

**THE BIG
ISSUE**
FOUNDATION



2019-22

**Dismantling Poverty,
Creating Opportunity**

Who We Are

Our Vision

To create opportunities that will end poverty and exclusion for Big Issue vendors.

Our Mission

To connect Big Issue vendors to the vital support and specialist services that enable them to rebuild their lives and determine their own pathways to a better future.

Our Values

We believe in a hand up, not a handout

The Big Issue Foundation works exclusively with vendors that have chosen to embark on a business principled journey of self-help and change by selling The Big Issue magazine.

We believe in the power of partnership

We work with over 300 agencies, organisations and fellow charities every year to ensure Big Issue vendors are connected to the most appropriate health, housing and other specialist services in response to their identified support needs.

We believe in development

The Big Issue Foundation values personal development, growth and change above all else. Whether it's a big change or a small one, we aim to provide ongoing coaching and expert information, advice and guidance to our vendors so that they can take positive steps forward.

We believe in creating opportunity for Big Issue vendors

Our 'vendor centric' approach is entirely driven by the needs and aspirations of vendors that have committed to building their own micro business selling The Big Issue magazine.

We believe financial stability generated through magazine sales is the cornerstone for Big Issue vendors to first overcome symptoms of poverty and thereafter pursue further employment, training and personal aspirations when they feel ready to move on.

Our Impact

Service Brokerage is our core work. From office bases in Bath, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Bristol, London, Nottingham and Oxford our frontline workers – Service Brokers – are trained to accurately identify the health, housing, employment and other support needs of Big Issue vendors and provide expert information, advice and guidance in response to these needs.

Over the last three years (2016–19), we have supported **4,870 Big Issue vendors** to overcome financial and social exclusion by connecting them to specialist services and local provision best placed to address their individual support needs. Newfound financial stability generated through magazine sales and increased social equality in turn empowered vendors to achieve **2,381 outcomes**. These encompassed:

503
outcomes

Achieved Personal Sales Goals

Bristol based vendor Jack achieved his aim of selling over 200 mags in the seven days he was featured in The Big Issue's popular 'My Pitch' feature. This quantity of sales enabled him to take a well-earned week off.



234
outcomes

Rehoused in Suitable Accommodation

Kimberley was accompanied to sign a housing contract with Liberty Estate agents in Finsbury Park. Within two months, she progressed from living on the street in London to making a sustainable living selling The Big Issue and being permanently housed.



377
outcomes

Accessed Health and Wellbeing Services

Jim registered with a GP for the first time ever - he's been in the UK since 1997 - and has only ever accessed A&E in times when a health problem has been so pressing, he has had no other choice. He will now be able to access mainstream health care and receive treatment whenever he needs it.



127
outcomes

Accessed Addiction Treatment

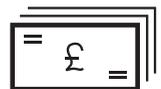
In Bath, Anthony was referred to The Beehive Centre where he is engaging with addiction treatment. He is now receiving specialist support from a drugs worker and beginning detox.



269
outcomes

Improved Finances & Money Management

With the help of Service Broker Becky, Gary was supported to contact his bank to sort out arrears he was accruing on an unarranged overdraft. He was initially very distressed about the situation but extremely relieved at the end of the call when the bank made a payment to clear the arrears.



309
outcomes

Pursued Employment & Volunteering Opportunities

After 15 years as a Big Issue vendor, Marc handed in his tabard and started working full-time on his vinyl record business in Devizes.



116
outcomes

Engaged with Education and Training

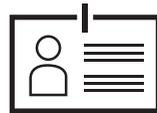
John recently sat a CPC exam (Heavy Goods Vehicle Training) and achieved a 100% pass mark. This is significant step toward his goal of become an HGV driver.



115
outcomes

Successfully Obtained ID

Pablo had lost his Citizen Card and was very worried because of Brexit uncertainty that he would be asked to leave the country having no official ID. We applied for a replacement online and it arrived within three weeks. He is now considerably more relaxed.



74
outcomes

Opened a Bank/Credit Union/Post Office Account

After months of persuading, Adrian finally went to the One Stop Shop and opened a savings account with Bristol Credit Union. He is now really motivated about saving for a van.



257
outcomes

Improved Relationships & Achieved Personal Aspirations

Dave is now selling prints of his artwork through The Big Issue shop and is receiving a commission from every sale.



Paul – West Bridgford (Nottingham)

“ The Big Issue Foundation has been a constant over the years; helping me in lots of different ways from sustaining my flat to accessing medical treatment when my health took a knock.

I've recently invested in a card reader and am proud to be the first vendor in the East Midlands to get one. I picked up 16 to 17 extra customers in the first week alone so it's already paid for itself!

”

Challenges Facing Big Issue Vendors

The Big Issue was first launched in 1991 by Gordon Roddick and John Bird in response to the growing number of rough sleepers on the streets of London and a shared belief that the key to solving the problem of homelessness lay in helping people to help themselves.

To complement this self-help ethos, The Big Issue Foundation was established in 1995 as an independently registered charity committed to creating opportunities for Big Issue vendors to work themselves out of poverty by selling the magazine. 25 years on, the nature of poverty and financial and social exclusion has changed yet the same symptoms still perpetuate. Some of the biggest societal challenges facing Big Issue vendors in 2019 include:

1. A Homelessness Crisis

320,000

people are currently homeless in the UK. This equates to a year on year increase of 13,000 – or 4% rise – which is the equivalent to



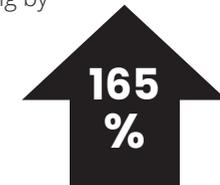
new people becoming homeless every day.

2. Cuts to Services

Government spending on support services for single homeless people in England are



than they were in 2009. This is despite rough sleeping – the most distressing form of homelessness – rising by

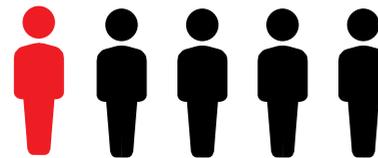


over the same period.

3. The 'Poverty Premium'

14.3 million

– or 1 in 5 people – in the UK currently live in poverty. On average, this group pay £490 more per year for essential goods and services than the rest of UK households.



4. Income Inequality

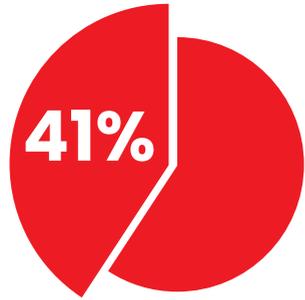
The UK is not projected to meet its Sustainable Development Goal target on inequality between 2019-24. Income growth for the poorest 40% is expected to remain lower than overall growth rather than exceeding it.



5. Financial Exclusion

1.5 million

adults do not have access to a bank account. Of this number,

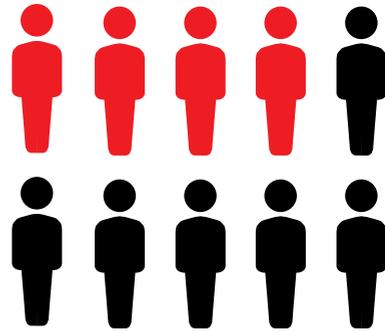


either currently do not have the right ID to open one, or they do not feel like they have the right form of verification.

6. Welfare Reform

4 in 10

Universal Credit claimants said they were experiencing problems keeping up with bills and credit commitments. 113,000 new claims were paid late in 2017 with 1 in 5 claimants not receiving their full payment on time.



Footnotes

- https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/articles/320,000_people_in_britain_are_now_homeless,_as_numbers_keep_rising - Shelter Report (November 2018).
- <https://www.mungos.org/publication/fixing-funding-for-homelessness-services-summary/> - St Mungo's Home for Good Campaign (April 2019).
- <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2018> - Joseph Rowntree Foundation: UK Poverty 2018.
<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/geography/pfrc/pfrc1614-poverty-premium-key-findings.pdf> - Bristol University: Paying to be Poor Report (November 2016).
- <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/the-living-standards-outlook-2019/> - Resolution Foundation: The Living Standards Outlook 2019 (February 2019).
- https://www.lloydsbank.com/assets/media/pdfs/banking_with_us/whats-happening/LB-Consumer-Digital-Index-2018-Report.pdf - Lloyd Bank: UK Consumer Digital Index 2018.
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/714842/universal-credit-full-service-claimant-survey.pdf - Department for Work & Pensions: Universal Credit Service Survey (June 2018).
<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Rolling-out-Universal-Credit.pdf> - National Audit Office: Rolling Out Universal Credit (June 2018).



June - Bournemouth

// I am eternally grateful for the support from The Big Issue Foundation and all my wonderful customers - you have all helped me so much.

I've always had a thirst for learning and thanks to the Vendor Support

Fund, I've passed a lot of different courses. I completed my Level 3 English having struggled with reading and writing all my life and since then gained further Level 2 qualifications in Door Supervision and Customer Service. I'm more than ready **//** now to get a 'proper job'.

Developing the Strategy

Composition of this strategy has been informed by many different voices. Last year, we commissioned J H Consultancy to complete an independent evaluation of our Service Brokerage model that harnessed the feedback of Senior Managers, Frontline Staff, Volunteers and Big Issue vendors.

The purpose was to identify notable areas of strength, weakness and impact whilst making key action-based recommendations for future service development.

In addition, we worked with Applied Predictive Technology (APT) to undertake a 'data dive' of our database to gain a deeper understanding of the range, complexity and changing support needs of Big Issue vendors over the last decade.

These pieces of work – together with feedback from the 300 health, housing, financial and other specialist agencies that we work in partnership with – has enabled us to identify the key drivers for 'dismantling poverty and creating opportunities' for Big Issue vendors:



Increasing Social Inclusion

Housing

Housing advice, rehoused in safe and secure accommodation, ongoing tenancy support.

Education & Training

Attend opportunities workshops, enrol on education and training courses.

Health & Wellbeing

Register with a GP, access specialist health services, e.g. mental health, addiction treatment.

Financial Capability

Open a bank account, budgeting support, access to a specialist financial service, e.g. debt advice.

Employment

Employability workshops, job search, CV writing, interview skills.

Reducing Financial Exclusion

Sales Skills

Complete induction and obtain official Big Issue vendor badge and tabard.

Sales Progression

Assigned a pitch and build up a customer base.

Sales Maximisation

Increase numbers of magazines purchased and sold.

Our Strategic Goals

Over the next three years, our overarching objective is to provide **'expert information, advice and guidance and a universality of financial and social support'** to Big Issue vendors across the country. We will strengthen existing staff deployment alongside expanding our national footprint to parts of the UK that do not currently have a Big Issue Foundation presence.

To achieve this ambition, we plan to double our turnover from one to two million pounds and identify and secure sustainable revenue streams to minimise risk and ensure a consistency of frontline service delivery posts. Underpinning our task will be a steadfast commitment to the following 5 strategic goals:

1 Vendor Engagement

Our work will remain led by the needs, wishes and ambitions of Big Issue Vendors. We believe that personal choice is fundamental to inclusive participation in democratic society and that self-help and determination create personal journeys away from the poverty of peoples' experiences.

We will achieve this by:

- Focussing our efforts on early intervention, vendor engagement and ongoing assessment from our offices and on the street pitches of vendors.
- Putting Big Issue vendors at the centre of our service development through consultation and first-hand involvement in the design, delivery, feedback and future shape of our service offer.
- Ensuring that our frontline team are equipped and targeted to respond to the demographic diversity of the vending population; particularly the cross sections that struggle most to access mainstream services.

2 Continuous Improvement

We will continue to improve the complimentary and flexible services we provide for Big Issue vendors, measuring our impact and reflecting upon our learning to ensure our actions match our sentiments.

We will achieve this by:

- Investing in a new vendor case management system and embedding associated KPIs into our own monitoring frameworks to gain a deeper understanding of vendors' needs and aspirations.
- Expanding the reach and impact of our financial inclusion tools such as the Vendor Support Fund.
- Maximising vendor engagement with our specialist 'Theme Weeks' covering topics such as Health, Finances and Opportunities.
- Ensuring that our service team is representative of the diversity of Big Issue vendors, including people with lived experience of homelessness and having the ability to communicate in non-English languages such as Romanian.
- Investing charitable funding in response to vendor need.
- Seeking to achieve further external accreditation of our services, e.g. Matrix and/or City & Guilds.

3 Scalability

Expanding the reach of Service Brokerage in response to the local needs of Big Issue vendors in current and new regions with the explicit intention of making Service Brokerage accessible and adaptable to the needs of all Big Issue vendors; irrespective of their geographical location.

We will achieve this by:

- Investing charitable funding to increase the capacity of our existing frontline teams to reduce 'stretch', improve the frequency of vendor engagement and ensure early assessment opportunities are maximised.
- Maintaining an ongoing review and response to the growing number of vendors who are not just 'homeless' but are living in poverty and present complex health, housing and other multiple support needs.
- Reviewing opportunities to move into new regions where The Big Issue Foundation doesn't currently have a presence.

4 Partnership Working

Big Issue vendors face a host of complex housing, health and financial issues. We will continue to work collaboratively with a wide range of health, housing and other specialist organisations to ensure vendors always receive the service most appropriate to their individual support needs.

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring our position in the service landscape continues to complement rather than duplicate the offer of partner and third sector agencies; guaranteeing that we remain responsive and flexible to the changing support needs of Big Issue vendors.
- Continuing to innovate and adapt services to modern day opportunities, including financial inclusion and the emerging cashless society.
- Ensuring that our learnings and insights are shared with sector colleagues and publicised and promoted to the wider community through media and collaborative campaigning work.
- Seeking out collaborative partnerships that will enhance our service and fundraising offers and ensuring that the lives of Big Issue vendors remain front and centre to all that we do and say.

5 Best Practice

We will ensure that our charitable work is supported by exemplary levels of governance and compliance with all relevant regulatory and statutory bodies.

We will achieve this by:

- Independent evaluation of our services to measure and demonstrate the impact they have on the lives of Big Issue vendors.
- Investing in ongoing staff training and development for all our team members and Trustees.
- Continuing to ensure that we are fully compliant with Fundraising regulations and the official Fundraising Regulatory body.
- Continuing to ensure compliance with GDPR regulations in theory and in practice.
- Maintaining high levels of diversity and skills set within our governing Trustee Board, including representatives with lived experiences of the issues that we are tackling on behalf of Big Issue vendors.



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