

# FRIENDS OF BIG ISSUE NORTH

SPRING 2019

## Stuart begins new adventure

**When Stuart first spoke to Big Issue North in February 2018, he was battling a dangerous addiction, while sleeping on a friend's sofa.**

But Stuart was determined not to give up on his dream of remaining sober and changing his life, and with the support of Big Issue North staff and his own resilience, he is now able to focus on detoxing and getting clean in a safe environment.

Thanks to our local knowledge, and good relationships with other organisations and services, Stuart has been supported into specialist recovery accommodation. This means that he will begin his journey of clean and independent living with a network of other residents who also understand the struggles that he has been facing.

The accommodation only accepts people who have complex needs, while also battling substance addictions. The staff will do everything they can to help people like Stuart, but in return, residents have to engage with the treatment programme.

Stuart said: "I sold the magazine because it was a way to support myself. Not just earning money, but to get other things in my life sorted too."

"Big Issue North has helped me with everything, from getting ID to helping me make and arrange appointments. They have given me support with my recovery and managed to get me housed into specialist recovery accommodation."

"If it weren't for the staff and customers at Big Issue North, I wouldn't be here now."

During his time with Big Issue North, Stuart has thrown



himself into the role, proving to be a reliable and outgoing member of the vendor community.

Stuart has become involved in everything from attending vendor representative meetings and having his say on how vendors can help others in Sheffield, to selling Big Issue North alongside Yorkshire legend Jon McClure, lead singer of Reverend and the Makers, as part of the Big Sell (see page 2).

Stuart even made an appearance in our 2019 calendar, talking about his love of adventure! Getting into the great outdoors has been another key factor in Stuart's recovery journey. He said: "I love the outdoors. I've been up Snowdon and the next thing is to go up Ben Nevis. I can get away from everything – drugs don't even enter my mind when I'm doing stuff like that."

Although Stuart will be taking a break from life as an active vendor to focus on getting clean and deciding on his next steps, he isn't ready to step away from Big Issue

North entirely. "Although I'm no longer selling the magazine, I will still be around to volunteer with Big Issue North because they have really helped me."

Stuart will now be helping us package and distribute Big Issue North subscriptions from the Sheffield office, building his CV while continuing to receive support whenever he may need it.

To make a donation to Big Issue North Trust, and enable more vendors like Stuart to change their lives, please take two minutes to complete the attached form.

### Letter from Fay

Happy new year and welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter!

After the excitement of Christmas has passed, life on the streets for our vendors can be cold and challenging. That's why it's more important than ever that we do everything we can to support our vendors to change their lives – just like Stuart is doing.

None of our work to help vendors change their lives would be possible without your donations of money, time and skills, so thank you for your ongoing support.

**Fay Selvan,**  
Big Issue North Chief Exec



# Celebs go head-to-head to support Big Issue North



To mark international Vendor Week, scores were settled across the North, as high-profile people went head-to-head with each other to see who could sell the most copies of Big Issue North in an hour – and raise awareness of the challenges that regular sellers of the magazine face.

The week began with one of the region's most keenly felt rivalries – Manchester versus Liverpool. Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham competed against Merseyside Mayor Steve Rotheram, selling copies of Big Issue North for an hour on the street.

While Steve won 19-7, he knew the most important message. "It's really important not just to raise money for vendors, but also to raise the issue. I wouldn't like to do this as a living – while many were warm and friendly, there are those people who walk past as if you're invisible."

The pair joined forces with big names from the world of music, sport and politics during the event.

Perhaps the fiercest battle took place in Sheffield, where Lord Mayor Magid Magid faced-off against one of the city's most famous musical sons, Jon McLure, lead singer of Reverend and the Makers. Despite Jon selling a very respectable 16, the Lord Mayor was the star of the week, with 26 sales, and many more selfies and hugs from the Sheffield public!

Magid said: "It's been good fun to help out Murph (the vendor who sold alongside Magid), but it's about showing solidarity – it's cold, it's been raining and I just wanted to help a great person and a great cause."

Meanwhile, Yorkshire Cricket Club

wicketkeeper Jonny Tattersall swapped cricket whites for a hi-vis jacket, selling alongside regular vendor Ste at Leeds Train Station.

Jonny said: "It's been an eye-opening experience. Vendors are doing this to work – it might not be well paid, but it's what these guys do to keep themselves off the street. They deserve massive credit for doing that. I'll definitely be buying a copy next time I'm in town!"

Other people taking part included Edna Robinson, Chair of The Big Life group and the People's Powerhouse. Edna went head-to-head with Mark Fitzgibbon, Big Issue North Trustee.

Each guest seller sold for one hour alongside a regular Big Issue North vendor, and all money raised from magazine sales goes straight into the regular vendor's pocket.

This was the fifth annual Big Sell, with previous participants including actor Maxine Peake, music legend Clint Boon, and politicians including Hilary Benn MP, David Blunkett and George Galloway.

***The Big Sell always takes place during international #VendorWeek, an international event organised by INSP (International Network of Street Papers). During the week, people across the world show their support for street papers, often by giving up an hour of their day to sell their local magazine).***

To see videos of our Big Sell participants, visit [youtube.com/bigissuenorthmagazine](https://www.youtube.com/bigissuenorthmagazine).



Clockwise from left, Magid Magid and Steve Rotheram

## AROUND THE REGIONS

In **SHEFFIELD**, Team Leader Ben Stevenson hosted a talk to ACIS housing group. Ben explained the benefits of selling the magazine and the challenges that Big Issue North vendors face.

In **LIVERPOOL**, Interim Team Leader Lindsay Rimmer was interviewed by BBC Radio Merseyside on Big Issue North's partnership with Trusty Paws, a vet clinic, set up to benefit the pets of those living on the streets, hosted at our office on weekends.

In **LEEDS**, former vendor Alex has been named as the face of a campaign at Leeds College of Building, encouraging new students to sign up. This follows Alex's journey from begging on the streets, to selling Big Issue North, and then being supported onto his college course and made student of the term.

In **MANCHESTER**, supporters of Big Issue North are raising money for our Trust, by running the Manchester 10k! If you would like to join these determined people in raising money for Big Issue North Trust, please email [fundraising@bigissuenorth.com](mailto:fundraising@bigissuenorth.com). We'll cover your entry fee and give you some goodies to help you on your way – all you have to do is raise sponsorship and get running!



# VENDOR SUPPORT THROUGHOUT 2018

Thanks to your donations throughout 2018, we have been able to provide support to vendors, helping them to improve their lives in all sorts of areas.

This support helped many vendors, including those featured in last year's editions of Friends of Big Issue North. **Victoria, Manchester:** Victoria continues to improve her English through ESOL classes and conversations with her customers. Victoria's story featured in international media, demonstrating the positive effect that selling street papers can have on people who speak multiple languages.

**Simon, Harrogate:** Simon's battle with MS continues to inspire people, having been viewed on the Big Issue North website over 15,000 times! The local paper in Simon's town featured a story on the outpouring of support he has been given since the news of his diagnosis broke to his caring customers.

**Miley, Liverpool:** When we told Miley's story, it touched many local people. One kind-hearted customer even contacted the office to donate their digital camera, so she could pursue her passion of photography, which she had had to give up, since living on the streets.

**Dave, Manchester:** With support from staff, Dave is feeling much better and is looking forward to his future and retirement. While his caravan in North Wales is not yet on the cards, Dave is excited to take steps towards his dream of opening a second-hand bookshop.

The number of times we helped vendors access health support



135

The number of times we provided education, employment and training support



The number of times we supported vendors with housing issues

168

36

The number of times we provided crisis support



75

The number of times we supported vendors to get ID

The number of times we supported vendors to report a crime

13



Victoria, Manchester



Daruiz, Liverpool



Dave, Manchester

## Recycled magazines become high-end fashion

We're expanding our product range on our online shop! Thanks to our membership of INSP (the International Network of Street Papers), we worked with Shedia, a street paper operating in Athens, to stock their stunning range of products made from recycled magazines.

Through employing a number of their vendors to use leftover magazines to make products, Shedia not only produce high-quality, environmentally-friendly pieces, but also provide their vendors with new skills and opportunities to earn an income. It's something that we're hoping to replicate here in the UK.

You'll find everything from earrings to clocks, all made out of old copies of Shedia, but looking like something you'd find in a high-end boutique. The money raised through selling these products on our shop goes to help vendors in Greece and here in the North of England.

Head over to [shop.bigissuenorth.com](http://shop.bigissuenorth.com) for everything from tote bags to awesome gift ideas!

## MANCHESTER OPENS ITS DOORS TO NEW VENDORS

Big Issue North are holding an open day to offer our support to those who might be able to change their lives by signing up to sell the magazine.

On Wednesday, 20 March, our office doors will be open to prospective vendors. We will provide them with hot drinks, food and someone to talk to, and the chance to find out more about what life is like as a magazine seller, and what additional support we can offer.

There are all sorts of reasons why people sell the magazine, and we hope the drop in session will allow us to engage with those who need our support and to help them on the road to achieving their goals.

# Humans of Liverpool

We're collaborating with 'Humans of Liverpool', a collection of social media pages that chronicle the experiences and opinions of people in the city, giving a voice to people that don't have one.

Earlier in the year, Adam Thompson, the page's founder reached out to us to create a series of posts featuring Big Issue North vendors, giving them a voice and a raised profile.

We invited Adam to spend the day with our Liverpool team. During his time with us, he visited vendors working around the city, taking the time to speak with them about the positives in their lives, the challenges they face and, of course, why they love Liverpool!

You can view the profiles on Facebook and Instagram via @humansofliverpool. We will also be featuring the profiles on our website at [www.bigissuenorth.com](http://www.bigissuenorth.com).



Adam, Founder of Humans of Liverpool, meets City Centre vendor Les.

## 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 BITN19 and the amount you wish to donate e.g. £20 to 70070



Please make out donations by cheque 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](mailto:fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com)



It's really easy to raise funds for the Trust with EasyFundraising while shopping online. Just remember to set Big Issue North Trust as your chosen charity and start raising at no extra cost!

Go to [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) today!

# Searching for certainty

With the date for Britain to leave the EU drawing nearer, we have been busy meeting with many other agencies to make sure we have all the advice and information we need to help those vendors who aren't from the UK and are looking to secure residency.

In particular, many of our vendors from Eastern Europe face a time of uncertainty over Brexit, and we are doing everything we can to make sure we support them to continue to live and work here.

If you'd like to hear more about what life can be like for one of our Roma vendors, you can hear Ramona's story on our Anon Podcast.

Ramona, has experienced life as a Big Issue North seller and seen the challenges that comes with being an immigrant in the UK.

Listen to **The Anon Podcast** at [www.bigissuenorth.com/anon-podcast/](http://www.bigissuenorth.com/anon-podcast/) or your regular podcast provider.



A large advertisement for the Big Issue North Shop. It features a collage of various Big Issue North magazine covers with different headlines like "It is a lifeline", "Bumper Christmas Issue £3", "Station to station", "Scourge of food waste", "ABYMETAL", "JOHNNY MARR", and "FRANK TURNER". Overlaid on the collage is the text "BIG ISSUE NORTH SHOP" in large white letters. Below this, it says "Buy something BIG." and "Take a look at our shop for photographic prints, canvas tote bags, back issues and more." It also states "All profits made from our shop are reinvested back into Big Issue North, ensuring we can continue to support people to earn an income." At the bottom, it says "shop.bigissuenorth.com". There is also a small image of a tote bag with a quote: "There aren't many magazines like BIG ISSUE NORTH that have got a conscience, are well written and offer an alternative voice" - Ian McMillan, poet.

## THE TRUSTEES

Big Issue North Trust is supported by the Zochonis Charitable Foundation  
The Trustees of The Big Issue North Trust are: Fay Selvan • Edna Robinson • Mark Fitzgibbon • Safina Islam

The Big Issue in the North Trust is a Big Life charity (Registered Charity No. 1056041)  
[www.bigissuenorth.com](http://www.bigissuenorth.com)

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