheffield a lack of qualifications ranked at equal third with their financial situation.

Given the proportion of vendors in 2004 who said that selling *The Big Issue in the North* had increased their self-confidence (79%) and their motivation to change things in their lives (85%), the percentage of vendors who view these as barriers in this year's audit is disappointing.

*Table 14.1: Barriers preventing vendors from making changes in their lives by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **physical health problems** | 33% | 36% | 35% | 27% | **34%** |
| **mental health problems** | 26% | 32% | 35% | 17% | **29%** |
| **housing situation** | 68% | 54% | 70% | 53% | **63%** |
| **drug/alcohol use** | 64% | 73% | 65% | 50% | **65%** |
| **finances** | 56% | 61% | 47% | 43% | **53%** |
| **lack of qualifications** | 38% | 25% | 37% | 43% | **35%** |
| **not enough help/support** | 31% | 30% | 28% | 37% | **31%** |
| **not wanting to make changes** | 4% | 7% | 7% | - | **5%** |
| **lack of motivation** | 33% | 32% | 35% | 20% | **32%** |
| **lack of confidence** | 43% | 41% | 35% | 37% | **40%** |
| **other barriers** | 7% | 13% | 12% | 10% | **10%** |
| | n=72 | n=56 | n=57 | n=30 | n=215 |

Note: multiple responses were possible, so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100%. 'Other' barriers included: having a criminal record; being anti-authority; not having a bank account; language barriers; family problems; having to wait; lack of self-esteem and assertiveness; lack of time; partner's substance use; social stigma; 'myself'.

Shorter-term vendors, i.e. those who had been selling the magazine for less than a year, were significantly less likely to say that their physical health (25% compared to 40% of longer-term vendors) and not wanting to make changes (1% compared to 9% of longer-term vendors) were barriers to moving on in their lives.

In previous years we have phrased this question differently, asking vendors whether they were experiencing problems in a range of areas, so no direct comparisons are possible. It is interesting to note, however, that the three most problematic areas of life reported by vendors overall in 2004 were drugs, accommodation and money.

## 15. EXPERIENCE OF IN-HOUSE SERVICES

This year, as part of the evaluation of the Big Life Plan - our new vendor resettlement and support programme that was introduced in 2005 - we asked vendors a number of questions to gauge their basic understanding of the programme. We also asked them about the support they were receiving from us, and the training courses they were attending. The following section explores their responses.

### 15.1 Understanding of the Big Life Plan

Just over two thirds (69%) of vendors overall said they had heard of the Big Life Plan (see Table 15.1). Some were unsure of the name, but were aware that a new way of working had been introduced.

*Table 15.1: Vendors who have heard of the Big Life Plan by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **have heard of it** | 67% | 75% | 86% | 30% | **69%** |
| **have not heard of it** | 33% | 25% | 14% | 70% | **31%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| (missing=1) | n=72 | n=55 | n=57 | n=30 | n=214 |

There were clear differences between the offices in this respect - vendors in Manchester were more likely, and vendors in Sheffield were significantly less likely to say that they had heard of the new programme. This was not unexpected, given the later introduction of the Big Life Plan in the Sheffield office.

*Table 15.2: Vendors' understanding of how the Big Life Plan works by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yes, understand it** | 58% | 73% | 80% | 44% | **69%** |
| **no, don't understand it** | 42% | 27% | 20% | 56% | **31%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=48 | n=41 | n=49 | n=9 | n=146 |

Note: only includes vendors who had heard of the Big Life Plan (missing=1)

When asked if they understood how the Big Life Plan worked, just over two thirds (69%) of vendors who had heard of the programme said that they did (as Table 15.2 shows). Again the responses varied between the offices, with Manchester vendors being most likely, and Sheffield vendors markedly less likely to be aware of how the programme worked.

In order to sell the magazine, vendors must sign up to the Big Life Plan - which requires them to undergo an initial assessment with staff to identify the areas in which they need support, and draw up a case plan to meet these needs. However almost a fifth (17%) of vendors who were aware of the programme said they had not been assessed, or were unsure about whether they had or not.

*Table 15.3: Vendors who say they have had an initial assessment by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yes, had initial assessment** | 75% | 90% | 81% | 100% | **83%** |
| **no, not had initial assessment** | 5% | 5% | 13% | - | **7%** |
| **not sure** | 20% | 5% | 6% | - | **10%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=44 | n=40 | n=48 | n=9 | n=141 |

Note: only includes vendors who had heard of the Big Life Plan (missing=6)

Once assessed, vendors are assigned to a named co-ordinator or key worker, who meets with them on a regular basis to review their support needs and identify actions to help them meet the milestones in their care plans. Just under two thirds of vendors (60%) said that they knew who their key worker was. Again there were clear differences between the cities, with vendors in Liverpool being more likely, and vendors in Leeds and Sheffield less likely to know who their key worker is.

*Table 15.4: Vendors who know who their case worker is by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yes, know** | 30% | 87% | 70% | 22% | 60% |
| **no, don't know** | 51% | 10% | 21% | 67% | 30% |
| **not sure** | 19% | 3% | 9% | 11% | 10% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=43 | n=40 | n=47 | n=9 | n=139 |

Note: only includes vendors who had heard of the Big Life Plan (missing=8)

The Big Life Plan is divided into three developmental stages, with stage 1 focusing on stabilisation, stage 2 on resettlement, and stage 3 on sustainability. The majority of vendors were unsure which stage of the programme they were currently at, as Table 15.5 shows.

*Table 15.5: Which stage of the Big Life Plan vendors say they are at, by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **stage 1** | 9% | 13% | 26% | 11% | **16%** |
| **stage 2** | 2% | 18% | 13% | - | **10%** |
| **stage 3** | 5% | 3% | 4% | - | **4%** |
| **not sure** | 84% | 67% | 57% | 89% | **70%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=43 | n=40 | n=47 | n=9 | n=139 |

Note: only includes vendors who had heard of the Big Life Plan (missing=8)

Although most vendors told us they understood how the Big Life Plan works in principle, from their responses to the questions about assessment, key workers and stages of the plan, it appears that they are less clear about this in practice.

The on-going evaluation of the programme will help us to decide whether this is important, or whether vendors are able to access the support they need to help them move on in their lives and away from homelessness regardless of this.

## 15.2 Support received from The Big Issue in the North

*Table 15.6: Areas in which vendors were currently receiving support from us by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **housing** | 25% | 45% | 10% | 4% | **25%** |
| **finances** | 6% | 25% | 25% | 12% | **17%** |
| **health** | 13% | 18% | 13% | 8% | **14%** |
| **employment, education & training** | 29% | 27% | 42% | - | **28%** |
| **drugs/alcohol** | 19% | 27% | 8% | 24% | **19%** |
| **personal development** | 16% | 36% | 23% | 4% | **22%** |
| **other** | 2% | 7% | 13% | - | **6%** |
| | n=63 | n=55 | n=48 | n=25 | n=191 |

Note: excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=2). Multiple responses were possible, so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100%. 'Other' support received included: bereavement support; maintaining motivation; support around depression; help with vet's appointments; avoidance of prison; and general support from staff.

Under the Big Life Plan, vendors are offered support in a range of areas, including accommodation, health, finances, substance use, employment, education & training, and personal development. Table 15.6 shows which of these areas vendors said we were currently supporting them in.

Overall, the areas in which the highest proportion of vendors were receiving support were employment, education & training, accommodation, and personal development. Around a quarter of vendors across the region were currently being supported by us in each of these three areas.

Vendors in Liverpool were significantly more likely to be receiving support with housing and personal development than vendors elsewhere, while vendors in Manchester were more likely to be getting help with their employment, education and training needs. Vendors in Liverpool and Manchester were more likely than those in Leeds and Sheffield to be receiving support with their financial situation. Again the lower levels of support seen in Sheffield are a result of the relatively late introduction of the Big Life Plan in this office.

Whilst these patterns of support do not necessarily reflect the areas that vendors were most likely to identify as barriers to moving on in their lives, it must be remembered that this question related only to the provision of in-house support. We recognise that there are other agencies who may be more appropriate than The Big Issue in the North to support vendors in certain areas - for example drug or alcohol use - and it is our policy to refer vendors on to these agencies where appropriate.

Asked what they thought about the amount of support they were receiving from The Big Issue in the North, around three quarters (77%) of vendors overall said that it was about right, and just under a quarter (23%) thought it was not enough. There are clear differences between the cities, with vendors in Liverpool more likely, and vendors in Sheffield less likely to say they were getting as much support from us as they needed.

*Table 15.7: Vendors' views on the amount of support they were receiving by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **not enough support** | 29% | 11% | 20% | 38% | **23%** |
| **about the right level** | 71% | 89% | 80% | 62% | **77%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=58 | n=53 | n=46 | n=24 | n=181 |

Note: excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=12)

Just over a third (37%) of vendors said there were areas in their life where they would like more support from The Big Issue in the North. Surprisingly, vendors in Sheffield were not as likely as vendors elsewhere to ask for this, as Table 15.8 shows.

*Table 15.8: Whether there were areas in which vendors would like more support by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yes, there were** | 40% | 42% | 38% | 20% | **37%** |
| **no, there weren't** | 60% | 58% | 62% | 80% | **63%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=62 | n=53 | n=47 | n=25 | n=187 |

Note: excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=6)

The main areas in which vendors asked for more support were: finding suitable housing; help with drug and/or alcohol problems (including access to rehabilitation services); training (including basic skills, IT skills and vocational qualifications); access to job opportunities; financial support (including getting a bank account and budgeting skills); obtaining ID; and engaging with health services, especially dentists and GPs.

### 15.3 Courses delivered by The Big Issue in the North

In order to help vendors get the most out of working with us and support them to move on in their lives, we offer a range of in-house training courses. Learn to Earn, Learn to Live and Learn to Work are designed to complement the three developmental stages of the Big Life Plan; while the basic skills and IT courses help vendors develop the skills they will need to secure future employment. We also offer a number of other courses or group sessions, often working with external facilitators, to support vendors' personal development and help improve their confidence and self-esteem.

More than half (56%) of vendors overall had completed Learn to Earn, which is designed to help them get the most out of selling *The Big Issue in the North*, and is usually undertaken in the initial stages of their engagement with us; and a third (33%) in each case had done Learn to Live and Learn to Work.

*Table 15.9: In-house courses vendors have accessed by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Learn to Earn** | 62% | 67% | 59% | 8% | 56% |
| **Learn to Live** | 41% | 30% | 41% | 4% | 33% |
| **Learn to Work** | 40% | 28% | 43% | 4% | 33% |
| **basic skills** | 25% | 26% | 20% | - | 21% |
| **IT/computer course** | 46% | 17% | 39% | - | 30% |
| **other course/group** | 8% | 6% | 18% | 36% | 14% |
| | n=63 | n=54 | n=49 | n=25 | n=191 |

Note: excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=2). Multiple responses were possible, so the percentages in each column do not add up to 100%. 'Other' courses/groups attended included: arts (n=7); writing/poetry (n=3); cookery (n=3); 'keep it safe' (n=2); counselling; drama; health & safety; first aid; 'lifeshare'; maths; music; T-shirt design (all n=1).

There are computer suites and dedicated IT support staff in the offices at Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester, and almost a third of vendors overall (30%) had completed a computer course - although vendors in Liverpool were less likely to have done so than those in Leeds and Manchester. Again the training provision in Sheffield is only just being developed, and this is reflected in the significantly lower proportion of vendors who have accessed in-house training there to date.

*Table 15.10: Current attendance on in-house courses/groups by office*

| | Leeds | Liverpool | Manchester | Sheffield | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **yes. currently** | 8% | 28% | 17% | 18% | **17%** |
| **no, not currently** | 92% | 72% | 83% | 82% | **83%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |
| | n=61 | n=46 | n=47 | n=22 | n=176 |

Note: excludes vendors being badged up for the first time (missing=17)

Finally, we asked vendors whether they were attending any in-house courses at the time of the survey. Overall 1 in 6 (17%) said that they were, with vendors in Liverpool most likely and vendors in Leeds least likely to be doing so, although the differences between the offices are not statistically different. The courses that vendors were attending currently included: creative writing; cookery; employment; Learn to Earn; IT courses; 'keep it safe'; maths/basic skills; music and drama; and 'appreciative inquiry'.

## 16. VENDORS HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

In previous surveys, more than 90% of vendors have said they want more from life than selling *The Big Issue in the North*, so this year we asked them what they would like to be doing and/or where they would like to be in five years' time.

### 16.1 Vendors' aspirations

Most vendors told us a number of hopes they have for the future - with many saying that they "just want a normal life". Some examples are given below. The specific things that were mentioned most often in this context were having a job (25%), having a place of their own (25%), being off drugs (10%), having their family around them (6%), and being in a steady and fulfilling relationship (6%). Other common hopes included living abroad, settling down, owning their own business, and going into training or education.

*"In decent accommodation my kids could stay with me in ... with a good job ... have enough money to be comfortable ... and the odd holiday ... and be able to save a bit of money."*

*"To lead a better lifestyle, become healthier, and get more education."*

*"To learn to drive, own a van and have my own business"*

*"To be independent in my own property, in a nice stable relationship, drug free and happy"*

## 17. METHODOLOGY

The final section briefly describes how this year's audit was designed and undertaken, and how the data were analysed.

### 17.1 Process

Building on the experience of previous years, the survey was conducted as part of our annual re-badging process, when vendors must prove they are still eligible for our services in order to receive a new badge number and to continue selling the magazine.

### 17.2 Sample

Since the aim was to include all current vendors, they were only given a new badge once they had completed an audit questionnaire - although they were interviewed after being told that they would be getting a new badge, removing the potential for them to exaggerate (or underplay) their current circumstances in order to sign on with us. Vendors were not given any incentives to take part in the survey. A total of 215 vendors were re-badged during the audit period: Table 17.1 gives a breakdown of these by office.

*Table 17.1: Number of vendors included in the survey by office*

| | 2002 | 2004 | 2005 total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Leeds** | 102 | 98 | **72** |
| **Liverpool** | 84 | 56 | **56** |
| **Manchester** | 99 | 132 | **57** |
| **Sheffield** | 23 | 18 | **30** |
| **TOTAL** | **308** | **304** | **215** |

### 17.3 Questionnaire design

Parts of the questionnaire were based on those used in previous audits, so that year-on-year comparisons could be made. Following consultation internally with staff and externally with partner organisations, however, we added a number of new sections and expanded the range of questions asked in others.

This year there were new sections on vendors' family situation; their experience of crime (as victims, as well as perpetrators of crime); their voting habits; their social and leisure activities; their experience of debt; and their aspirations for the future. We also expanded the questions around drug and alcohol use. A copy of the full audit questionnaire is included in the appendices.

### 17.4 Fieldwork

The interviews were carried out with vendors by staff from The Big Issue in the North and the Big Life group. The confidential nature of the survey was stressed to all participants, and all of the interviews took place in a private space. The survey ran for three working weeks during October 2005.

### 17.5 Data preparation and analysis

The completed questionnaires were input into, and analysed using SPSS v14 (which is a computer statistical software package).

Ali Watson
Research Manager
The Big Life group

# CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE: VENDOR AUDIT 2005

Every year we carry out a survey like this to tell us who our vendors are and what they think about selling *The Big Issue In the North*. The information you give me will be treated confidentially and will only be seen by our Research Manager, who will add it to the information collected from all our other vendors to produce a report that will help us to provide you with a better service.

If you are asked a question that you don't want to answer, you do not have to do so, and you don't have to give a reason why.

**Office:** Hull ☐ Leeds ☐ Liverpool ☐ Manchester ☐ Sheffield ☐

**Vendor reference number:** ☐☐/☐☐☐☐☐☐☐/☐ **New badge number:** ☐☐☐☐☐

**Today's date:** ☐☐ October 2005

*1. WORKING WITH THE BIG ISSUE IN THE NORTH*

1.1 How did you first find out about The Big Issue in the North?

- from a friend ☐
- had seen vendors in the street ☐
- referred here by another agency ☐
- used to buy the magazine ☐
- other (please state how) ☐ ____________________

1.2 What was your main reason for signing up with us?

- to earn some money ☐
- to find a place to live ☐
- to get help/support ☐
- other (please state what) ☐ ____________________

1.3 How long have you been selling *The Big Issue In The North* for (please say for this time around if you've had more than one spell selling)?

- started today ☐ ➔ if starting today, go to question **3.1**
- less than 3 months ☐
- 3-6 months ☐
- 7-12 months ☐
- 1-2 years ☐
- more than 2 years ☐

1.4 Where do you sell the magazine?

- in the city centre ☐
- out of town ☐

1.5 Do you read the magazine yourself?

always ☐
sometimes ☐
never ☐

1.6 Is there anything that you would like to change about the magazine?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

**2. MAGAZINE SALES**

2.1 What percentage of your income is from:

(a) magazine sales? _______ %

(b) drops/tips _______ %

2.2 Are your customers mainly:

male ☐
female ☐

2.3 Which age group do you think that the majority of your customers fall in to?

25 & under ☐
26-45 ☐
46-65 ☐
over 65 ☐

2.4 What percentage of your customers do you consider to be regulars?

_______ %

2.5 Do your customers always take the magazine once they've paid for it?

yes ☐
no ☐

If not, why do you think they don't take it?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

## 3. ABOUT YOU

3.1 Are you:

- male ☐
- female ☐

3.2 How old are you?

- 17-20 ☐
- 21-25 ☐
- 26-30 ☐
- 31-35 ☐
- 36-40 ☐
- 41-45 ☐
- 46-50 ☐
- 51-55 ☐
- over 55 ☐

3.3 How would you describe your ethnic origin?

- ☐ White British
- ☐ White Irish
- ☐ any other White background
- ☐ mixed White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ mixed White and Black African
- ☐ mixed White and Asian
- ☐ any other mixed background
- ☐ Indian or Indian British
- ☐ Pakistani or Pakistani British
- ☐ Bangladeshi or Bangladeshi British
- ☐ any other Asian background
- ☐ Black Caribbean or Black British Caribbean
- ☐ Black African or Black British African
- ☐ any other Black background
- ☐ Chinese or Chinese British
- ☐ any other ethnic background
- ☐ prefer not to say

3.4 Before you became homeless, were you ever in care?

- yes ☐
- no ☐

3.5 Have you ever served in the armed forces (i.e. the army, navy or air force)?

- yes ☐
- no ☐

3.6 Have you ever had a formal paid job?

yes ☐
no ☐ ➔ if no, go to question **4.1**

3.7 If yes, when did your last job end?

in the last 6 months ☐
6 months to 1 year ago ☐
1 year to 2 years ago ☐
2 years to 3 years ago ☐
over 3 years ago ☐

## 4. HOUSING SITUATION

4.1 Are you registered as homeless (with the local authority) in the area you are currently living in?

yes ☐
no ☐
not sure ☐

4.2 Have you slept rough in the past 12 months?

yes ☐
no ☐

4.3 Where did you sleep last night?

slept rough ☐ ➔ if yes, go to question **4.4**
council/HA tenancy ☐ ➔ if yes, go to question **4.6**
private rented tenancy ☐ ➔ if yes, go to question **4.7**
shared house with support ☐
women's refuge ☐
homeless hostel ☐
bail/probation hostel ☐
B&B (bed & breakfast) ☐ } if yes, go to question **4.9**
squat ☐
night shelter ☐
family/friend's place ☐
other *(please say where)* ☐ ____________________

4.4 If you slept rough, did you try to get a place in a hostel or a night shelter?

yes ☐
no ☐

4.5 What was the <u>main</u> reason that you slept rough rather than getting a place in a hostel or a night shelter? *Please tick one reason only.*

- hostels all full up ☐
- didn't know where to look ☐
- don't like hostels ☐
- barred from hostels ☐ ➔ if yes, why? violence ☐ drugs ☐ other ☐
- had no ID ☐
- was using alcohol or drugs ☐
- own a pet ☐
- part of a couple ☐
- had rent arrears ☐
- wanted to avoid drug users ☐
- bullied in hostels in past ☐
- problems getting referred ☐
- like to sleep rough ☐
- other ☐ *what reason ?* ____________________

now go to question **4.9**

4.6 Were you given a choice about:

(a) the area in which you live? yes ☐ no ☐

(b) the type of accommodation you are in? yes ☐ no ☐

4.7 If you have your own tenancy, how long have you maintained this?

- less than 3 months ☐
- 3-6 months ☐
- 7-12 months ☐
- 1-2 years ☐
- longer than 2 years ☐

4.8 Have you had any support in keeping the tenancy on?

- yes ☐
- no ☐

If yes, can you tell me what type of support you have had, and who was it from?

____________________

____________________

now go to question **5.1**

4.9 How long have you been homeless or vulnerably housed?

- less than 3 months ☐
- 3-6 months ☐
- 7-12 months ☐
- between 1 and 2 years ☐
- between 2 and 3 years ☐
- between 3 and 5 years ☐
- between 5 and 10 years ☐
- more than 10 years ☐

4.10 How did you become homeless? *(please note the event or process involved e.g. "I split up with my partner", not the underlying reason for this e.g. "We argued all the time")*

- left care ☐
- split up with partner ☐
- told to leave by parents ☐
- left parents home due to problems ☐
- evicted ☐
- left prison ☐
- left the armed forces ☐
- other *(please state what)* ☐ ____________________

4.11 What is the main barrier preventing you from moving into your own accommodation? *(please tick one box only)*

- currently excluded from housing list ☐ → if yes, go to question **4.12**
- lack of a deposit ☐
- can't afford rent ☐
- drug/alcohol use ☐
- physical/mental health problems ☐
- don't know where to access support ☐
- difficulty in filling in forms ☐
- don't know how housing system works ☐
- own a pet ☐
- other barriers *(please state what)* ☐ ____________________

$\}$ if yes, go to question **5.1**

4.12 If you are currently excluded from the housing list, why is this?

- due to previous convictions ☐ → if yes, what for? arson ☐ violence ☐ other ☐
- previous rent arrears ☐
- issues around drug use ☐
- issues around alcohol use ☐
- mental health issues ☐

## 5. FAMILY SITUATION

5.1 Do you have any children?

- yes ☐
- no ☐ → if no, go to question **6.1**

If yes, how many children do you have, and how old are they?

________________________________________

________________________________________

5.2 Do your children live with you?

yes ☐
some of them ☐
no ☐

5.3 Do you have regular contact with the ones who don't live with you?

yes ☐
some of them ☐
no ☐

## 6. HEALTH

6.1 Are you registered with a local GP/doctor i.e. one with a practice in the area you are currently living in?

yes ☐ ➔ if yes, is this with a homeless/NFA team? yes ☐ no ☐
no ☐
don't know ☐

6.2 Are you registered with a local dentist i.e. one with a practice in the area you are currently living in?

yes ☐
no ☐
don't know ☐

6.3 I don't want to know why, but are you seeing anybody at the moment about any sort of health problem? *(please tick all you are currently seeing)*

GP/doctor ☐
hospital ☐
nurse ☐
counsellor ☐ ➔ if yes, is this in-house? yes ☐ no ☐
complementary therapist ☐ ➔ if yes, is this in-house? yes ☐ no ☐
other *(please say who)* ☐ ____________________
none of these ☐

6.4 In your opinion, do you have a disability or long-term illness that limits your daily activity?

yes ☐
no ☐

6.5 Have you ever exchanged sex for money or favours?

yes ☐
no ☐

## 7. DRUG/ALCOHOL USE

7.1 Are you currently using any of the drugs listed in the table below?

yes ☐ ➔ if yes, proceed with **table**
no ☐ ➔ if no, go to question **8.1**

| Drug type (specify if possible) | Tick if ever used | Age at first use | Frequency of use. Please draw a ring around a letter for each drug. (see list below - if the categories don't fit, write them in your own words) | Method of use. Please draw a ring around a letter (see list below) | Average amount used per day | Average value used per day in £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| alcohol | | | A B C D E F G H I | O | | |
| amphetamines | | | A B C D E F G H I | O N S I | | |
| anti-depressants | | | A B C D E F G H I | O | | |
| barbiturates & ketamine | | | A B C D E F G H I | O N S I | | |
| cannabis | | | A B C D E F G H I | O S | | |
| cocaine | | | A B C D E F G H I | O N S I | | |
| crack | | | A B C D E F G H I | O N S I | | |
| hallucinogens & ecstasy | | | A B C D E F G H I | O N S I | | |
| heroin | | | A B C D E F G H I | O N S I | | |
| inhalants | | | A B C D E F G H I | N | | |
| other opiods e.g. methadone | | | A B C D E F G H I | O N S I | | |
| tobacco | | | A B C D E F G H I | O N S | | |
| tranquillisers | | | A B C D E F G H I | O I | | |
| | | | A = no recent use<br>B = 1 day in the last month<br>C = 1 to 3 times a month<br>D = 1 day in the last week<br>E = 2 to 3 times a week<br>F = 4 to 6 times a week<br>G = about once a day<br>H = 2 to 3 times a day every day<br>I = 4 or more times a day | O = used orally (mouth)<br>N = used nasally (nose)<br>S = smoked<br>I = injected | | |

7.2 Are you currently injecting?

yes ☐
no ☐

7.3 Do you currently speedball?

yes ☐ ➔ if yes, is this: heroin & speed ☐ heroin & crack ☐ heroin & cocaine ☐
no ☐

7.4 Have you shared any of the following kit? *(please tick all you have shared)*

| | **ever** | **in last 4 weeks** |
|---|---|---|
| barrels | ☐ | ☐ |
| citric | ☐ | ☐ |
| filter | ☐ | ☐ |
| needles | ☐ | ☐ |
| spoons | ☐ | ☐ |
| swabs | ☐ | ☐ |
| water | ☐ | ☐ |

7.5 Have you had a break in using drugs?

no ☐
yes ☐ ➔ if yes, was this: in the last 2 weeks ☐
last month ☐
in the last 3 months ☐
in the last 6 months ☐
longer ago than this ☐

7.6 Have you ever gone over (overdosed)?

no ☐ ➔ if no, go to question **7.7**
yes ☐ ➔ if yes, continue with question **7.6**

Was this in the last 6 months?

yes ☐
no ☐

The last time you went over (overdosed), were you in company?

yes ☐
no ☐

When this happened, was an ambulance called?

yes ☐
no ☐

7.7 Did you know that the police are **not** routinely called to a 999 overdose call for an ambulance, unless children or the ambulance crew are believed to be at risk?

yes ☐
no ☐

7.8 Have you ever accessed residential/community drug treatment?

yes ☐ ➔ if yes, go to question **7.9**
no ☐ ➔ if no, go to question **8.1**

7.9 How many times have you accessed drug treatment?

________

7.10 Are you currently accessing any of the following local drug/alcohol services?

show lists provided by centre managers - if yes go to question **8.1**; if no go to question **7.11**

7.11 If you are not currently seeing anyone about your drug use, why did you stop attending your last treatment programme?

finished the treatment programme ☐
was barred from the service ☐
did not find the service helpful ☐
moved away from the area ☐
went to prison ☐
did not get on with the other clients ☐
did not get on with the staff ☐
other reason *(please say what)* ☐ ______________________________

## 8. CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

8.1 Were you involved in any criminal activity before you started selling *The Big Issue In the North*?

yes ☐
no ☐ ➔ if no, go to question **8.8**

8.2 Roughly how much per week did you earn through crime previously?

£ ______________

8.3 What sort of crime were you involved in previously?

- burglary ☐
- theft (car) ☐
- theft (general) ☐
- shoplifting ☐
- non- violent robbery ☐
- violent robbery ☐
- other *(please say what)* ☐ ______________________

If the vendor is getting badged up for the first time today, go to question **8.5**

8.4 What effect has selling *The Big Issue In The North* had on the amount of crime you commit?

- commit a lot more now ☐
- commit a bit more now ☐
- had no effect ☐
- commit a bit less now ☐
- commit a lot less now ☐

Why is this?

______________________

______________________

8.5 Have you ever been in prison?

- yes ☐ → if yes, go to question **8.6**
- no ☐ → if no, go to question **8.8**

8.6 Was this before or after you first became homeless?

- before ☐
- afterwards ☐
- both ☐

8.7 I don't want to know the reason why, but have you been in prison in the last 12 months?

- yes ☐
- no ☐

8.8 Are you currently subject to any of the following? *(please tick all that apply)*

- ASBO (anti social behaviour order) ☐
- DTTO (drug treatment & testing order) ☐
- probation order ☐
- YOS (youth offending scheme) ☐
- DIP (drugs intervention programme) ☐
- criminal injunction ☐
- civil injunction ☐

## 9. VIOLENCE, SAFETY & VICTIMISATION

9.1 Which parts of the city don't you feel safe in, and why?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

9.2 What time/s of the day do you feel safest? *(please tick all that apply)*

morning (sunrise until noon) ☐
afternoon (noon until 6 pm) ☐
early evening (6 pm until 9 pm) ☐
late evening (9 pm until midnight) ☐
night time (midnight until sunrise) ☐

9.3 In the last year, have any of these crimes been committed against you? *(please tick all that apply)*

burglary ☐
theft ☐
damage to your property ☐
violence ☐
threats ☐
sexual assault ☐

9.4 In the last year, have you experienced any of the following as a result of being homeless or being a vendor? *(please tick all that apply)*

| | **homeless** | **vendor** |
|---|---|---|
| publicly insulted | ☐ | ☐ |
| harassed | ☐ | ☐ |
| had things thrown at you | ☐ | ☐ |
| intimidated | ☐ | ☐ |
| urinated on | ☐ | ☐ |

9.5 How often do you report crimes that are committed against you to the police?

always ☐
sometimes ☐
never ☐

If 'sometimes' or 'never', why don't you report them?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

9.6 Have you ever been excluded from a service or medical treatment because you were homeless?

yes ☐
no ☐

If yes, which service/s?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

## 10. VOTING/CITIZENSHIP

10.1 Have you ever voted in a general election in the UK?

yes ☐ ➔ if yes, go to question **10.2**
no ☐ ➔ if no, say why, then go to question **11.1**

If not, why not?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

10.2 If you have, did you vote in the election in May this year?

yes ☐ ➔ go to question **11.1**
no ☐ ➔ go to question **10.3**

10.3 If you didn't vote this year, when was the last time you voted in a general election?

2001 ☐
1997 ☐
1992 ☐
before 1992 ☐
can't remember ☐

## 11. SOCIAL/LEISURE ACTIVITIES

11.1 When was the last time you cooked yourself a meal?

yesterday ☐
last week ☐
last month ☐
last year ☐
can't remember ☐

11.2 How often do you read a newspaper?

daily ☐
a couple of times a week ☐
a couple of times a month ☐
never ☐

11.3 Do you own a mobile phone?

yes ☐
no ☐

11.4 How many hours sleep do you get a night, on average?

_______ hours

11.5 When was the last time you went on holiday?

this year ☐
last year ☐
2-3 years ago ☐
more than 3 years ago ☐
can't remember ☐
never been on holiday ☐

11.6 When was the last time you went to the cinema?

yesterday ☐
last week ☐
last month ☐
last year ☐
can't remember ☐

11.7 When was the last time you played sport, or watched a live sporting event?

yesterday ☐
last week ☐
last month ☐
last year ☐
can't remember ☐

11.8 Do you own a TV?

yes ☐
no ☐

11.9 Do you have any of the following identification documents? *(please tick all those you still have now, not those you once had and have lost or had stolen)*

- birth certificate ☐
- passport ☐
- driving licence ☐
- medical card ☐

11.10 Do you have an account where you could deposit money with any of the following? *(please tick all those you have an account with)*

- bank ☐
- building society ☐
- post office ☐
- credit union ☐

11.11 Do you owe money in any of the following ways? *(please tick all those that apply)*

- credit card/s ☐
- bank loan ☐
- overdraft ☐
- rent arrears ☐
- store card/s ☐
- catalogues ☐
- family or friends ☐
- social loan fund ☐
- other ☐ *please say how* ____________________
- don't owe money ☐ ➔ go to question **11.14**

11.12 Have you ever had any debt support?

- yes, currently ☐ ➔ go to question **11.14**
- yes, in the past ☐
- no, never ☐

11.13 Would you like support around your debts/the money you owe now?

- yes ☐
- no ☐

11.14 Have you been sent promotional literature encouraging you to take out credit since you became homeless?

- yes ☐
- no ☐

11.15 Have you been approached on the street by someone offering you a credit card, store card or loan since you became homeless?

yes ☐
no ☐

11.16 Have you ever had to beg?

yes ☐
no ☐ ➔ if no, go to question **12.1**

11.17 When was the last time that you begged?

less than 3 months ago ☐
3-6 months ago ☐
7-12 months ago ☐
1-2 years ago ☐
more than 2 years ago ☐

## 12. BARRIERS

12.1 What do you think are the main barriers preventing you from making changes in your life? *(please tick all the barriers that apply)*

physical health problems ☐
mental health problems ☐
housing situation ☐
drug/alcohol use ☐
finances ☐
lack of qualifications ☐
not enough help/support ☐
not wanting to make changes ☐
lack of motivation ☐
lack of confidence ☐
other barriers *(please say what)* ☐ ____________________

## 13. EXPERIENCE OF SERVICES AT THE BIG ISSUE IN THE NORTH TRUST

13.1 Have you heard of the Big Life Plan?

yes ☐
no ☐ ➔ if no, go to question **13.6**

13.2 Do you understand how the Big Life Plan works?

yes ☐
no ☐

13.3 Have you had an initial assessment?

- yes ☐
- no ☐
- not sure ☐

13.4 Do you know who your case worker is?

- yes ☐
- no ☐
- not sure ☐

13.5 Which stage of the Big Life Plan are you at?

- stage 1 ☐
- stage 2 ☐
- stage 3 ☐
- not sure ☐

13.6 In which of these areas do you currently receive support from The Big Issue in the North? *(please tick all that apply)*

- housing ☐
- finances ☐
- health ☐
- employment, education & training ☐
- drugs/alcohol ☐
- personal development ☐
- other *(please state what)* ☐ ____________________

13.7 Is the amount of support that you receive from The Big Issue in the North:

- not enough ☐
- about right ☐
- too much ☐

13.8 Are there any areas in your life where you would like more support from The Big Issue in the North?

- yes ☐
- no ☐

If yes, please say which areas, and what sort of support you would like:

____________________

____________________

13.9 Have you ever accessed any courses or groups here? *(please tick all you have been to)*

Learn To Earn ☐
Learn to Live ☐
Learn to Work ☐
Basic skills ☐
IT/computer course ☐
other *(please say what)* ☐ ____________________

13.10 Are you attending any courses or groups currently?

yes ☐
no ☐

If yes, please say what course/s or group/s:

____________________

____________________

## 14. ASPIRATIONS/PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

14.1 In an ideal world, what would you like to be doing and/or where would you like to be in five years from now?

____________________

____________________

____________________

____________________

**THAT'S THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE - THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO GO THROUGH IT WITH ME**