Annual Survey of The Big Issue in the North Vendors 2000
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1. Introduction

We carried out this survey in March 2000. Each year, The Big Issue in the North Trust conducts an Annual Audit, which includes the Annual Survey, of all its current vendors in order to:

- produce statistical information about vendors which can be compared to previous research;
- provide information to assist us to develop our policies so that we can provide informed, practical services for vendors;
- collect information to support our strategy for attracting funding;
- check on each vendor's housing situation so that only those who are eligible to sell the magazine are doing so;
- act as an opportunity for staff to talk to vendors about the services we offer.

The last Audit was conducted in February 1999. Prior to that we conducted Audits in October 1997 and October 1996.

This year's Annual Survey contains a lot of information that can be compared with previous years. We have also added new questions on rough sleeping, employment history and on the length of time vendors have been selling The Big Issue in the North. Vendors' responses to these provide new and interesting information that is important not only for us but for national debates about how best to tackle homelessness.

2. Summary

2.1. Introduction

This section describes the key findings to emerge from this year's survey. More detail is contained in the chapters that follow.

2.2. How many Big Issue in the North vendors are there?

- The Audit provides a snapshot figure. In March 2000, we had 362 vendors. In February 1999, there were 300. The Audit lasted slightly longer this year so the figures are not directly comparable.
- There were 156 vendors in Manchester, 130 in Leeds and 76 in Liverpool. Not all these vendors actually sell The Big Issue in the North in these cities. The magazine is sold across the whole of the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside in 90 different locations.
- Between February 1999 and March 2000, 1,416 vendors joined The Big Issue in the North. Between October 1997 and February 1999 the figure was 1,370 vendors.

2.3. Who are our vendors?

- The results from this year's survey are broadly similar to those from 1999.
- 88% of our vendors are male and 12% are female. The proportion of female vendors has increased slightly over the last year.
- 90% of our vendors are white. This is a very similar proportion to that in previous years.
- 25% of our vendors are under 25 years old, whilst 75% are under-35. These are very similar figures to 1999. Our first survey in 1996 showed a younger age profile as 43% were under 25 years old and 87% were under-35.
- The proportion of vendors who had spent time in care as a child was 27%, exactly the same as last year. In previous years, the figure was higher: 31% in 1997 and 34% in 1996.
- This year's study again showed that vendors who had been in care were more likely than other vendors to:
  - have a disability or long term illness;
  - have been homeless for a longer period;
  - have become homeless at a younger age;
  - have slept rough during the last 12 months;
  - have never had a formal, paid job.

2.4. Becoming homeless

- 58% of vendors became homeless before they were 25 years old. This figure has declined from 65% in 1999 and 1997 and 78% in 1996.
- Women were more likely to have become homeless at a younger age, with 49% becoming homeless before they were 21 years old, compared to 32% of men. This reverses last year's findings but is similar to those from 1997.
- 27% became homeless because they split up with their partner. 24% became homeless due to leaving the family home because of problems and these were also the two most frequent reasons in previous surveys.
- 39% of vendors have been homeless for at least 3 years, similar to 1999 but lower than the figure of 50% in the 1996 study.

2.5. Employment history

- 79% of vendors have had a formal paid job at some point in the past. The figure in 1996 was 67%.
- 84% of Leeds vendors and 71% of Liverpool vendors have worked. Manchester was close to the average.
- 70% of these have not worked in a formal, paid job for at least two years. 40% have not worked for at least five years.
- The jobs vendors have done were concentrated in three main occupational areas: particularly Craft and Related Occupations (eg. jobs in construction or engineering). The other frequent categories were Personal and Protective Service Occupations (eg. bar or waitressing work, security guards or catering) and Other Occupations (mainly general labouring work).

2.6. Vendors' housing situation

- 14% of vendors had slept rough the previous night, slightly higher than last year's figure of 11%.
- 30% are currently staying in hostels, the most frequent type of current accommodation.
- 20% have moved into their own home and 18% are staying with friends. 4% are staying in squats and 3% are in bed and breakfasts. Overall, these figures are similar to last year.
- Men were less likely to be staying with friends (19% of men, 32% of women) and more likely to have slept rough the previous night (15% compared to 9% of women).
- In Liverpool, only 4% of vendors were sleeping rough. In Manchester the figure was 20% and in Leeds 12%.
3. Who are our vendors?

2.8. Selling The Big Issue in the North

- 30% first sold the magazine within the last six months. 35% first sold the magazine more than two years ago and 11% had first become a vendor over 5 years ago.

- Some vendors may not have sold the magazine consistently over these time periods so they were asked for how long they have been selling regularly. 35% have been selling the magazine for less than six months. 22% have been selling for more than two years. 4% have been selling for more than five years.

- 58% of vendors had a regular pitch from where to sell The Big Issue in the North, lower than last year's figure of 65%.

- 65% of Liverpool vendors had a regular pitch, compared to 80% last year. 51% of Manchester vendors and 62% of Leeds vendors sold from a regular pitch.

- 72% of vendors considered themselves to have regular customers, slightly lower than last year (78%).

- 85% of female vendors had regular customers, compared to 77% of male vendors, reversing the gender difference in last year's figures.

- 70% of vendors said selling The Big Issue in the North had improved their self-confidence and 70% believed it had improved their motivation to actually change things in their life. Only 3% said that selling had lowered their self-confidence and 2% said it had lowered their self-esteem.

- 51% sell on Out-of-town pitches (suburban locations and pitches in other towns and cities away from our offices), 21% sell in Zone 1 (mainly new vendors) and 29% in Zone 2 (other city centre pitches).

2.9. Vendors’ perceptions

- Most vendors want to move away from a life on the streets and can foresee a time when they no longer need to sell The Big Issue in the North. 77% agreed that homeless people should do more for themselves.

- 91% agreed with the statement “I want to be drug free”, exactly the same as last year.

- Just over 50% of vendors expressed an interest in having more of a say in how The Big Issue in the North is run, higher than last year when 40% said this. 83% of vendors agreed that The Big Issue in the North is a good read.

- Vendors in 2000 expressed similar levels of optimism and confidence about their futures as in 1999. Vendors in 1996, however, were significantly more optimistic and confident about their futures.

2.10. Regional differences

- Leeds vendors, again, experienced a rise in drug problems. In other areas, however, the picture is more positive.

- In Liverpool, the findings are more positive in many areas than they were last year with exception of problematic drug use which continues to be more prevalent in other cities.

- There is a great deal of continuity in the findings for Manchester vendors. Problematic drug use is lowest here but rough sleeping appeared to be on the increase.

3.1. Introduction

This section describes the main characteristics of our vendors, particularly in relation to gender, ethnicity, age and length of homelessness.

3.2. How many vendors are there?

The survey provides a snapshot of the number of vendors in March 2000. We badged up 362 vendors during the survey period compared to 300 in February 1999. However, it is difficult to make a direct comparison since the Audit was organised slightly differently this year.

There were 130 vendors in Leeds, 76 in Liverpool and 156 in Manchester. Not all these vendors actually sell The Big Issue in the North in these cities, however, so it is not true to say, for example, that there are 156 vendors selling in the city of Manchester. Vendors are recorded at the office from which they buy their magazines. The magazine is sold on the streets of towns and cities across the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside.

Between February 1999 and March 2000, we badged up 1,416 vendors: 559 in Leeds, 271 in Liverpool and 586 in Manchester.

3.3. Gender

The vast majority of vendors are male (88%).

There are small regional differences, as the table below shows. Liverpool has the smallest proportion of female vendors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1 Gender by office</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Leeds Liverpool Manchester Total Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 13% 6% 14% 12% 9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 87% 94% 86% 88% 91%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL 100% 100% 100% 100% 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=130 n=76 n=156 n=302 n=300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4. Ethnicity

90% describe their ethnicity as ‘white’. This is lower than last year’s figure of 97%, largely owing to the introduction of a new category: “Irish”. In Liverpool, 9% of vendors described themselves as “Irish”.

- These figures are similar to last year’s although the proportion sleeping rough in Manchester rose from 15% to 20%.
- Liverpool vendors were most likely to be living in hostels (40%) and to have their own home (28%). A relatively low proportion of Manchester vendors were in their own home (14%). Leeds vendors were most likely to be staying with friends (28%).
- 76% of vendors had slept rough during the last 12 months. This is similar to the 1999 figure but less than 1997’s figure of 81%. There were relatively small differences between the three cities in this respect but Manchester vendors were most likely to have slept rough (79%) and Liverpool the least likely (70%).
- There was a large increase in the proportion of women who had slept rough, from 59% in 1999 to 79% this year.
- Most rough sleeping was relatively short term although there was a small group of long term rough sleepers, 51% of those who had slept rough spent less than a week on the streets the last time they slept rough. 88% spent less than six months on the streets. 7% spent over a year sleeping rough.
- Vendors slept rough for a variety of reasons. The most frequent were that there were no empty hostel beds (25%) and that they considered hostels unattractive place to stay (22%).
- In 1997, those vendors who had slept rough during the last 12 months said they faced more problems with drugs. This pattern was again evident this year.
- 44% of vendors described themselves as having a disability or long term illness, slightly higher than 1999 and 1997 (39%).
- When vendors were asked to list the problems they faced, 65% mentioned accommodation, 58% said financial problems and 57% said drugs. These were similar to last year’s figures.
- 81% of those who said they had a drug problem said that their drug problem came before their homelessness.
- Vendors selling on Out-of-town pitches were less likely to experience problems than vendors who sell in city centres. This is probably associated with the greater level of organisation, such as budgeting and planning required to sell successfully Out-of-town.
- The likelihood of having accommodation, financial and offending problems decreased with length of time selling The Big Issue in the North. The likelihood of having problems with drugs and health, on the other hand, increased.
3.5. Age of vendors

Comparisons between this year’s survey and last year’s show that the age profile of our vendors is similar. 26% are aged under 21. As a group, our vendors are relatively young with 79% aged 35 or under.

Female vendors as a whole were younger than their male counterparts, 52% of women under 25 compared to 22% of men. This pattern has been evident in other surveys but the difference was much smaller last year when the figures were 33% of women and 28% of men. This year’s results are more similar to those in 1997.

3.6. Local authority care

The same proportion of vendors had spent time in care as last year’s survey: 27%. In previous years the figure has been higher: 31% in 1997 and 34% in 1996.

Last year, virtually all of the vendors who had been in care were men. This year, 90% were men, which mirrors the overall population of vendors.

As last year, Leeds and Liverpool had lower proportions of vendors who had been in care (24% and 22% respectively) compared to Manchester (33%).

Previous surveys have highlighted the association between spending time in care and problems later in life. This year’s study again showed that vendors who had been in care were more likely to:

- have a disability or long term illness (56% compared to 40% of those who had not been in care);
- have been homeless for more than five years (30% compared to 21%);
- have become homeless at a young age (11% of care leavers became homeless before they were 16 and 40% before they were 21);
- have slept rough during the last 12 months (82% compared to 72%);
- have never had a formal job (35% compared to 16%).

Section 7 contains more information on the problems facing vendors.

3.7. Length of homelessness

Vendors were asked how long they had been homeless or experienced unsettled housing. The surveys carried out in 1996 and 1997 both showed that around 50% of vendors had been homeless for at least three years. For the last two years, the figure has been 39%.

Last year, there was a significant gender difference in terms of length of homelessness with women much more likely to be have been homeless for a shorter time. This was the first time that our annual surveys had shown this pattern. This year, once again, there were relatively few differences by gender in this respect. Men were, however, more likely to be homeless for over ten years (12% compared to 5%).

4. Becoming homeless

4.1. Introduction

People become homeless for many different reasons. This section describes, in broad terms, how and at what age vendors became homeless.

4.2. Age at which vendors became homeless

Most of our vendors first became homeless at an early age. 58% of vendors became homeless before they were 25 years old, but the trend seems to be for fewer vendors to become homeless at an early age. Last year the figure was 65% and 78% in 1996.

Women were more likely to have become homeless at a younger age, with 49% becoming homeless before they were 21 years old, compared to 32% of men. This is similar to the findings from 1997 but reverses last year’s results.

Differences between offices were also identified. As in previous years, vendors in Liverpool became homeless at an older age than those in Manchester and Leeds. Vendors in Manchester were more likely to have become homeless when aged under-16.

4.3. How vendors become homeless

Vendors were asked to describe in broad terms how they became homeless.

As previous years, two routes into homelessness stood out. The most frequent way that vendors became homeless was because they split up with their partner. The other important cause of homelessness was vendors leaving the family home because of problems. This largely reflects the experience of young people who find it impossible to continue living with their parents.

There were few differences between the three cities although in Liverpool, a relatively high proportion of vendors had become homeless through eviction.

There was only significant difference between men and women in how they became homeless. 33% of women were evicted compared to only 8% of men. This has not been evident in previous surveys.

The proportion who were ‘kicked out by family’ fell from the 1999 figure and is similar to that recorded in 1997.

### Table 3.2 Ethnicity by office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.3 Age of vendors, by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.4 Age of vendors, by office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *not including prison or care.

### Table 4.1 Age vendors became homeless, by office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;16</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
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<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<td>41-45</td>
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<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *not including prison or care.

### Table 4.2 How vendors became homeless, by office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spent up</th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left home due</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to problems</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evicted</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicked out by</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving prison</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left an institution*</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repossession</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of home</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *not including prison or care.

4.4. Length of homelessness

Vendors were asked how long they had been homeless or experienced unsettled housing. The surveys carried out in 1996 and 1997 both showed that around 50% of vendors had been homeless for at least three years. For the last two years, the figure has been 39%.

Last year, there was a significant gender difference in terms of length of homelessness with women much more likely to be have been homeless for a shorter time. This was the first time that our annual surveys had shown this pattern. This year, once again, there were relatively few differences by gender in this respect. Men were, however, more likely to have been homeless for over ten years (12% compared to 5%).
5. Vendors’ employment history

5.1. Introduction
This year, we included some questions about vendors’ employment history. This section describes what jobs vendors have done in the past and how long it is since they were in employment.

5.2. Time since vendors had a job
Most vendors (79%) have had a formal, paid job at some point before selling The Big Issue in the North. In 1996, the figure was lower (67%).

Leeds had the highest figure (84%) and Liverpool the lowest (71%). In Manchester, 78% have had a formal paid job.

Table 5.1. shows that 71% of vendors have not had a formal paid job in the last two years and 40% have not worked in the past five years. Just 7% have worked in the past six months.

Over half (54%) of Liverpool vendors have not worked in the past five years, the highest proportion of the three cities.

5.3. Types of jobs vendors have worked in

We asked those vendors who had worked in a formal, paid job to describe the last job they had done. Table 5.2, shows that vendors were concentrated in a small number of occupational areas. 40% worked in Craft and Related Occupations (eg. jobs in construction or engineering). The other frequent categories were Personal and Protective Service Occupations (eg. bar or waitressing work, security guards or catering) and Other Occupations (mainly general labouring work).

Only 6% worked in a professional or managerial position.

6. Vendors’ housing situation

6.1. Introduction
Homelessness does not always mean that someone is sleeping on the streets and by no means are all vendors rough sleepers (by sleeping rough we mean sleeping on the streets, in cars, parks, in or on other unconventional settings). However, those who do have accommodation are mostly in temporary or unstable accommodation. This section examines vendors’ housing in more depth.

6.2. Current accommodation
14% of vendors had slept rough the previous night, slightly higher than last year (11%).

The types of housing that vendors are living in is broadly similar to last year. 31% are in a host to, higher than last year. 21% were living in their own home. 21% were staying with friends, but the majority were not happy with their situation. 80% of those living with friends said accommodation was a problem for them. Only squatters (32% said accommodation was a problem) and rough sleepers (81%) were more likely to say that accommodation was a problem. This would seem to imply that living with friends is not a long-term solution to most vendors’ homelessness.

There are few differences between men and women’s accommodation. Men were less likely to be staying with friends (19% of men, 32% of women) and more likely to have slept rough the previous night (15% compared to 9% of women). Last year, the only significant difference was that men were more likely to be in a hostel.

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Table 5.2. Vendors’ last job, by Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOC Category</th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professional</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; Technical</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft &amp; Related</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal &amp; Protective Service</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant operative</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: figures refer to those vendors who have had a formal paid job.

Table 5.1 Time since vendors had a formal paid job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Homelessness</th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;3 months</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 months</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 months</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ years</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: figures refer to those vendors who have had a formal paid job.
There was an association between accommodation and the zone in which vendors sell. The zone system is fully explained in Section 7, but Zone 1 vendors are new vendors in city centres, Zone 2 are other city centre vendors and Out-of-town vendors sell in suburban locations or in towns other than Leeds, Liverpool or Manchester.

Only 6% of Out-of-town vendors slept rough the previous night compared to 17% of Zone 1 vendors and 23% of Zone 2 vendors. Out-of-town vendors were much more likely to have stable accommodation. 31% of Out-of-town vendors held their own home compared to 15% of Zone 1 vendors and 21% of Zone 2 vendors.

There is a clear association between the time spent as a vendor and the likelihood of having slept rough the previous night. 24% of new vendors had slept rough compared to 12% of those who had been vendors for over three years. 26% of those who had been vendors for three years had their own home compared to 13% of those who had been selling for less than 6 months.

6.3. Rough sleeping in the last 12 months

Vendors were asked whether they had slept rough during the last 12 months. The majority of vendors, even if they are not currently sleeping rough, do sleep rough from time to time. 75% of vendors had slept rough during the last 12 months. This is similar to the last year’s figure (72%). The difference between the cities was relatively minor but Manchester vendors were most likely to have slept rough (78%) and Liverpool the least likely (70%). In Leeds, 72% had slept rough in the past 12 months.

Last year, men were much more likely to have slept rough than women (73% compared to 59%). This year, the likelihood of men sleeping rough has stayed constant but this year, many more women have slept rough. In fact, women were slightly more likely to have slept rough (79% of women compared to 74% of men).

Table 6.2 Proportion who have slept rough in the last twelve months by length of time as a vendor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time as a vendor</th>
<th>% who slept rough in last 12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New vendor</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;6 months</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 months</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=362</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vendors slept rough rather than find temporary accommodation for a variety of reasons. It is important to note that the vendors did not necessarily sleep rough in the Leeds, Liverpool or Manchester areas, so their comments do not necessarily refer to the situation in these cities.

The most frequent reasons for not staying in temporary accommodation were that there were no empty beds available (25%) and that they considered hostels unattractive places to stay (22%).

Only 2% of vendors said that they liked living on the streets. National-level research in 1993 found that 5% of rough sleepers slept rough by choice.

Table 6.4. The reasons vendors who slept rough did not stay in temporary accommodation the last time they slept rough

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hostels were full</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostels are unattractive</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t know how to find one</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where to find one</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unattractive</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough sleeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was short term</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostels don’t</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow pets</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like it on the street</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too expensive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t have ID</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>n=94</td>
<td>n=54</td>
<td>n=130</td>
<td>n=278</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was clear that for many of those who said that the hostels were full, their need for temporary accommodation came about unexpectedly and they found themselves in need of a direct access service.

Those who said they found hostels unattractive often described them as violent or threatening places. Many vendors who were seeking to stop using drugs described how the level of drug use in many hostels put them off staying there. The following quotes from vendors convey the main themes which emerged from this question:

"I’m trying to stay off drugs. If I went to a hostel it would be impossible to stop."

"I’m trying to avoid heroin, hostels are rife with users."

"I do not like hostels, I don’t feel safe."

"I’ve experienced bullying in hostels."

"Didn’t like going in hostels, some are rougher than the streets."

"Because I’m part of a couple and we want to be together. Hostels and shelters separate people."

"I suffer from depression, hostels make me worse, they’re full of heroin addicts, it’s better to find a corner and close your eyes."

7. Problems facing vendors

7.1. Introduction

This section examines in more detail the problems that vendors face and provides information about the number of vendors who perceive themselves to have a disability or long term illness.

7.2. Disability and long term illness

44% of vendors described themselves as having a disability or long term illness, up from 39% last year last year. This compares to a figure of just 6% for the general population of the same age group (1993 Census, 16-54 year-olds).

Not all disabled people are in poor health but 53% of those vendors with a disability or long term illness said that their physical health was a problem for them. This compares to 12% of other vendors. 41% of vendors with a disability said that their mental health was a problem compared to 17% of other vendors.

This year, as in 1997, there were no significant differences between the three offices or between men and women in the prevalence of disability. Last year, 50% of women said they had a disability compared to 36% of men.

Leeds vendors were much less likely to report having a disability than those in other cities. The figures are 29% in Leeds, 55% in Liverpool and 52% in Manchester.

Those who had been in local authority care were more likely to have a disability or long term illness (56% compared to 40% of others).

7.3. Problems in life

Vendors were asked whether they were currently experiencing problems in a range of areas. It is important to bear in mind that these were the vendors’ own perceptions. There are a whole range of reasons why vendors may not say they have a problem, for example, have a problem with their mental health. These could include an unwillingness to admit to a problem or a lack of awareness of their mental health.

The results show that, overall, the most problematic areas of life for vendors are:

- accommodation;
- financial problems;
- drugs.

These were problems in each of the cities and this mirrors the findings from previous surveys. The proportion citing financial problems rose by 9% between 1997 and 1999 and has risen a further 8% in the last year.

There were some differences in the type of problems mentioned by vendors in the different offices. Overall, Leeds vendors were more likely to mention having problems. In particular, they were much more likely to mention Employment, Education & Training and Financial problems than vendors in other cities.

Last year, Liverpool vendors appeared to be facing more problems than those in other cities. This year, they mentioned most problems less frequent than other vendors. The exception was drug problems which have historically been more prevalent in Liverpool.

As in previous years, drugs were mentioned more than alcohol as a problem. Vendors in Leeds and particularly Liverpool were most likely to identify drugs problems. There has been a steep rise in the last two years in the number for Leeds vendors reporting a drug problem. In 1997, in Leeds, 37% said they had a drug or alcohol problem. Alcohol was mentioned more in Manchester, although vendors there still referred to drugs more frequently.

Problematic drug use was mentioned relatively frequently by all age groups but those aged 26-30 were more likely to have done so older vendors. 60% of those under-40 said that drugs were a problem compared to 25% of those over-40.

Table 7.1. Vendors’ problems by office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education or training</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offending</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=130 n=130 n=116 n=362 n=300

Note: percentages total more than 100% as more than one response could be given.

* Last year, there was no distinction between physical and mental health, 41% of vendors said their health was a problem for them.

No-one from the youngest age group (16-20 year-olds) perceived themselves to have a problem with alcohol. 25% of the over-30s mentioned alcohol as a problem compared to 11% of the under-30s.

Last year, there appeared to be, on the one hand, a drug using younger group and, on the other, an older group whose substance misuse revolves around alcohol. While there was some evidence of this, the findings this year did not show such a strong relationship between age and substance misuse.

Vendors were asked what came first: their drug problem or their homelessness. 81% said that their drug problem preceded their homelessness. There was very little difference between the three cities in this respect.

Last year, health problems were closely related to age, but this year this pattern was not evident.

There are some differences in the responses given by men and women. Women were more likely to mention mental health (37% compared to 26% of men), drugs (67% compared to 56%). Men mentioned employment as a problem more frequently than women (52% compared to 40%).

Analysis was also conducted to identify any relationship between current housing situation and problems faced by vendors. On the whole, there were few clear trends. However, those who slept rough the previous night were more likely than other vendors to have problems with accommodation (81%) and committing crime (15%).

For the first time we asked which zone vendors sell in. Pitches are in one of three zones. Zone 1 pitches are in the city centre and usually reserved for new vendors. Zone 2 pitches are also city centre pitches but are usually a little further from our office. Out-town pitches are in suburbs or in other towns.

Looking at the problems experienced by vendors who sell in different zones reveals some interesting comparisons.

Table 7.2 shows that Out-town vendors are less likely to report most of these problems. Selling Out-town requires a higher degree of budgeting and organisation than selling in city centres and it is perhaps no surprise that they appear to be a more stable group with fewer problems. Selling out-town is often more financially rewarding than the city centre which may also contribute to vendors' wellbeing and, particularly, relatively low level of financial problems. Section 3 described how Out-town vendors were more likely to have their own home and less likely to sleep rough.

Table 7.3. Vendors’ problems by length of time as a vendor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Zone 1</th>
<th>Zone 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education or training</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offending</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=64 n=67 n=116 n=307

Note: percentages total more than 100% as more than one response could be given.

* This table does not include vendors who joined The Big Issue in the North during the Audit.
8. Selling The Big Issue in the North

8.1. Introduction

We asked a number of questions about selling The Big Issue in the North, including whether vendors have a regular pitch from which they sell, whether they have regular customers and what effect selling the magazine has had on their self-confidence and motivation to change things in their life. We also added some extra questions this year about the length of time vendors have sold The Big Issue in the North.

Not all vendors sell from the same pitch all the time. Those who do must use it regularly or they can lose the pitch. Therefore, vendors who have regular pitches are often those with more stable circumstances and lifestyles.

8.2. Length of time as a Big Issue in the North vendor

This year we asked new questions about how long vendors have been selling The Big Issue in the North. Because vendors may have spells when they do not sell the magazine, we asked them two questions. Firstly, when did they first sell the magazine? Secondly, how long have they been selling the magazine, this time around if they have had more than one spell as a vendor?

Table 8.1 shows that just under half (48%) of the vendors first sold the magazine less than a year ago. Just over a third (36%) first sold the magazine over 2 years ago.

Liverpool has a higher proportion of relatively new vendors than the other two cities and, correspondingly, a smaller proportion of vendors who first sold the magazine over two years ago. Manchester has the largest proportion of vendors who first sold the magazine over two years ago.

Table 8.1. Time when vendors first sold The Big Issue in the North

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months ago</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 months ago</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 years ago</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 3 years ago</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 5 years ago</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 5 years ago</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This table does not include vendors who joined The Big Issue in the North during the Audit.

Because some vendors have had more than one spell of selling the magazine, we asked how long they had been selling the magazine for in this spell. Table 8.2, therefore, shows the length of time that vendors have been selling on a consistent basis.

This shows that the majority of vendors have been selling for a relatively short time. 65% have been selling for less than a year. 22% have been selling for more than two years.

The three cities are relatively similar in the proportion who have been selling for less than a year, although the figure in Manchester (56%) is a little lower than Leeds (65%) and Liverpool (63%). The proportion of long-term (over two years) vendors is significantly higher in Manchester (29%) than Leeds (14%) and Liverpool (23%).

Table 8.2. Length of spell selling The Big Issue in the North

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 months</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 years</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 3 years</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 5 years</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 5 years</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This table does not include vendors who joined The Big Issue in the North during the Audit.

8.3. Where vendors sell the magazine

As Table 8.3 shows, around half of vendors sell from Out-of-town pitches in all three cities (see Section 7.3 for a description of the pitch system). The most significant difference between the cities is that Manchester has a low proportion selling in Zone 1 and a high proportion in Zone 2. This is largely due to a recent review of pitches. In Manchester this disproportionately affected Zone 1 where a number of pitches were removed.

Table 8.3. Where vendors sell The Big Issue in the North

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zone 1</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-town</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This table does not include vendors who joined The Big Issue in the North during the Audit.

There were no differences between men and women in terms of the zone in which they sold.

63% of vendors have a regular pitch from which to sell The Big Issue in the North, similar to the figure of 65% last year, with a marked decline in Liverpool. 72% of vendors considered themselves to have regular customers, again slightly lower than last year (78%).

Last year, Liverpool had the highest proportion of vendors with a regular pitch. This year, there was little difference between Leeds and Liverpool. 70% of Liverpool vendors had a regular pitch (the figure was 80% last year), compared to 71% of Leeds vendors and 53% of Manchester vendors.

There were few differences between the offices in terms of the proportion who have regular customers although Manchester’s figure is surprising since it has the lowest proportion with a regular pitch. Overall, 96% of those vendors with a regular pitch have regular customers compared to 45% of other vendors.

Last year, women were more likely to have regular customers than men. This year, 78% of both sexes said they had regular customers. There is despite the fact that more male (65%) than female (50%) vendors had a regular pitch.

There was a clear link between the zone in which vendors sell and having regular customers and a regular pitch.

8.4. Improving self-confidence and motivation

Vendors were asked two questions: What effect has selling The Big Issue in the North had on your self-confidence and What effect has selling The Big Issue in the North had on your motivation to change things in your life? The questions were re-phrased slightly from last year to reduce any possible bias in the answers (the old questions were: Has selling The Big Issue in the North increased your self-confidence / motivation?). Even allowing for the fact that some vendors may have felt obliged to answer “yes”, since it was our staff who conducted interviews, the results are encouraging.
9. Vendors’ perceptions

9.1 Introduction

Vendors were asked a series of questions about their attitudes to themselves, their future and The Big Issue in the North more generally. Some of those questions were asked to vendors in previous surveys so we can make comparisons with these findings. Vendors were read a series of statements and asked to say how strongly they agreed or disagreed with them.

9.2 Vendors’ self-perceptions

One set of questions was related to vendors’ perceptions of their own future. These showed that most vendors want to move away from a life on the streets and can foresee a time when they no longer need to sell The Big Issue in the North. This year a similar proportion agreed that I want more from life than selling The Big Issue in the North as had done so in 1996 and 1999 (Table 9.1). However, in 1996, a much greater proportion had “strongly agreed”. Liverpool vendors felt more strongly about this question than vendors in other cities.

Table 9.1. “I want more from life than selling The Big Issue in the North”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>2000 TOTAL</th>
<th>1999 TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.3 Vendors’ perceptions of The Big Issue in the North

Vendors were also asked for their reactions to a set of statements about The Big Issue in the North.

Just over 50% of vendors expressed an interest in having more of a say in how The Big Issue in the North is run, an increase from 40% last year. However, the proportion who felt very strongly about this remained relatively low, however, so it is unlikely that 50% would actually wish to be actively involved.

Table 9.5. “I want more of a say in how The Big Issue in the North is run”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>2000 TOTAL</th>
<th>1999 TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally we asked vendors for their view of the magazine that they sell. Overall, the vast majority agreed that The Big Issue in the North is a good read and only 2% disagreed. The figures were similar across the three cities.

Table 9.6. “The Big Issue in the North is a good read”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leeds</th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>2000 TOTAL</th>
<th>1999 TOTAL</th>
</tr>
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<td>Agree</td>
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<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This set of questions reveals that most vendors are happy with the magazine that they sell.

We regard the fact that around 50%, an increase from last year, wished to have more of a say in how The Big Issue in the North is run as a positive sign. Whenever vendors wish to take more control of their own lives it is encouraging.

While most vendors feel that the public generally support...
10. Regional differences

10.1. Introduction

One of the interesting aspects of this and previous year’s surveys are the differences between the three offices in Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester. This section provides a summary of the position in each city and how this has changed.

There are a lot of similarities between the three cities as the other sections in this report make clear and in many ways, the similarities are more striking than the differences. Furthermore, when the prevalence of a particular problem is referred to as relatively low amongst vendors, it will generally still be much higher than in the general population. For example, Leeds vendors have a relatively low rate of disability, but the figure is 29%, nearly five times higher than the general population.

10.2. Leeds

Last year’s Annual Survey found a growing drugs problem amongst Leeds vendors which seemed to threaten their reputation as the most stable group of vendors. This year, the proportion with a drug problem is even higher and continues to cause concern.

In other respects, the situation in Leeds is more promising. A high proportion have experienced formal, paid employment, the rate of disability is relatively low and rough sleeping amongst Leeds vendors was more short-term than in the other cities.

Some statistics that at first appear to be negative may actually indicate a more positive picture. For example, a high proportion of Leeds vendors said they had problems with employment, education and training. This may be an indication that vendors are not content with selling the Big Issue in the North and wish to move on to more formal employment or training.

10.3. Liverpool

Historically, drug use and other problems have been particularly prevalent among Liverpool vendors. Last year there were some more positive signs such as a reduction in rough sleeping and an increase in the proportion reporting improved self-confidence.

This year, there is a high proportion of new vendors in Liverpool. The rate of problematic drug use remains high and a relatively low proportion had worked before selling the magazine. Of those who had worked, long-term unemployment was more common than in Leeds or Manchester.

However, Liverpool vendors this year reported fewer problems in other areas of life relative to the other cities. Once again, Liverpool vendors appeared to be motivated to move away from The Big Issue in the North and to take more responsibility for doing this themselves.

10.4. Manchester

Last year, there was a mixed picture in Manchester. Vendors were more likely to have been in care, to be rough sleepers and to be long-term homeless. However, there was an improvement in the proportion with drug and alcohol problems.

This year, the level of drug use was relatively low but the other indicators mentioned above were still worse in Manchester than in Leeds or Liverpool. A high proportion slept rough the previous night and long-term rough sleeping was more common in Manchester. A lower proportion owned their own home in Manchester.

The proportion of long-term vendors was highest in Manchester so it is perhaps unsurprising that many of these indicators are little changed.

11. Methodology

11.1. Introduction

This section describes how the audit was conducted.

11.2. Process

This year’s audit built on the experience of previous years. The survey was conducted as part of the re-badging process, whereby all vendors must prove that they are eligible to sell the magazine in order to receive a new badge which enables them to continue selling. This took place during March 2000. Vendors were given three weeks notice that they needed to provide evidence of their homelessness, validated by another organisation.

Vendors were interviewed after they had been told they could have a new badge. This removed any potential for vendors to exaggerate their current circumstances (eg, to say they were rough sleepers) in an attempt to gain a badge.

11.3. Sample

The aim of the study was to interview all current vendors. In order to achieve this, vendors were only given a new badge if they completed a questionnaire. No incentives were paid to vendors. In practice, virtually all regular vendors were badged up and completed a questionnaire.

11.4. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was based on last year’s enable year-on-year companions to be made although a small number of questions were changed following consultation with staff. The questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

11.5. Fieldwork

A briefing paper giving advice on how to use the questionnaire was produced and circulated to the three offices, along with copies of the questionnaire. Interviewers were also briefed in person. All interviews were completed by staff. The confidential nature of the survey was stressed and all interviews took place in a separate office, in a private space. All interviews were completed during March 2000.

11.6. Data preparation and analysis

All completed questionnaires were input into SPSS (a statistical computer software package). Direct entry of questionnaires minimised any possible inaccuracies and ensured confidentiality within the organisation.

11.7. Report writing

A draft report was produced and circulated amongst staff. Following this consultation a final report was produced. The report deliberately follows last year’s format for ease of comparison.
APPENDIX A
Annual Audit Questionnaire

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE MUST BE FILLED IN BY A MEMBER OF STAFF, NOT A VENDOR

Date ___________________________ Interviewer ___________________________ Ref (leave blank) __________

Office: ☐ Leeds ☐ Liverpool ☐ Manchester

1. What is your full name? ___________________________

2. Current Badge Number (enter "999" for new vendor) ___________________________

3. New Badge Number ___________________________

4. What is your date of birth? ___________________________

5. What is your age? ___________________________

6. Gender
☐ Male ☐ Female

7. What is your address?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

8. Contact phone number in case of emergency ___________________________

9. Name/address of next of kin in case of emergency (optional)

__________________________________________________________

10. How would you describe your ethnic origin?
☐ White ☐ Black Caribbean ☐ Black African ☐ Black Other
☐ Indian ☐ Pakistani ☐ Bangladeshi ☐ Chinese
☐ Asian Other ☐ Irish ☐ Other (please state)

11. How long have you been homeless or experienced unsettled housing?
☐ Less than 3 months ☐ 12 months to 2 years ☐ 5 to 10 years
☐ 3 to 6 months ☐ 2 to 3 years ☐ Over 10 years
☐ 6 to 12 months ☐ 3 years to 5 years

12. How old were you when you first became homeless?
☐ Under-16 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-35
☐ 36-40 ☐ 41-45 ☐ 46-50 ☐ 50+

13. How did you first become homeless? (tick one)
☐ Left care ☐ Split up with partner ☐ Left parents’ home due to problems
☐ Kicked out by parents ☐ Evicted ☐ Left prison
☐ Other, please state ___________________________

14. Have you slept rough at any time in the last year? ☐ Yes ☐ No (go to q17)

15. Thinking about the last time you slept rough, how many consecutive nights did you sleep rough for?
☐ 1 night ☐ 2-7 nights ☐ 8-14 nights ☐ 15-30 nights
☐ > 1 month - 2 months ☐ > 2 months - 6 months ☐ > 6 months - 1 year
☐ >1 year - 2 years ☐ > 2 years - 3 years ☐ > 3 years - 5 years
☐ > 5 years - 10 years ☐ >10 years

16. What was the main reason you slept rough rather than got a place in a hostel or night shelter?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

17. Where did you sleep last night?
☐ Slept rough ☐ B & B ☐ Own home ☐ Squat
☐ Hostel ☐ Night shelter ☐ Friend’s place ☐ Other

18. Were you ever in care as a child? ☐ Yes ☐ No

19. Have you ever had a formal, paid job? ☐ Yes ☐ No (go to q22)

20. When did your last formal paid job end?
☐ Less than 3 months ago ☐ 3-6 months ago ☐ 6-12 months ago ☐ 1-2 years ago
☐ 2-3 years ago ☐ 3-5 years ago ☐ 5-10 years ago ☐ Over 10 years

21. What was the job? (Find out what they actually did, not who they worked for)

Leave these blank, they will be filled in later
☐ Managerial ☐ Professional ☐ Assoc Professional ☐ Clerical
☐ Craft ☐ Protective ☐ Sales ☐ Plant operatives
☐ Other

22. Do you have a disability or long term illness that limits your daily activity?
☐ Yes ☐ No
23. Are you experiencing problems in your life with any of the following (read out each in turn and tick those that apply):
☐ Accommodation
☐ Employment
☐ Education or training
☐ Physical health
☐ Mental health
☐ Drugs
☐ Alcohol
☐ Money
☐ Committing crime
☐ Other areas of life (Please describe)

24. (If drug use is a problem) When did your drug use first become a problem for you, before you became homeless or afterwards?
☐ Before
☐ After

25. When did you first start to sell The Big Issue in the North?
☐ less than 6 months ago
☐ 6-12 months ago
☐ 1-2 years ago
☐ 2-3 years ago
☐ 3-5 years ago
☐ Over 5 years ago

26. How long have you been selling The Big Issue in the North for (this time around if more than one spell selling)?
☐ less than 6 months
☐ 6-12 months
☐ 1-2 years
☐ 2-3 years
☐ 3-5 years
☐ Over 5 years

27. Do you have a regular pitch for selling The Big Issue in the North?
☐ Yes
☐ No

28. Which zone do you sell in at the moment?
☐ Zone 1
☐ Zone 2
☐ Out-of-town

29. Do you have regular customers who buy The Big Issue in the North from you?
☐ Yes
☐ No

30. What effect has selling The Big Issue in the North had on your self-confidence?
☐ Increased it
☐ Made it worse
☐ No effect

31. What effect has selling The Big Issue in the North had on your motivation to change things in your life?
☐ Increased it
☐ Made it worse
☐ No effect

I AM NOW GOING TO READ YOU SOME STATEMENTS AND I WANT YOU TO SAY HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THEM. CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER FROM THE LIST.

32. I want to be drug free (ask only if a drug user)
☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

33. I want more from life than selling The Big Issue in the North
☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

34. I feel I have a good future ahead of me
☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

35. The public are generally supportive of The Big Issue in the North
☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

36. I want more of a say in how The Big Issue in the North is run
☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

37. The Big Issue in the North magazine is a good read
☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

38. Homeless people should do more for themselves
☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

ALL VENDORS MONITORING SCORES
Housing  Drugs & Alcohol  Health  Finance  EET  Pers Dev

Read this statement to the vendor and ask them to sign if they agree.

The information you have given us will be held by The Big Issue in the North Company and Trust. We will use it for research and to help us provide you with a better service. We may, in exceptional circumstances, pass information about you to a third party. This will only be done if we consider that you, or someone else, is at risk or in immediate danger.

I consent to The Big Issue in the North Trust holding and processing personal data about myself for the above purposes

(signature)