

FRIENDS OF BIG ISSUE NORTH

AUTUMN 2017

"I'M UNRECOGNISABLE FROM A YEAR AGO!"

Big Issue North supports those who are homeless, vulnerably housed, or have little means of earning an income.

When they sell the magazine, vendors also receive support from our staff to help them make positive changes to their lives. As well as providing day-to-day support, service coordinators meet with each active vendor twice a year to do a more formal review of the support they need.

Alex, who sells in Leeds city centre, is one vendor who has found this support makes a real difference to his life.

Alex said: "Growing up, I couldn't fit in with anything. I found out I was dyslexic when I was a teenager and, hand-in-hand with that, that big bottle of alcohol came. And then the death of my grandparents, the split-up of a relationship – it all just came crashing down and I thought, right, I'm just keeping that bottle as my best friend now. And I ran away.

"I started off working on the fairs. I worked at V festival. If you were there between 2000 and 2005 then I guarantee that I would have spun you on the waltzer. Then I met a traveller and I went off around Europe. I've seen some amazing things and some things I never ever want to see again. But it all became about alcohol.

"One day, I had a brainwave. I thought, I'm fed up of this, I'm 40 years old. I gave up the alcohol last year



Leeds vendor Alex with his dog Muttley

and put myself in a hospital. It was difficult getting the right support. I had to keep turning up at the hospital, nearly killing myself through drinking. They would keep me in for a few days and then send me back out."

Speaking about what made him come to Big Issue North, Alex said, "I was caught on the streets begging and I thought, right, this is the moment that I can make a change. I started selling the magazine, and now, half past seven every morning – boom! I'm out of the house.

"The changes I have made over the past few months have been ground-breaking. I'm feeling so much happier, and have so much confidence. Honestly, I'm unrecognisable from a year ago!"

After working with our team to identify ways to help him to build his self-esteem, Alex has spent time volunteering at Hollybush, his local conservation centre.

And, in September, after help to apply for the course from our team, Alex will embark on a new challenge, as he starts a college course in painting and decorating!

If you would like to support vendors like Alex to move on in their lives, please consider making a donation to our Trust.

Letter from Fay

Welcome to the Autumn 2017 edition of our newsletter.

As you will read inside, this summer has seen us get out on the road to raise awareness and donations for Big Issue North Trust.

All of our fundraising activity is done to help our vendors change their lives for the better, and that wouldn't be possible without your donations, so thank you for your ongoing support.

Fay Selvan, Big Issue North Chief Exec



AROUND THE REGIONS



In **LIVERPOOL**, we attended two festivals to help our fundraising efforts, Africa Oye and Hope & Glory, where we unveiled our bespoke temporary tattoos!

We delivered a talk to Liverpool University's Criminology and Security students from the Singapore Institute of Technology as part of their Overseas Immersion Programme.

In **SHEFFIELD**, we attended the Roma Network Forum, hosted by Migration Yorkshire to gain further insight into how we can support our Roma vendors.

In **LEEDS**, we hosted an office visit from Joanna (see below) and hosted two students for work experience! See page 4 for their stories).

Leeds office staff delivered a talk on Big Issue North's positive impact on the wider community to Women's Institute members in Linton, North Yorkshire,.

In **MANCHESTER**, Big Issue North Director, Emma Eaton, delivered a talk alongside city centre vendor, Chris, who gave an account of his experiences of being a vendor, to the Royal College of Nursing.

Victoria Station vendor, Stefan, kick-started the opening event for Manchester International Festival, which was live streamed on the BBC!



MANCHESTER DAY PARADE

On 18 June, Big Issue North vendors took part in the Manchester Day parade.

Holding extra resonance in the wake of May's Manchester Arena attacks, the day was an opportunity to display the city's diverse communities. Big Issue North vendors were thrilled to be involved, representing those people in the city with no fixed abode and with little means of earning an income.

Co-ordinated by the arts group, Walk The Plank, Big Issue North worked with artist Enya Koster to create a design in line with this year's theme of 'magic'.

After talking to vendors, we decided on the concept of being King for a Day. Staff and vendors dressed as playing cards.

Vendors took it in turns to sit on a throne, complete with a wheel of fortune on the back representing luck and

changing circumstances, and be carried along the parade.

Feedback from vendors after the parade was really positive; one vendor, participating after completing a detox session, said that they hadn't had so much fun sober in a long time.

City Centre vendors, Tommy, Keith & Chris, said: "Today was a top day. We really enjoyed supporting Manchester and having fun. We felt that we were getting the message out there to people. We felt appreciated."

With 100,000 people lining the route through central Manchester to cheer participants on, Big Issue North vendors received quite the welcome!

We're so proud of those who took part in the event and are grateful for the reception of the crowds to our vendors.

Joanna shares her vendor experience

In our previous newsletter, we shared the story of Joanna Ripley.

After losing her father Allan in December 2014, the Skipton resident is continuing his legacy of kindness by selling her laughter as a 99p ringtone!

Kind-hearted Joanna decided that, instead of just fundraising to reach the £5,000 target for Big Issue North, she wanted to find out how our vendors

work, what they enjoy about working at the magazine, and what challenges they face on the streets. So, we arranged for her to spend a day with our Leeds team, meeting vendors both in the office and on the streets.

After her day with us, Joanna wrote about her thoughts, saying: "One of the big pieces of learning for me is that we must challenge negative perceptions and prejudices about the vendors."

To read first-hand how Joanna found her experience with our vendors, visit bigissuenorth.com/our-work/our-news.

From bake sales to skydives, if you're fundraising to support us, please get in touch to see how we can help!

Email fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com to see how we can support and publicise your venture.

LIFESAVING TRAINING FOR VENDORS

Manchester vendors are being trained in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillator use by local community group, Chorlton Lifesavers.

The training sessions are held at Big Issue North's Manchester office, and are led by former nurse, Catherine Brownhill.

Cath said: "Coronary Heart Disease is the biggest single cause of death in the UK. Having CPR skills would be excellent for the vendors,

and this is endorsed by the Resuscitation Council and the British Heart Foundation, who say that we should teach all citizens from school children upwards in basic life support.

"Having the training may also increase an individual's confidence and self-esteem. It also serves as a useful addition to lifelong skills on a CV for job applications."

Jenny Slee, who makes up the final component of Chorlton Lifesavers explains how this unique partnership

was formed: "When we had the unveiling of the first inner cabinet defibrillator in Chorlton, we met a Big Issue North vendor. I bought a magazine from him and joked that if no one turned up to the opening that he could be a part of the rent-a-crowd! My colleague Cath got speaking with him and we thought that we would open up training to Big Issue North vendors.

The first to complete the course were Congleton vendors, Amar & Decembre. Speaking about their first

training session, they said: "We have been learning about what to do to help people if they have problems with their heart. We have learned how to do compressions and how to use the defibrillator. Now we would both feel confident about helping someone who collapsed if we were out selling the magazine."

While it's not nice to think about this sort of situation occurring, should it arise on a street where a trained vendor is present, they could one day save someone's life.

Spectacular gig brings street paper summit to a close

On Thursday, 24 August, singer-songwriter Frank Turner played to a packed crowd at the O2 Manchester Ritz, to mark the end of the Global Street Paper Summit.

More than 1,500 people came to the sold out concert to hear Turner sing songs from his extensive back catalogue, ably supported by two bands, London-based glam rockers Felix Hagan and the Family, and Bolton up-and-comers Our Fold.

The event, named Street Noise, was put on to raise money for Big Issue North Trust and INSP (international Network of Street Papers), with all profits from ticket sales, merchandise and on-the-night donations going to the two charities.

Among the thousands there were more than 120 people representing 57 street papers in 28 countries. These people had been in Manchester for the week at a conference that

allowed people working on publications such as ours to share ideas.

The summit was organised by INSP, and hosted by Big Issue North. Through a mixture of talks and workshops, delegates were able to learn more about the challenges and opportunities for street papers in other parts of the globe, and go back to their own papers inspired and ready to make positive change for vendors and readers.

VENDORS GIVE BACK

Big Issue North vendors in Sheffield have started a charitable initiative, supporting local causes within their community.

This quarter, Sheffield Children's Hospital is the nominated charity, selected by city centre vendor, Sam. When asked why he selected the charity, Sam said: "I have young children and I really like that it's a local charity. They do great work."

Sheffield office manager, Ben Stevenson, said: "The idea to collect money for a charity was devised by one of our vendors, and it was great to see how enthusiastically the idea was embraced by all vendors at our last forum."

Cheryl Davidson, Community Fundraising Manager at Sheffield Children's Hospital, said: "It's so heart-warming to see the vendors coming together to fundraise for us, despite their own struggles. Every penny raised helps young patients face a better, healthier future."

We will be providing regular updates on social media, so make sure you're following us!



CARD READER UPDATE

In the last newsletter, we featured York vendor, Sin Bad, and his recent card reader purchase. This was inspired by a nationwide decline in cash sales, due to the increase in people carrying plastic. Since then, we have piloted the card reader scheme with vendors in our Leeds office.

This was made possible by funds donated in memory of late York vendor, Pete Toulson, coordinated by friends of Pete and supporters of Big Issue North, John and Julie Mcgall.

One vendor trialling the cashless payment scheme is Simon, who sells the magazine in Harrogate. He gave us an update on how he has found using his card



reader. "It's been great, I've made 25 sales to people who normally wouldn't have bought the magazine, I'm so happy! But now I know who's telling me porkies when they say they don't have any change!"

Have you bought a copy of the magazine by card? Let us know your experience!

Youngsters gain work and life experience

Dan Loveday, from Roundhay Sixth Form, spent a week with us at our Leeds office, gaining experience in media and communications.

After spending time with us, Dan reflected on his experience: "It has been a really enlightening experience for me, in which I have been incredibly lucky to work with truly lovely people who have balanced their already tricky jobs with helping me gain valuable understanding of a new environment."

At the Sheffield office, we've opened our doors to welcome Politics and International Relations

student, Thea Kerwick. Thea has just embarked on the start of her dissertation and is collating research working with Big Issue North vendors.

Speaking of her experience thus far, Thea said: "There's a lot of good will from Big Issue North as an organisation, but there's also a lack of resources. Obviously, with the impact of austerity, things are going to be difficult, but with the support that's provided from Big Issue North, you can really progress with your life."

Hear more from Dan and Thea at bigissuenorth.com/our-work/our-news.

How to donate

We are so grateful to everyone who donates to us, if you haven't donated already, here are some ways to support our vendors.

To set up a standing order to support our vendors please fill in the form enclosed with the newsletter or call 0161 848 2420.



You can also donate by mobile phone, just text BITN17 and the amount you wish to donate e.g. £20 to 70070



Please make out donations by cheque out to Big Issue North Trust and send it to 463 Stretford Road, Manchester, M16 9AB.



For more ways to raise funds for us please contact fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com

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Starting Christmas shopping?
Check out our online shop, for:

- Tote bags
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- Back issues and subscriptions

All profits from our shop go back into Big Issue North, ensuring we provide a first class service for our vendors, supporting people to earn an income and change their lives.

shop.bigissuenorth.com

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