



THE BIG ISSUE

FOUNDATION

Annual Report 2018

TBIF Mission and Vision

To complement the self-help ethos of The Big Issue magazine, The Big Issue Foundation was established in 1995 as an independently registered charity.

Our vision is to create opportunities that will end poverty and exclusion for Big Issue vendors and our mission is 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.

We currently support over 1,390 Big Issue vendors every year across London, the South Coast, Oxfordshire, the Midlands and the South West.



A message from our CEO

Welcome to our Annual Review. These few pages seek to pull together our recent achievements and share some insight into the real-life stories and impact that we are all proud to have played a part in enabling in the past year; no easy task to pick and choose when faced with so much good work from our frontline team.

Big Issue vendors are working in our communities, taking business-based journeys of personal change away from poverty, away from exclusion and the many different facets of 'homelessness' in our society. Vendors are trading in tough times, the distressing visibility of rough sleeping and the continual pressures placed on people with diminishing support, prompting new calls for action and new measures to be taken by Government and Local Authorities.

We deliver real-life opportunities through collaboration and partnership work. We work on the ground, avoiding service duplication and respecting the expertise of sector colleagues to deliver personalised, bespoke support for people

as individuals. We understand that 'one-size' does indeed not fit all. Flexibility, compassion and professional drive underpin our core values, change for the better remains a driving objective.

During the last year, we continued to reach and enhance the quality of service available to Big Issue vendors region wide. Collaborative and innovative partnerships were established including with Southampton Football Club. Our popular corporate learning and development days saw over 300 professionals leave the comfort of their offices to work with Big Issue vendors on the street, learning, amongst many things, how hard and alienating it can be to not be who you know yourself to be but to be who others think you are. Challenging stigma and prejudice is critical for us.

We played an active role in partner charity Crisis' initiative to shift the language, understanding and debate around homelessness and exclusion, reflecting both the political and humanitarian issues at its heart. We were a founding member of the 'London Homelessness Charities Group' and worked with the Mayor of London's office to help deliver more resource and support where and when it is needed most. We are a small charity but together we can do more.

In the coming year we will implement our 3-year plan to double the level of our service provision, building sustainable revenue streams and seek new and innovative ways to improve and grow our impact for the people we are here to assist.

Our work is made possible only by the generosity of our supporters and funders and I commend each person who has put their money where their heart is and helped us to make some dreams into realities and opportunities for the future. I am proud to play a very small part in the achievements found within this report. Please do not take my word for it - read on!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen Roberts". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing 'S' and a cursive 'Roberts'.

Where we work

The Big Issue Foundation works directly from offices in Bath, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Bristol, London, Nottingham and Oxford; locations with high densities of Big Issue vendors. From these small bases, our frontline Service Brokerage teams reach out to the Big Issue vending community across the UK.



Gary – Bristol

“I started selling the magazine in Bristol last October. Things were not going great for me, but The Big Issue gave me a way of earning money and working towards something better.

I sell in a nice part of town and I work hard – I’m smashing all my own selling targets”.



Julie – Bournemouth

“I’m grateful for what The Big Issue and The Big Issue Foundation have done for me.

They’ve helped me get my life back on track and once again achieve my independence”.



Lynne – Birmingham

“The last 3 years have been an uphill struggle but I now live independently in my own flat. I stopped drinking 2 years ago now.

This would not have been possible without the help and support of Tom from The Big Issue Foundation.

I have just started college and my future looks bright. I hold my head high and am now reaching for the stars”.



Dave – London

“I’m making a living, I’m self-employed, I’m independent.

What is it they say? Practice makes perfect! I’m a lot more confident now, because of all these opportunities through the Foundation and the magazine”.



What we do Service Brokerage

Service Brokerage is our core work. Built on the unique trust developed between the Foundation and Big Issue vendors over the last 10 years, 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 best able to address these needs.

Our approach is ‘vendor centric’. We work under the direction of Big Issue vendors; supporting them to improve their income equality through magazine sales and achieve a position of financial stability from which they can begin to address housing, health and other symptoms of poverty and social exclusion that have previously held them back.



Financial Inclusion

Increase income equality.

Sales Skills – complete induction and obtain official badge & tabard.

Sales Progression – assign a pitch and build up a customer base.

Sales Maximisation – increase numbers of magazines purchased and sold.



Social Inclusion

Increase equality and create opportunity.

Housing – provide housing advice, rehouse in secure accommodation, tenancy support.

Financial Capability – open a bank account, budgeting, access a specialist financial service, e.g. debt advice.

Health & Wellbeing – register with a GP, access specialist health services, e.g. mental health, addiction treatment.

Education & Training – attend opportunities workshops, enrol on education and training courses.

Employment – employability workshops, job search, CV writing, interview skills.

How we do it The Journey of Change

We aim to help vendors continue their journey away from social and financial exclusion, by connecting them with the support and solutions that will help them continue to rebuild their lives. Our Service Brokers do this through a structured process of:

1. Induction

- The induction is the first point of contact with a new Big Issue vendor.
- It aims to capture basic information about the vendor, explain how we work and convey some simple sales advice.
- The induction concludes with the signing of the Vendor Agreement.



2. Initial Assessment & Vendor Action Plan

- The Service Brokerage Assessment identifies the support needs of a vendor and promotes the range of services we can help them to access.
- Some support needs can be addressed immediately such as access to emergency accommodation whilst longer term goals – including obtaining ID and opening a bank account – are collated into an Action Plan and manageably worked through on a step by step basis.



3. Review & New Action Plan

- All our vendors work towards clear goals that we call outcomes. Outcomes achieved by vendors are formalised and tracked through their individual Action Plans and Outcome Star Assessments.
- Action Plans and Assessments are regularly reviewed – typically every 3 months – to discuss any barriers to progression and set new goals accordingly.

Review Action Plan

Action Plans provide a structure for vendors to become financially independent selling The Big Issue magazine in the short term whilst in the long term encouraging vendors to think about realistic career and life goals when they feel ready to move on.

Outcome Star Assessment

An Outcome Star Assessment can help to provide structure for vendors as they work towards Sales Skills, Housing, Employment/ Training and other key outcome areas. It measures a vendor's progress on a 1-10 scale against each outcome area; recognising a vendor's journey is not necessarily linear and accommodating our belief in self-improvement.

4. Dismantling Poverty, Creating Opportunity

By increasing the income equality of Big Issue vendors through their magazine sales and creating improved health, housing and employment opportunities for them to actively contribute to mainstream society as participative citizens, we enable vendors to work towards an end goal of financial stability and social inclusion.

Other Ways We Support Big Issue Vendors

Alongside Service Brokerage, our Service teams help vendors improve their financial capacity and realise their ambitions in several other ways. These include:

Vendor Tabard Scheme

The red tabards act as a uniform; identifying vendors as official sellers of the magazine. The highly visible presence means that vendors are instantly recognisable to members of the public which in turn helps to improve their sales.

Vendor Savings Scheme

Our Vendor Savings Scheme aims to foster a saving culture amongst Big Issue vendors. It is not designed to replace bank/credit union accounts but instead encourages vendors to budget and change their mindset to move away from day to day living.

Vendor Support Fund

The Vendor Support Fund (VSF) is an enabler for Big Issue vendors to achieve employment, training and other personal aspirations which require financial support. The fund is open all year round and accessible to Big Issue vendors throughout the UK. Vendors are helped to identify goals and aspirations and assisted to complete an application form. They then save and contribute 50% towards their chosen cost with the VSF Fund covering the remainder.

Theme Projects

Each year we run theme projects focussing on needs and future aspirations identified by our vendors. These include:

Sales & Money – The Sales and Money Project helps vendors to make informed financial decisions and think of new ways to increase their magazine sales. Topics covered include Sales Training, Budgeting and Money Management, Banking (improving knowledge of and confidence in using financial services), Saving (towards both short and long-term goals) and Debt (setting up repayment schedules and managing pre-existing arrears).

Health & Wellbeing – This project seeks to promote, inform and encourage positive health among Big Issue vendors. It focuses on improving the mental and physical health and wellbeing of vendors covering screenings and vaccinations, nutritional advice and guidance and health needs relating to alcohol, drugs and sexual health awareness.

Opportunities – The Opportunities project provides activities that focus on promoting an aspirational culture and encourages vendors to think about future career paths and personal aspirations. Topics covered include Paid work, Voluntary work, Work Placements and Training, Employability Skills, Education and Personal Wellbeing.

June's Story

Bournemouth based Big Issue vendor June, 62, says:

“I am eternally grateful for the support from The Big Issue Foundation, its supporters and all my wonderful customers – you have all helped me so much.

I've always had a thirst for learning and with the support of The Big Issue Foundation's Vendor Support Fund, I've passed a lot of different courses. In 2016, 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”.





Eftenoiu Paun, Birmingham

Birmingham's New Street Station now has its second Big Issue vendor! We accompanied Eftenoiu Paun to an interview with New Street's manager, where we explained Paun's dedication to work and the long hours he has put in since he started selling The Big Issue. He is thrilled to be selling in the station in the city he now calls home.

"I'm lucky enough to have a special new pitch inside New Street station, arranged with Network Rail. It's a great place to sell the magazine, with so many people coming and going. It must be one of the busiest places in the country, but there is still time to have nice little talks with some of my customers.

I'm from a place in Romania called Craiova – a city in the south. I've been in the UK for over five years now. I wanted to come here to try to make a

better life. When I first came to Birmingham, my situation was pretty bad. I struggled to find work. I had nowhere to stay. And I had nowhere to even wash. After about six months of trying to find jobs, I started to sell The Big Issue.

Things gradually began to improve. I earned some money and I began going to English classes once a week at The Big Issue office. And I began to feel more at home here, more like I was part of the city.

For a long time, I was staying with a friend of mine – sleeping on his sofa. Before that I was sleeping outside. But just recently I was told I have a room in a shared accommodation place, organised by one of the housing associations. I am very happy about that. It will be a big change for me, to have a room of my own, but I hope I can adjust."



**Susannah - Service Broker
Team Leader (Birmingham)**

We were really happy to offer the pitch at New Street to Paun, as he has really put the hours in since he started selling The Big Issue. From the moment he started over five years ago, he has worked from 6am-6pm, 7 days a week, in all of the weather Birmingham has thrown at him!

We struggled to communicate when he started with us, and were pleased to be able to offer our in-house English conversation class to

him. This meant that his confidence grew, and his conversations with customers increased, which meant his customer base increased too! Since arriving in the UK, he has struggled with finding accommodation. Now through Big Issue contacts, he is in shared accommodation. It has been worth the wait, as he finally has a place to call his own. His enthusiasm for life, positive outlook, determination and work ethic are inspiring. It is a pleasure to be able to reward these attributes with this selling opportunity, and we look forward to supporting him in the next chapter of his story.

A Week in the Life of

Hannah and Michael, Oxford Service Brokers

Monday by Michael

Today is our busiest day. The new magazine is out and vendors arrive early to buy their copies, book pitches and plan their sales for the week ahead. I take this opportunity to chat to vendors about last week's sales, what they have going on and what support they might need.

I talk to a vendor about the upcoming Big Sleep Out. He's taken part in previous events, and is looking forward to doing so again. We talk about his fundraising efforts, travel arrangements and his invitation to speak at the event. He is apprehensive but proud of the opportunity to talk about his experiences to Big Issue Foundation supporters. He's a great ambassador for our work and the power of people to overcome adversity.

Later, I meet with a vendor who is new to Oxford. He wants to return to college to gain English qualifications and pursue further education. We make a plan to help him reach this goal. Hannah and I will be on hand to support him with this going forward.

Tuesday by Michael

Today I'm supporting a vendor to move into a hostel. Lionel was evicted and his options to find a new place to live have been limited. Hannah and I have worked hard to secure a hostel bed for him and ensure that he doesn't have to sleep rough. I meet Lionel at the hostel and help him take his bags to his new room. Lionel is glad to have a fresh start and put his recent difficulties behind him. I arrange to meet him again next week to help him resettlement. We'll notify relevant organisations of his new address and begin work on tackling his debts.

I'm in constant communication with his support network to ensure we're all working together to support Lionel.

I'm off now until Friday and leave the vendors in Hannah's very capable hands.

Wednesday by Hannah

I find out that a vendor has fallen behind with his energy bills. I help him to set up an affordable repayment plan before he goes out to work for the day. He'll be able to have a warm shower again.

Another vendor arrives for his three-month review: we do this with all the vendors to assess how things are improving, set new goals and plan interventions that might help them. He's putting a lot of effort into finding accommodation and is working with his key worker to find local authority housing. We discuss his hopes to go back to building work, and decide that part of his journey towards this goal might be taking up new hobbies so I give him information about a football group and a local Rotary club.

I meet with other local organisations that are working to support rough sleepers. We work collaboratively to offer the best possible support. Afterwards, I walk around the sales pitches in Oxford city centre and check in with the vendors as they are selling.

Thursday by Hannah

Our volunteer, Mair, takes flyers to the Simon House hostel and hosts a drop-in session for anyone interested in selling the magazine. Next, she's joined by a representative from Crisis Skylight and together they visit vendors at their



pitches to inform them about the courses on offer at Crisis Skylight.

Meanwhile, I see three people who are out begging and offer them the opportunity of The Big Issue as a positive alternative. They each take a contact card.

We plan a new project: Mair will collect some quirky quotes and create material that will help the public get to know their vendors.

Friday by Michael

It's an early start this morning for our monthly outreach with the rough sleeper team. I give out my

card and encourage a couple of people to visit the office to get badged up.

Later, I induct a new vendor who is rough sleeping with his dog. I refer him to the rough sleeper outreach team, which can support him off the streets, and also to the Dogs Trust Hope Project so he can access free veterinary treatment for his dog. He's keen to move away from begging towards a more constructive lifestyle. Today he's made the first step towards social and financial inclusion and The Big Issue Foundation will be there to support him on this journey.



Stuart Bainbridge, Bath

"I've been on this pitch since September. Another vendor had it before, and so now I'm trying to get some new clients and find some more people who might want to buy the magazine. I'm also getting to know the market people – they're good as gold.

It's going well. Last week I sold 55 which is very good. For me, selling the magazine is all about being polite and courteous. I don't shout things, but I say, 'Good morning ma'am, would you like a Big Issue today?'

My customers are very good. There's one guy called Mark who works in the market, every day he'll bring me coffee, maybe a home-made flapjack or some banana cake. He buys the magazine every Monday.

I'm sleeping rough in Bath at the moment. I change where I sleep every night, but I can't see any prospect of anything more settled in the near

future because I don't have a local connection.

I'm a head chef by trade and I used to have my own business running a café and catering firm in Cheltenham. I was going to people's houses, putting on birthday parties, wedding parties, stuff like that. But it was too stressful, and eventually I

had a nervous breakdown.

Then I just ended up on the streets – in Bristol, Manchester, London, Birmingham and now in Bath. But now I'm selling the magazine and I'm doing well. For me it's about respecting people.

If they're having a bad day

you go up and say, 'I'm here if you want to talk.' I do that for all my customers.

I'm done with catering now, it's too stressful. I'd like to get into working with homeless people. I'm interested in doing outreach work, getting out in the morning to give rough sleepers tea and coffee and trying to get to know them."

"I'm interested in doing outreach work, getting out to rough sleepers in the morning and trying to get to know them."



Lewis, Service Broker Team Leader, Bristol & Bath

Stuart began selling The Big Issue in September and quickly began building up his sales and regular customers at Green Park. He was eager to engage with the support on offer and through the course of reviews and conversations,

we were able to identify key areas where Stuart could take steps forward. Over the next few months, The Big Issue Foundation was able to help him move toward opening a bank account and registering with a GP, to apply for a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and to explore his longer-term aspiration to become a mentor for other homeless people.

A Week in the Life of

Ana Potcoava, London Service Broker

Monday

It's our busiest day. We'll be focusing on catching up with vendors who only visit our office once a week to pick up magazines and make ourselves available to speak to anyone having issues right away. I chat with Alex about the benefits of going to his therapy Tai Chi class and encourage him to not miss it again.

In the afternoon, following a conversation we had earlier this month with a council worker about alternative giving in the area, my colleague Emmie and I have a meeting with the local authorities regarding a begging hotspot. We decide on a strategic approach to the problem by offering those at-risk legal ways of making an income, such as selling the magazine, along with the much-needed support from other local agencies. We will also work closely with the PCSO and the railway staff to ensure potential vendors will not be approached by drug dealers in the area. The more agencies we bring in on this, the more likely it is that we give vulnerable people a better chance.

Tuesday

I've been putting together more information about family planning in response to some conversations I had with some female Roma vendors during Health Week. Because a lot of women from this community don't speak English, I've created a leaflet with all the relevant information in Romanian. Some of our projects and campaigns have very long-term goals; maybe this generation of young Roma women will not make full use of their options when it comes to contraception, but we are raising awareness. This gives the next generation a chance to make more informed choices.

Wednesday

I meet up with Dion, who wants to find his way out of an alcohol addiction that is ruining his health. However, he's finding it very difficult while also sleeping rough. He's been in touch with various agencies about this, but it feels like the rate of progress punishes his decision more than it rewards it. It's endlessly frustrating to see someone who wants the change but hasn't got access to the resources he needs. His case is not unique. Finding the right environment where someone like Dion can talk openly and gain the confidence and support he needs is where we come in. By facilitating the process, Big Issue Foundation service brokers bring new hope to the lives of those who struggle to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Thursday

I head to Liverpool Street. I'm happy to find out that Alex has attended his Tai-Chi class, a major step towards re-engaging with society, and good therapy for his illness. He is very excited about his next class, and I'm happy to hear he took my advice on-board. We also talk about the possibility of having him on a corporate placement with a law firm, which I think would suit him great and increase his chances of finding employment. Whilst on the subject, Vince approaches me to enquire about a pitch in Liverpool Street train station - again an opportunity I think would suit him very well. I also offer a vendor help through the Vendor Support Fund for a phone.

Friday

It's been a busy week and I'm very much looking forward to the next edition of the magazine. I make

sure I've seen everyone and kept good records of anything that may have changed from the previous week. We always try to tailor our support to the needs of those we work with, so accurate record keeping is a must. Next week we have a national Service Brokers' meeting. It will be good to exchange tips, tricks, and operational hacks. My colleagues' expertise is invaluable, so the meeting should be a great opportunity for our team to see different angles and opinions. It all looks very positive, and every small step we make takes us closer to fulfilling our mission. After all, sometimes all one needs is a hand up at the right time.





Bill Webb, Bournemouth

"I had a nervous breakdown caused by overworking. My flat was attached to my job and I lost everything in one go. I'd been homeless a year, lived six months in a cave, spent two months walking the coast with my dog Chloe sleeping wherever we could find shelter. When we arrived in Bournemouth we were tired. I asked a Big Issue vendor if there was anywhere safe to put my tent for the night and he showed me where he was camping. That evening he persuaded me to try selling The Big Issue.

Service Broker Liam did my assessment the very next morning. My medication had run out, so Liam arranged for me to see a doctor and Chloe was registered with The Dogs Trust.

We found out I had Hepatitis C at a drop-in health clinic at the Foundation's Bournemouth office. I was offered treatment but because the side effects are so severe I wasn't allowed to start until I was housed.

Eventually we found a flat but there was another obstacle: I needed a lot of money for the deposit. The Big Issue Foundation came to the rescue, liaising with other agencies to arrange a deposit bond. I was finally able to move in and start treatment.

Then my landlord announced that he was

selling the flat and we were back where we started; sharing a tent in the park. Luckily the team in Bournemouth put me in touch with Street Services, and by October they found me a place in supported accommodation which saw me indoors for Christmas. The flat had no furniture but thanks to The Big Issue Foundation's Vendor Support Fund, Chloe and I now have a fully furnished home with a life time tenancy at a rent we can afford.

"I'd been homeless a year, lived six months in a cave. My dog Chloe and I were tired when we found shelter in Bournemouth"

I've given numerous speeches over the years about my experiences of homelessness at Big Issue Foundation events and also to students at Bournemouth University. It's been excellent preparation for my new job as a tour guide at

Southbourne Ales.

I used to run a pub on the Isle of Grain in Kent so have always been into real ale. I started at Southbourne Ales over Easter and now give tours Wednesday to Sunday. Hopefully I'll see a few of my regulars down here for a tour soon!

My customers have been really supportive, and I've already had 12 good luck cards. I want to take this opportunity to thank them and The Big Issue for all the support over the past six years – I don't think I could have done this without them".

Our Impact in 2017-18

We believe financial stability generated through magazine sales is the cornerstone for Big Issue vendors to first overcome poverty and social exclusions and thereafter pursue employment, training and other opportunities in mainstream society.

All our vendors work towards clear goals that we call outcomes. In 2017-18, we supported Big Issue vendors to achieve 642 positive outcomes. These encompassed:



172
vendors

Achieved personal sales goals

172 Big Issue vendors supported to increase their sales skills, build up a regular customer base and exceed weekly sales targetset.



83
vendors

Improved finances and money management

83 Big Issue vendors supported to improve their budgeting skills and address any underlying debt issues.



60
vendors

Rehoused in suitable accommodation

60 Big Issue vendors supported to access safe and secure accommodation and prevent future homelessness by providing ongoing tenancy support.



90
vendors

Accessed health and wellbeing services

90 Big Issue vendors referred to GP, dentist, mental health and other specialist health services. Service Brokers work in partnership with local health professionals to identify the physical and mental health needs of Big Issue vendors and make intelligent referrals to the right health services.



23
vendors

Accessed addiction treatment

28 Big Issue vendors struggling with drugs and/or alcohol misuse were supported to access and remain engaged with addiction treatment programmes.



53
vendors

Progressed into employment & volunteering opportunities

53 Big Issue vendors supported to explore future career opportunities. This includes harnessing the transferable skills vendors learn by selling the magazine and helping them update their CV, job search, interview coaching and job applications.



100%
pass mark

Progressed into education and training

52 Big Issue vendors supported to add to their skills set and pursue aspirations. This includes referral to specialist training courses, e.g. Construction Skills Certification, Customer Service Skills and Railway Track & Signalling and relevant volunteer placements.



26
vendors

Successfully obtained official ID

26 Big Issue vendors supported to gain official ID. A lack of ID is a huge barrier to vendors wishing to open a bank account, register an address and/or claim benefits (e.g. housing support). The most common forms of ID required are a birth certificate and/or passport. Service Brokers support vendors to gather all necessary documentation and contribute towards the fee through the Vendor Support Fund, if needed.



78
vendors

Improved relationships & achieved personal aspirations

78 Big Issue vendors supported to reconnect with family and achieve other personal aspirations.



George, Big Issue Vendor

During his Corporate Placement with the Wellcome Trust in London, Big Issue vendor George was commissioned to write a paper on the physiological effects of depression. He is hopeful that his paper will be published in the medical journal Open Access.

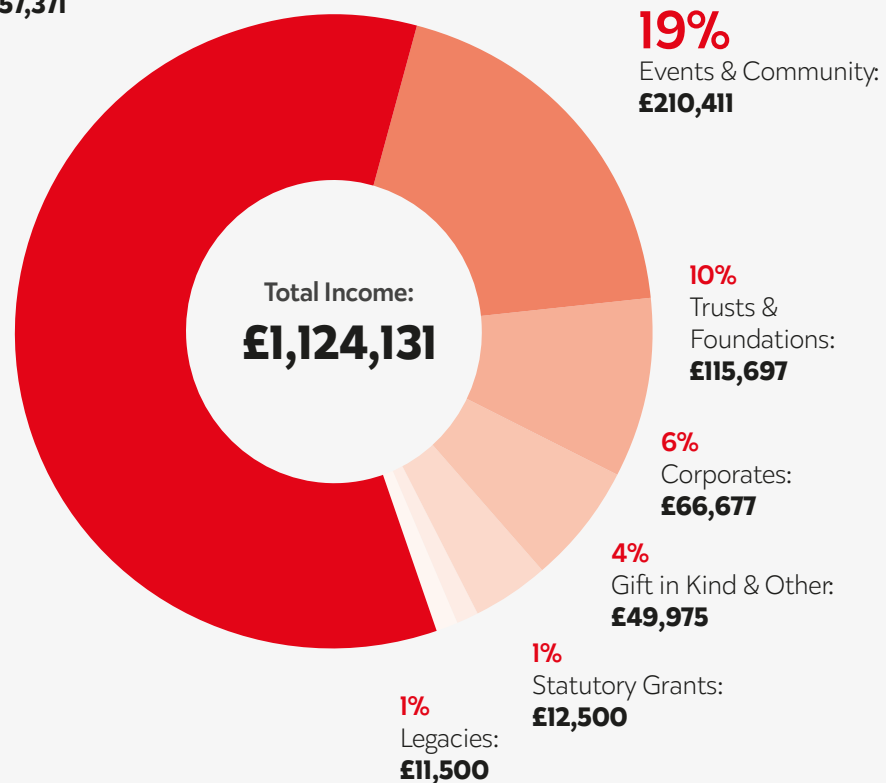
"Wellcome has been kind to me in many ways, including designing business cards, a website and providing a laptop. They have provided great encouragement and practical advice on setting up my own business providing an English editing service for biomedical manuscripts. I have continued to write academic articles on a wide array of biomedical conditions, including breastfeeding, Alzheimer's disease and perinatal depression".

Financial Summary

Income

59%

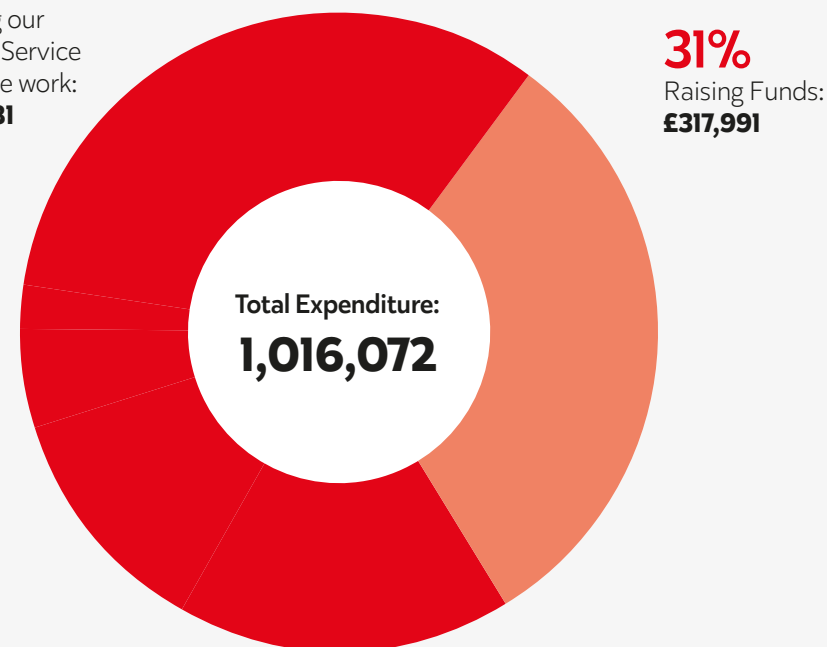
Individual Giving:
£657,371



Expenditure

69%

income spent on
charitable activities
including our
frontline Service
Brokerage work:
£698,081



The information on pages 22 & 23 are an extract of financial information taken from our 2018 Annual Accounts independently audited by Kingston Smith LLP.



In 2017-2018, for every **£1 spent on fundraising**

The Big Issue Foundation raised **£3.54**



Moving On

Matthew Smith, Oxford

"I was living rough in London, drinking. I ended up on license, and my Probation Officer told me about a night shelter in Oxford that takes people on a first come first serve basis. I went there, queued up and got myself a bed. The Big Issue has a big presence here, so I knew about vending long before I started. But I was pretty chaotic at the time and didn't see it as something I was able to manage, initially.

Lucy Faithful House was the first hostel I moved to from the night shelter. It's closed now. By the time it closed, the hostel was as tired as most of its residents. It was a resigned building.

I think the future isn't in warehousing us anyway. I see integration. Smaller units integrated into communities so that you're surrounded by ordinary living. It's very easy to create a pocket of homelessness and within that world all your behaviours and all your problems become normalised. That's what happens when you warehouse the homeless and the addicted. I've witnessed it and been part of the problem.

I started selling the magazine in 2013. The Big Issue gave me structure, purpose, a sense of usefulness. A place in the community. When I was begging and drinking, my eyes were always down. But never as a vendor. I sold over 75 magazines a week. The income from magazine sales paid for visits to see my dad when he was ill.

The Big Issue Foundation helped me to take

courses in Practical Philosophy and Introduction to Counselling. While it's common for people like me who have recovered to want to help – and I do want to help – I'm not sure I want to do it professionally.

Hannah and Michael from The Big Issue Foundation have helped me throughout. They're sympathetic, non-judgmental. As a homeless person, never mind an addict, you're well aware of the fact that you are being judged.

Through the Vendor Support Fund, I got myself a soprano sax. It's an old love. It fell by the wayside

pretty early on. It still causes me pain that I let that instrument go in the most ridiculous circumstances. I love playing my new sax. I practice every day.

Earlier this year, I moved into a one-bedroom flat in the city centre. It's marvellous. Half the furniture came from my regulars.

They say you start with a plant, then you move onto a pet and eventually a person. That's the plan.

One of my regulars, Steve, told me about a vacancy at the college where he works. I applied for the full-time vacancy. I didn't get that. But they liked my interview so much they offered me the part-time vacancy instead. I'm due to start soon. I'm looking forward to the free lunches!

The Big Issue has been a huge part of my recovery. Without it I wouldn't have the job I have now, the friends that I now have, some of the clothes on my back, some of the food in my cupboard. I cannot thank everyone enough".

"They say you start with a plant, then you move onto a pet and eventually a person. That's the plan"



Corporate Supporters



Freshfields have enabled us to establish many of our flagship initiatives; from our award-winning vendor day experience – as an integrated part of Freshfields trainee lawyer induction programme – to our corporate placements – enabling Big Issue vendors to develop skills vital for their future aspirations.

Simmons & Simmons

Simmons & Simmons provide invaluable pro-bono support as well as financial investment into our frontline teams. They too host a corporate placement and have implemented the vendor day as a key aspect of their trainee lawyer induction programme.



Our partnership with Southampton Football Club, and their charitable arm Saints Foundation, has led to four Big Issue vendors securing jobs at the club, the launch of our first partnership Big Stadium Sleep Out and winning Gold for Innovation at the prestigious Sports Business Awards.



Gowling WLG have also integrated the vendor day experience into their trainee lawyer induction programme. Furthermore, they have provided vital financial investment towards our frontline work in Birmingham.



Through our partnership with Northern Trust we were able to initiate the first Big Issue vendor pitch within Canary Wharf. We hope to open up more opportunities for Big Issue vendors in this area.



From hosting a vendor day experience through to the initiation of a corporate placement, it has been great to see the partnership with Wellcome Trust evolve over the past couple of years.



The Royal College of Nursing enthusiastically took part in a vendor day that led to further corporate engagement. This included sponsorship of new vendor tabards for our cohort of Big Issue vendors across the UK.

Corporate Engagement

The Big Issue Foundation engages with organisations in a wide range of ways. Partnerships often support objectives across community, marketing, training and development, inclusion and diversity. Examples of our flagship corporate engagement activities include:



Vendor Days

Vendor days are an experiential learning initiative, with a social focus. By donning a Big Issue tabard to sell The Big Issue magazine alongside Big Issue vendors, participants gain first-hand insight into the challenges and barriers that some of the most excluded people in society face daily.

Law firms Freshfields, Simmons & Simmons and Gowling WLG have all endorsed the experience by implementing it as a key aspect of their trainee lawyer induction programme; resulting in over 120 trainee lawyers taking part each year.

“What a fantastic experience. It was humbling and eye opening and taught me so much which destroyed any misconceptions I had inherited from others. The Big Issue vendors inspired me as they are people who are taking their current situation into their own hands and making a future for themselves with the support and encouragement of The Big Issue Foundation.”
Zoe, Vendor Day participant



Corporate Placements

Corporate placements provide Big Issue vendors with a supported sales opportunity within a corporate environment as well as skill development and mentoring essential for reaching future aspirations.

“The Big Issue Foundation provides valuable support and services to hard working vendors, and we are delighted to be able to open up our office to provide some extra opportunities for vendors to increase their selling capacity and provide some stability in a new environment. It has been really positive to see Tony, our most recent vendor, grow in confidence over the course of his placement with us.” Julia Royle, Head of Corporate Marketing and Communications EMEA, Northern Trust

“I was chosen by The Big Issue Foundation for a Corporate Vendor Placement Programme at Simmons & Simmons, the big law firm in the city. It was great to meet new people and to get to know them all. Ever since my placement, my confidence has greatly increased. I spent some time in the company library and significantly developed my IT and blogging skills”. Big Issue vendor Paul

Supporter Stories, Harley

Last year, Harley took part in The Big Step Challenge by walking 10,000 steps a day for 2 weeks.

Harley has Cystic Fibrosis; overcoming fatigue and other health challenges to not only complete the Challenge but raise an amazing £541.65 doing so. It is only because of the generosity, dedication and belief of our incredible individual supporters and fundraisers – like Harley – that we are able to deliver our work bettering the lives of Big Issue vendors.

“My name is Harley Cottle. I’m 22 years old and deciding to do The Big Step Challenge was the easiest decision I’ve made in a long time.

When I started university in a new city, it came to my attention just how many people were homeless. It broke my heart a little every day seeing someone new and knowing that I was going back to a warm house.

One morning on my commute to university, I handed a hot drink token to a gentleman sat outside Morrisons every day. I will never forget how thankful he was for something that was such a small gesture. I wish I could have done something more.

The day I found out about The Big Step Challenge, I was in London with my family. We passed a Big Issue vendor who said hello and we stopped to chat. He was so lovely which made it

an easy decision to buy my copy of The Big Issue magazine. As he handed me the magazine, he asked if he could show me the best part of this issue. He opened the page to a picture of him holding a sign that read ‘Your steps make a big difference’. I told him that would be the first thing I read.

True to my word, 5 minutes later I was reading the page. It was about The Big Step Challenge. I already had a good insight and interest in the work The Big Issue Foundation from doing some prior research and so getting involved in the challenge seemed a natural next step.

To many people, 10,000 steps a day does not sound like much of a challenge. However, I have Cystic Fibrosis which has many different complications. I suffer a lot from fatigue and sometimes have unbearable pain in my hips brought on by an allergic reaction a few years ago.

Completing The Big Step Challenge was a tough but hugely rewarding experience. Knowing that my fundraising would support vendors like George – who introduced me to the Challenge in the first place – was a big source of inspiration. I’d encourage anyone to get involved in an event and talk to their local Big Issue vendor!”

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Looking to the Future

This year will see us embark on the first year of a Three Year Strategic Plan (2018-21). 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 establishing a presence in regions of the UK where The Big Issue Foundation does not currently work.

To achieve this ambition, we plan to double our turnover from one to two million pounds per annum, identifying and securing sustainable revenue streams to minimise risk and ensure a consistency of frontline service delivery posts.

Underpinning our task will be a steadfast commitment to 5 strategic goals:

1. Vendor Engagement – Our work will remain led by the hopes, 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 people's experiences.

2. Continuous Improvement – We have commissioned an external evaluation of our Service Brokerage Model and plan to transition to a new service management database.



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.

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.

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 receive the service most appropriate to their individual support needs at all times.

5. Best Practice – We will ensure that our charitable work is supported by exemplary levels of governance and full compliance with The Fundraising Regulator and statutory bodies.

Westminster Abbey, London

'A coarse, gum-speckled road contrasts starkly with the smooth oily water reflecting the Abbey. The eerie towers standing out in the blue-sky clash profoundly with the mundane aesthetic of the street. It is this mix that captures the magic of the city'.

Carlos Gonzalez Perez –
Photographer & Big Issue Vendor
www.carlosphotography.com



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