

# FRIENDS OF BIG ISSUE NORTH

AUTUMN 2016

## BUILDING A LIFE, ONE MAGAZINE AT A TIME

**Marcin, originally from Poland, sells in Leeds city centre. He spoke to us about how his life has changed since he started selling Big Issue North.**

“I started selling Big Issue North because I had a problem with my documents, I’m originally from Warsaw in Poland. I’ve lived in England for 17 years, 15 in Leeds, 2 in Scarborough.

“In 2006 I only had an ID card and everywhere I looked for work they needed different identification, I didn’t have it or the documents to apply for new ID so what choice did I have? I had to start selling the magazine.

“Of course any job when you start is hard but after a while if you stick it out people get to know you, you build up regular customers and it becomes much easier to sell the magazines. I don’t receive any benefits at the moment so if I don’t sell any magazines I have no money.

“I changed country for my life. Since 2006 I’ve only been back to Poland once. When



I came I spoke no English, my first words were “good morning” but now I speak fluently, most people think I must have spoken English my whole life!

“In Poland you will work

really hard and no matter what job you get, after you pay rent and bills you have nothing left. Here there are more opportunities, I’ve been here almost half my life; England is my home.

“I appreciate my customers, even those who cannot afford the magazine but say hello. I think if you help somebody, that help comes back to you. Please give everybody a chance, give me a chance.”

### Letter from Fay

Welcome to the Friends of Big Issue North newsletter, autumn 2016. It has been a very busy few months for, with two office moves and 115 new vendors registered to sell the magazine!

I wanted to thank everyone who donated to us following our summer newsletter; your contributions are invaluable and enable us to continue to support vendors change their lives.

Fay Selvan – Big Issue North Chair



### Big Issue North on air!

**In Manchester 12 people went on an employability course with allfm 96.9. For four weeks participants gained many new skills, built up their CVs, attended mock interviews and even hosted their own music-based radio show which went out live!**

One participant told us why she got involved, “I wanted to show my daughter that women can be strong and do many different jobs, I want to get a good job to make her proud and feel like she can do anything when she grows up.”

This summer, our audit of **242** of our vendors gave us greater insight into the difference that selling Big Issue North makes to them.



**88%** said it provides a way to earn an income

**57%** said it **increases confidence or their motivation.**



**23%** said it improves budgeting skills

**31%** said it gives their day structure



**25%** said our staff helps signpost them to other support

# The Farm help vendors **Feel the Love**



Merseyside band **The Farm** have used the launch of their comeback record to raise funds for Big Issue North.

The band, back in the studio for the first time in 20 years, are donating all the profits from the sales of t-shirts bearing

the name of their new song, **Feel the Love**.

The money raised will be used to support Big Issue North vendors across the north of England, in areas ranging from providing regular breakfast clubs to helping with documentation required to



**Chris, originally from Sri Lanka, has sold Big Issue North for 12 years, and tells us how Liverpool has welcomed him and made him feel right at home.**

“I am a Tamil, and there were a lot of problems for Tamils in Sri Lanka. There was a bad civil war there and many, many people died. I lost a lot of family members and if I had stayed I would have died too. I left in 1999 and lived in London for two years, then I came to Liverpool. I love Liverpool.

“They are the number one people – very lovely people who help. They bring me coffee, breakfast, supper. I am very

happy, I love it here. When I lived in London I started to support Liverpool Football Club. And so it was meant to be that I came here.

“If I went back to Sri Lanka I would have nowhere to go and there is no one there for me now. It is a sad feeling but if I lived there I would be dead. I have a happy and peaceful life now. Liverpool is my home.”

“The staff are very happy and kind, all my customers are wonderful, I love them. For the future, I am happy to sell the magazine and I wish all the people of Liverpool to be happy and live in peace.”



# el the Love

find and maintain a home.

Big Issue North relies on donations such as this to provide its vendors with opportunities to change their lives. Just £5 can provide breakfast for 15 vendors, while a monthly contribution of £22 can set up one new vendor every month.

Now back in the studio, the band came up with the idea for the Feel the Love campaign after witnessing the rising issues around homelessness in towns and cities across the UK.

Alongside the t-shirts, fans and fundraisers can buy hoodies, bags, vests and even baby grows with the name of the campaign and a heart-shaped red and blue globe.

*All the merchandise can be bought from the campaign's dedicated online shop, <https://feelthelove.noisemerchants.com/shop/>.*



## BBC produce vendor videos

Over the summer we have worked with the BBC to produce two videos featuring our Big Issue North vendors. One busts the top 10 most common myths about the magazine and the people who sell it, while the second is an induction video for new vendors which includes reminders about how to sell the magazine, and top selling tips from our vendors.

Both videos will be available to view on our YouTube channel soon so please keep an eye out for them!

## martin xxxxxx

**Martin Taylor joined Big Issue North in July, as a Service Co-ordinator in our Manchester office. We spoke to him about his first few months with us.**

### What was it that first attracted you to the role?

I felt that this job could make the most of the skills and ability that I had already. I'd worked in the NHS as a recovery worker, helping people who had poor mental health, or who were addicted to drugs and alcohol.

My job was to support people to a better future and a better life, which was great, but I was ready to move on. So the job with Big Issue North seemed to me to be the perfect opportunity.

### How have you settled in?

Everyone has been so welcoming here from my first day onwards, including the vendors. My team have been really warm and helpful – even though they must be



sick of me asking 'why' all the time!

### Have you found many challenges?

Yes! We're very busy, and with Christmas around the corner, we're going to get even busier. It's also tricky with

some of our Roma vendors who don't always speak English, and we're trying to find ways to communicate with them as well as we can.

### What have you learned in your job?

I've learned so much – Big

## REGIONAL ROUNDUP

We have moved offices in **MANCHESTER** and in **LEEDS**. Both offices have provided us with more space, while and in Leeds we are now able to have a library and computer club for vendors to access.

We have delivered talks in Kendal, Liverpool, Manchester and Grassington to let even more people know about Big Issue North, our vendors and the work we do.

In **MANCHESTER**, we have received donations of boxes of cereal and cosmetics from HIS church and the Co-op.

In **LIVERPOOL** we have had a push for new pitches and have secured four around the city centre and beyond.

The next annual INSP (International Network of Street Papers) conference has been confirmed and will be held in Manchester in summer 2017.

We're hard at work creating a brand new website for Big Issue North, which will showcase the magazine's editorial content, and tell you more about the work we do with our vendors. Watch this space for future updates!

We'd love to hear your feedback or stories about our vendors. This newsletter or the magazine. Please email us at [fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com](mailto:fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com)

Issue North isn't like what I imagined. People often have an idea about our vendors and don't understand what we do for them. I've now seen first-hand that it's a very challenging job.

The big thing I've learned is that people shouldn't judge. Behind each vendor is a story and a life – a really challenging one that I'm now trying to make better.

## WATER BOTTLES FOR VENDORS



Our Liverpool staff have been working hard to ensure our vendors have had everything they needed to get through those long hot days in the last few months. We received this incredible donation of water bottles from GULP!

**While it's not nice to think about what happens after we're gone, leaving a legacy means you can make a lasting, positive change to people's lives.**

Last year we received two legacies that enabled us to provide lasting support to vendors. We provide an opportunity for people to earn an income who have no other means and we need your help to continue to support people with no alternative means of income for as long as is necessary.

To find out more about making a legacy for Big Issue North vendors please contact us on 0161 848 2420 or [fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com](mailto:fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com)



It's really easy to raise funds for the Trust with EasyFundraising while shopping online. Just remember to set the Big Issue North Trust as your chosen charity and start raising at no extra cost!

Go to [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) today!

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR DONORS

**"I used to buy the magazine every week from my local vendor, now I'm older I don't make it into town each week so I donate directly to the charity. I like the newsletter as I get to find out how my contribution is helping." – anonymous**

"I did some work in the Manchester office over 10 years ago, I set up a small library in the office and arranged for professional story-tellers to visit the office and they were a real hit. I have a lot of respect for the

Big Issue North sellers and the staff that support them." – Maeve

At Big Issue North we're always keen to get your feedback and hear the views of people who support our work. As someone who subscribes to our newsletter we'd like to hear from you. This short survey should only take you a few minutes to complete but will really help us continue to improve what we do. Please go to - <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/US5I0/>



### How to donate –

We are so grateful to everyone who donates to us, if you haven't donated already, here are some ways to support our vendors. Regular donations are a great way to support us going forward. If you are looking to set up a standing order to support our vendors please call 0161 831 5556 and we'll get that sorted.



You can also donate by mobile phone, just text BITN16 and the amount you wish to donate e.g. £20 to 70070



To make donations by cheque please make it out to Big Issue North Trust and send it to 10 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JN.



For more ways to raise funds for us please contact [fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com](mailto:fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com)

#### THE TRUSTEES

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