



BIG ISSUE NORTH

THE INDEPENDENT STREET PAPER | WORKING NOT BEGGING



VENDOR AUDIT 2016





About Our Vendors :

	2016	2001
MALE	61%	88%
FEMALE	39%	12%
18-20 YEARS OLD	11%	7%
21-30 YEARS OLD	23%	48%
31-5- YEARS OLD	52%	43%
OVER 50 YEARS OLD	15%	2%

VENDOR AUDIT - 2016

Big Issue North gives people with limited other means, the opportunity to earn an income. The people who sell Big Issue North may not be able to access mainstream employment for many reasons; their mental health, drug or alcohol dependence, lack of skills, homelessness or because they are new to the country.

In 2016 Big Issue North was sold by over 260 people at any one time in towns and cities across the North of England. Fifteen years ago (2001) there were 356 vendors selling the magazine at any one time; 96 vendors more than today.

242 vendors completed the vendor audit in 2016 from Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool and Sheffield. Of the vendors who completed the audit, 42% were based in Manchester, 35% in Liverpool, 11 % in Leeds, and 13% in Sheffield.

In the last fifteen years the demography of our vendors has changed dramatically. This is largely driven by the decrease in Heroin use and the migration of Roma people from Romania. In 2016 only 25% of our vendors described themselves as British, (compared to 95% in 2001). 68% are Romanian and the remaining 8% of vendors comprise nationalities including Bulgarian, Greek, Polish, Slovakian, Sri Lankan, Spanish and Zimbabwean.

The change in our vendors is also reflected in their gender and age. Of our non-British vendors the proportion who are female increases to 51% and compared to fifteen years ago we have more younger and older vendors, and less 21-30 year olds.

LANGUAGE

In 2016, 73% of vendors do not speak English as a first language, and of those 93% say that selling the magazine improves their English skills

FAMILY

85% of vendors have contact with their family, (this is 95% of non-British vendors and 58% of British vendors)

BACKGROUND

Overall 7% of vendors said they had been in care during childhood (this is 2% of non British vendors and 22% of British vendors). The British figure is similar to the overall 2001 figure, 29%, when the vast majority of vendors were British. In 2016 7.5% of all vendors have been in the armed forces (6.7% of non-British vendors and 10.2% of British vendors), 17% of all vendors have been in prison (2.8% of non-British vendors, and 61% of British vendors).

Selling Big Issue North

Why people started to sell Big Issue North

To earn an income – 93%

For something to do - 28% (41% of British vendors)

For social interaction – 23%

“ to earn money, ensure our children have all they need and are happy”

“to provide for my family and take care of myself”

“ to earn an income and not have to beg”

LENGTH OF TIME PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SELLING THE MAGAZINE FOR

	2016	2001
LESS THAN A YEAR	30%	45%
1-2 YEARS	13%	18%
2-5 YEARS	22%	26%
5 PLUS YEARS	34% 28% OF NON-BRITISH 54% OF BRITISH	48%

HOW MANY DAYS VENDORS SELL IN A WEEK

46% of vendors sell for 4-5 days
35% vendors sell for 6 – 7 days per week
19% vendors sell for 2-3 days a week

WHERE PEOPLE SELL BIG ISSUE NORTH

40% vendors sell the magazine in city centres and 60% in out of town areas. This is not significantly different to 2001, when slightly more vendors sold in city centres (54% in city centres and 46% in out of town areas). This reflects that Roma vendors have less complex issues and are able to organise to travel to out of town to sell.

VENDORS SAY SELLING THE MAGAZINE HELPS THEM BY:

Providing a way to earn an income – 88%
Selling the magazine increases their confidence and/or their motivation – 58%
Helps improved budgeting skills – 23%
Provides a structure to the day - 31%
Help signpost to services 25%
Get support from staff to make changes 22%.

In 2001 76% of vendors said that selling the magazine helped increase their confidence.



MOVING ON AND EMPLOYMENT

54% of vendors see themselves moving on from selling Big Issue North, 45% describe themselves as happy selling the magazine at this point in time.

EMPLOYMENT

34 % of vendors have previously been in employment [17% of non British vendors, 84% of British vendors]. The most common types of work people have done include factory/warehouse work, driving and being a chef/cooking. This compares to 84% in 2001, where most vendors had previously worked in manual unskilled jobs.

WHEN VENDORS LAST HAD A JOB (FOR THOSE WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY WORKED):

	2016	2001
In last year	18%	15%
Between 1 and 3 years ago	20%	30%
Over 3 years ago	62%	56%

Interestingly, more vendors had recent experience of work (in the last three years) in 2001 than today. [Figures for 2016 broken down by nationality in same order as table non-British 37%, 23%, 40%: British 8%, 18%, 74%]. However, anecdotally, the Roma vendors would not report casual work labouring or driving as a 'job', so the figures for 2016 may under report this.

BARRIERS STOPPING PEOPLE FROM MOVING ON FROM SELLING BIG ISSUE NORTH:

	2016	2001
Language Barriers	40%	
Lack of qualifications	39%	25%
Finances	23%	
Lack of confidence	19%	
Lack of motivation	18%	
Physical health	11%	30%
Mental health	5%	27%
Childcare	3%	

Not all the same categories were recorded in the Vendor Audit in 2001, but it is clear that whilst some of the barriers remain (mental health, physical health and lack of qualifications), new barriers specific to Roma vendors, are apparent today – Language, lack of finance and childcare.

EDUCATION

Only 28% of vendors have formal qualifications, although 50% of British vendors have. These include GCSE's, NVQS and specific qualifications in driving, painting and decorating, food hygiene, and mechanics. This compares to 57% of vendors in 2001 having qualifications. This reflects that Roma vendors have had less access to education and training than British vendors.

ASPIRATIONS

People cited a range of jobs that they would like to move on into – this included cleaning, warehouse/factory work, painting/decorating, shop/retail work

WHAT TRAINING PEOPLE NEED TO GET THE JOBS THEY'D LIKE

People were very open to accessing training specifying particular training needs including getting CSCS cards, driving licences and ESOL/English language courses. People also highlighted they would like more support around CV writing and job search.

15% of vendors who answered this question stated they would like to do any training – showing a commitment to development and a possible lack of understanding/knowledge of the specific training needed to progress into employment.

PROBLEMS VENDORS FACE

PROBLEMS VENDORS ARE EXPERIENCING	All Vendors - 2016	British - 2016	Non-British - 2016	All Vendors - 2001
Drugs	9%	34%	1%	61%
Accommodation	12%	24%	8%	54%
Finances	36%	41%	35%	53%
Employment	26%	25%	28%	53%
Physical health problems	18%	44%	9%	35%
Eating Well	7%	22%	2%	
mental health problems	9%	34%	1%	25%
Education/training	9%	15%	7%	26%
Alcohol misuse	4%	14%	1%	16%
Committing crime		0%	0%	7%
victim of crime	4%	7%	3%	
Gambling	2%	8%	1%	
Language barrier	23%	2%	30%	
No, or restricted, right to work	0.41%	0%	1%	
none of the above	36%	12%	43%	
other	4%	8%	1%	

The problems that vendors face have also changed over the years. Only 9% of vendors now report having a problem with drugs (compared to 61% in 2001) and only 12% report having a problem with accommodation (compared to 54% in 2001). This reflects that Roma communities often share accommodation and support each other when they move to this country.

HOUSING STATUS Are all Big Issue North vendors homeless?

Vendors do not have to be homeless to sell Big Issue North – selling the magazine gives people with few other means, the opportunity to earn an income. As can be seen below, the number of vendors who are sleeping rough or staying with friends/family has decreased since 2001, even amongst the British vendors.

WHERE VENDORS LIVE

- 71% of all vendors live in private rented accommodation, this increases to 83% of non-British vendors
- 34% of British vendors live in local authority or housing association accommodation, and only 1% of non-British vendors live in LA/housing association accommodation.
- 13% are currently living with friends/family. This compares to 25% in 2001.
- 2% of all vendors were rough sleeping at the time of the audit – this increase

to 5% amongst British vendors. This compares to 13% in 2001.

WHERE VENDORS SLEPT THE NIGHT BEFORE THE AUDIT

13% of vendors have slept rough in the last 12 months (compared to 75% in 2001), and 26% of vendors at some point in their lives. Reasons for rough sleeping included hostels being full, having no connection to the local area, having rent arrears, being in a couple, and having no ID.

Of those people who slept rough 63% did not try to get a place in a hostel (compared to 69% in 2001).

The length of time people have slept rough for varies from a day to a few months, a few years and in a handful of instances several years. In 2001 46% had slept rough under 7 nights and 52% between one week and one year.

HOW VENDORS BECAME HOMELESS?

Of those Vendors who categorise themselves as homeless (don't have their

- own tenancy) ,
- 36% became homeless as a result of being new to the country
 - 25% as a result of relationship problems,
 - 7% as a result of drug/alcohol issues,
 - 5% after leaving prison

WHEN VENDORS BECAME HOMELESS

64% of vendors have a tenancy (27% British vendors, 77% non British vendors).

Of vendors without their own tenancies:

- 27% have been homeless for more than 10 years,
- 27% have been homeless between 5 – 10 years,
- 20% between 3 and 5 years,
- 5% for 1-2 years and
- 20% for under 1 year.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- 15% (31% in 2001) of vendors believe they have a long term illness/health condition which limits their daily activity – this increases to 44% within responses from British vendors. Long term illness/health conditions include metal health issues, arthritis, diabetes and problems with legs.
- 12% (25% in 2001) of vendors have a mental health problem
- 14% (61% I 2001) of vendors are drug users. Of these 44% use heroin, 36% use crack cocaine, 33% use cannabis and 25% prescribed methadone. 89% of vendors who use drugs started using them over 10 years ago.

- 4% (16% 2001) of vendors state they have a problem with alcohol – this increases to 12% of British vendors .

VENDORS USE A RANGE OF OTHER SERVICES INCLUDING:

- 33% of vendors who use drug/alcohol are engaged with drug/alcohol services
- 85% of vendors are registered with a GP
- 58% of vendors are not registered with a dentist
- 19% of vendors have used a foodbank and 25% have used soup kitchens, within British vendors this increases to 47% who have used foodbank and 61% soup kitchen.
- 29% of vendors have used a food bank and/or soup kitchen.

ID AND BANK ACCOUNTS

- 48% of vendors (46% non British) don't have a birth certificate and 52% (46% non British) don't have a passport.
- 30% vendors (35% non British) have no form of bank account
- 17% of vendors (16% non British) have a driving licence
- 21% (19% non British) have a medical card
- 71% (67% non British) have an NI number
- 22% have verification of self-employment (24% non British)
- 58% have a European Identity card (78% non British vendors)

CRIME

- 13% of vendors were involved in criminal activity before selling Big issue North, of British vendors this number increases to 47%. 64% of vendors who have been involved in criminal activity say that since selling Big Issue North they have committed less crime
- 18% of vendors have been a victim of crime. This increases to 31% of British vendors.
- 43% of vendors who have been a victim of crime believe it was because of their race and/or nationality
- 13% of vendors have been a victim of crime while selling the magazine, 6% whilst sleeping rough (17% British while sleeping rough) and 3% while staying in a hostel (10% British while staying in a hostel)

BEGGING

12% of vendors begged prior to selling the magazine – of those 54% say that selling the magazine has reduced their begging. 71% claims since selling the magazine their begging has either reduced or stayed the same.



Our service

98% of vendors rate the service they receive from Big Issue North as good or very good

88% of vendors feel supported by Big Issue North staff

WHAT WE DO WELL

Feedback from vendors around what we do well included providing support to people (28%), helping people to earn an income (35%) , praise for staff including “show people respect, good service” “ someone to speak to and get advice, friendly” “ nice people , helping me to get on with my sales”

WHAT COULD WE DO BETTER

There were 173 responses to what we could do better – 57% of these included “don't know/nothing”. Of the suggestions made, 31% covered operational issues such as extending opening hours, pitch development/management, outreach, move on support, and consistency in service/approach. A small number of people gave feedback on magazine content and price.

