

WELCOME

OUR VALUES

IMPACT  
DELIVERY

2024 IN  
NUMBERS

STRATEGY

LEARNING &  
EMPLOYMENT

FINANCIAL  
& DIGITAL  
INCLUSION

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HEALTH &  
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INSIDE BIG  
ISSUE GROUP



**BIG  
ISSUE  
GROUP**

Working to end poverty

# IMPACT REPORT 2024

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## We're working to end poverty

■ Three years ago, in an impact report like this one, we shared our vision for the next five years of the Big Issue Group. By 2027, we wanted to be engaging 11 million people with our products and services. It was an ambitious target, which required us to double the number of people we engage with. But now – just three impact reports later – we are proud to share with you that we have achieved that goal, two years ahead of schedule.

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of our team, Big Issue Group engaged with and supported 11.6 million people in 2024. Reaching this milestone has been no small feat and we'd like to thank each and every one of our staff, partners and all our customers. We've worked hard to get here – but we've got more work to do.

Poverty in this country is now at its highest point since the turn of the century. Nearly one in four Brits (24%) live in poverty – that's nearly 16 million people, including 5.2 million children. In the most extreme situation of all, 3.8 million are experiencing destitution, and are unable to feed, clothe or keep themselves warm. Our country is in the thick of a poverty crisis that won't shift easily.

That's why, across all areas of the Big Issue Group, we're working to end poverty. Whether it's with our vendors out earning on the streets, the candidates engaging with us to find work, people being supported by the innovative organisations we're investing in, or the readers of our groundbreaking social justice journalism – we're using all the resources at our disposal to do our bit in the fight against poverty and inequality.

Poverty is a problem that touches everybody. The issues it throws up are already destabilising our wider society, from the growing welfare bill to our overburdened public services. We must concentrate all efforts – individually, in our local communities and in government – on ending this crisis. We're working to unite these voices. Our new Big Issue membership movement began at the end of 2024, adding to the community of fantastic supporters who are by our side in this fight. To all those with us, thank you.

We're working to show the way - and seeing signs that the government is sitting up and listening. As the political agenda shifts to trying to find ways to remove deeply entrenched barriers to work in groups of people furthest from the job market, we are using our 34-year Big Issue legacy of success to influence their approach – with Big Issue Recruit the latest model of personalised, end-to-end support to help people earn an income. And as Westminster grapples with the poverty crisis, our repeated call for the focus to be on prevention seems to be landing with the various taskforces looking to reduce homelessness and child poverty. Read on to see more about the fantastic impact of the Group in the past year, including how we're working across our five impact pillars to fight poverty on all fronts.

And thank you to all those who are working with us – we couldn't do this without all our partners and supporters.



**Paul Cheal**  
Big Issue Group CEO



**Nigel Kershaw, OBE**  
Big Issue Group Holdings Chair

# 11.6 million

people engaged and supported  
by Big Issue Group in 2024

**Our vision** is a world that works for everyone.



**We are working to end poverty.** With 3.8 million people in the UK experiencing destitution and growing, Big Issue Group creates solutions and opportunities for people to work, earn, learn, and thrive.



**Our Mission** is to dismantle poverty through social business solutions.



**Our Values**  
To achieve this, we have defined our core values that shape our organisation and how we work with our customers, partners and wider ecosystem.

**Inclusive**  
We believe in a fair, open and inclusive world and treat everyone with respect.

**Adaptive**  
We are quick to respond to changing circumstances to deliver solutions that drive positive change for ourselves and those we work with now and for future generations.

**Collaborative**  
We encourage open and honest communication and teamwork in order that people and ideas can thrive.

**Entrepreneurial**  
We are passionate about empowering people to design and create opportunities that drive change and growth for themselves and for others.

# IMPACT DELIVERY

Through a comprehensive approach that encompasses direct support, inclusive recruitment, social investments, campaigning, impact journalism, and impact advisory, we are working to end poverty and enabling those living in poverty to earn, learn and thrive.

BIG ISSUE GROUP We create innovative solutions through enterprise to unlock social and economic opportunity for people affected by poverty				
ENTITIES OF BIG ISSUE GROUP				
<p><b>Changing Lives CIC</b></p> <p>Through our frontline service team, we enable marginalised individuals to earn a living with access to support services, training and employment opportunities to improve their lives.</p> <p>Our Big Issue Recruit service supports people facing barriers to work into sustainable employment and offers an inclusive recruitment service to socially conscious employers</p>	<p><b>Big Issue Invest</b></p> <p>Social impact investing to end poverty and social inequality</p>	<p><b>Big Issue Media</b></p> <p>Award-winning social-impact journalism, enabling vendors to earn a legitimate income</p>	<p><b>Big Futures</b></p> <p>Campaigning to end poverty now and for future generations</p>	<p><b>Big Issue Impact</b></p> <p>Supporting businesses to deliver impact and achieve sustainability</p>
HOW WE DELIVER IMPACT				
<p><b>Directly Supporting</b></p> <p>We recognise that immediate and tangible assistance is crucial for individuals trapped in poverty. Our services provide essential support, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the opportunity to earn an immediate income</li><li>support to move into sustainable employment</li><li>access to educational resources, training, and skills-development opportunities</li><li>support to address basic needs that bring stability to people's lives</li></ul>	<p><b>Social Investing</b></p> <p>We invest in enterprises delivering long-term solutions that address the root causes of poverty. Our social investments focus on enabling the core solutions to poverty in the UK by supporting organisations delivering impact with investment and lending ranging from £20,000 to more than £3.5 million.</p>	<p><b>Impact Journalism</b></p> <p>Our commitment to social justice flows through our journalism. We harness the power of storytelling to expose the underlying causes of poverty and inequality, giving voice to marginalised communities and individuals, and holding those in power to account.</p>	<p><b>Campaigning</b></p> <p>We believe that fully addressing the issue of poverty in the UK requires a collective voice, pushing for systemic change. Our campaigning efforts advocate for policies that address the structural barriers perpetuating poverty and inequality, moving us from emergency responses to prevention.</p>	<p><b>Advising</b></p> <p>We work closely with partners who manage people's savings, pensions and other investments to co-design funds that make investments to address the major social and climate challenges of our time.</p>
IMPACT PILLARS We deliver impact across five key pillars, which we believe are critical to dismantling poverty				
<p><b>Learning &amp; Employment</b></p> <p>Our pillars are in everything we do, in the issues we tackle in our journalism, in the programmes of work we champion for individuals through our Big Issue Changing Lives CIC, through the organisations we invest in via Big Issue Invest and the causes we campaign for UK government policy change on.</p>	<p><b>Financial &amp; Digital Inclusion</b></p>	<p><b>Housing</b></p>	<p><b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b></p>	<p><b>Community &amp; Environment</b></p>

## IN NUMBERS

2024 was another huge year of achievements for Big Issue Group in working towards our mission.

### DIRECT SUPPORT

# 3,700

individuals directly supported by our services

**53** individuals supported into new employment opportunities

# £3.9 million

collectively earned by Big Issue vendors

### SOCIAL INVESTMENT

# £68 million

of managed funds, either already invested or ready to invest

# 145

social enterprises supported

# 1.8 million

people supported by our investees

### IMPACT JOURNALISM

# 9.5 million

unique annual visitors to bigissue.com

**2,400** stories focusing on our five Impact Pillars

# 1.8 million

copies of the Big Issue magazine circulated

### IMPACT ADVISORY

**67** ethical and impact managers

with a combined total value of over

**£52.8 billion** through Big Exchange

**> £350 million**

invested in public markets through partner fund CT UK Bond Fund

### CAMPAIGNS

# 17,000

actions taken by our digital campaigners to push the government to end poverty

# 24

MPs became Big Issue End Poverty Champions and committed to speaking against poverty in Parliament

# STRATEGY

■ In 2021, Big Issue Group shared a five-year impact strategy which set ambitious goals on how we aimed to increase our reach and deliver greater impact for those living in poverty. The headline aim of our strategy was to reach and engage 11 million people annually, by the end of 2026<sup>1</sup>.

We are excited to share that we have achieved that goal two years ahead of schedule, thanks to the hard work and commitment of our team. In 2024, we engaged with and supported 11.6 million people.

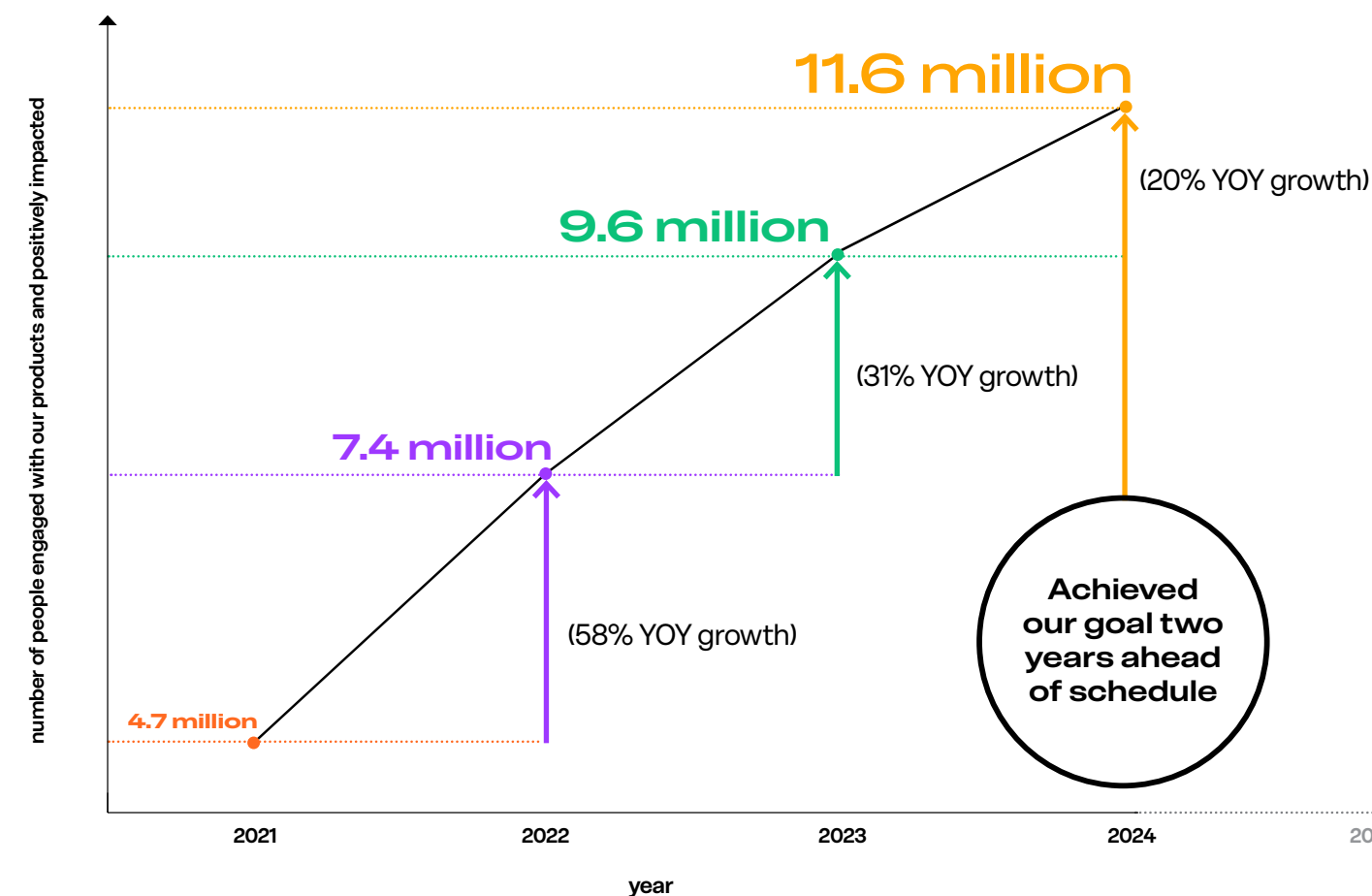
Big Issue is working to grow its reach and impact across all it does, but it was the strong growth of our digital offering through bigissue.com that

helped us hit our target two years early. For the remaining two years of our strategy, Big Issue Group will continue to reach more customers and prioritise our strategic goals.

In the coming two years, our digital focus will be on developing depth of engagement and not just reach. We want our readers to spend more time on our website and return more frequently.

This will help us drive more positive social change. A more engaged audience can take more meaningful individual actions, such as sharing our content more widely, engaging with more of our products or becoming a Big Issue member.

## Big Issue Group's impactful growth



Drive more social change

Readers to be more engaged online

Readers to spend more time on our website

Become a Big Issue member

Readers to return more frequently

Meaningful individual actions





IMPACT PILLAR

# LEARNING & EMPLOYMENT



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## LEARNING & EMPLOYMENT

We believe that investing in education and skills results in higher quality, and more stable and secure employment, higher earnings and lowered risk of poverty.

### DIRECT SUPPORT

# 3,500

people earning a legitimate income as Big Issue vendors

**89%** of surveyed customers agreed they were able to achieve their goals after receiving our Learning & Employment support

# 150

Big Issue Recruit Candidates achieved Work Ready status



# 53

of whom supported into new, sustainable employment

### LEVY'S STORY

■ Levy was previously a Big Issue vendor who had had to drop out of school in Year 11 to help care for her mum. Last year she successfully secured a role as a Vendor Outreach Assistant, providing guidance and training to Big Issue's Roma-speaking vendors, before then being promoted to London Outreach Worker with Big Issue Changing Live CIC.



I am so happy... someone should pinch me.

It has been a very big thing for me, it has changed my life. The best part is I know I'm working with people who really care about me, who want to get the best out of me every single day. I have had some tough periods of my life, but when I'm at work, I stop overthinking everything and concentrate on the things I have to do. I'm building a timetable and a life for myself."

### SOCIAL INVESTMENT

# 47

organisations delivering Learning & Employment solutions funded



That's **32%** of our investments

### IMPACT ADVISORY

# £22 million

total invested by CT UK Bond Fund

# 14 bonds

invested in by CT UK Bond Fund align to Learning & Employment

### IMPACT JOURNALISM

# 16,000

readers engaging with each article and supporting our journalism

# 450

articles on Learning & Employment

# LEARNING & EMPLOYMENT

## Big Issue Recruit – Breaking down employment barriers

Launched in 2022, Big Issue Recruit is a specialist recruitment service, dedicated to supporting people who face barriers to joining the workforce into sustainable employment. It is a person-centred service and free to candidates, supporting individuals pre, during and post-employment.

### We work with candidates:

Our candidates are referred to us by national referral partners such as the Department for Work and Pensions, HM Prison & Probation Service, Royal British Legion, Crisis plus a wide variety of local service providers.

Our Job Coaches build skills and confidence through one-to-one support, whilst also addressing practical barriers such as housing, childcare, financial and digital skills, supporting with creating a CV, and interview skills.

### We work with employers:

Our partners are in retail, logistics, health and social care, micro-mobility and environmental management

We work with employers to understand their needs and match the right candidates to vacancies, supporting them through the recruitment process.

As well as access to a large pool of work-ready candidates, we offer a range of recruitment solutions. We work with employers to understand their needs and match the right candidates to vacancies, supporting them through the recruitment process.

BIR carries out workplace assessments with both candidate and employer prior to employment, ensuring both parties are happy and comfortable before moving forward. This is a key step in sustaining placements and reducing turnover.

**£2 million**  
of social value created by BIR through supporting Candidates, in its first two years.

Once a candidate moves into employment, BIR job coaches are available to support through regular check-ins for up to 12-weeks. Candidates have regular touch points and the opportunity to raise any issues related to the challenge of moving into employment. BIR job coach also supports the employer with any issues arising during this transitional period, giving the candidate the best chance of remaining in their new position.

**More information in our BIR Impact Report**

### HOLLIE'S STORY



Big Issue Recruit has changed my life. Growing up I had a lot of issues surrounding family, school and with relationships. It caused me to not want to continue with my education and I dropped out before going to university.

I was suffering with a lot of low moods, I had quite bad self-esteem and because my CV wasn't very good, I wasn't sure how to begin going into the working world. I was living off £5 a week and because of that I couldn't afford to get any sort of bus and because I don't drive it really limited the jobs I could apply for.

Someone recommended that I speak to Big Issue Recruit and that's where my luck began to change, when I started working with my Job Coach. He got in contact with me originally and got to know me very well, he got to know my likes and dislikes and the sort of job opportunities I'd like. It made it very personal in the sense that he didn't see me as a number he saw me as an actual person.

He showed me a job that was for Sales and Services Executive with C&C Group. I was worried that during the interview that I'd freeze up and not know what to say, so he got in contact with them on my behalf and told me the types of questions I'd be asked so I'd feel more confident.

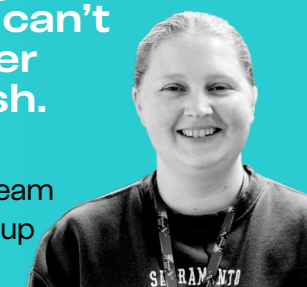
When I turned up for my interview, I was really worried but after I remembered what my coach told me about the questions and all the positive affirmations such as 'you can do this' and 'any job would be lucky to have you' it made my confidence soar.

After 3 or 4 days I received a call from C&C Group to tell me I had got the job, and I was so happy the first thing I did was go home and order a takeout it was sort of an appreciation for a new chapter in my life.

I really recommend people seeking the support of Big Issue Recruit because it's been such a positive and overwhelming experience. I've got a job so quickly and I couldn't really have done it without them."

→ For Hollie the sky's the limit and I can't see that there's anything she wouldn't be able to achieve with us as a company. She's brilliant and I can't wait to see her career flourish.

**Hayley**  
Sales and Services Team  
Manager at C&C Group





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## IMPACT PILLAR FINANCIAL & DIGITAL INCLUSION



## FINANCIAL & DIGITAL INCLUSION

We believe in tackling digital and financial exclusion by ensuring everyone has basic financial and digital skills as well as access to fundamental communication and financial services. These are critical to driving inclusion, earning opportunities and employment.

### DIRECT SUPPORT

445

people supported to be more financially and digitally included

206

new vendors able to accept cashless payments, bringing a boost to their income

185

people supported with a refurbished smartphones, in partnership with giffgaff

88%

of surveyed vendors experienced an improvement in digital confidence after receiving our support

### MATTHEW'S STORY

London based vendor Matthew was supported by Big Issue Changing Lives with access to a new phone, enabling him to accept cashless payments while selling.



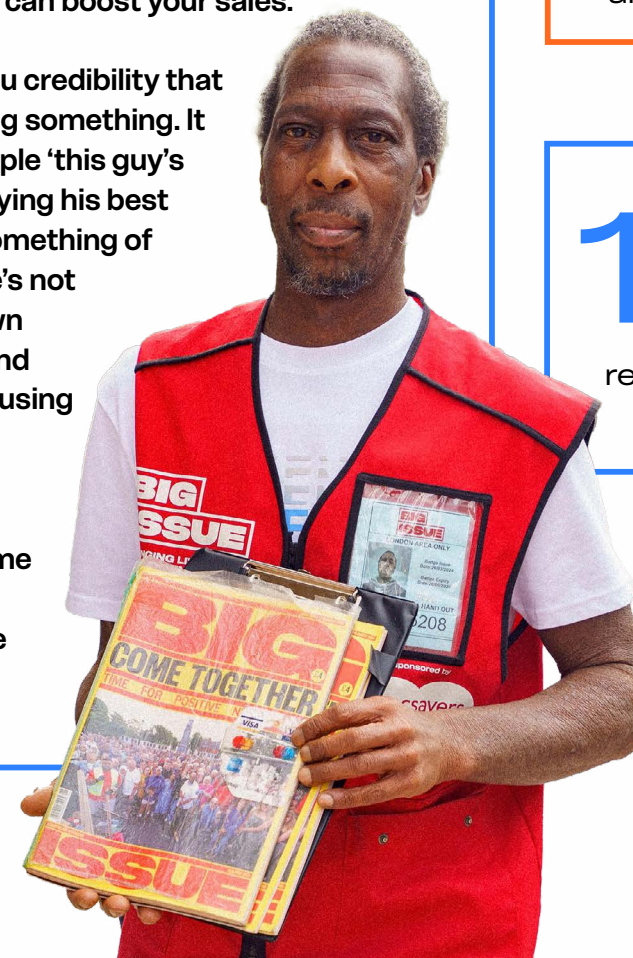
Big Issue staff told me that with a new phone I could take payments through PayPal and Google payments.

I was like 'WOW!', I'd been missing out on sales all this time. So, I went up to the office and the team showed me the gizmo. And yeah, I've never looked back, I'm still using it now.

"It makes you feel more of a business, and take the business more seriously. Because you're processing money through your banking system, and you're digital now, and it can boost your sales.

"It gives you credibility that you're doing something. It shows people 'this guy's out here trying his best to make something of himself. He's not sitting down begging, and he's not causing offence to anybody.'

"It makes me feel proud to wear the tabard."



### SOCIAL INVESTMENT

5

organisations delivering Financial & Digital Inclusion solutions funded



That's 3% of our investments

### IMPACT ADVISORY

£39 million

total invested by CT UK Bond Fund

17 bonds

invested in by CT UK Bond Fund align to Financial & Digital Inclusion

### IMPACT JOURNALISM

19,000

readers engaging with each article and supporting our journalism

361

articles on Financial & Digital Inclusion

# FINANCIAL & DIGITAL INCLUSION

## Building a fairer, more impactful financial system

■ Big Issue Group is transforming society by creating a finance system that works for all. We do this through advising both institutional and retail investors such on directing their investments to more impactful causes<sup>2</sup>.

Our goal is to change the world of finance for good, so that ordinary people can put their money to work towards a better world. We work closely with partners who manage people's ISAs, savings, pensions and other investments to co-design funds that make investments to address the major social and environmental challenges of our time, without sacrificing financial returns<sup>3</sup>.

We are the Social Advisory partner for the CT UK Bond Fund with Columbia Threadneedle and are a co-founder of the retail investment platform The Big Exchange<sup>4</sup>. We provide impact advisory services to each of these fund managers.

Financial Inclusion has proved to be an important area in our Impact Advisory work on the CT UK Bond Fund. £39 million (11%) of assets currently managed by the CT UK Bond Fund<sup>5</sup> are invested to improve financial inclusion. It includes investments such as providing mortgages to individuals that would typically not be eligible, for instance people on low incomes or self-employed, older population, people who have no credit history.

In the UK, financial inclusion is increasingly critical, with 20.2m adults now classified as financially under-served - a 50% increase in less than a decade<sup>6</sup>. Without access to essential financial services, many people struggle to fully participate in the economy, leading to a cycle of debt, exclusion, and poverty.

**20.2 million**  
adults now  
classified as  
financially  
under-served



That's a  
**50% increase**  
in less than  
a decade<sup>6</sup>

### COVENTRY BUILDING SOCIETY

## One bond invested in by the CT UK Bond Fund to further financial inclusion is Coventry Building Society.

Coventry Building Society is a mutual building society providing savings and residential mortgages, lending more than £50 billion to over two million customers. It has been chosen as our case study in financial inclusion because of their focus on helping first-time buyers onto the housing ladder and their support for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable to become more financially resilient.

In 2023, difficult market conditions saw UK lending to first time buyers fall by 24% overall. Although Coventry Building Society fell short of their target to lend to 10,000 first time house buyers it still achieved an increase in first time buyer lending by 17%, supporting over 6,300 households into a first home.

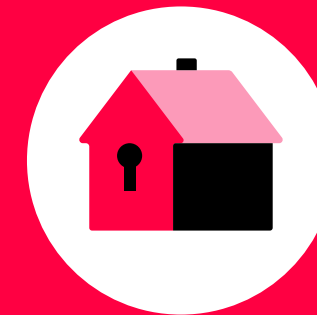
Coventry Building Society supports borrowers who may be facing financial difficulties and

has established a working group which champions the needs of vulnerable customers. This year arrears fees and Consent to Let fees were removed to further reduce the financial burden. Trained Vulnerable Customer Experts are embedded in customer facing teams and in head office functions to ensure appropriate support and explore all possible solutions to stave off repossession. Despite a substantial rise in calls to customer services over the last two years, waiting times of under 2 minutes were maintained.

It also provides funding and support through their Better Foundations programme to local partners who help the most disadvantaged and vulnerable towards financial sustainability and inclusion by providing debt and legal advice in cases of eviction and working with social enterprises that provide food and other forms of support.



**Trained Vulnerable Customer Experts are embedded in customer facing teams and in head office functions to ensure appropriate support and explore all possible solutions to stave off repossession.**



## IMPACT PILLAR HOUSING

# HOUSING

We believe secure housing is an important step in creating a stable foundation from which people affected by poverty can begin to move forward and rebuild their lives.

## VINCENT'S STORY



■ Vincent, a Nottingham based vendor, has struggled with health issue for a number of years and lives with his partner who is a domestic abuse victim from several previous relationships. The couple had been living in privately rented accommodation before they were served with a Section 21 Eviction Notice. Big Issue's team in Nottingham worked to support them to find a new place to live by engaging the local authority and also challenging the Section 21 Eviction Notice.

After five weeks of intense support, the couple successfully made an application for a new rental property and moved in shortly after.

Vincent says: "It feels that you guys [Big Issue] were the only ones that really helped us and cared about our situation. The flat is lovely, and we got our own garden and small shed. Also, there's a community centre around the corner which we can go to anytime and wash and dry our clothes for free."

## CAMPAIGNS

Our policy demand for  
**1.5 million**  
new social and affordable  
homes to be built was  
included in the  
King's Speech

## SOCIAL INVESTMENT

**17**  
organisations delivering  
Housing solutions funded  
↓  
That's **12%** of our investments

**420**

housing  
interventions  
leading to positive  
outcomes

## IMPACT ADVISORY

**£84 million**  
total invested by CT UK Bond Fund

**42 bonds**

invested in by CT UK Bond Fund  
align to Financial & Digital Inclusion

## DIRECT SUPPORT

**140**  
people supported  
with housing needs

**16 people**  
supported to  
find new, safe  
places to live

## IMPACT JOURNALISM

**3,500**  
readers engaging with each article  
and supporting our journalism

**550**

articles on  
Housing

# HOUSING

## Investing in sustainable homes

Big Issue  
Invest  
made an  
investment of  
**£2.5 million**

### London Community Land Trust

(London CLT) is a community-led organisation working with local people to create affordable homes and community spaces. London CLT is membership-based organisation open to all London residents, and they currently have more than 3,800 members.

They work with local people to campaign and bid for land in their boroughs. The homes are designed by people in the local communities, who choose the architects and construction companies, apply for planning permission and decide on the allocation of the completed units. London CLT's work is all about ensuring local people have control over their homes, blocks and neighbourhoods. The aim is for any new development project to integrate the local community, rather than displace it.

Crucially, London CLT ensures affordability by pricing the homes relative to local median incomes for each borough, based on the Office of National Statistics Data, so that residents are not faced with financial stress related to housing and don't spend more than a third of their income on housing costs. They also ensure affordability in perpetuity: as residents move out, they must sell the property at rates linked to local earnings. To make sure the homes are going to those who need them, they are only available to people who do not already own properties and who will be living there.

### Citizens House Project

In 2021, Big Issue Invest made an investment of £2.5 million into London CLT to build the Citizens House project near Sydenham, Lewisham.

It was the organisation's first direct development and initially started as a campaign in 2014, with members of the local community walking the streets of Lewisham to find potential sites for development. After presenting 43 sites to Lewisham Council, the location was finally agreed in 2016.



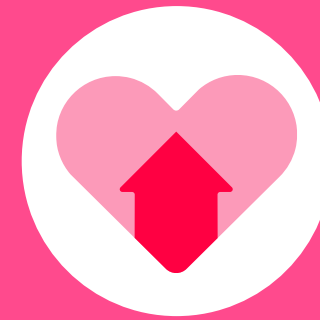
After years of local workshops and collaboration with Lewisham Council to develop designs, proposals were submitted for planning in June 2018, and the team received planning permission in April 2019. London CLT entered into a funding agreement with the GLA in October 2020 to help fund the project, with Big Issue Invest making its investment in 2021. Big Issue Invest helped to fund the employment professionals working on the project, including the architects and surveyors. Construction began in the same year, and the first residents moved in at the beginning of 2023.

In total, the development houses 11 individuals. Through the innovative London Affordable Housing Programme, Big Issue Invest has demonstrated that community-led housing can be an effective way to deliver much-needed social housing, particularly in smaller, complex urban sites where commercial development is not viable.

Critical to the program's success has been Big Issue Invest's experience working with social enterprises with deep community engagement. BII's flexible and patient approach ensures projects remain viable to completion, despite potential setbacks. To date, the programme has had 100% completion rate for all projects.

BII's role in developing this programme in partnership with Greater London Authorities has enabled it to broker meetings and unlock opportunities for community land trusts, successfully building 88 units of housing, with a further 22 in construction.

To continue with this work, Big Issue Invest is looking to apply this model of housing development to other areas of the UK, fostering strong partnerships between local government and social enterprises.



IMPACT PILLAR

# HEALTH & WELLBEING



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## HEALTH & WELLBEING

We believe poverty causes ill health, drives inequality in health outcomes and increases the use of health services. Which means it is expensive keeping people poor, in public costs and lost opportunity and productivity.

### DIRECT SUPPORT

# £33,000

of fuel vouchers distributed through our work with British Gas Energy Trust and Fuel Bank Foundation

**71%** of customers reporting an improvement in mental health after accessing our support

## 542

individuals supported to improve their health & wellbeing

### CAMPAIGNS

Our policy demand for **free breakfast clubs in primary schools** was included in the King's Speech

### ROBYN'S STORY

Before coming to the Big Issue, Robyn had previously worked in management roles, but her career ended as a result of addiction problems. Since becoming a vendor, Robyn has established herself at a spot on Quatermile, Edinburgh. The stability she has found in selling the Big Issue has allowed her to take steps in improving her confidence and mental health as she progresses on her recovery journey.



Big Issue has given me the stability I have needed

to build my confidence and rebuild my mental health after the lowest point in my life. I have had well-paid management jobs before and even 6 months ago would not have thought of the Big Issue as an option, but I have enjoyed the day-to-day of selling the magazine more than I have any job I've had before. The stability the Big Issue has offered has been vital in supporting my recovery from addiction."

### SOCIAL INVESTMENT

# 47

organisations delivering Health & Wellbeing solutions funded



That's **32%** of our investments

### IMPACT ADVISORY

## £44 million

total invested by CT UK Bond Fund

## 17 bonds

invested in by CT UK Bond Fund align to Health & Wellbeing

### IMPACT JOURNALISM

# 7,000

readers engaging with each article and supporting our journalism

## 546

articles on Health & Wellbeing

# HEALTH & WELLBEING

## Mencap special edition

Driving impact through journalism



There are  
**1.5 million**  
people with  
a learning  
disability in  
the UK

Big Issue Group and Mencap teamed up in June to break new ground with the first magazine to be created by and wholly feature people with a learning disability. This was to mark Learning Disability Week.

A group of Mencap's Myth Busters worked with the Big Issue's editorial team to write features, create designs and collaborate on how to make the magazine more accessible to those with a learning disability.

There are 1.5 million people with a learning disability in the UK, many of whom face barriers and inequalities in their daily lives. This year's Learning Disability Week theme, 'Do you see me?', aimed to ensure people with a learning disability are seen, heard and valued in society.

However, research from Mencap shows there is still much more work to do, especially in the public eye. A quarter of the general population (25%) say they have never seen people with a learning disability represented in the media, and those that have estimate they only see someone with a learning disability in the media once every seven to eight weeks. Almost half (48%) think that disabled people are not represented enough in the media.

The high cost of healthcare and additional support, combined with limits on opportunities for employment, also mean that people with a learning disability are more likely to fall into poverty<sup>7</sup>.

Big Issue Senior Reporter, Isabella McRae who played a key role in co-ordinating the special edition, said: "The Big Issue has always been about amplifying the voices of people who are not often heard in the media – and this issue of the magazine put people with a learning disability at the heart of the storytelling process.

They were involved in coming up with the ideas, contributing to the content and helping design the magazine to make it more accessible. It was about celebrating people with learning disabilities and all their achievements and busting stigma.

It had a big impact. Our press teams secured more than 200 pieces of national and regional media coverage – including on ITV news, Channel 5 News, BBC, the i, the Independent, the Daily Mail and many more.

On social media, our posts over learning disability week reached almost a million people across Facebook, Instagram and X.

Most importantly, we were overwhelmed by the response from people with learning disabilities and their loved ones, who felt represented and seen by the Big Issue. I had letters from people with learning disabilities who had read and loved the magazine and wanted to thank us for representing their experience.

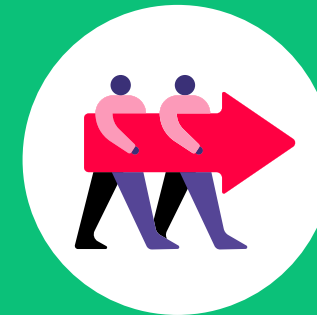
Some of our readers called it the 'best Big Issue ever'."



**I really enjoyed working on the magazine as I got to meet so many different people and people like me (who have a learning disability). My favourite part was sharing ideas. It's so important to have a magazine like this that showcases our work, recognises us and includes us from the get-go."**

**Aisha Edwards**  
Mencap Myth Buster





IMPACT PILLAR

# COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT

## COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT

We believe poverty and inequality can be directly tackled at a local level through community initiatives, and this is intrinsically linked with improving our built and natural environment.

### SOCIAL INVESTMENT

# 29

organisations delivering Community & Environment solutions funded



That's **20%** of our investments

### IMPACT ADVISORY

## £161 million

total invested by CT UK Bond Fund

## 63 bonds

invested in by CT UK Bond Fund align to Community & Environment

### IMPACT JOURNALISM

# 1,500

readers engaging with each article and supporting our journalism

## 480

articles on Community & Environment

## 420

housing interventions leading to positive outcomes

### DIRECT SUPPORT

# 112

people supported with needs related to Community & Environment

### MARK'S STORY



Big Issue collaborated with Beyond the View in 2024 to offer a group of vendors the opportunity to visit a retreat to the Lake District. Three vendors from different urban parts of the UK were given the opportunity to embark on the pilgrimage and experience the scenic views from the summit of the Old Man of Coniston. One of those vendors was Mark who has previously faced alcohol addiction.



On this retreat, you can just do your own thing and there's the wild and everything else that goes with it. You're just connected to nature and the healing power of it. That beats any drug to me. Stuff like that is hard to get funded but it should be.

Walking, hiking up them hills, nothing around me, just the wild, it was just something else. It's somewhere I'm meant to belong. I'm still there in my head. It's like a place that has always been there, but was just seeking me out for me to go there. I was in my element. I can't get it out of my head at the moment."



# COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT

## Tailored support for a marginalised community

■ It is estimated that more than 200,000 Roma live in the UK, and this is a population experiencing structural discrimination and exclusion, and barriers to accessing basic services such as education, housing and employment<sup>9</sup>.

Over the last two decades Big Issue has worked closely with many individuals from the Roma community, and we have now collaborated with the Roma Support Group to develop a project to empower Roma community with the tools to enable them to plan, develop and deliver training to organisations with the aim of improving the level and quality of engagement between statutory and community agencies and members of the Roma community.

The project is currently in the first year of a planned three-year delivery period and is engaging with individuals from the Roma community living in London and Birmingham, before expanding to more areas in years two and three.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Provide opportunities for the Roma community to have their voices heard and feel empowered to share their knowledge and experiences, helping to develop Roma specific services that engage and benefit other members of their own and the wider community.

35

people from the community have been engaged on the development of a grass-roots Roma led training scheme and support service for professionals, with the training now ready to be delivered

3. Better equip statutory and community services to reach out to, and meet the needs of, the Roma community and increase the confidence of services to engage Roma in the support they provide.

It is now estimated that more than  
**200,000**  
Roma live in the UK

4

peer-mentors have been recruited from the Roma the communities in London and Birmingham, who will be trained to work closely with Roma vendors to help improve their knowledge and support them with the challenges they face

2. Improve Roma individuals' personal knowledge on their rights and responsibilities as a housing tenant, employee, migrant with settled status etc. as well as their peer mentoring skills, allowing them to help their wider community.

600

people from the Roma community supported across Birmingham and London in 2024

4. Improve the general wellbeing of Roma individuals, enabling Roma to feel safe and connected to the wider communities they live and work within.

### MELANIE'S STORY



The peer mentoring programme means that I can help my community engage better with support services, helping them to be more confident in accessing the support that they need. It is so rewarding to see the difference that I can make in somebody's life."

■ Melanie started selling the Big Issue a few years ago, she was supporting her community the best she could by interpreting for others, reading letters, or explaining what people in the community need to do next to solve a problem. She was involved in the project from the very start, attending all the workshops and then she agreed to be trained in training co-delivery to professionals. She really enjoyed her first co-delivery training session for Big Issue staff members.

A Big Issue staff member who has known Melanie as a vendor said that seeing her co-deliver the session alongside the Roma Support Group was amazing. She was so confident and passionate in helping us understand the challenges that the community faces and what we can do to better support. We practiced a few words in the Romanes language, which was brilliant.

She is now training to become a full peer-mentor, where she will learn much more about how best she can support her community. Peer mentors on this project are compensated for their time, and this is a great opportunity for Melanie to learn new skills and help the community while not having to worry about income she may lose from reduced time selling the Big Issue.



# INSIDE BIG ISSUE GROUP



# DIVERSITY & EQUALITY

## Representation amongst our staff

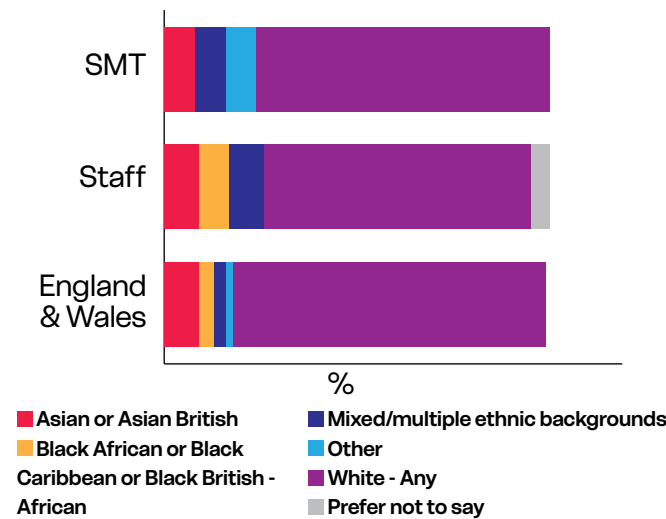
■ Key to our commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion is sharing demographic insights into representation amongst our employees<sup>10</sup>.

### GENDER



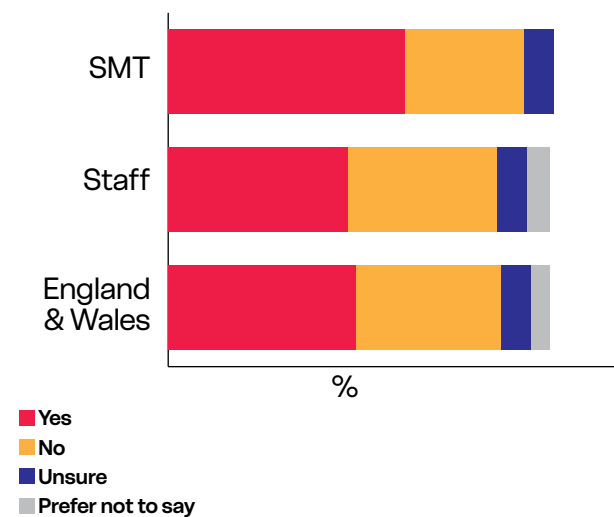
➤ The percentage of women at BIG is **54%** at Senior Management Team and **53%** amongst staff, both increased from **50%** last year.

### ETHNICITY



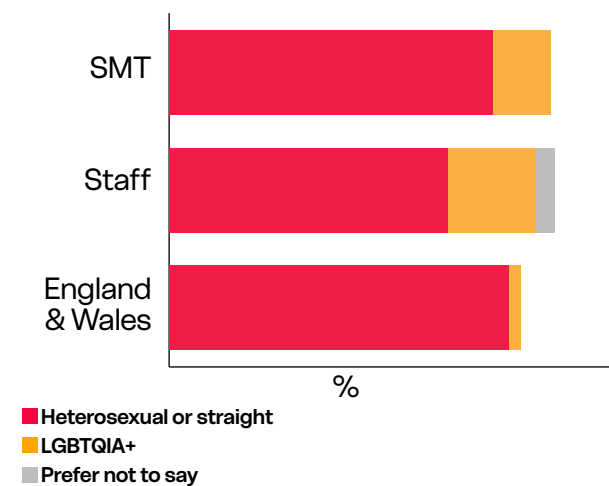
➤ Representation of global majority ethnicity groups is **23%** at SMT and **30%** in the Staff team, increased from **12%** and **19%** last year, respectively.

### LIVED EXPERIENCE



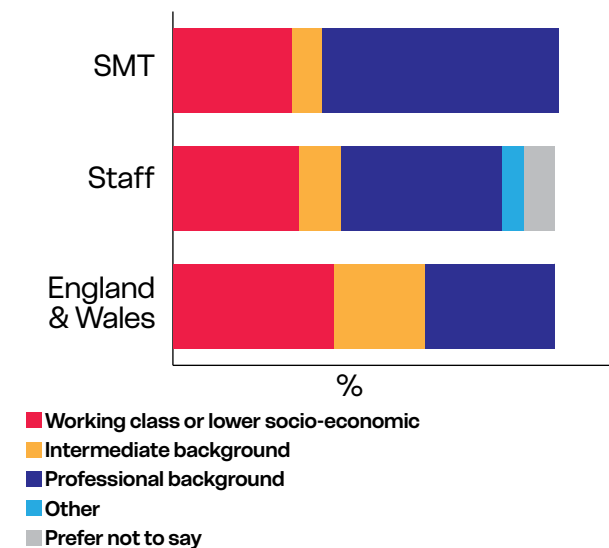
➤ **47%** of the Staff team and **62%** of SMT have lived experience of a social challenge.

### SEXUAL PREFERENCE



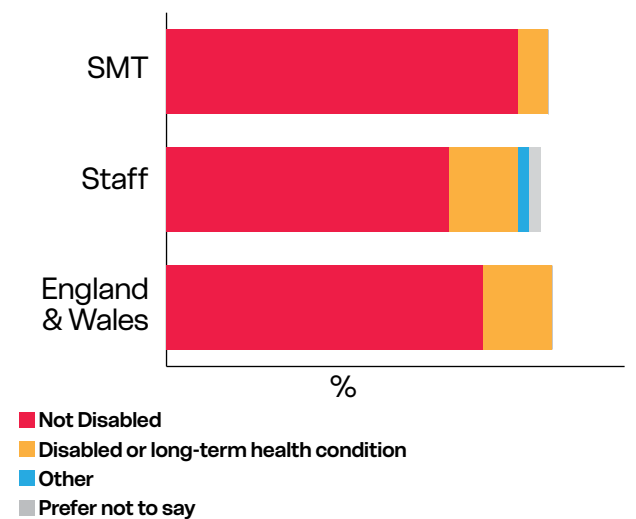
➤ LGBTQIA+<sup>12</sup> representation is above average at both SMT level (**8%**) and in the Staff team (**23%**).

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND



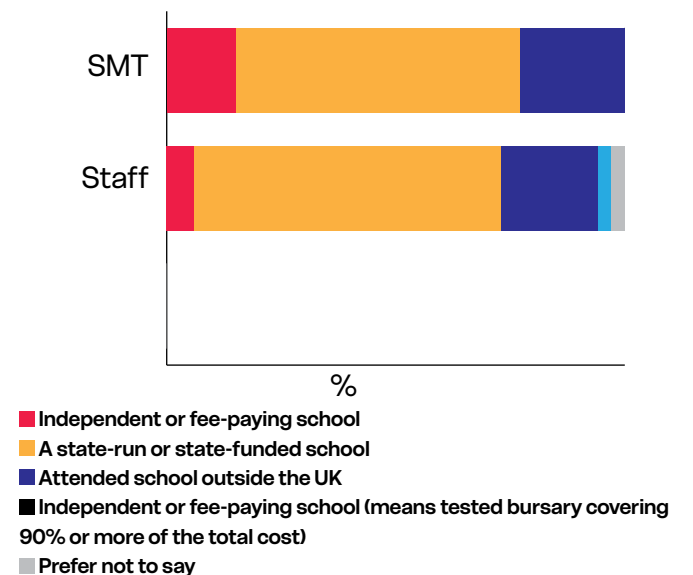
➤ People whose main household earner when they were a teenager were from professional backgrounds are overrepresented at BIG. **31%** of SMT and **33%** of staff are from working-class backgrounds.

### DISABILITY<sup>11</sup>



➤ Representation is above average in the Staff team (**26%**), but is low at SMT (**8%**).

### TYPE OF SCHOOL



➤ **67%** of the Staff team and **62%** of SMT attended state-funded schools in the UK, while **6%** of the Staff team and **15%** of SMT attended independent or fee-paying schools.

# DIVERSITY & EQUALITY

## Pay gap

■ For the third time, we are sharing data on our gender pay gap and the difference in income between our highest and lowest-earning employees.

THIS YEAR

Mean gender pay gap is  
**1.7%**  
in favour of men

Median gender pay gap is  
**4.0%**  
in favour of women

Highest to lowest hourly pay ratio is  
**£8.42 : £1**

LAST YEAR

Mean gender pay gap was  
**0.4%**  
in favour of men

Median gender pay gap was  
**7.5%**  
in favour of women

Highest to lowest hourly pay ratio was  
**£8.42 : £1**

Proportion of male, female and non-binary staff in each pay quartile 2024/24

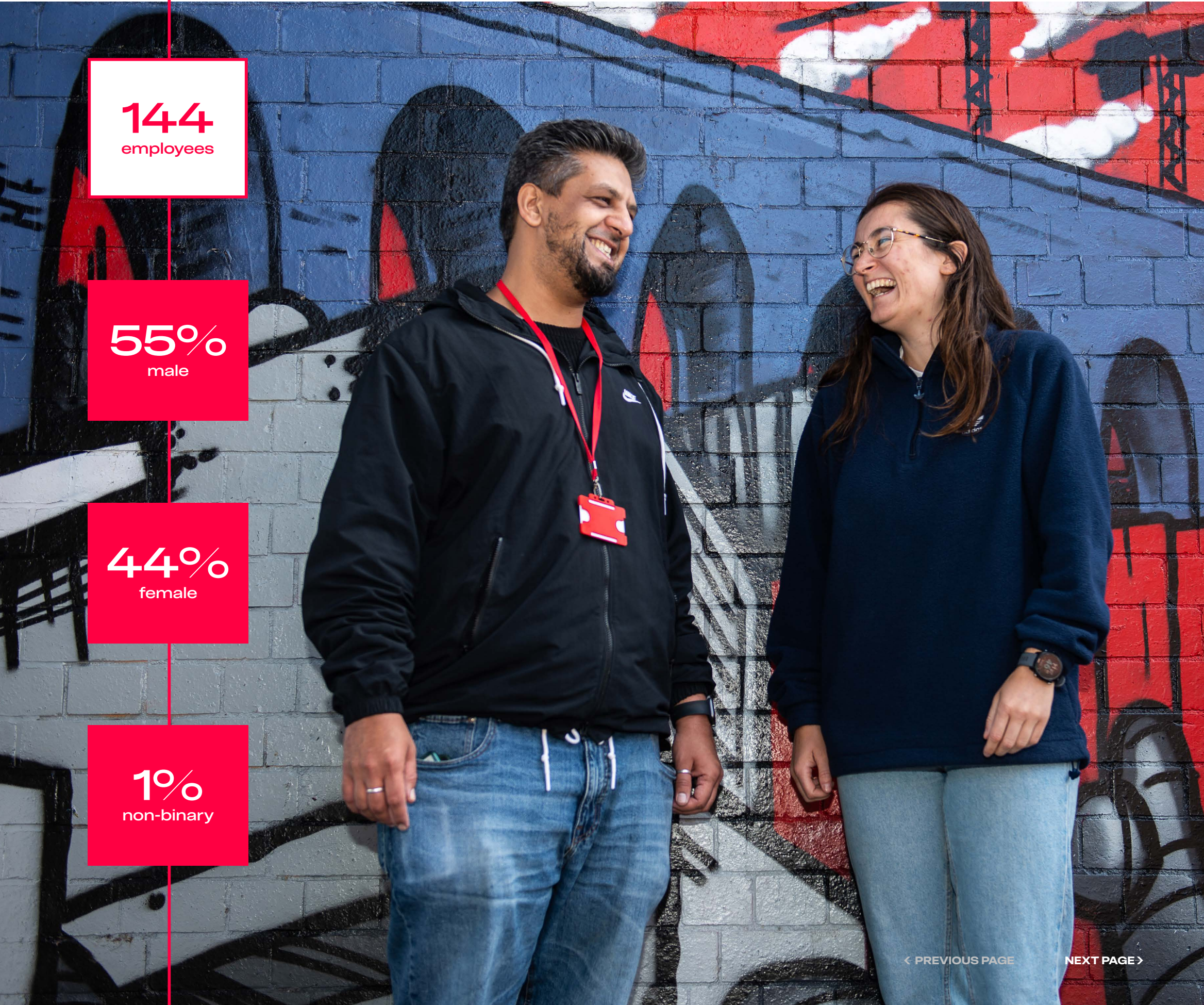
Group	Male (%)	Female (%)	Non-Binary (%)
Upper Hourly Pay Quarter	53	47	0
Upper Middle Hourly Pay Quarter	56	44	0
Lower Middle Hourly Pay Quarter	50	47	3
Lower Hourly Pay Quarter	61	36	3

144  
employees

55%  
male

44%  
female

1%  
non-binary



# SUSTAINABILITY

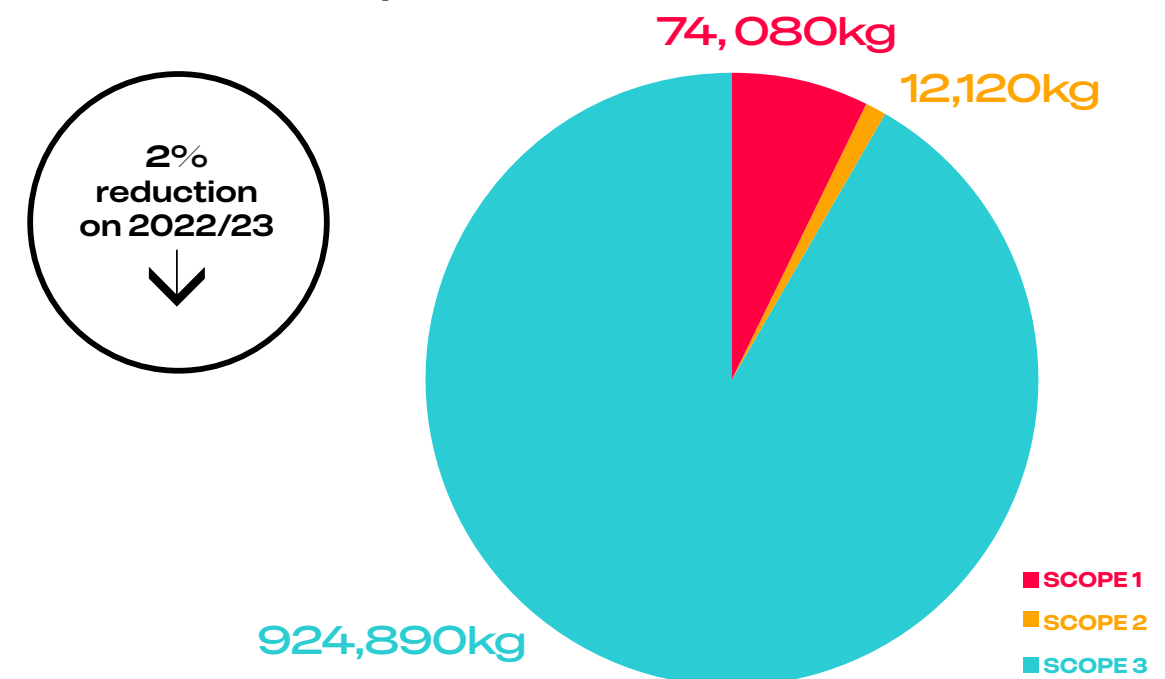
## Taking significant steps in reducing our carbon emissions

■ Last year, Big Issue Group shared data on its carbon footprint for the first time. Since then, we have taken initial steps to start reducing our negative impact on the environment. Over the course of 2025/26, Big Issue Group will be building an overall carbon reduction plan that will support each area of our business to take more significant steps in reducing our carbon emissions.

While we move forward on our own sustainability journey, we continue to build key partnerships, with the likes of Citroen and giffgaff that aim to inform and build recognition amongst consumers leading to more positive and sustainable actions being taken be all for the benefit of the planet, whether that be purchasing an electric vehicle or a refurbished piece of technology.



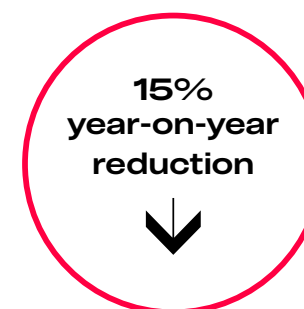
### Our Carbon Footprint



### Total CO2 emissions of 1,011,090kg, or 1,011 tonnes, in 2023/24

**SCOPE 1**  
**7%**  
of total emissions

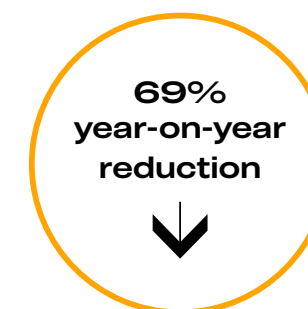
Direct emissions from the burning of diesel in our fleet of vans and gas in our offices.



Reductions in Scope 1 emissions were driven by better management of our fleet allowing us to make few journeys, drive fewer miles and ultimately burn less diesel. We have also partnered with a new fuel card provider who will help us to offset 101% of our fleet emissions moving forward, this offset will be seen in next year's data.

**SCOPE 2**  
**1%**  
of total emissions

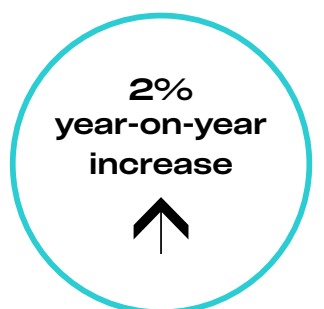
Indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity used in our offices.



Reductions in Scope 2 emissions were driven by moving the majority of our supplied electricity to 100% renewable providers or providers with a better energy mix than before.

**SCOPE 3**  
**91%**  
of total emissions

Indirect emissions from our supply chain.

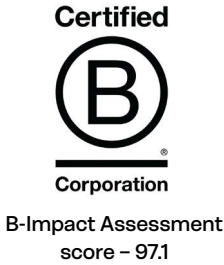


In 2025, BIG will be starting to get to grips with its Scope 3 supply chain emissions and planning on how to make reductions moving forward"

# AWARDS AND ACCREDITATIONS



OBE for services to  
Business and Social Finance  
for Danyal Sattar,  
Big Issue Invest CEO



The ALF Awards	AOP Association of Online Publishers Awards	Pensions for Purpose	BVCA Awards	Society of Editors Media Freedom Awards	British Society of Magazine Editors
Best Partnership with Purpose (with giffgaff)	Best Publisher-led Social Good Initiative or Campaign Award	Best Strategy Impact (Columbia Threadneedle Report)	Excellence in Impact	Outstanding Achievement Award (Big Issue Media)	Editor of the Year: Current Affairs & Politics (Paul McNamee)
Winner	Winner	Winner	Winner	Winner	Winner

Pioneers Post NatWest SE100 Social Business Awards	
Social Investment Pioneer (with Lightning Reach & GIF partners)	Social Business Pioneer
Winner	Shortlisted

Investment Week Sustainable Investment Awards		
Outstanding Contribution to the Sustainable Investment Industry (Nigel Kershaw)	Best Sustainable Investment Consultancy	Rising Star Sustainable Investment Champion of the Year (Sasha Afanasieva)
Winner	Shortlisted	Shortlisted

PPA Awards	PwC Building Trust Award for Impact in Social Enterprise	NACFB Commercial Lender Awards	UK Social Enterprise Awards	
Consumer Commercial Partnership (with giffgaff)	Impact in Social Enterprise Award 2024	Community Lender of the Year Award	Social Enterprise Innovation of the Year	Deal of the Year (with Lightning Reach & GIF partners)
Shortlisted	Shortlisted	Shortlisted	Shortlisted	Shortlisted

# REFERENCES

1. This goal includes the individuals we directly support through our services, the end customers of our investees, the volunteers who support us, the individuals supporting our journalism through bigissue.com and Big Issue magazine and those purchasing through Big Issue Shop.
2. The most notable examples of institutional investors are traditionally pension funds, hedge funds and mutual funds whereas retail investors are most commonly individual investors.
3. Capital is at risk when investing and neither financial, social or environmental returns can be guaranteed. Please remember that when investing, making money is not guaranteed and your capital is at risk.
4. The Big Exchange (TBF) Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Big Exchange Limited. The Big Exchange (TBF) Limited is an Appointed Representative of Resolution Compliance Limited, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FRN 574048).
5. [Read more about the CT UK Bond Fund here](#)
6. [PwC, and TotallyMoney, 2022](#)
7. [IRISS](#)
8. [National Crime Agency](#)
9. [Heriot Watt University](#)
10. This year we are unable to report DEI data for Board members across BIG. There have been many changes across the various Boards of BIG in the last year and accurate data is still being collected. Board level data will be presented again next year.
11. Disability is defined as per the UK Equalities Act 2010, available here.
12. LGBTQIA+ is the acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or questioning), Intersex, Asexual and other non-cis or heterosexual identities. BII takes definitions from Stonewall's glossary of terms when referencing LGBTQIA+ communities. More information here.