



THE BIG ISSUE IN THE

# north

**& The Harvey Project**  
**impact report**  
**April 2013 - March 2014**

# introduction

The Big Issue in the North publishes a weekly magazine, distributed across the north of England and sold for profit on the streets by people with limited means of earning another income. The Big Issue in the North Trust (registered charity no.1056041) provides support to help vendors to improve their lives.

**The Big Issue in the North** manages the supported housing at The Harvey Project and Belmont House, and manages Community Voice which aims to give service-users a real say in drug and alcohol services in Liverpool.

The Big Issue in the North offered **12** valuable editorial placements to people interested in magazine writing and production.

*“From the first task to the last, every piece I contributed went towards the publication in a meaningful way. No forms, no endless hot drinks, no trivial tasks purely there to keep me occupied. I found the office to be a lot more accommodating than what I’d expected out of a popular magazine, which aided in how productive I was. The variety of tasks I was set, from reporting on an event to writing reviews to editing, meant that I undertook a number of challenges I hadn’t previously experienced. Overall, I got a lot out of the time I spent at The Big Issue in The North.”* Fin



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@bigissuenorth

# Our Vendors

**From April 2013 – March 2014:**

Our average weekly circulation was **12,698**, slightly up on the year before.

We had an average of **271** vendors selling the magazine every week.

## **We supported:**

**64** vendors into secure accommodation and **60** into work, volunteering, education or training. We also dealt with:

**700** housing enquiries, helping vendors get the information they needed.

**471** enquiries about employment, training or education services.

**300** requests to help vendors sort out their benefits or tax.

**506** requests for help to access health service issues.

**96** requests for help to access drug or alcohol services.

**81%** of the vendors said key aspects of their life like health, housing, money and skills had improved while selling The Big Issue in the North.



*“I left high school in Cornwall when I was 15, I had no qualifications and found school hard because of hearing problems I was born with. I found it hard to read and write so I could only get work at travelling fairgrounds, putting up the roller coasters and taking them down.*

*After an accident when I was 19, I couldn't work anymore and had to sleep rough and beg. I came to Liverpool and started selling The Big Issue in the North, and when the staff were doing my assessment they saw me struggling with reading and writing.*

*They helped me with classes to learn what I've missed and now I can read books, I like the James Bond novels. I also do the creative writing classes and had my poetry and thoughts published in a magazine. I've also got a First Aid certificate, which gives me confidence out on the streets.”* Morley

# supported housing

**Through the Harvey Project we provide 24-hour supported accommodation in self contained flats.**

The Harvey Project provided a place to live for **43** people last year.

**15** tenants were male and **28** were female.

**100%** of tenants had complex needs.

**23** rough sleepers were taken in from the street at Harvey.

**622** key sessions were held, where service staff work one to one with tenants to put their support plans into action.

**40** of our tenants were engaged, for at least 12 weeks, in a treatment programme.

**16** of our tenants became drug free.


**4** female service users ended their involvement in sex work.

**100%** of tenants were supported to gain greater independent living skills.

**Belmont House provides five fully furnished, self contained one bed flats and studio apartments.**

It gives vulnerable people a permanent home and supports them to deal with issues like claiming and managing housing benefits, and managing fuel supplies and bills.

Between July 2013 to March 2014, **6** people were supported to maintain a tenancy and 2 people moved from the Harvey Project into Belmont House.



*“I’ve been living at the Harvey Project since January 2014. I’m an alcoholic and this has affected my life for almost twenty years. I used to work in the Civil Service, but I started drinking in 1995 when my marriage failed. Drink has played every part of badness in my life. I lost my youngest daughter through it. It has led to homelessness, hostels, prison, more hostels. I even tried to take an overdose and was sectioned because of it.*

*Harvey is a wonderful place. The staff are remarkable. The help I get from staff everyday, twenty four seven is amazing! I can go and see them – night or day – and sometimes I speak to them for hours. Harvey is the ideal place if you really want to change your life. Staff members have been helping me in so many ways! They’ve helped me access other services, find loads of activities to keep me busy, deal with my drinking, get back in touch with my family and now they are helping me find somewhere to live.*

*When I was drunk, I was really horrible. I even robbed a staff member’s handbag! But staff at the Harvey still wanted to support me. The way they’ve been treating me is magnificent. I don’t know where I’d be without them!”*



# community voice

Community Voice provided a platform for **230** service users to share their views on drug and alcohol services in Merseyside.

This year, **24** service user volunteers took part in the **Big Voice** project. They visited **31** different services and got **222** people to give their views on the homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health and criminal justice services they use.

We trained this group in personal skills, personal development, how to conduct interviews and be on an interview panel and what procurement and commissioning is. They then formed a board that has been involved in the commissioning of some projects funded by the National Lottery. Their research will help improve the delivery of services critical to people with multiple and complex needs.



*“Going out and doing the surveys with people has got me out and about, and I’ve been offered paid work in one of the services. Big Voice has given me the insight and knowledge I needed and has definitely played a major role in me getting work. I’ve finally been given a second chance.”*



Big Voice Volunteers

**The  
BigLife**  
**group**  
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Big Issue in the North is part of The Big Life group of social businesses and charities

