

# FRIENDS OF BIG ISSUE NORTH

SUMMER 2019

## Jamie gets back on track

**For years, Jamie was begging on the streets of Leeds, and spent time in prison after committing crimes to support his heroin addiction.**

“When I was growing up, my mum left our family. My dad had a heroin addiction – that was his focus. So when my mum left, leaving her youngest child, me and my brothers had to step up and look after him. Things like getting him ready, feeding him and taking him to school. I was 16.

“I started acting out and was kicked out of the family home when I went to prison for pinching cars. From the age of 21, when I got out of the gates, I was straight on the streets and started begging.

“In Leeds there are ‘Red Coats’ [City Centre Liaison Officers] who patrol the centre. They found me begging again and booked me an appointment with Big Issue North. From that point, straight away everything started to get sorted.”

As Jamie says, he is on an upwards trajectory since becoming a vendor in Leeds. “I’ve lived in Armley all my life. I like it here. Doesn’t matter if you’re in the outskirts or in the city centre, Leeds is home. I love selling the magazine in my hometown and now I’m not begging, I don’t get moved on from my pitch because I’m there legitimately.

“Selling Big Issue North gives you time to better yourself. It’s more than just about selling a magazine. Big Issue North also gives help too. You’re able to bring friends with you to the office who may also need help.

“I’ve come a long way since starting to sell the magazine. I wasn’t in a good place at one point, but now I seem to be



getting back on a level where I feel I’m getting somewhere better.”

Thanks to your donations to Big Issue North Trust, we can provide extra support to vendors, as well as giving them a chance to earn an income. Office staff can support vendors like Jamie, who may be experiencing addiction. We can support vendors to engage with specialist drugs services, where they can receive counselling and start methadone programmes.

Jamie said: “Big Issue North sort out referrals to places and other organisations to help me with anything from getting signed up with a GP to using computers and finding a place that does hot meals if I can’t afford to eat. It means that I have a better way of life from the one I previously had. The organisation are doing more than people realise to try to help vendors.”

“I would like to continue to try to better myself and to get to be as stable as I can. Selling the magazine has allowed me

the opportunity to start saving money and to build my life back up to ‘normal’. That’s the end game anyway. Oh, and to go on holiday!”

For many people who have experienced life on the streets, Big Issue North serves as a life

line. Vendors like Jamie not only earn an income, but also receive support to achieve their goals. This vital work would not be possible without contributions made to Big Issue North Trust.

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

### Letter from Fay

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter!

Stories like Jamie’s show the difference that selling Big Issue North can make to people’s lives – offering an alternative to begging and criminal activity. His inspiring story is typical of the positive steps our vendors make, and of the way it can change not just lives, but aspirations for the future.

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 Executive



# Fundraisers put best foot forward

**Last month, seven of our supporters took part in the Simply Health Manchester 10k Run to raise money for Big Issue North Trust.**

Christian, Sabine, Anne-Marie, Fia, Hayley, Nicky and Deborah all put themselves through their paces to do their bit to support our vendors. We found out more about why they chose us as their cause:

**Christian:** Big Issue North Trust is not a massive charity, but it does a lot with the little money that it gets. I was talking to a vendor who, with the help of the Trust, has been through college so he can work as a painter and decorator. He is about to start work, and the Trust has even helped pay for the equipment he needs!

**Sabine:** Homelessness has become a huge problem in Greater Manchester in the past 10 years. I find it really upsetting to walk round our beautiful city and see hundreds of people sleeping rough. I am hoping that by running 10k for Big Issue North Trust, I will be able to raise some money to help support vulnerable people, who are looking for a solution to their problems and who choose to work for a living to support themselves.

**Anne-Marie:** I dislike running. In fact, I actually hate it! I'm aiming to raise a little bit of money for those less fortunate than myself. Taking part is one way in which I can help those who need it the most.

**Fia:** I am raising money for Big Issue North Trust, which will really make a

difference to vendors. It's part of The Big Life group, which is the company I work for, as a teacher, in a wonderful school, and it reaches out and serves communities like no other!

**Hayley:** I have decided to do the 10k run not only to help people who are less fortunate than myself but also I'd like to challenge myself as I haven't run this far before. The children at the school where I work have spoken about homelessness in Manchester, and I think they would appreciate me making a contribution towards a charity that helps people experiencing homelessness in the city.

Meanwhile, another dedicated supporter has embarked on a touching fundraising venture. Marg Pierce took on the challenge of one of the Camino walks in north west Spain, in memory of her son, Gavin.

Gavin passed away unexpectedly at the age of 36, following a diagnosis of ulcerative colitis. He received treatment at Arrowe Park Hospital and was a big supporter of Big Issue North, regularly making donations at Christmas.

Raising money for Big Issue North Trust and the hospice that looked after Gavin, Marg was recently joined by two friends to walk the famous route, covering more than 70 miles in five days!

If you would like to help Marg hit her fundraising target, please visit her JustGiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/marg-pierce>.



Left to right: Anne-Marie, Fia and Nicky.

Inset: Mary Pierce

## AROUND THE REGIONS

In **MANCHESTER**, we're relocating! You can find us in our new home: Raven House, 113 Fairfield Street, Manchester, M12 6EL from Monday 17 June.

In **LIVERPOOL**, Big Issue North staff visited ForFutures, a council led homelessness prevention project. We delivered a talk on how to become a vendor, and the additional support that comes with the role – thanks to donations to our trust.

In **LEEDS**, we have been working with Big Change to use a small pot of funding to provide home starter packs to vendors who have managed to secure accommodation.

In **HARROGATE**, vendor Simon recently received postcards from customers who were on their holidays. Despite a lack of address, local postal worker, Peter Nichols delivered them to his pitch. This uplifting update featured on the BBC News website!

In **MANCHESTER**, staff and vendors are getting ready to attend the Manchester Day Parade, taking place on Sunday 23 June. Vendors will be supported by staff to work with local artists to create a float for the event.

Vendors who access the **SHEFFIELD** office will be receiving supplies of tea, coffee and biscuits. All thanks to the Royal College of Nursing Yorkshire and Humber division! You can read a little about our involvement with the RCN on page 4.

In **MANCHESTER**, Freshfields, a national law firm, opened the doors of its office to a Big Issue North vendor one day a week, meaning that staff will be able to get their weekly copy of the magazine straight from the comfort of their office.

And, this change of scenery for the vendor also comes with a skills programme, facilitated by staff at Freshfields. That means that on the days that they are there, they will not only get the income from sales over lunchtime, but also learn more about life in different office environments during the morning and afternoon.

If you would like to find out more about how your workplace can support our vendors or Big Issue North Trust, email [fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com](mailto:fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com).



# CHARITY PLANS IN MEMORY OF LIVERPOOL VENDOR

In recent weeks, we received the sad news of the death of John Gibney. For many years, John sold Big Issue North in Liverpool, touching the hearts of staff and customers alike.

While we are saddened to hear of his passing, John's memory will live on thanks to two of his regular customers and friends, Oddvar and Trinne.

Oddvar and Trinne met John when visiting Liverpool from Norway four years ago. After buying a magazine from John they bonded over their shared love of Liverpool FC. Despite the distance, Oddvar and Trinne kept in regular contact with John and even flew over to attend his funeral, alongside Liverpool office staff.

In light of John's passing, Oddvar and Trinne are taking steps to set up a charity in his name. The charity will focus on helping other people like John, who have experienced homelessness in Liverpool city centre. We look forward to bringing you updates on their progress.

In John's final interview in 2018, he passed on a message, "I want to say thank you to all my customers. I enjoy the conversations that we have and I love the fact that you care so much about me."



## HOW BIG ISSUE NORTH HAS HELPED ME

I ended up back on the streets for two years, begging and busking to get by. I was arrested for begging. Bolton town security, enforcement officers, told me I needed to come and sell the magazine instead. Now I have just moved into a new flat, and I am selling the magazine again so I can buy some furniture and get my life back together. All my regulars, they are people who remember me when I was begging, and they all say they are proud of me because I'm doing this, because I used to be sat there on the pavement asking for money. Selling the magazine builds your confidence. **Alan, Bolton**

My whole life just spilled out of control from being ill, so I started to sell the magazine to make some extra money so I could take care of myself and my family. I am being supported to do loads of interviews and as soon as a job comes up I will be on it. But that's not to knock the magazine. It is a good thing. It allows you to go and make money without doing any badness. I think without this there would be a lot of crime out there in the world. I can't understand those people begging – why can't they just get badged up and sell magazines? Big Issue North is a great thing for people who need it. **Dave, Manchester**

Selling the magazine has kept me out of trouble, massively. If the magazine wasn't here and I hadn't started doing it when I came to Manchester, I'm pretty sure I would have started shoplifting again and ended up back in jail. For me it has served a massive purpose. **Charlie, Manchester**

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



### Our work from April-June

The number of times we helped vendors access health support



41

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



The number of times we supported vendors with housing issues

67

22

The number of times we provided crisis support



5 The number of times we supported vendors to get ID

The number of times we supported vendors to report a crime

4



# The Big Trip

Many of you receiving this newsletter will be booking and looking forward to your summer getaways. But, did you that your holidays can help vendors?

Through our Big Trip campaign, supporting vendors through the summer comes in three simple steps, and you can jump on board at any stage:

1. Book holidays and buy any items you need through Easy Fundraising, selecting Big Issue North Trust as your chosen cause.
2. Take a picture of your Big Issue North in the most unusual locations and share it on social media, using #TheBIGtrip and tagging us @bigissuenorth
3. When you've finished topping up your tan, don't forget to donate your loose foreign currency through Leftover Currency. They take leftover holiday money off your hands, convert it back to pounds, and pass it straight onto us. Visit [www.leftovercurrency.com/charity](http://www.leftovercurrency.com/charity) and select Big Issue North Trust.

## 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.



Donate online at [justgiving.com/bigissuenorth](http://justgiving.com/bigissuenorth)



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)



**We need you!**

Raise vital funds for free when you shop online with **easyfundraising.org.uk**

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!

# RCN open doors

Recently, we attended Mental Health: Beyond The Diagnosis, an event organised by the Royal College of Nursing.

Darren took a day off from his usual pitch in York and was able to sell the magazine at the event., while our staff were able to promote our work and make great connections with other professionals working in public health to further support vendors.

Organisers from the Royal College of Nursing arranged for tea, coffee, hot chocolate and biscuits to be collected at the event and donated to our vendors in Leeds and Sheffield!

If you would like to donate items for vendors, or would like to work with Big Issue North at an event, please get in touch via [fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com](mailto:fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com)



**BIG ISSUE NORTH SHOP**

**Buy something BIG.**

Take a look at our shop for photographic prints, canvas tote bags, back issues and more.

All profits made from our shop are reinvested back into Big Issue North, ensuring we can continue to support people to earn an income.

[shop.bigissuenorth.com](http://shop.bigissuenorth.com)

## 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)  
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