

WELCOME

OUR VALUES

WHO WE ARE

BIG ISSUE CHANGING LIVES

BIG ISSUE RECRUIT

BIG ISSUE MEDIA

BIG ISSUE INVEST

BIG ISSUE IMPACT

INSIDE BIG ISSUE GROUP

THE
**HIDDEN
HEARTBEAT**
OF THE
NATION



**BIG
ISSUE
GROUP**

Working to end poverty

Impact Report 2025

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More than
3,000
 vendors earned a legitimate
 income selling the magazine

A message from our CEO

■ This year marks an important milestone for Big Issue Group: **35 years** of standing alongside people facing poverty and creating opportunities for them to thrive. Since our founding in 1991, our mission has remained steadfast – to dismantle poverty through innovative, entrepreneurial solutions that provide a hand up, not a handout. Yet while our purpose endures, the world around us has changed dramatically.

When we began, poverty was visible on the streets and defined by homelessness, crisis, and exclusion from services. The Big Issue magazine was created as a bold and practical intervention – an immediate way for people to earn money with dignity. For many today, it still plays that vital role.

But the face of poverty in the UK is now profoundly different. We are living through a period of unprecedented hardship. **3.8 million people are experiencing destitution**, and nearly **one million young people** are not in education, employment or training. At the same time, the societal conditions that enabled the Big Issue model to flourish – busy high streets, cash transactions, and widespread print readership – have shifted towards a digital-first world. Cash use has declined sharply, magazine circulation has fallen across the sector, and changing work patterns have transformed footfall.

These forces demand that we adapt. And we are.

Over the past year, Big Issue Group has supported **thousands** of people to improve their income, skills, wellbeing, and stability. More than **3,300 vendors** earned a legitimate income selling the magazine. Hundreds of candidates were supported by Big Issue Recruit into sustainable employment.

Our media platform produced award-winning journalism that shaped national conversations. Through Big Issue Invest, we backed social enterprises delivering longterm, systemic change. And we launched our newest enterprise, Big Issue Impact, built to offer advisory services.

But to meet the challenges ahead, we must not only strengthen what we do today—we must build the Big Issue of tomorrow.

That is why we have launched our **Transformation Fund**, enabling us to design bold, future focused solutions. This includes new digital earning opportunities, a place-based income generation model for young people, and expanded skills and employment pathways. We are evolving the magazine model to further embrace digital payments systems and subscriptions, while harnessing community reporting, digital creation, and modern sales techniques to open new doors for those who need them most.

For 35 years, Big Issue Group has championed opportunity, dignity, and social justice. Now, as the landscape of poverty evolves, we are transforming to ensure that our impact continues for generations to come.

Thank you for standing with us—past, present, and into the future.



Paul Cheal
 Group CEO

Big Issue Group is working to end poverty

Our Vision

is a world that works for everyone.

Our Mission

is to dismantle poverty through social business solutions.



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

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.



Our landscape has changed

Our mission has always been to build solutions that fit the needs of the people we serve. But much has changed in the 35 years since our launch, the face of poverty in 2026 looks radically different from the face of poverty in 1991.

■ When we launched the Big Issue, the crisis of poverty was visible. It was defined by street homelessness, addiction, and immediate exclusion from services. Our magazine was – and remains – a highly effective emergency intervention for this reality. It offers an immediate, low-barrier way to earn money and reconnect with the community. For those in deep crisis, this model is still a vital lifeline.

1991 Responding to a visible crisis →

→ **A crisis defined by:** street homelessness, addiction, immediate exclusion

→ **The model:** Emergency intervention. Immediate, legitimate, low-barrier earning. A vital lifeline.



Social Context: 1991

→ **Cash is King:** the primary payment method

→ **Busy High Streets:** the retail hub

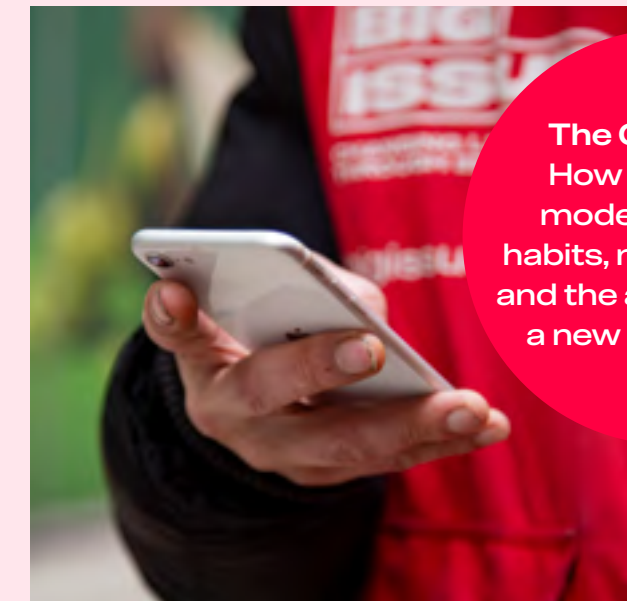
→ **Print dominance:** the main information source

2026 Entrenched destitution, locked-out youth, and a digital shift →

→ Destitution at record levels impacting **3.8 million people** in the – a rise of **148%** since 2017¹

→ **A generation locked out:** **946,000 young people** are not in education, employment or training and are locked out of opportunity²

→ **A Generation worse off:** Our research with YouGov shows that 67% of people think the next generation will be worse off.



The Challenge: How to adapt a model for digital habits, modern skills, and the aspirations of a new generation.

Societal Context: 2026

→ **The decline of cash:** Only 9% of UK transactions were cash-based in 2024.³

→ **The decline of print media:** More than half of the UK magazines audited in 2024 saw their print circulation decline by 10% or more.⁴

→ **The Decline of the High Street:** Reduced footfall driven by changing work patterns, more 'out of town' retail and continued growth of online shopping.

Our transformative solutions

Our adaptive solutions are bold and aimed at guaranteeing the future impact of Big Issue Group. This involves a three-step approach:

1 Strengthening the Current Model

Print media has faced many challenges over the last decade, but the Big Issue magazine remains our flagship product for those facing immediate crisis. We are investing to make it work harder for our vendors.

→ **The FumoPay Pilot:** To combat the decline of cash, we piloted FumoPay (Open Banking) with 100 vendors. It generated **£14,500** in transactions and significantly higher engagement than previous systems.

→ **Scaling Up:** We have now extended this to **300+ vendors**, processing over **15,000 transactions** to date, **worth over £91,000** to vendors.

→ **The Impact:** Accepting cashless payments has the potential to increase a vendor's annual income by up to **18%**.

→ **Developing Digital Earnings Solutions:** After successes launching digital subscriptions we will continue to explore ways for vendors to generate income through the sale of digital products.

→ **More onward pathways:** Through Big Issue Recruit we are offering a range of onward pathways for those with a wide range of backgrounds, barriers and experiences.

2 Investing in Prevention and Opportunity

Through Big Issue Invest, we will look to direct more investment towards addressing the current and future risks of the UK's NEET population.

→ **Investing to support the current 16-24 NEET** cohort to ensure opportunities are created for learning and employment.

→ **Investing in solutions that support early-years and children**, targeting a reduction in the risk factors that lead to young people becoming NEET at age 16.

3 Transforming Income Generation for the Future

To ensure we are prepared for the future and are able to offer a range of products that suit the needs of the different groups facing poverty, we have launched the **Transformation Fund**. The Fund will drive fundraising to support the development and design of new services. The first of these is planned to be a new digital-first product specifically tailored to the aspirations and needs of young people.

→ **The Goal:** A model of prevention. By engaging young people with a proposition they want to be part of, we can stabilise their finances and build their confidence early, preventing the slide into the deeper crises that defined our past.

→ **The Concept:** We are preparing to pilot a new, place-based income generation opportunity. This will enable young people to earn through community-generated content and street-based sales of digital products.

→ **A Desirable Proposition:** Unlike traditional street sales, this model is designed to be an entry point into the workforce, specifically for young adults. It focuses on digital creation, community reporting, and modern sales techniques – skills that are highly transferable to the wider job market.

→ **Engaging the Community:** Our research with YouGov shows that 69% of people believe local issues are best solved by local people. Our new model will harness this, empowering young people to become the voice of their local areas.





We have now invested
£100 million
 into **600** organisations

A message from our Group Chair

■ Since 1991, Big Issue Group has been an engine for social change. We do not just react to poverty; we are here to prevent it. For 35 years, we have met major societal changes with new social business solutions. This proven history of innovation is why we are the right organisation to lead the fight to dismantle and prevent poverty today.

A History of Innovation

Our journey began in 1991 with the launch of The Big Issue magazine. We provided a way for homeless people to earn a legitimate income. Each vendor runs a micro-enterprise; since our launch, 108,000 vendors have earned £160 million in legitimate income. This model has been replicated over 100 times across the globe.

In 2005, we saw that mainstream banks were not lending to social enterprises like us, so we launched Big Issue Invest. We have now invested £100 million into 600 organisations. In 2015, we addressed the "poverty premium" for millions of renters by partnering with Experian to add rent data to credit files. We have worked to make capital and investment more accessible through the CTUK Bond Fund and The Big Exchange. When the pandemic forced vendors off the streets in 2020, we moved the magazine to newsstands and launched a subscription model in days. We provided £1.3 million in direct support to keep vendors safe during this time.

Meeting Today's Challenges

The world is changing again. In the UK, 3.8 million people face destitution, and nearly 1 million young people are out of work or training. As cash use drops and the high street changes, we are adapting once more. Since 2018, we have given 1,550 vendors card readers to manage the shift to contactless payments. In 2025, we rolled out

FumoPay, an Open Banking tool that allows vendors to take payments via QR codes without needing expensive hardware.

The Next Step

The Transformation Fund is the latest chapter in our history of innovation. It allows us to bring the solutions needed for 2026 and beyond to the market. Our three-step strategy is built on this fund:

- **Strengthening the current model:** We are scaling digital payment tools and subscriptions to help vendors boost their income.
- **Investing in prevention:** We will direct capital toward early-years and youth employment programmes to stop the cycle of poverty before it starts.
- **New ways to earn:** We are building digital-first products for a new generation. Our research shows 69% of people want local solutions for local issues. We will help young people to earn through community reporting and digital content creation.

Our 35-year history of changing lives shows we can launch new business solutions that fulfil our mission of preventing poverty and creating opportunity. The Transformation Fund will deliver a hand up for the next generation.



Nigel Kershaw, OBE
 Big Issue Group
 Holdings Chair

Who we are

Big Issue Group operates through five distinct but interconnected businesses, each playing a specific role in our mission:



→ a registered Community Interest Company enabling marginalised individuals to earn a living with access to support services, training and employment opportunities to improve their lives.



→ an end-to-end recruitment service supporting people facing barriers to work into sustainable employment and offers an inclusive recruitment service to socially conscious employers.



→ award winning content and business solutions that highlight the challenges around poverty while providing the means by which vendors earn a legitimate income.



→ our social investment arm, providing financing and support to social enterprises and charities across the UK, to drive growth and impact.



→ our advisory business, using our experience and expertise in delivering and reporting impact to support other businesses to deliver impact and achieve sustainability

Our Impact Pillars

Big Issue Group's work is not simply focused on achieving any one single outcome. By fostering collaboration, empowering individuals, local organisations and leaders, and promoting sustainable practices, Big Issue Group is creating long-lasting, positive impact.

■ All of our products and services deliver impact across at least one of our five key impact pillars: Learning & Employment, Financial & Digital Inclusion, Housing, Health & Wellbeing and Community & Environment.

Delivering change in each of these impact pillars is pivotal to dismantling poverty in the UK.



→ Learning & Employment

We support people to develop skills through training, building upon pre-existing skills learned selling the magazine, and give support to update CVs, complete job applications and explore future career opportunities when they feel ready to take the next step.



→ Financial & Digital Inclusion

We support people with opening a bank account, budgeting, arranging access to specialist financial services, and give guidance on using of devices to access essential services, such as online banking, and digital literacy sessions.



→ Housing

We support people to access safe and secure accommodation and work to prevent future homelessness by providing ongoing tenancy support.



→ Health & Wellbeing

We support people to register with a GP and dentist, and make referrals to specialist health services, for example mental health services, addiction treatment, and access to essentials, such as food and fuel vouchers.



→ Community & Environment

We support people to obtain a passport or other form of ID, develop language skills and support the building of valuable networks of social and community support.

Our impact in 2025

1 in 3 children live in poverty



POVERTY ZERO

SIGN THE PETITION

We demand change



BIG ISSUE CHANGING LIVES

HIGHLIGHTS ↓

3,316

people earned a legitimate income working as Big Issue vendors in 2025

£3.3 million

of collective income earned by and for Big Issue vendors




Health & Wellbeing
1,266
 vendors supported

76%
 report an improvement in their mental health after receiving our support


Financial & Digital Inclusion
757
 vendors supported

79%
 report an improvement in their ability to manage their finances


Learning & Employment
270
 vendors supported

92%
 agreed they had been able to achieve their goals with our support


Housing
84
 vendors supported

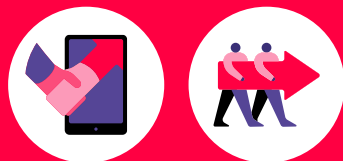
75%
 experienced an improvement in the situation around their housing after receiving our support

The Invisible Burden:

Supporting young parents living in poverty

BIG Impact Pillars:

Financial & Digital Inclusion,
Community & Environment



■ For parents raising young families in poverty, the daily reality is a relentless struggle to meet basic needs, often intensified by additional social and economic barriers. Beyond the immediate financial strain, poverty can severely impact a parent's mental well-being, leading to increased **stress, anxiety, and depression** as they grapple with insecurity and a lack of resources. The Child Poverty Action Group highlights that, 4.5 million children currently living in poverty in the UK, with children from global majority ethnic backgrounds being disproportionately affected.⁵

Immigrant parents often face compounded challenges, including language barriers, difficulties with professional accreditation, and navigating complex social support systems that can limit employment options and deepen isolation. These constant pressures can reduce a parent's capacity to engage in activities outside the home, impacting their mental health and sense of self-worth. Paula's story shows that parents facing these challenges are not just seeking income but also flexibility, community, and a pathway to independence; all of which can be found through selling the Big Issue.

From Isolation to Independence: Paula's Story

■ Paula, a 21-year-old from Romania, moved to the UK six years ago and now dedicates her life to raising their two young children. Living with her husband's parents, Paula faced significant hurdles in finding traditional employment. Language barriers, a lack of formal qualifications, and the demanding reality of caring for two small children meant that conventional jobs were simply out of reach. This left her feeling isolated and anxious, "always home, not feeling very well because I was always inside with the kids."



Finding Freedom and Financial Independence with the Big Issue

Two years ago, Paula discovered Big Issue, something that transformed her life. "The position at Big Issue is good for me because it's very flexible," she explains, highlighting the crucial ability to manage her work around her family's needs. This flexibility was a lifeline, allowing her to earn money and escape the confines of her home, which had fuelled her anxiety. "I was always cleaning the house, and looking after the kids, my head was like oh my god... because I needed to speak with someone." Big Issue provided not just income but a vital social outlet, helping her overcome her shyness and connect with people. "I used to be scared talking and telling people my problems and now I'm okay with that."

Beyond the financial aspect, Big Issue offered tangible support that directly addressed her family's poverty. They provided **electric and gas vouchers** and helped with the purchase of an **air fryer** and even a new **washing machine** when hers broke – practical help that eased the financial burden on her and her husband. Crucially, Big Issue gave Paula her own income, fostering a profound sense of independence. "Now I always have money, my money. No need to ask my husband for money," she proudly states. This personal income means she can now afford essentials for her children, like "more clothes, or when I go out with them if my daughter wants some sweets I will just go and buy them."

Building Community and Hope for the Future

Paula's pitch has become a vibrant community, providing not just sales but genuine human connection. Her customers are "like a family, people love you," offering understanding and support. She recalls a particularly touching moment when a regular customer presented her with a Christmas gift for her and her children. Despite facing judgment from some who question why a "young lady" is selling magazines, Paula steadfastly defends her work: "Big Issue is work, it's not begging... I come every day; I stay in all weather."

Big Issue has empowered Paula not only financially but emotionally, giving her a sense of purpose and a supportive network that helps alleviate her anxiety. She feels "free" and "happy to be here," appreciating the flexibility and the strong support from the Big Issue team, especially Natalie, whom she considers "like a sister-in-law." Though worries about her children's future persist, Paula remains determined. "I'm proud because I can do something for my kids," she affirms, embodying resilience and hope in the face of adversity.



Big Issue is work, it's not begging... I come every day; I stay in all weather.

BIG ISSUE RECRUIT

HIGHLIGHTS ↓



1. Onboarding

- Candidate & Partner outreach
- Initial needs & barrier assessment
- Specialist Job Coach allocation

520
new candidates supported in 2025

348
candidates achieving Work Ready Status⁶

2. Training & Preparation

- Tailored coaching & mentoring
- Interview prep & skills workshops
- Sector specific training, when needed
- Financial health & wellbeing support

3. Matching & Placement

- Curated jobs match
- Interview facilitation & feedback
- Successful job offer & contract

194
candidates supported into new job opportunities

4. Sustainable employment

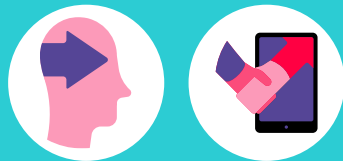
- In-Work support from Job Coaches
- Ongoing employer feedback loop
- Career progression guidance

For every **£1** spent, Big Issue Recruit generated **£5.90** in social value.



Breaking the Digital Barrier to Sustainable Employment

BIG Impact Pillars: Learning & Employment, Financial & Digital Inclusion



■ At Big issue Recruit, we focus on removing the practical barriers that prevent individuals from securing work. Digital access is now a basic requirement for anyone seeking a job in the UK. Most employers require online applications and mobile contact for interviews. People without a smartphone or data connection cannot engage with the job market. This barrier often affects people experiencing housing instability, making it difficult to find a stable career.

Data from FutureDotNow shows only 33% of people not in work can complete all 20 work tasks in their Essential Digital Skills Framework, but 82% of jobs require basic digital skills.⁷

Having moved to the UK from Spain at a young age, Aiona experienced years of extreme housing instability, including living in a squat for a long period. This lack of a permanent, stable home created a cycle of uncertainty that made it incredibly difficult to build a foundation for a career. "What that does is that you are very unstable," they explain, highlighting how the absence of a secure base affects every other aspect of life, particularly the search for work.

The Challenge: The "Digital Invisible" in the Job Market

■ In the modern economy, the "Digital Barrier" is a significant hurdle for those furthest from the job market. To find work today, internet access and a reliable phone aren't luxuries—they are essential infrastructure.

For Aiona, the lack of connectivity meant being effectively "invisible" to potential employers. Without a phone or the money to top up Wi-Fi, the basic mechanics of job hunting—searching for roles, submitting applications, and being available for interviews—were out of reach. As they put it: "If you don't have a phone, how can they contact you?"



The Support: Tailored Recruitment and Connection

Through Big Issue Recruit, Aiona received specialist, one-to-one support tailored to their specific needs. Recognizing that digital exclusion was the primary roadblock, the Big Issue Group and giffgaff partnership provided a smartphone and reliable connectivity.

This intervention wasn't just about giving a device; it was about providing the tools for "sustainable employment" and the "digital skills training" necessary to navigate the modern recruitment landscape.

The Impact: Agency and Access

The provision of a phone and data has fundamentally changed Aiona's ability to engage with the world. It has restored their agency and allowed them to take control of their future:

- ➔ **Increased Productivity:** "I can search for jobs and apply for jobs all the time from my house... I can spend more time searching for jobs".
- ➔ **Accessibility:** They are now able to receive the vital messages, emails, and phone calls from employers that were previously missed.
- ➔ **Confidence:** The support from a dedicated Job Coach, combined with the right technology, has shifted the focus from survival to thriving.

Looking Forward: A Career with Purpose

"I'm excited about the kind of jobs that they can help me get... where I feel like I can thrive". By bridging the digital divide, the giffgaff partnership has helped turn a period of instability into an opportunity for a fresh start and a career of purpose.

Aiona has now started an Interpreting for the Community training course, which lasts 12 weeks and in early January 2026 she has begun a paid internship with the charity Change Please.



"I'm excited about the kind of jobs that they can help me get... where I feel like I can thrive"

BIG ISSUE MEDIA

HIGHLIGHTS ↓

Content Creation & Storytelling

- Award winning journalism
- Investigative reporting
- Challenging stereotypes
- Amplifying marginalised voices

2,500
articles published on
bigissue.com

Driving Social Change

- Advocacy & awareness
- Influencing national policy

35
UK MPs recruited as
End Poverty Champions
supporting our mission
by speaking out against
poverty in Parliament

3,000
views per article,
on average

Multi-platform Reach & Engagement

- Publishing across print & digital
- Driving social media engagement
 - 1.57 million copies of the Big Issue sold across the UK
 - 2,500 articles published on bigissue.com
 - 7.35 million views across all articles

Impactful Partnerships

- Corporate partnerships
- Brand collaborations
- Purpose driven events
- Shared social value creation

38

sponsored articles
showing the impact of our
Partners for Good:
Citroen, giffgaff, Specsavers,
Lenovo, StreetVet,
Animal Friends,
Experian, Stonewater
and Gander



Fighting for a suitable home: the UK's accessible housing crisis

BIG Impact Pillars: Housing



■ The United Kingdom is in the midst of a severe and growing crisis in accessible housing. A staggering **12 million people in the UK with accessibility issues are living in homes that do not fully meet their needs**, a shortfall that has only worsened over the last decade.⁹

This "accessibility gap" leaves millions of individuals struggling with daily life, often facing a lack of basic features like wheelchair access, appropriate bathrooms, and sufficient space. This isn't just an issue of convenience; it's a matter of health, dignity, and independence. The shortage forces many disabled people to live in conditions that actively harm their physical and mental well-being, as well as their ability to participate in society. The human cost of this systemic failure is immense, and it's a problem that affects people across the country.

Jason's story demonstrates not only how Big Issue Group not only supports individuals who are facing challenges around their housing but also how, as a national media publication, the Big Issue magazine can amplify the voices of people who are not usually heard in the fight for social justice.

A Daily Battle Against Unsuitable Housing

■ Jason is a Big Issue vendor and an amputee who uses a wheelchair. His ordeal began in 2014 when he was housed in a second-floor flat. The broken lift often forced him into the degrading and physically draining position of "crawling up the stairs." Although he was moved to a new ground-floor property in 2022, his struggles continued. This house is not wheelchair-accessible, limiting his mobility and causing damage to the property as he navigates it. As a local authority occupational therapist noted, his health has been deteriorating, yet two years after a recommendation for a transfer, he remains in the same unsuitable accommodation.



Jason feels discriminated against and questions the fairness of paying £153 a week in rent and council tax for a home that is actively harming his health. "I've never lived in a wheelchair-adapted property," he states, his frustration and exhaustion palpable. The managing housing association has admitted to "service failings in complaint handling," but Jason's core demand for a suitable home and an admission of discrimination has yet to be met.

The Big Issue: A Platform for Advocacy

Jason's story has not gone unheard. The Big Issue has used its media platform to not only tell his personal story but to make a powerful case for wider change. The magazine featured his case, giving a human face to the statistics that reveal a growing national problem. Data from the Centre for Ageing Better shows a widening "accessibility gap": while the disabled population in England grew by 4.7 million between 2009 and

2022, the number of fully accessible homes only increased by 2.4 million. This growing deficit leaves 12.8 million disabled people without a suitable home.

By showcasing Jason's journey and linking it to this broader data, Big Issue turns his personal fight into a campaign for all. It demonstrates our commitment to fight for vendors and how we can transform their stories into a rallying cry for policy reform. Jason's story is evidence to the magazine's role as a vital media outlet, giving a voice to those who need it most and proving that a single voice can spark a national conversation for systemic change.



I've never lived in a wheelchair-adapted property

Big Issue Investigation: The "Yo-Yo Homes" Scandal

■ Big Issue's 2025 investigation exposed a systemic drain on public finances through "Yo-Yo Homes"—council properties sold under Right to Buy and repurchased by the same local authorities at inflated prices.



Data from 50 councils revealed over **445 instances** of this practice. In London alone, nine boroughs lost **£55.6 million** over five years. One Hackney property, sold for £95,050 in 2014, was bought back for £365,000 in 2021. Following our reporting, which reached *The Telegraph* and *Sky News*, the government extended discount repayment periods to 10 years to curb this unfair profiteering.

BIG ISSUE INVEST

HIGHLIGHTS ↓

£61.8m

under management, and 139 investees in our portfolio

- 96% of our investees provide core solutions to poverty⁹
- 74% of invested capital is in businesses with diverse representation at either senior management team or board level
- 58% invested in highly deprived UK regions¹⁰



Impact first:

We unlock investment for social purpose organisations



Social Equity:

We back social purpose organisations that tackle poverty and inequality

1.9 million people supported by our investees

£3.5m

repaid by investees in 2025

- 8 live products and funds including accelerator, lending and growth capital
- Partnerships with three combined authorities: Greater London Authority, North East Combined Authority, West Midlands Combined Authority



More than Money:

We support our investees to positively change people's lives

£9.4m

newly invested in 50 organisations in 2025

- 76% of investees would highly recommend our service and support
- 77% report increased resilience
- 83% report an increase in their social impact

New Investment: Great Oaks College

BIG Impact Pillars: Learning & Employment,



■ In March 2025, Big Issue Invest invested an initial £2.6 million in Great Oaks College (GOC), of a total £3.2 million commitment. GOC offers life opportunities to 100+ young people (19 to 25) with moderate, severe, or profound and multiple learning difficulties so they can build skills, confidence, and resilience.



Impact on Great Oaks College

“Just two months after receiving an ‘Outstanding’ Ofsted report, we were informed by the Local Authority that we had been issued a two-year notice to vacate our site. Our immediate challenge was securing a suitable building that can safely accommodate our students and meet their complex physical and educational needs. As a charity, securing financial support has been particularly challenging. We were unable to obtain a mortgage on a new property, and without a physical asset to secure a loan against, it proved difficult to gain the support we needed from potential investors. Despite our best efforts, we felt as though we were running out of options – until we were introduced to BII.

BII has proven to be much more than a financial partner; they have invested in our vision and values. James and Rebecca have demonstrated a genuine commitment to our mission. The support will ensure that we can continue to provide exceptional education for our students, empowering them to lead full, meaningful lives.”

Nickyie Thomas
Principal
Great Oaks College



Why we invested

“We’re delighted to have made our first Social Impact Debt Fund IV loan commitment to Great Oaks College to allow it to transition to a new site and provide its students and staff with long term security. The outcomes achieved by the students at Great Oaks College and the difference the college makes to their lives is why BII funds projects like this.

This loan will remove the uncertainty and challenges of a short-term leased site and allow Great Oaks to own, manage and invest

in its site, providing the students with the opportunity to make the most out of their time at the college, opening doors for their future. This funding for a critical piece of community infrastructure creates exactly the type of long-term impact we’re trying to make with Fund IV and across BII.”



James Potter
Investment Director
Big Issue Invest

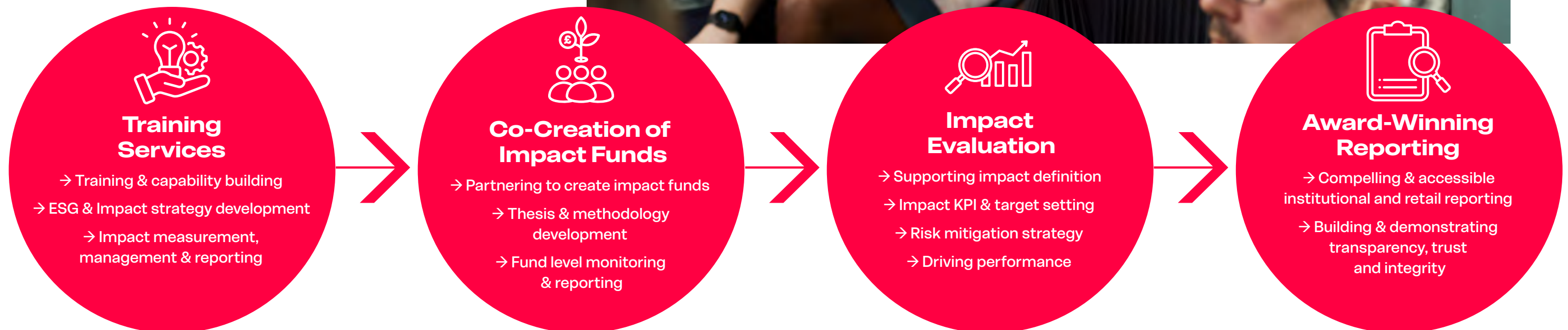
BIG ISSUE IMPACT

HIGHLIGHTS ↓

■ We launched our new Impact advisory business in 2025

- Providing Impact Advisory on our co-developed CT UK Social Bond Fund, with Columbia Threadneedle
 - CT UK Social Bond Fund has invested £394 million into social outcomes.
- Refined Big Issue Group's Social Value Framework to more accurately track the long-term outcomes of our programs.
- Led the data collection and analysis for the Group-wide annual impact assessment.

What we offer:





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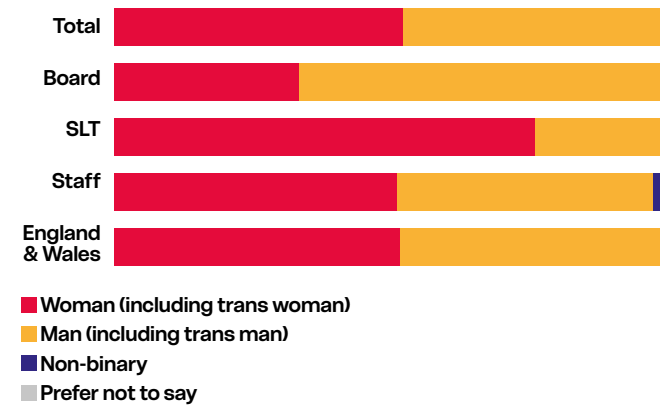
INSIDE BIG ISSUE GROUP

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at BIG

Key to our commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion is sharing demographic insights into representation amongst our employees.

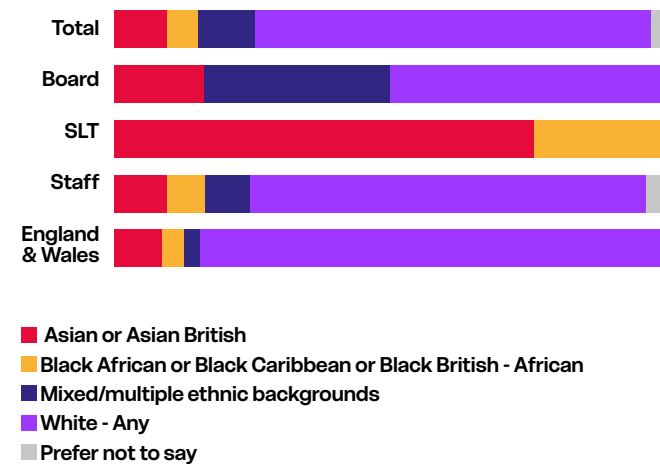
For the fourth time, we are also sharing data on our gender pay gap and the difference in income between our highest and lowest-earning employees.

Gender



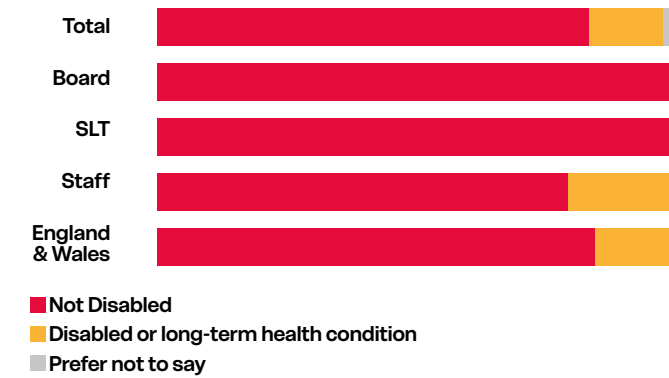
→ The percentage of women at BIG is **51%** overall. That's **33%** at Board level, **75%** at Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and **51%** amongst staff.

Ethnicity



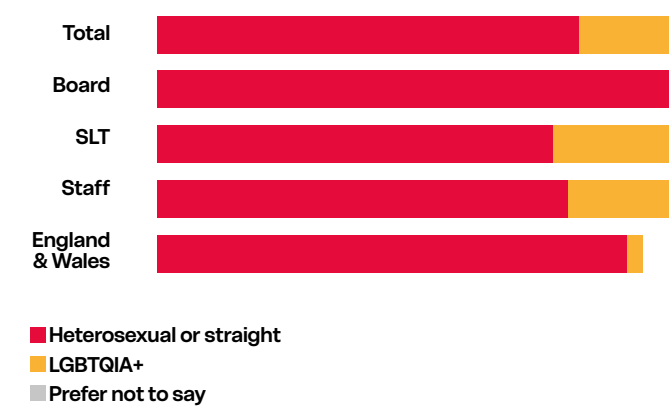
→ Representation of global majority ethnicity groups at BIG is **26%**. That's **50%** at Board level and **31%** amongst staff. Individuals in our SLT are all from White ethnic backgrounds.

Disability¹¹



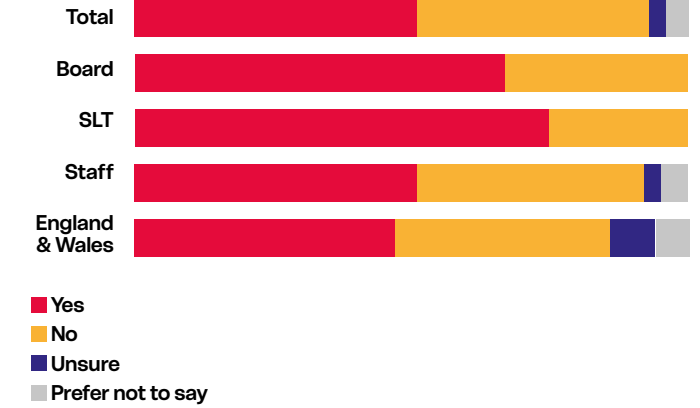
→ Representation is in line with national data in the Staff team (**17%**). There is no disability representation at Board or SLT level.

Sexual Orientation



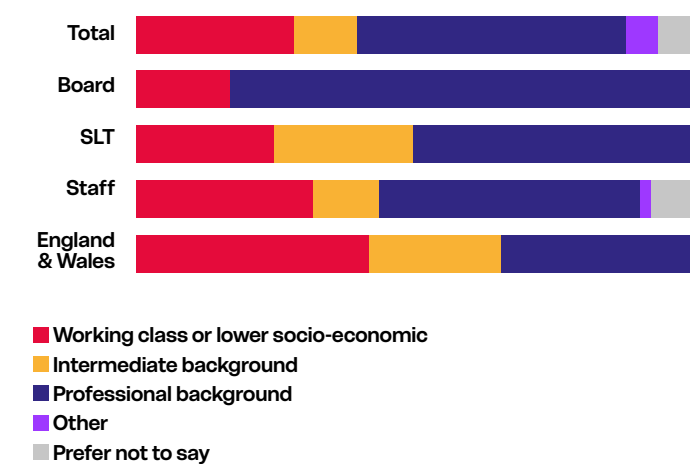
→ LGBTQIA+¹² representation is above average at both SLT level (**25%**) and in the Staff team (**20%**). But there is no representation at Board level.

Lived Experience



→ **51%** of Board members, **51%** of the Staff team and **25%** of SLT have lived experience of a social challenge.

Socio-economic background



→ People whose main household earner when they were a teenager were from professional backgrounds are overrepresented at Big Issue Group (**51%**). **17%** of Board, **25%** of SLT and **32%** of staff are from working-class backgrounds.

Big Issue Group's pay gap

Number of employees

121

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

Group	Male (%)	Female (%)	Non-Binary (%)	Prefer not to Say (%)
Upper Hourly Pay Quarter	57	40	0	3
Upper Middle Hourly Pay Quarter	40	57	0	3
Lower Middle Hourly Pay Quarter	47	47	3	3
Lower Hourly Pay Quarter	71	19	3	7

Big Issue Group's 2024/25 mean gender pay gap is

9%

in favour of women

Last year BIG's mean gender pay gap was

2%

in favour of men

Big Issue Group's 2024/25 median gender pay gap is

20%

in favour of women

Last year BIG's median gender pay gap was

4%

in favour of women

This year Big Issue Group's highest to lowest hourly pay ratio is

£4.86 : £1

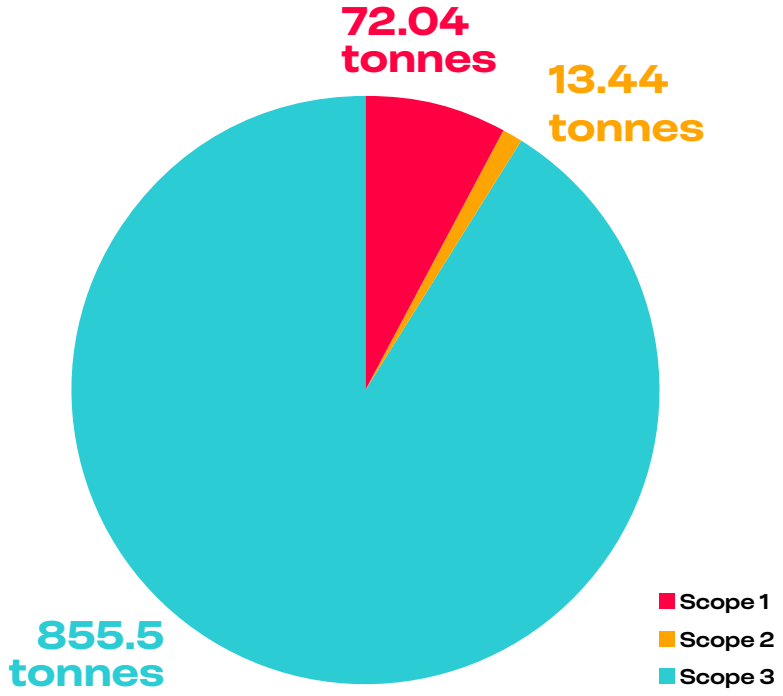
Last year Big Issue Group's highest to lowest hourly pay ratio is

£8.42 : £1



Our Carbon Footprint¹³

For the third time, we are sharing our carbon footprint data and for the second successive year we have achieved an overall reduction in our carbon footprint.



Our highest emitting activities.

- 28%** of our total emissions come from printing and paper activities, such as the production of the Big Issue magazine.
- 10%** of our total emissions come from office administration and management.
- 9%** of our total emissions come from our IT solutions, both hardware and software.
- 9%** of our total emissions come from consulting and freelance services.



Total CO2 emissions of **940,980kg**, or **941 tonnes**, in 2024/25.

↓ **8%** reduction on 2023/24.

Scope 1
8% of total emissions.

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

An increase of **↑ 3%** year-on-year in Scope 1 emissions.

Scope 2
1% of total emissions.

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

An increase of **↑ 11%** year-on-year in Scope 2 emissions.








Scope 3
91% of total emissions.

Indirect emissions from our supply chain.

A reduction of **↓ 9%** year-on-year in Scope 3 emissions.

References

- <https://www.jrf.org.uk/deep-poverty-and-destitution/destitution-in-the-uk-2023>
- <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/november2025>
- <https://www.finder.com/uk/current-accounts/cash-usage-statistics>
- <https://pressgazette.co.uk/publishers/magazines/magazine-abcs-2024-circulation-print-digital/>
- <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/poverty-facts-and-figures>
- BIR's Work Ready Status ensures that candidates have all the Foundational, Essential and Employability skills needed to enter the workforce. It also ensures that candidates have appropriate industry specific training, where required.
- [FutureDotNow](#)
- [Centre for Aging Better](#)
- We define 'core solutions to poverty' as aligning to one of the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

				
				
- Highest deprivation areas refer to deciles 1 to 4, middle areas refer to 5 to 8, and lowest deprivation areas refer to 9 to 10 of the [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#).
- Disability is defined as per the UK Equalities Act 2010, available [here](#).
- LGBTQIA+ is the acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or questioning), Intersex, Asexual and other non-cis or heterosexual identities. BIG takes definitions from Stonewall's glossary of terms when referencing LGBTQIA+ communities. More information [here](#).
- Carbon accounting data for FY 2024/25

Photography: Louise Haywood-Schiefer; Exposure Photo Agency; Andy Parsons; Matthew Horwood; Christopher Baker

