



# THE BIG ISSUE FOUNDATION

## Introducing the work of The Big Issue Foundation and Magazine

### Desired learning outcomes:

- For pupils to begin to understand issues around homelessness and vulnerable housing.
- For pupils to understand how The Big Issue magazine works as a micro business.
- For pupils to understand the purpose of The Big Issue Foundation in it's role as a support mechanism for vendors.

**Themes:** homelessness, social justice, rights & responsibilities

*Time allocation: 15-20 minutes*

*\*Before you begin – please be mindful of the living situations of the children in your school.*

### Materials required:



- 2 umbrellas

- 2 cardboard boxes



- 4 bin bags

- 2 newspapers



- Stopwatch/Sand timer

- The Big Issue assembly video or video transcript

- Assembly PowerPoint



*(slide 1)*

### **Introduction:** Hands up if you....

*(2 minutes)*

Ask the children to 'put your hands up if you....'

- have a pet?
- have a brother or sister?
- have a TV in the living room?
- sleep in a bed?

All of the children should have their hands up for the last question.

Ask them to quietly think about what it would be like to not have a bed to sleep in.

How would you feel? Invite answers from one or two children.

*(slide 2)*

### **Activity:** One minute bed challenge

*(5 minutes)*

*You need two teams of three volunteers for this activity.*

*Provide each team with a cardboard box filled with 2 bin bags, a newspaper and an umbrella. Use the timer on slide 2 of the PowerPoint or alternatively use a sand timer.*

### **Explain**

Some people do not have a home or even a bed to sleep in. They have to sleep on the street. They have to be creative with the things they find to keep them warm, dry and as comfortable as possible.

You have one minute, to make a bed that would keep you **warm, comfortable and safe** for a night, if you had to sleep on the street.

When the minute is up, ask the volunteers to stand away from their 'beds'.

Ask the children to vote for the best bed by clapping or putting their hands up.

*\*If you have more time you can check if the bed is waterproof and windproof.*

*Use a watering can for rain and a hairdryer or fan for wind.*

*(slide 3)*

### **Explanation: Street life**

*(3 minutes)*

That was a fun game but for people who have to sleep on the street it's no laughing matter.

How many people do you think sleep on the street in England every night because they have nowhere else to go?

100? 500? 1000? More?

It's actually about 2,200 people that have to sleep outside every night. <sup>(1)</sup>

That's more people than are in this school!

To help the children visualise just how many people that is on any given night the figure correlates approximately to:

10 x single form entry schools (R-Y6)

5 x two form entry schools

3.5 x three form entry

*(slide 4)*

### **The Big Issue: How it works**

If you can't tell people where you live it makes it really difficult to do lots of things like see a doctor or get a job.

*(slide 5)*

Put your hands up if you've heard of The Big Issue before?

Does anyone know what it is?

The Big Issue is a magazine that was set up over 20 years ago to help people who are homeless or vulnerably housed (that means people in hostels or sleeping at friends' houses because they can't stay anywhere else). It helps by giving them a job so they can start to help themselves.

*(slides 6 and 7)*

Big Issue vendors buy the magazine for £1.25 and then they sell it on the street for £2.50. They use their own money to buy the magazine and every time they sell a magazine they earn money.

Have you ever noticed someone selling The Big Issue?

*(slides 8 and 9)*

The Big Issue Foundation is a charity that was set up to support people who sell The Big Issue. It helps them with things like finding a safe place to stay or getting into college to learn new things so that they can get a job. The Big Issue Foundation is able to help vendors using money it raises through fundraising.

*(slide 10)*

### **Watch: The Big Issue Assembly video**

*(3 minutes)*

We're going to watch a video about Michael Murphy who sells the Big Issue and they are going to tell you a bit more about why they do it.

*(slide 11)*

### **Think: How can you make a difference?**

*(2 minutes)*

So we've heard from Michael Murphy about what it's like to have no home or job. We've learnt that lots of people really want to make their lives better. The Big Issue is helping people to make changes for the better by giving them a hand up and not a handout.

One thing that can be hard for someone selling The Big Issue is that people can be rude to them or ignore them when they are trying to do their job. 1 in 3 homeless people don't speak to anyone at all in a whole day so they can get very lonely!

We all know it can make you really sad when someone is rude to you or they ignore you when you are trying to talk to them. So today in school if you notice someone in the playground who is on their own or feeling down – show them you care by asking if they are ok or by inviting them to join in with your game.

*(slide 12)*

When you go home today, share with your family some of what you've learnt about being homeless and the work of The Big Issue. Ask them if they knew that Big Issue vendors buy the magazine with their own money. Find out if anyone in your family has ever bought The Big Issue.

*(slide 13)*

And when you get into bed, take a moment to remember Michael Murphy and all the people who will be sleeping on the street tonight.

1. A figure of 2,181 people sleeping rough in any one night was recorded in England in Autumn 2011. People sheltering in hostels are excluded from the count. The figure has risen 23% in one year. Source <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/roughsleepingautumn2011>