



**ANNUAL SURVEY
OF
THE BIG ISSUE IN THE NORTH
VENDORS**

2009

(June)



August 2009

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Introduction

The results in this report are based on surveys carried out with *The Big Issue in the North* vendors from the four main offices.

358 surveys were completed and the numbers interviewed from each office were as follows: 80 in Leeds, 79 in Liverpool, 165 in Manchester and 34 in Sheffield.

The numbers for Sheffield are considerably smaller than for the other offices so this should be considered when making comparisons between the four offices.

The report contains figures and analysis for all questions asked and where possible compares the results with those recorded in 2008.

Executive Summary

The key findings from each section of the survey are listed below:

About You

- Almost three-quarters of vendors are male.
- Two-thirds of vendors are aged between 25 and 44.
- 46% of vendors are non-British, the vast majority of which are Romanian.

Working with The Big Issue in the North

- 87% of vendors state their main motivation for selling the magazine is to earn money.
- Half of all vendors have been selling the magazine for more than 2 years – a 12% increase from 2008.
- 86% of vendors reported that working for *The Big Issue in the North* has increased their confidence.
- Selling the magazine has motivated nearly three-quarters of vendors to change their circumstances.

Housing Situation

- Over half of all vendors become homeless under the age of 24.
- 96% of non-British vendors became homeless because they arrived in the UK without accommodation.
- The number of vendors who are sleeping rough at the time of the audit has more than halved since 2008.
- 94% of vendors living in private rented accommodation are happy with their current situation.

- Financial problems, and a lack of deposit in particular, are the main barriers preventing vendors accessing their preferred accommodation options.
- The longer a vendor has been selling the magazine, the longer they are likely to have maintained their own tenancy.

Health

- 82% of vendors consider themselves to be healthy.

Criminal Activity

- A third of vendors were involved in criminal activity, other than begging, before selling the magazine.
- 96% of vendors commit less crime as a direct result of working for *The Big Issue in the North*.

1. About You

This section explores *The Big Issue in the North's* vendors in terms of gender, age and ethnic background.

Q1.1 Are you male or female?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	353	80	76	163	34
Male	260 74%	60 75%	62 82%	112 69%	26 76%
Female	93 26%	20 25%	14 18%	51 31%	8 24%

Missing=5

Nearly three-quarters of vendors are male with Liverpool having the highest proportion of male vendors and Manchester the highest proportion of females.

The figures are very similar to those in the 2008 audit which recorded 76% of vendors as male.

Q1.2 How old are you?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	354	80	77	164	33
17-24	65 18%	15 19%	15 19%	33 20%	2 6%
25-44	231 65%	57 71%	51 66%	99 60%	24 73%
45-64	56 16%	7 9%	10 13%	32 20%	7 21%
65 +	2 1%	1 1%	1 1%	- -	- -

Missing=4

Two-thirds of vendors are aged between 25 and 44. There are significant numbers of vendors in the 17-24 and 45-64 age categories but only two vendors aged over 65.

Analysing age categories by gender shows that female vendors are more likely to be under 24 (33% compared to 13% male). Also, only 9% of female vendors are over 45 compared to 19% male.

The 2008 audit used different age categories, making direct comparisons difficult, but last year's results showed a similar pattern with over half of all female vendors aged under-30.

Q1.3 Are you British?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	336	78	68	156	34
Yes	183 54%	49 63%	47 69%	63 40%	24 71%
No	153 46%	29 37%	21 31%	93 60%	10 29%

Missing=22

54% of vendors consider themselves to be British, but the figure is far lower in Manchester than the other three cities.

The differences between gender groups are stark as 80% of female vendors are non-British. 51% of these work in Manchester.

Were you born in the EU?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	215	46	31	113	25
Yes	208 97%	43 93%	27 87%	113 100%	25 100%
No	7 3%	3 7%	4 13%	-	-

Note: It is reasonable to assume that the high number of missing responses is because many British vendors did not answer this question thinking it did not apply.

Missing=143

It is difficult to interpret this question given the high number of missing responses, although it is clear that very few vendors were born outside the EU.

Three vendors were born in Sri Lanka, one in Burundi and one in Iceland. The other two vendors did not state their place of birth.

Q1.4 Were you born in one of the following EU countries?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	164	28	26	101	9
Czech Republic	1 1%	1 4%	-	-	-
Hungary	-	-	-	-	-
Lithuania	1 1%	-	-	1 1%	-
Slovakia	-	-	-	-	-
Bulgaria	2 1%	-	-	2 2%	-
Estonia	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	2 1%	-	1 4%	-	1 11%
Romania	158 96%	27 96%	25 96%	98 97%	8 89%

Missing=194

164 vendors were born outside the UK but in the EU, and 7 vendors were born outside the EU altogether. This shows us that 48% of all vendors were born outside of the UK, and the vast majority of these were born in Romania.

The figure is very similar to 2008, which showed that 45% of vendors were born outside the UK, with Romania again the dominant country of birth.

The majority of Romanian vendors are working in Manchester and nearly half of all female vendors (47%) are Romanians working in Manchester.

2. Working with The Big Issue in the North

This section looks at how the vendors became aware on *The Big Issue in the North*, their reasons for signing up, how long they have been doing so and plan to do so and also the effect the experience of selling the magazine has had on them.

Q2.1 How did you first find out about *The Big Issue in the North*?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	338	75	71	161	31
From a Friend	260 77%	51 68%	56 79%	133 83%	20 65%
Had seen vendors in the street	67 20%	22 29%	11 15%	25 16%	9 29%
Referred here by another agency	11 3%	3 4%	3 4%	4 2%	1 3%
Used to buy the magazine	1 0%	- -	- -	- -	1 3%
Seen poster or cards	1 0%	- -	1 1%	- -	- -

Note: Some vendors gave more than one response, so percentages in each column do not add up to 100%

Missing=20

In all cities, the majority of vendors became aware of *The Big Issue in the North* through a friend. The only other response with significant numbers was seeing vendors in the street. Very few vendors were referred by another agency. The figures are similar to 2008 when 71% said they had found out through a friend.

Other reasons given included: Local agencies (8), finding out through family (5) and used to sell it elsewhere (3).

Q2.2 What was your main reason for signing up with us?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	344	78	77	161	28
To earn some money	298 87%	65 83%	67 87%	141 88%	25 89%
To find a place to live	77 22%	11 14%	14 18%	47 29%	5 18%
To get help/support	49 14%	7 9%	22 29%	18 11%	2 7%
Social reasons	14 4%	3 4%	4 5%	7 4%	- -

Note: Some vendors gave more than one response, so percentages in each column do not add up to 100%

Missing=14

The main motivation of vendors in choosing to work for the magazine is to earn money, and this is the case in all four cities. In 2008, 82% gave this as their main reason.

To find a place to live was the next most common reason. 40% of British vendors stated this as a motivation compared to 23% non-British.

The other reasons given were to stop committing crime (9), to get a job (1) and improve the quality of their life (2).

It is interesting that very few vendors identify committing less crime as a motivation, despite the clear correlation between this and selling the magazine. But as the reasons given in Q5.3 show, earning money is the main reason why vendors stop committing crime, and this is clearly the primary motivation.

Q2.3 How long have you been selling *The Big Issue* in the North?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	352	79	79	161	33
Started today	13 4%	6 8%	4 5%	3 2%	- -
Less than 3 months	35 10%	6 8%	8 10%	19 12%	2 6%
3-6 months	26 7%	2 3%	7 9%	13 8%	4 12%
7-12 months	28 8%	7 9%	5 6%	14 9%	2 6%
1-2 years	75 21%	19 24%	23 29%	22 14%	11 33%
More than 2 years	175 50%	39 49%	32 41%	90 56%	14 42%

Missing=6

Exactly half of current vendors have been selling the magazine for over two years. This increases to 56% in Manchester.

This is a significant increase on the result in the 2008 audit which recorded 38% selling for more than 2 years. It suggests that vendors are less likely to leave once they have been with the organisation for over a year and are more likely to drop out in the first few months of their time selling the magazine. 71% of vendors have been selling for over a year – 10% higher than in 2008.

There are few differences on this point when analysed by gender or nationality but there is a trend suggesting that older vendors are more likely to stay for a long period than younger ones. 54% of vendors aged between 25 and 64 had been selling for over two years, compared to 31% of 17-24 year olds.

Q2.4 How long do you plan to sell *The Big Issue in the North* for??

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	349	76	78	161	34
Less than 1 year	34 10%	16 21%	3 4%	8 5%	7 21%
1 year	28 8%	10 13%	7 9%	7 4%	4 12%
2-3 years	25 7%	2 3%	6 8%	15 9%	2 6%
3-5 years	16 5%	1 1%	4 5%	9 6%	2 6%
5 years +	57 16%	7 9%	5 6%	41 25%	4 12%
Not given it any thought	189 54%	40 53%	53 68%	81 50%	15 44%

Missing=9

The majority of vendors do not have any fixed plan of how long they would like to sell the magazine for. Vendors in Liverpool are particularly flexible about their plans.

Otherwise, the responses are fairly well split across the five-year time span. 16% would like to stay for more than five years while 10% anticipate that their stay will be brief – for less than a year.

Q2.5 Has selling the magazine helped to increase your confidence?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	277	59	52	134	32
Yes	239 86%	49 83%	46 88%	119 89%	25 78%
No	38 14%	10 17%	6 12%	15 11%	7 22%

Missing=81

An overwhelming majority of vendors report an increase in their confidence as a result of selling *The Big Issue in the North*, a result which is consistent across all cities.

The result is consistent across age, gender and nationality groups.

Has selling the magazine helped to motivate you to change your circumstances?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	249	59	56	101	33
Yes	181 73%	41 69%	43 77%	73 72%	24 73%
No	68 27%	18 31%	13 23%	28 28%	9 27%

Missing=109

The result is not as high as in the previous question but nearly three-quarters of vendors report that selling the magazine helped them change their circumstances.

79% of men responded positively to this question compared to 51% of women, though the greatest difference is seen when the question is analysed by nationality. Only 48% of non-British vendors have been motivated to change their circumstances compared to 89% of British vendors. This might be explained by the results of Q3.4 which shows that more non-British vendors live in private tenancies so maybe would not have the same motivation to change their living circumstances.

Has selling the magazine helped you to access information about further support?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	245	62	55	96	32
Yes	169 69%	31 50%	45 82%	69 72%	24 75%
No	76 31%	31 50%	10 18%	27 28%	8 25%

Missing=113

69% of vendors have used their time at the magazine to access information about further support. The proportions of people doing this are significantly lower in Leeds. Also, male vendors and British vendors are more likely to have accessed this information.

The results of these two questions suggest that British and non-British vendors experience differing outcomes and benefits from working for the magazine.

Has selling the magazine helped you to earn an income?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	320	68	77	143	32
Yes	312 98%	66 97%	76 99%	140 98%	30 94%
No	8 3%	2 3%	1 1%	3 2%	2 6%

Missing=38

Unsurprisingly, nearly all vendors say that working for the magazine has helped them earn an income.

The most common additional comment received was that working had enabled vendors to meet people and engage with members of the public/wider society. A typical comment was:

"Doing the job has helped me interact with people I wouldn't normal interact with and helped me find other job opportunities."

Other comments included: helped to stop drugs habit (2), helped me to stop committing crime (6) and given me a routine (3).

3. Housing Situation

This section looks at vendors' current housing situation, investigating reasons for homelessness and barriers preventing accessing different housing options.

Q3.1 What age were you when you first became homeless?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	299	79	75	115	30
Under 17	23 8%	9 11%	10 13%	3 3%	1 3%
17-24	143 48%	37 47%	36 48%	53 46%	17 57%
25-44	110 37%	29 37%	25 33%	46 40%	10 33%
45-64	23 8%	4 5%	4 5%	13 11%	2 7%
64+	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -

Note: Viewpoint added the 'under-17' response to the original questionnaire to ensure all responses were recorded

Missing=59

Nearly half of all vendors became homeless in young adulthood, between the ages of 17 and 24. A majority of vendors became homeless under the age of 24.

Only a small proportion became homeless after the age of 45.

Q3.2 What was the main reason you became homeless?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	283	76	68	112	27
Left care	16 6%	1 1%	7 10%	5 4%	3 11%
Left prison	12 4%	3 4%	4 6%	4 4%	1 4%
Left the armed forces	1 0%	- -	- -	1 1%	- -
Arrived in the country without accommodation	112 40%	28 37%	28 41%	52 46%	4 15%
Split up with partner	36 13%	11 14%	10 15%	13 12%	2 7%
Left parents' home due to problems	62 22%	15 20%	15 22%	19 17%	13 48%
Violence/abuse	11 4%	3 4%	5 7%	3 3%	- -
Evicted	11 4%	4 5%	3 4%	3 3%	1 4%
Drug/Alcohol usage	29 10%	8 11%	8 12%	9 8%	4 15%
Debt or Money issues	6 2%	- -	2 3%	4 4%	- -
Redundancy/lost job	9 3%	4 5%	1 1%	3 3%	1 4%

Note: Some vendors gave more than one response, so percentages in each column do not add up to 100%

Missing=75

The main reason given for becoming homeless is arriving in the country without accommodation. This is the reason given by 96% of non-British vendors.

For British vendors the main reason is leaving their parents home due to problems, with splitting up with partner and drug/alcohol use also fairly common responses. In 2008, splitting up with partner was the most common response for British vendors.

Additional reasons to those in the table are few and varied, but include: Parents dying (3), gambling troubles (1), partner dying (1) and one vendor said the question did not apply as they have never been homeless.

Q3.3 Have you slept rough in the last six months?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	341	79	79	153	30
For all of this time	9 3%	- -	1 1%	7 5%	1 3%
For most of the time	23 7%	5 6%	6 8%	6 4%	6 20%
Now and again	60 18%	17 22%	16 20%	18 12%	9 30%
Not at all	249 73%	57 72%	56 71%	122 80%	14 47%

Missing=17

Nearly three-quarters of vendors have not slept rough in the last six months. In Sheffield however this applies to only 47%.

1 in 10 vendors sleep rough all or most of the time, though this figure contradicts the following question (Q3.4) where only 5% of vendors declare that they currently sleep rough.

This question shows a big difference when analysed by nationality. 91% of non-British vendors have not slept rough at all in the last six months compared to 58% of British vendors.

Q3.4 Where do you currently live?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	344	77	76	158	33
I sleep rough	17 5%	1 1%	5 7%	7 4%	4 12%
Council/HA tenancy	54 16%	15 19%	13 17%	20 13%	6 18%
Private rented tenancy	121 35%	23 30%	30 39%	61 39%	7 21%
Shared house with support	10 3%	- -	2 3%	8 5%	- -
Women's refuge	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Homeless hostel	21 6%	1 1%	12 16%	5 3%	3 9%
Bail/probation hostel	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
B&B (bed and breakfast)	5 1%	1 1%	1 1%	1 1%	2 6%
Squat	1 0%	1 1%	- -	- -	- -
Night shelter	3 1%	- -	3 4%	- -	- -
Family/friends place	109 32%	33 43%	10 13%	56 35%	10 30%
Wherever I can	3 1%	2 3%	- -	- -	1 3%

Missing=14

The majority of vendors live in private rented tenancies or with family or friends. Significant numbers also live at council/HA tenancies. The results are fairly comparable with the 2008 audit with the same accommodation options coming out on top.

The most striking change is that the number of vendors sleeping rough has more than halved in a year, from 40 vendors to 17. This figure should however be treated with caution as 32 vendors say they have slept rough most or all of the time in Q3.3.

There has also been a small proportional increase since 2008 in council/HA tenancies (6%) and in staying with family/friends (7%).

More non-British vendors live in private rented tenancies than British vendors (57% compared with 14%). British vendors are instead more likely to live in council/HA tenancies (28% compared with 3%).

Only two of the vendors who sleep rough are non-British and only one is female. There is no link between whether a vendor sleeps rough and how long they have been selling the magazine.

Other places where vendors live were: Caravan (3) and temporary sheltered accommodation (3).

Q3.5 If you reside in a hostel, which services do you receive?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	18	1	9	5	3
Access to educational courses	6 33%	- -	4 44%	2 40%	- -
Employment advice	7 39%	- -	6 67%	- -	1 33%
Key worker sessions	17 94%	1 100%	9 100%	4 80%	3 100%
Health advice	14 78%	- -	7 78%	4 80%	3 100%
Further opportunities	6 33%	1 100%	3 33%	1 20%	1 33%

Note: Only answered by vendors who answered 'Homeless hostel' or 'Bail/Probation hostel' to Q3.4

Vendors were able to give more than one response, so percentages in each column do not add up to 100%

Missing=3

All but one hostel residents receive key worker sessions and most receive health advice.

Q3.6 Are you happy with your current accommodation?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	268	71	50	117	30
Yes	219 82%	53 75%	43 86%	98 84%	25 83%
No	49 18%	18 25%	7 14%	19 16%	5 17%

Missing=90

The results show that people are broadly satisfied with their current accommodation.

But the results are more revealing when broken down by type of accommodation. 100% of people sleeping rough, or who answered 'wherever I can' are unhappy with their situation. 50% of vendors sleeping in a shared house are unhappy as are 60% of vendors living in a B&B.

Instead, vendors are happiest living in private rented accommodation – 94%.

Further comments about their accommodation revealed many vendors aspire to having their own place and are working towards this. Typically vendors were happy to be where they were for the time being but few expressed great enthusiasm for where they live.

Q3.7 Please indicate whether you are experiencing any of the following problems with your current accommodation?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	74	11	23	29	11
Overcrowding	24 32%	5 45%	6 26%	10 34%	3 27%
Poor condition (damp, needing repairs)	33 45%	5 45%	12 52%	11 38%	5 45%
Vulnerable to eviction	31 42%	3 27%	11 48%	10 34%	7 64%
Not receiving support	16 22%	2 18%	5 22%	7 24%	2 18%
Violence	6 8%	- -	3 13%	3 10%	- -

Note: Vendors were able to give more than one response, so percentages in each column do not add up to 100%
Missing=284

The specific problems with accommodation are explored more in this question.

284 vendors (79%) chose not to answer the question suggesting the problems listed are not that widespread.

The poor condition of housing is the greatest problem, but overcrowding and being vulnerable to eviction also affects a significant number of people.

Other problems given by vendors included: Security (6), Too expensive/lack of money (5), people they live with (4) and would prefer own place (3).

Q3.8 If you have tried to move into different accommodation, what type of accommodation have you tried to access?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	115	43	24	29	19
HA/ Council tenancy	68 59%	23 53%	16 67%	16 55%	13 68%
Private tenancy	59 51%	32 74%	9 38%	11 38%	7 37%
Hostel	36 31%	15 35%	5 21%	5 17%	11 58%
Night shelter	15 13%	6 14%	1 4%	3 10%	5 26%
Support accomodation	10 9%	2 5%	1 4%	5 17%	2 11%

Note: Vendors were able to give more than one response, so percentages in each column do not add up to 100%

Missing=243

Vendors who have tried to access different accommodation have in the main targeted council or private tenancies. In addition to the responses in the table, one further vendor said they were trying to access a B&B.

Only 20 non-British vendors answered this question which tallies with results elsewhere in this section – a majority of non-British vendors live in private tenancies which is where people are happiest.

Q3.9 What is the main barrier preventing you moving into the accommodation of your choice?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	100	25	33	27	15
Excluded from hostel(s)	4 4%	1 4%	2 6%	- -	1 7%
Currently excluded from housing list	16 16%	2 8%	9 27%	3 11%	2 13%
Lack of deposit	36 36%	15 60%	10 30%	10 37%	1 7%
Can't afford rent	9 9%	- -	1 3%	3 11%	5 33%
Drug/alcohol use	12 12%	4 16%	3 9%	3 11%	2 13%
Physical/mental health problems	4 4%	1 4%	- -	3 11%	- -
Don't know where to access support	1 1%	- -	- -	1 4%	- -
Difficulty in filling in forms	1 1%	- -	- -	1 4%	- -
Don't know how housing systems works	7 7%	2 8%	4 12%	- -	1 7%
Own a pet	3 3%	- -	2 6%	- -	1 7%
Part of a couple	7 7%	- -	2 6%	3 11%	2 13%

Missing=258

Lack of deposit is the biggest issue for vendors, particularly in Leeds. Otherwise, the reasons are well spread with drug/alcohol use and being excluded from the housing list the biggest barriers. Lack of deposit was also the main barrier in 2008.

If 'lack of deposit' and 'can't afford rent' are combined it shows that 45% of vendors see finances as a barrier to getting their own accommodation.

Other than lack of deposit, the main reason why non-British vendors cannot access their own housing is lack of knowledge about how the housing system works.

The main additional barrier stated was the length of the council waiting list (11) while other problems with the system including excessive bureaucracy and not being eligible for benefits were also mentioned.

Q3.10 Why are you currently excluded from the housing list?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	56	20	25	6	5
Due to previous convictions	-	-	-	-	-
Previous rent arrears	12 21%	4 20%	2 8%	2 33%	4 80%
Issues around drug use	1 2%	-	1 4%	-	-
Issues around alcohol use	2 4%	-	2 8%	-	-
Mental health issues	-	-	-	-	-
Not eligible	43 77%	16 80%	22 88%	4 67%	1 20%

Note: This question should have only been answered by vendors who indicated that they were excluded from the housing list in Q3.9 but a far greater number have answered. Vendors were able to give more than one response, so percentages in each column do not add up to 100%

Due to the confusion in who was eligible to answer this question, the data is somewhat unreliable.

But if we look at the 16 people who indicated they were excluded from the housing list in Q3.9, five had previous rent arrears and nine are not eligible.

In the survey, a follow-up question asks about the nature of previous convictions but as none were recorded this does not apply.

Q3.11 How long have you maintained your own tenancy?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	191	38	41	102	10
Less than 3 months	25 13%	4 11%	4 10%	13 13%	4 40%
3-6 months	25 13%	4 11%	8 20%	12 12%	1 10%
7-12 months	27 14%	7 18%	6 15%	11 11%	3 30%
1-2 years	45 24%	13 34%	12 29%	18 18%	2 20%
Longer than 2 years	69 36%	10 26%	11 27%	48 47%	- -

Note: This question should only have been answered by the 175 vendors who indicated that they have a council/HA tenancy or private rented tenancy in Q3.4 but more than this have answered it.

The table shows that a majority of vendors (60%) have maintained their own tenancy for over a year. This is in stark contrast to 2008 when 65% of vendors had maintained their tenancy for less than a year and where 3-6 months was the most common length of time.

There is also an extremely strong link between the lengths of time vendors have been selling *The Big Issue in the North* and how long they have had their tenancy. 78% of vendors who have had a tenancy for over 2 years have also been selling the magazine for over 2 years.

There is also a link to nationality – 69% of vendors who have had a tenancy for over 2 years are non-British.

Q3.12 Have you had any support in keeping the tenancy on?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	174	34	40	91	9
Landlord	16 9%	3 9%	1 3%	11 12%	1 11%
Floating support worker	28 16%	3 9%	9 23%	14 15%	2 22%
Homeless agency	16 9%	1 3%	3 8%	12 13%	- -
Not received support	116 67%	27 79%	28 70%	55 60%	6 67%

Note: Only answered by vendors who indicated that they have a council/HA tenancy or private rented tenancy in Q3.4

Missing=1

Two-thirds of vendors have not received any support in maintaining their tenancy. This is an improved figure on 2008 when 84% did not receive any support.

Of the three other options, floating support worker was the most accessed support. Other support identified was minimal but included drug workers (2) and *The Big Issue in the North* (3).

Why have you not received support?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	126	26	27	67	6
I don't know what support there is	23 18%	3 12%	6 22%	11 16%	3 50%
I tried to access support but can not	5 4%	1 4%	2 7%	2 3%	- -
I don't need support	85 67%	22 85%	18 67%	42 63%	3 50%
I am currently applying for support	13 10%	- -	1 4%	12 18%	- -

Note: This question should only have been answered by the 116 vendors who answered 'Not received support' in Q3.12 but there are some additional responses.

The majority of tenants said that they did not need any support and only 14% have actually tried or are trying to access support, suggesting there is maybe not a huge demand for it.

4. Health

This section looks at the general health of the vendors and their access to and use of health services.

Q4.1 Are you registered with a G.P?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	357	80	79	164	34
Yes	287 80%	66 83%	60 76%	136 83%	25 74%
No	70 20%	14 18%	19 24%	28 17%	9 26%

Missing=1

8 out of 10 vendors are registered with a GP. The results across cities and gender are very similar.

British vendors are only 7% more likely to be registered with a GP than non-British vendors. The gap has closed compared to last year's audit which recorded that British vendors were 24% more likely to be registered.

Q4.2 Do you have access to a dentist?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	357	80	79	164	34
Yes	123 34%	29 36%	20 25%	54 33%	20 59%
No	234 66%	51 64%	59 75%	110 67%	14 41%

Missing=1

Two-thirds of vendors are not registered with a dentist. Vendors in Sheffield are more likely to be registered than vendors from the other three cities.

British vendors are 13% more likely to be registered and older vendors are more likely to be registered than younger ones (46% of 45-64 year olds compared to 25% of 17-24 year olds). The results showed very little difference when analysed by gender.

Q4.3 Do you consider yourself to be healthy?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	344	78	74	159	33
Yes	281 82%	62 79%	55 74%	141 89%	23 70%
No	63 18%	16 21%	19 26%	18 11%	10 30%

Missing=14

Over four in five vendors consider themselves healthy. The percentage is greatest in Manchester. This is possibly because of the higher number of Romanian vendors in the city, as 87% of non-British vendors consider themselves to be healthy.

There are no significant differences between gender or age-group.

Q4.4 In your opinion, do you have a disability or long-term illness that limits your daily activity?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	354	80	77	163	34
Yes	104 29%	20 25%	30 39%	40 25%	14 41%
No	250 71%	60 75%	47 61%	123 75%	20 59%

Missing=4

29% of vendors have a restrictive disability or long-term illness, a figure which has fallen from 37% in 2008.

Liverpool and Sheffield have the highest percentage. It's an issue that affects men more than women (by 16%) and unsurprisingly older tenants more than younger (43% of 45-64 year-olds compared to just 11% of 17-24 year-olds).

However the biggest difference is revealed when analysed by nationality. Just 9% of non-British vendors have a disability compared to 48% of British.

Q4.5 How many times have you attended A&E in the last year?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	348	77	74	163	34
Never	237 68%	58 75%	49 66%	113 69%	17 50%
Less than 5 times	101 29%	19 25%	20 27%	48 29%	14 41%
More than 5 times	10 3%	- -	5 7%	2 1%	3 9%

Missing=10

The majority of vendors did not visit A&E in the last year. It is encouraging than while 32% did visit A&E, only 18% consider themselves to be unhealthy.

There are no significant differences in the results when analysed by gender, age of nationality.

Q4.6 How well do you think you have been treated by the following services?

GP Surgery

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	285	66	59	131	29
Well	194 68%	48 73%	33 56%	93 71%	20 69%
Satisfactory	78 27%	16 24%	24 41%	30 23%	8 28%
Poor	13 5%	2 3%	2 3%	8 6%	1 3%

Missing=73

Only 5% are dissatisfied with the service provided by the GP surgery. Vendors in Liverpool are less satisfied than those in the other cities.

Walk in centre

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	123	18	26	58	21
Well	64 52%	10 56%	11 42%	30 52%	13 62%
Satisfactory	45 37%	6 33%	10 38%	23 40%	6 29%
Poor	14 11%	2 11%	5 19%	5 9%	2 10%

Missing=235

Satisfaction with the treatment at the walk-in centre is slightly lower than with the GP surgery.

A&E Dept

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	131	33	32	47	19
Well	66 50%	12 36%	14 44%	26 55%	14 74%
Satisfactory	44 34%	11 33%	10 31%	19 40%	4 21%
Poor	21 16%	10 30%	8 25%	2 4%	1 5%

131 vendors registered a response, despite only 111 vendors saying they visited A&E in the last year. It is assumed that some vendors were judging their experience of more than a year ago.

Missing=227

Satisfaction with the treatment at A&E is lower still than with the GP surgery and walk-in centre with 16% describing treatment as poor. The fall is greatest in Leeds where 10 vendors registered a 'poor' response compared to two in the previous two questions.

Other

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	33	3	8	17	5
Well	19 58%	2 67%	6 75%	9 53%	2 40%
Satisfactory	12 36%	- -	2 25%	8 47%	2 40%
Poor	2 6%	1 33%	- -	- -	1 20%

Missing=325

The results follow a similar pattern with a very small number of vendors dissatisfied with other health services.

Q4.7 Have you ever been excluded from a medical service?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	272	54	51	150	17
Because you were homeless	18 7%	3 6%	8 16%	5 3%	2 12%
Because you were a drug/ alcohol user	36 13%	10 19%	14 27%	12 8%	- -
Because you are not British	16 6%	- -	9 18%	5 3%	2 12%
I have not felt excluded	213 78%	43 80%	25 49%	131 87%	14 82%

Missing=86

78% of vendors have not felt excluded from a medical service. In Liverpool the figure is just 49% with the main reason for exclusion being because of drug and alcohol use. Relatively few vendors felt excluded due to their nationality or being homeless.

In addition, three vendors cited existing medical conditions as reasons why they were excluded.

5. Criminal Activity

This section looks at criminal activity, current and before working for *The Big Issue in the North*. Most importantly it looks at the effect working for the magazine has had on crime levels.

Q5.1 Have you ever begged?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	350	80	75	161	34
Never	229 65%	52 65%	42 56%	121 75%	14 41%
Less than 3 months ago	17 5%	2 3%	5 7%	5 3%	5 15%
3-6 months ago	6 2%	1 1%	3 4%	2 1%	- -
7-12 months ago	14 4%	4 5%	4 5%	3 2%	3 9%
1-2 years	17 5%	5 6%	4 5%	6 4%	2 6%
More than 2 years ago	67 19%	16 20%	17 23%	24 15%	10 29%

Missing=8

The majority of vendors have never begged, the highest percentage being in Manchester.

Very few vendors have begged recently, which is probably linked to the fact that half of all vendors have been working for *The Big Issue in the North* for over two years.

86% of female vendors have never begged, compared with 58% of male vendors. 95% of non-British vendors have never begged compared to 41% of British vendors.

Q5.2 Were you involved in any other criminal activity before you started selling *The Big Issue in the North*?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	341	80	70	157	34
Yes	119 35%	33 41%	36 51%	31 20%	19 56%
No	222 65%	47 59%	34 49%	126 80%	15 44%

Missing=17

A third of vendors were involved in criminal activity, other than begging, before selling the magazine.

The overall figures are similar to 2008, as is the fact that vendors in Sheffield are more likely to have had a criminal past and vendors in Manchester less likely.

Again, this is linked to the large number of female Romanian vendors in Manchester. Only 13% of all female vendors and only 3% of all Romanian vendors have been involved in previous criminal activity.

Q5.3 What effect has selling *The Big Issue in the North* had on the amount of crime you commit?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	102	29	26	29	18
Commit a lot more now	-	-	-	-	-
Commit a bit more now	-	-	-	-	-
Had no effect	4 4%	2 7%	-	1 3%	1 6%
Commit a bit less now	3 3%	1 3%	2 8%	-	-
Commit a lot less now	95 93%	26 90%	24 92%	28 97%	17 94%

Note: Only answered by vendors who answered Yes to Q5.2

Missing=17

As with the 2008 audit, the results show a tremendously strong link between working for *The Big Issue in the North* and committing less crime.

No vendors at all believe that selling the magazine has led to increased criminal activity while 96% believe it has meant that they now commit less crime.

When asked why, 45 vendors said they were earning a legitimate income so they had no need to. 30 mentioned that they commit no crime now.

Other factors mentioned included: Selling the magazine gave them something else to do, they feel more relaxed and settled now they are in work and also that talking to members of the public regularly has made them less inclined to commit crimes against them.

Q5.4 Have you ever been in prison?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	218	55	61	77	25
Yes	125 57%	35 64%	33 54%	38 49%	19 76%
No	93 43%	20 36%	28 46%	39 51%	6 24%

Note: Only answered by vendors who answered Yes to Q5.2 although many more have answered than this.

As many more vendors answered this question than were instructed, the results do not give us a true picture of how many vendors who had previously committed crime had spent time in prison.

But cross tabulating this question with Q5.2 shows us that 86% of vendors who were involved in criminal activity had been to prison. The figure in 2008 was 88%.

Q5.5 When you were released what support were you offered?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	115	31	31	35	18
Housing	24 21%	7 23%	7 23%	4 11%	6 33%
Re-location	8 7%	1 3%	2 6%	2 6%	3 17%
No support offered	83 72%	24 77%	23 74%	26 74%	10 56%
Substance misuse	19 17%	1 3%	3 10%	7 20%	8 44%
Employment	3 3%	- -	1 3%	- -	2 11%

Note: Only answered by vendors who answered Yes to Q5.4

Vendors were able to give more than one response, so percentages in each column do not add up to 100%

Missing=10

Only 28% of vendors coming out of prison were offered any support. This compares with 37% in 2008. Housing and substance misuse were the most common forms of support.

Q5.6 What support would have helped on your release?

	Base	Office			
		Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Sheffield
Base	109	31	28	35	15
Housing	84 77%	23 74%	23 82%	29 83%	9 60%
Re-location	14 13%	- -	5 18%	6 17%	3 20%
No support offered	11 10%	3 10%	3 11%	2 6%	3 20%
Substance misuse	35 32%	10 32%	12 43%	9 26%	4 27%
Employment	31 28%	8 26%	14 50%	5 14%	4 27%

Note: Only answered by vendors who answered Yes to Q5.4

Vendors were able to give more than one response, so percentages in each column do not add up to 100%

Missing=16

Over three-quarters of vendors would have liked housing support on release from prison, a number far higher than actually received this support. Support around substance misuse and employment were also in demand.

Other support mentioned which vendors felt would have been helpful included social/life skills, benefits advice and financial assistance.

6. Comments on the audit

About a quarter of vendors chose to add a comment at the end of the questionnaire. Most of these commented on the audit itself with the vast majority expressing that the audit was a good idea and that completing it was a positive experience. Typical comments were:

"The audit is a good idea as it allows me to express my opinion on services I access and gets my situation updated."

"I'm very happy that the audit takes place and think it is reassuring that the organisation does it."

Just one vendor said the audit was a negative experience, the reason being that they felt that all surveys are pointless as no improvement comes of them.

Some offered suggestions to improve the audit. They were:

- Vendors should be able to feedback on the magazine content and layout.
- Audit should be done more regularly and used to inform the public as well as highlighting any specific problems.

Other than commenting on the audit, vendors also used the opportunity to reinforce messages shown elsewhere in the survey.

Many vendors commented on the role of *The Big Issue in the North*, nearly all positively. The main points commented on were that it offers support and stops them committing crime. Examples were:

"The Big Issue is what's keeping me out of jail."

"The Big Issue in the North has helped me to stop committing crime, stabilise myself, get a home, an income and support a family. I now have plans for setting up my own business in the next 3-6 months."

A handful offered suggestions as to how the service offered by *The Big Issue in the North* could be improved. Ideas included:

- More publicity about what *The Big Issue in the North* does for people, including talks in schools to help prevent abuse and embarrassment.
- Support around starting a business.
- Concern that some vendors may see selling *The Big Issue in the North* as a better option than becoming educated or skilled as it provides an income without having to take these steps.

Two vendors also took the opportunity to say that they were unhappy with a recent rise in the cover price of the magazine.