



BIG ISSUE NORTH

THE INDEPENDENT STREET PAPER | WORKING NOT BEGGING

Impact report 2015

Introduction

The **Big Issue in the North** publishes a weekly magazine, **Big Issue North**, distributed across the north of England and sold for profit on the streets by people excluded from other means of earning an income.

The **Big Issue in the North Trust** (registered charity no. 1056041) helps some of the most marginalised people by providing support to help vendors improve their lives.

The **Big Issue in the North** manages our supported housing – **The Harvey Project** and **Belmont House** – and this year, we will extend our supported accommodation in Liverpool, opening five further flats at the Kremlin.

We also manage **Community Voice**, which gives service users a real say in drug and alcohol services in Liverpool.



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THE BIG ISSUE IN THE
northtrust

BigLife
Homes

CommunityVoice 



Editorial Placements

“My two weeks at Big Issue North have been extremely enjoyable, interesting, challenging and educational. The team have been friendly, helpful, kind and patient.

I have had the opportunity to write news articles, make telephone interviews, proof read, sub-edit, write reviews and write Q&As and synopses.

Overall, it has been a valuable and fascinating experience.” – Rachael Roberts



Big Issue North offered **5** valuable editorial placements to people interested in magazine writing and production.



“Thank you for your time this week and allowing me to come to Big Issue North as part of a placement for work experience. You’re a great team of journalists and are very professional and easy to get on with. I would definitely recommend it to other up and coming journalists.” – Karl Morris

Big Issue North contributed **29** articles to the International Network of Street Papers’ news service, published in **28** street papers across the world.



Our Vendors

From April 2014 to March 2015 our average weekly circulation was **12,001**, and we had an average of **262** vendors selling the magazine every week.

We supported **42** vendors into accommodation, **44** into work, volunteering, education or training and **49** to access drug or alcohol treatment.

We also dealt with:

- **590** housing enquiries.
- **390** requests to help vendors sort out their benefits and tax.
- **468** requests for help to access health services.
- **153** requests for help to access drug or alcohol services.

I'd been sofa surfing for years but found myself with nowhere to stay. I walked the streets all night and went to speak to a Big Issue North support worker in the morning.

He walked to me to Housing Options, helped me through their assessment. That night I got emergency housing, and three days later I had a flat.

*Big Issue North has done a lot for me. I didn't even know what I was entitled to. I don't think I could have done it without them. I have much more confidence now and the only thing I need to work towards now is a permanent job. – **Mark***

The Big Sell

In February, **Big Issue North** participated in Vendor Week Big Sell for the International Network of Street Papers (INSP) during which **22** business people, musicians, MPs and other well known people from throughout our region spent an hour selling the magazine alongside regular vendors.

Guest sellers included David Blunkett MP, Dan Haggis from Liverpool band The Wombats, and the Bishop of Manchester David Walker.

The week raised **£11,000** for INSP, enabling them to support and develop more than **110** street papers in **35** countries, which create employment and training opportunities for homeless and unemployed people.

During Vendor Week Big Sell, we gained **100** new followers on social media, **1.6** million people were reached through mentions, and **750,000** through retweets.



David Walker,
Bishop of Manchester



Dan Haggis from
The Wombats



David Blunkett, MP



Ian Munro, Chief Exec, New Charter Housing Association

Community Voice

231

Community Voice provided a platform for **231** service users to share their views on drug and alcohol services in Merseyside.

This year, **14** service users were recruited as volunteers, to take part in service evaluations, facilitate service user feedback meetings and work in the office. **1** volunteer secured employment within the project.

14

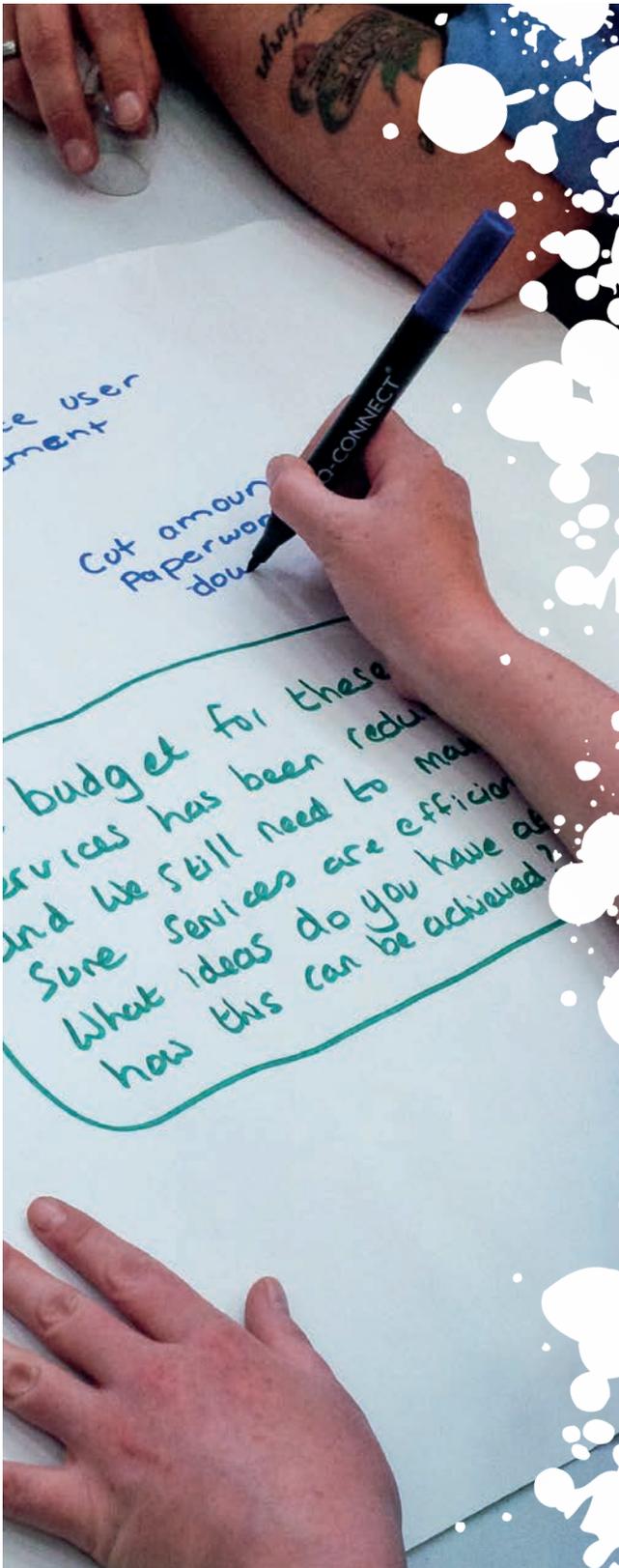
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Community Voice held **8** meetings in local service venues to enable people to give feedback in their local communities. Community Voice also undertook **4** service evaluations.

Altogether, Community Voice engaged with service users on **600** occasions, which including participation in monthly meetings, wellness assessments over the phone, support in benefit appeals, and volunteering opportunities.

600





I have been involved with Community Voice for six years now. I met one of their outreach workers while I was in detox.

She helped me sort out my benefits for when I leave detox to help me stay on the road of recovery rather than relapse due to the stress of having to start from nothing again.

Soon after I became part of the focus group, and I am now a Service User Involvement Officer. I think it's important that services and commissioners listen to the people using the services rather than dictating what people need and what kind of services to offer.

I want my voice and my opinion to be heard to prevent useful services from disappearing; for example, access to complementary therapies could become almost impossible.

Emma

CommunityVoice 

Supported Housing

The Harvey Project provides 24-hour supported accommodation in 20 self-contained flats across two sites, one which provides support to single men and couples and one which is a women only building.

The Harvey Project received **308** referrals and provided a place to live for **55** people in total last year.

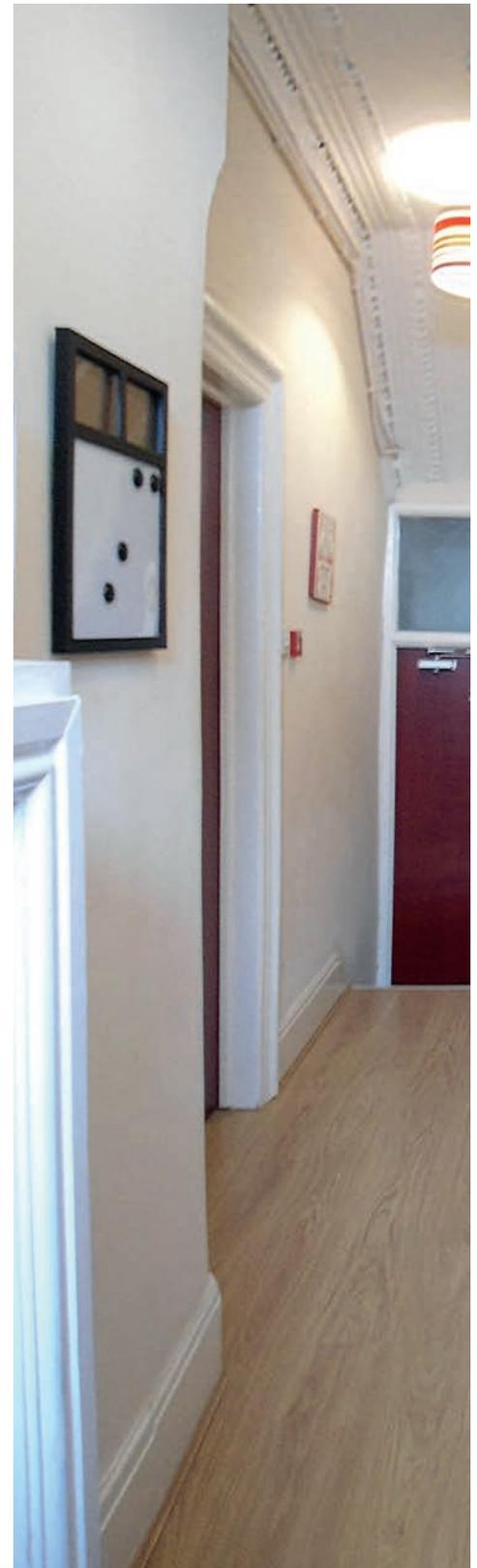
Last year's tenants included **23** men, **28** women and **2** couples.

- **100%** of residents had complex needs including substance misuse, mental health problems, long-term homelessness and a history of offending.
- **27** rough sleepers were taken in from the street at Harvey.
- **100%** of residents were registered with a GP.
- **693** key work sessions were held.
- **28** residents reported improvements in Quality of Life.
- **16** residents moved on into their own independent accommodation.
- **18** residents stayed drug free.

We made nearly **400** referrals to other services within Liverpool to ensure that residents get the support they need.

Our accommodation at Belmont House offers a more independent option to single people and couples, with one-to-one support from a Housing Outreach Worker.

This year, **8** people were accommodated in Belmont House. **3** tenants moved on into their own independent accommodation.





“When I first came to the Harvey Project, I had a list of issues as long as my arm.

I’d call myself a binge drinker, and I’ve got a history with cocaine. On top of that, I’ve struggled with my mental health, and have attempted suicide in the past. I also occasionally work as a sex worker.

I’m in the female-only accommodation at the Harvey Project; I get so much support. My key worker meets me regularly to help me out mentally and emotionally.

I drink more when I’m feeling down, so the staff here often try to get me to come to the office and talk about how I’m feeling, so I don’t start drinking again. Every week I meet with a team to make a plan to help me, and I get support to stay sober from Addaction

My eldest daughter comes to visit me at the Harvey quite regularly, which is great. She’s a good influence on me.

I feel like I’m managing well now, and the staff say that I’m ready to move on from the Harvey Project. I’m working with them to fill out a form to live with my daughter again. - Jenny”



TheHarveyProject

The logo for The BigLife group, featuring the text "The BigLife group" in white and orange, enclosed within a hand-drawn orange circle.

The
BigLife
group

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