BIG ISSUE CHANGING LIVES

Community Interest Company

Certified B Corporation

Part of Big Group, a certified B-Corp

IMPACT REPORT 2025/26



NEXT PAGE ›



3,900
people accessing Big Issue Changing Lives support

WELCOME

A Message from Catherine Parsons, Managing Director of Big Issue Changing Lives CIC.

In the UK 43% of working age adults living in a home where no-one is working are living in poverty. The Big Issue has been working to end poverty since 1991. Whilst our aim hasn't changed, the people that we are working with and the solutions that we can offer are different. Last year 3,330 people earned money through selling the magazine; this remains a unique way to immediately earn a legitimate income but as poverty in the UK grows we need to do more to move people into sustainable employment and to invest in new ways for our vendors to grow their income.

In the last year we have started working with fumopay, a bank-to-bank payment system whose innovative use of QR codes, provides greater safety for customers and faster payments for vendors. With only 9% of UK transactions taking place in cash, it is increasingly important that we are equipping vendors with the right technology.

1 in 5 adults in the UK is economically inactive and almost 1 million young people are not currently studying or working. Big Issue Recruit has developed new targeted programmes aimed at supporting young people, including those with experience of the care system. We also launched our first trainee role in South Wales, and he has now successfully moved into a permanent role in our Cardiff office.

Big Issue Recruit is also expanding to cover more regions across the UK, with new job coaches working in South Wales and the West Midlands, areas where unemployment rates are above the national average and are growing. This year across the UK we supported over 200 people into employment, more than doubling the job outcomes we achieved in 2024/2025.

In the year ahead we will continue to grow and evolve, with plans to employ two more jobs coaches supporting 150 more people to find work with employers who recognise the value of creating a more diverse workforce. We also want to develop more opportunities for vendors to increase their income: we have an ambition for 70% of vendors being able to take cashless payments, and we will introduce sales of digital content.

As Big Issue Group celebrates our first 35 years, I want to thank all those who worked alongside us : the vendors out of the streets every day in all weathers; the community organisations and funders who support us; employers providing work opportunities ; to our customers who buy the magazine every week, providing our vendors with stability, a sense of community and a hand-up.



Catherine Parsons
Managing Director

OUR LANDSCAPE HAS CHANGED



Big Issue Changing Lives (BICL) is now three years old, but in 2026 we are celebrating 35 years of the Big Issue magazine. Big Issue's 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 the magazine's 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 2017[1]

→ **A generation locked out: 946,000 young people are not in education, employment or training** and are locked out of opportunity[2]

→ **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

Big Issue Changing Lives is delivering bold, adaptive solutions. By supporting our current vendors to maximise their income, and creating new solutions to support more people living with the challenges of poverty and exclusion, we guarantee our continued future impact

BICL will play a lead role in delivering the success against two key goals of Big Issue Group's Transformation Fund, a fund dedicated to safeguard current vendor earnings and develop new earnings opportunities for the future.

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%[1].

→ **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 offer a range of onward employment pathways for those with a wide range of backgrounds, barriers and experiences.



2 Transforming income generation for the future

To ensure we are prepared for the future and can 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 will 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 Big Issue's history.

→ **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.

[1]Based on analysis of vendor sales data, comparing pre- and post-cashless weekly sales.

BIG ISSUE CHANGING LIVES CIC

We are working to end poverty.

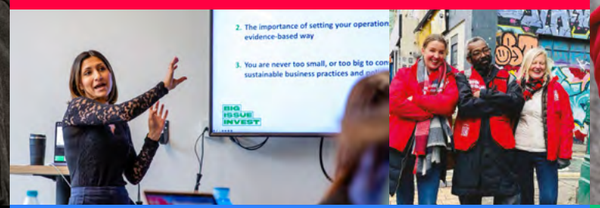








With **3.8 million people** in the UK experiencing destitution – and rising – Big Issue Changing Lives C.I.C. creates solutions and opportunities for people to work, earn, learn, and thrive.







Our Vision is a world that works for everyone.

Our Mission is to dismantle poverty through social business solutions.

Big Issue Changing Lives C.I.C. launched in June 2023, bringing together our legacy services into a single, purpose-driven organisation to deliver the most impactful support possible.

In April 2024, Big Issue Recruit became part of Big Issue Changing Lives. This means all of Big Issue Group's direct support services sit together within our Community Interest Company, enabling us to drive greater levels of impact.

BIG ISSUE CHANGING LIVES CIC

Our service model is a practical vehicle for change; enabling those we work with to access services, stay connected to support networks and pursue enterprise, training and employment opportunities.



People facing immediate crisis due to the impacts of poverty

The **Big Issue** magazine exists to offer an immediate opportunity to earn a legitmate income by becoming a vendor

Vendors can earn an income through selling the **Big Issue** and access the Hand Up service for as long as they need

The **Hand Up Service** exists to provide individual support to address needs across our five impact pillars



Some vendors may seek our support to find long-term employment

When vendors feel ready, some take the next positive step forward in their lives beyond Big Issue

People struggling to find work who find themselves in, or at risk, of poverty

Big Issue Recruit exists to support people facing barriers to employment find quality, sustainable work

Job coaches offer tailored employment support, as well as additional support across our five impact pillars, to help candidates overcome their barriers

Candidates successfully find employment and begin new careers

OUR IMPACT PILLARS

The work of Big Issue Changing Lives is not simply focused on achieving any one single outcome. We strive to create a ripple effect that transforms the lives of people and entire communities across multiple factors that contribute to causing and entrenching poverty.

By fostering collaboration, we work alongside the wider Big Issue Group with the aim to create long-lasting positive change. All our services deliver impact across one or more of our five impact pillars: Learning & Employment, Financial & Digital Inclusion, Housing, Health & Wellbeing, and Community & Environment.

Achieving outcomes in each of these impact pillars is pivotal to dismantling poverty in the UK. Below are figures for our overall reach in 2025/26.

3,300
people supported to earn an income as Big Issue vendors

↓

£3.4 million
of collective earnings for vendors



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.

769
people directly supported on Learning & Employment

↓

205
people successfully moved into new employment

Financial & Digital Inclusion

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

867
people directly supported on Financial & Digital Inclusion

Health & Wellbeing

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

1,096
people directly supported on Health & Wellbeing

Housing

We support people to access safe and secure accommodation, and provide ongoing tenancy support to prevent future homelessness.

61
people directly supported on Housing

Community & Environment

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

51
people directly supported on Community & Environment



IMPACT PILLAR

LEARNING & EMPLOYMENT

< PREVIOUS PAGE
NEXT PAGE >

LEARNING & EMPLOYMENT

Big Issue was founded to give people facing homelessness and poverty a way to earn their own income. That is still central to our work. But for many people, selling the magazine is one step in a bigger plan.

When someone is ready, we help them build skills, update their CV, apply for jobs, prepare for interviews, and move into secure work.

Big Issue Recruit provides specialist support for people who face real barriers to work. We connect candidates with employers offering good-quality jobs, and we continue to support them after they enter employment, helping them settle into work and sustain their progress.



In 2025/26:

205
people successfully moved into new employment.

2,600
hours of pre-employment support delivered

2,000
hours of post-employment support delivered

86%
of people achieved their Learning & Employment goals with our support

8.1/10 average
quality rating for our Learning & Employment support

LEARNING & EMPLOYMENT

Supporting care-experienced young people into work

Each year, thousands of young people leave the care system and are expected to manage adult life with far less support than many of their peers. In the UK, more than 13,000 young people left care on their 18th birthday last year. For many, that means dealing with housing, money, work, health and relationships without a steady support network. Care-experienced young people aged 19 to 21 in England are three and a half times more likely than their peers to not be in education, employment or training, with the rate for this group at 39%.

A practical partnership through Big Issue Recruit

Big Issue Recruit (BIR) launched a specialist pilot programme to support care leavers into work. We worked with local authorities, including council social services teams in Caerphilly, Newport, Hackney and Waltham Forest, alongside the Care Leavers Covenant and Jobcentre Plus. Together, we built a clear referral route for young people who need more than standard employability advice.

At BIR, each candidate is matched with a dedicated Job Coach. The support is tailored to the person in front of us. That can mean help with a CV, job applications and interview preparation. It can also mean support with housing, health, digital access, confidence and money. The aim is not only to help someone get a job, but also to help them feel ready, stay in work and build stability after they start.



Building confidence and opening routes into work

Since referrals opened in March 2026, 31 care-experienced candidates have registered with the programme. Twenty have already reached work-ready status. Through our network of inclusive employer partners, candidates have moved into roles with employers including Tesco and Five Guys, and through agencies such as Quint Education.

Support continues after the first day at work. Big Issue Recruit offers post-employment coaching and regular check-ins for up to six months, so candidates have someone to turn to if problems come up. One young person described the difference this support made:

“My job coach has been extremely supportive with my job application and interview preparation. Since working with them, I have managed to secure an interview for a role. Although I wasn’t successful in securing the role, they have been very helpful with the application support and preparation prior to the interview. I’m hopeful that with their support I will secure a permanent role soon."

The pilot shows what becomes possible when young people are given consistent, practical support at the right time. By combining trusted referrals, one-to-one coaching and links to employers, Big Issue Recruit is helping care leavers take their next step into work with more confidence and support around them.



IMPACT PILLAR

FINANCIAL & DIGITAL INCLUSION

FINANCIAL & DIGITAL INCLUSION

Fewer people carry cash. More payments happen by phone or card. For Big Issue vendors, that can mean missed income if they cannot offer cashless payment.

That is why financial inclusion and digital inclusion have to work together. We support people to open bank accounts, manage their money, build digital confidence, and access the services they need.

We also help vendors take cashless payments. Through fumopay, vendors can accept payment using a QR code which customers scan. Vendors do not need a card reader, Wi-Fi, or Bluetooth, and the money goes straight into their account.



In 2025/26

318
people supported across **376** Connect Digital Skills sessionss

93%
increased their confidence using digital tech

226
people supported across **346** Money Check-in sessions[1] resulting in **1,730** positive interventions

79%
increased their confidence managing money

379
new vendors enabled to accept cashless payments with fumopay

52%
of all vendors accepting cashless payments on the streets, every week

340
smartphones distributed in partnership with giffgaff

£17,800
of grants issued through our Hand-Up Fund

8.8/10 average
quality rating for our Financial & Digital Inclusion support

[1] Money Check-ins include our Money Health Checks and our Cost of Living Combined Checks for Money & Energy

Instant impact: making cashless payments easier for vendors

The Continuing Cashless Journey

By March 2025, Big Issue Changing Lives had supported 1,807 people to accept cashless payments. Providers such as Zettle helped vendors respond to the sharp fall in cash use. But card readers still created problems. They needed charging, Bluetooth connections could fail on the street, and payment processing meant vendors often waited several days before money reached their account.



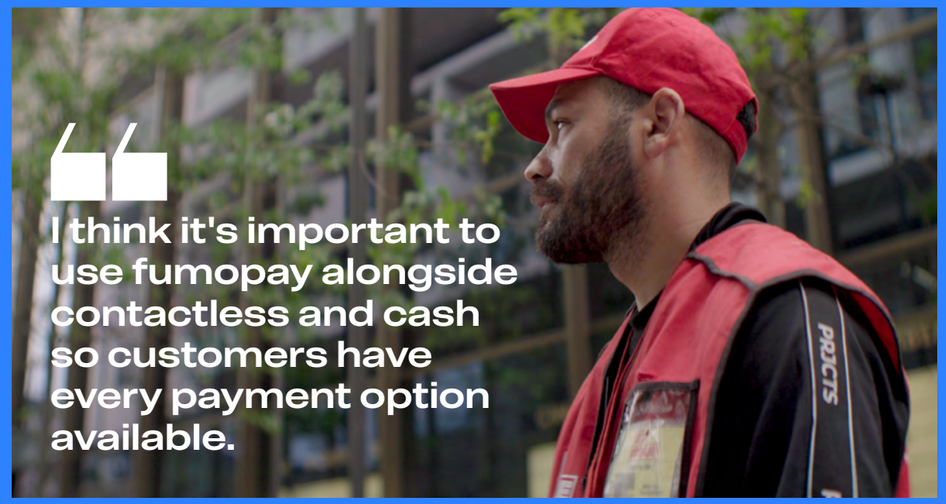
fumopay®

Lowering Barriers with fumopay

To solve these problems, we partnered with open banking provider fumopay. Vendors can now take account-to-account payments by showing a simple QR code. Customers scan the code, make the payment, and the money goes straight into the vendor's account.

That speed matters. For vendors living day to day, waiting several days for income can make budgeting harder and add stress. Fumopay gives vendors faster access to the money they have earned. The work has also been recognised beyond Big Issue, with the initiative shortlisted in the Open Banking for Good category at the 2025 Open Banking Expo Awards.

More than
379
vendors signed up to fumopay



More vendors, more transactions, more income

The response in 2025/26 has been strong. Across the year, **379 vendors signed up to fumopay**. Sign-ups were highest in November and December, when 79 and 84 vendors joined the platform. In total, vendors processed **21,743 transactions**, worth **£129,209**.

Gheorghe was one of the first vendors to test the new QR code payment technology. Before the pilot, he used other payment systems, but the three to five working day wait for money was a serious problem, especially over weekends. When every pound matters, delayed payments make it harder to plan, buy essentials and manage day-to-day costs.

After joining the fumopay pilot, Gheorghe became one of the UK's top-selling vendors and the number one seller in London. Faster access to payments, combined with his own hard work, has helped him build a stronger financial position. He has now secured part-time work close to his pitch and is continuing to work towards full-time employment.

Reflecting on his experience, Gheorghe said: "It's amazing. Fumopay is easier to use than a card reader because all I have to do is show my QR code, and the customer completes the payment themselves. I receive the money much quicker than I did before. I think it's important to use fumopay alongside contactless and cash so customers have every payment option available. It makes it much harder for people to ignore me on the streets."

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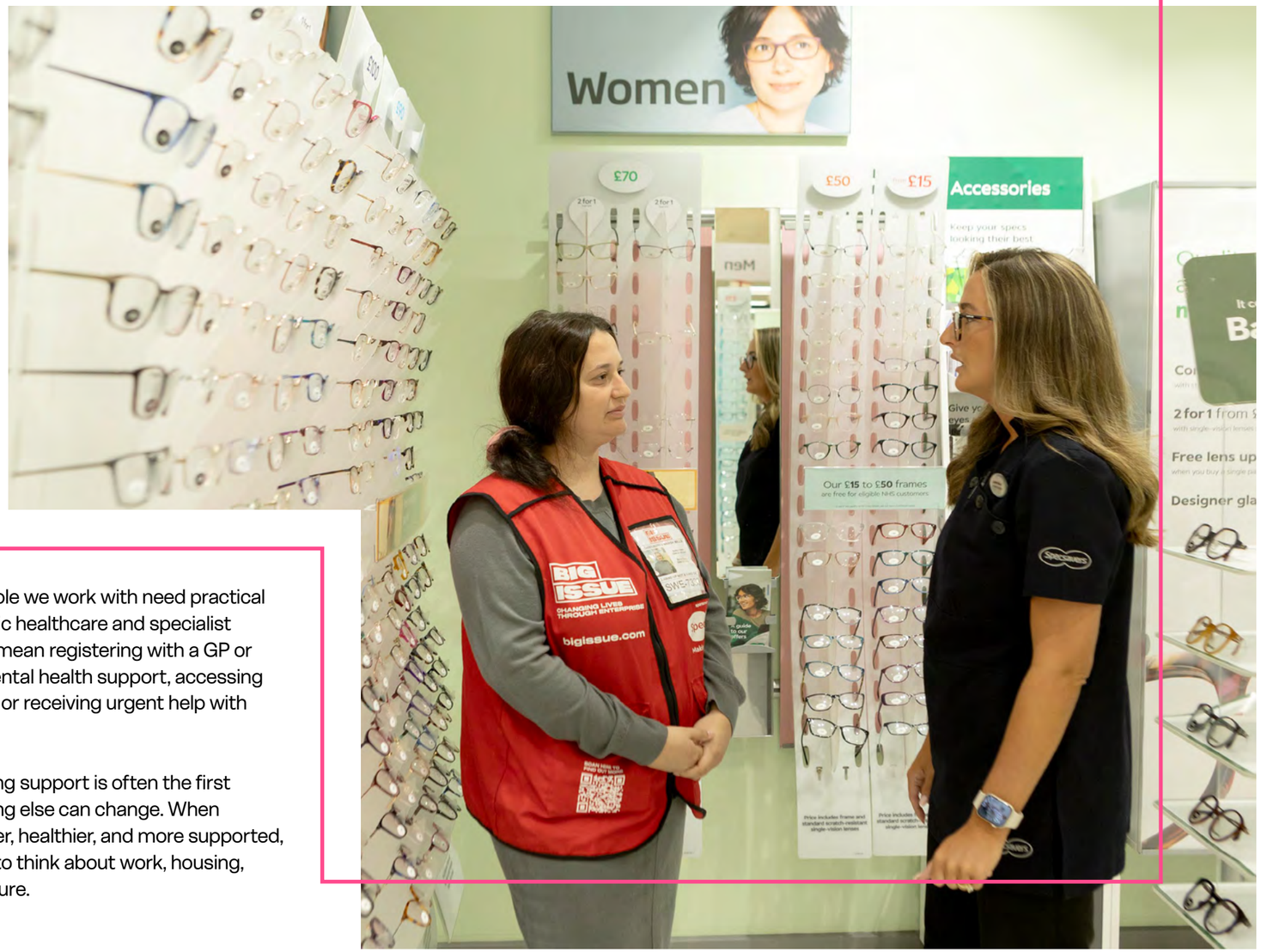


IMPACT PILLAR

HEALTH & WELLBEING

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Good health affects everything: work, housing, confidence, relationships, and day-to-day stability.



Many of the people we work with need practical help to access basic healthcare and specialist support. That can mean registering with a GP or dentist, getting mental health support, accessing addiction services, or receiving urgent help with food or fuel.

Health and wellbeing support is often the first step before anything else can change. When someone feels safer, healthier, and more supported, it becomes easier to think about work, housing, money, and the future.

In 2025/26:

393
people supported across
690 Welfare Check-ins

106
people supported across
181 Health Guidance sessions

82%
improved their physical health

7.6/10 average
average quality rating for our Health & Wellbeing support

Finding safety and stability after domestic violence

For safeguarding reasons, the vendor's name has been changed. "Mara" is used as a pseudonym.



Building trust in a moment of crisis

Mara came to Big Issue Changing Lives with her child after experiencing domestic violence. She had no family or close friends nearby to rely on. She was trying to manage several urgent problems at once, including personal safety, insecure housing, healthcare, the court process and her child's wellbeing.

This could not be solved with a single referral. Mara needed support that was safe, steady and led by her needs. Molly, one of our frontline staff members, spent time building trust so they could work together at Mara's pace. That relationship gave Mara space to talk about what she needed, understand her options and begin making decisions about her and her child's future.

Coordinated support around specific needs

Big Issue Changing Lives helped Mara access basic services that everyone should be able to use. She was supported to register with an NHS dentist and GP, giving her and her child a route into ongoing healthcare. Molly also referred Mara to victim support services for her court case and advocated for her to access an interpreter and welfare support in court.

At the same time, Molly worked with social services and housing support organisations to help Mara move towards a safer home. Mara was also referred to a specialist domestic violence charity, where she began receiving psychological support, counselling and art therapy. A joint referral from the school, social services and Big Issue Changing Lives was made so Mara's child could access specialist support too.

Practical safety work sat alongside these referrals. Molly supported Mara to build confidence around personal safety, including digital safety. This included advice on staying safe online, protecting personal information and avoiding sharing details with strangers. For someone recovering from domestic violence, this is part of rebuilding control, trust and independence.

A safer future for a mother and her child

This was long, careful work. It relied on trusted relationships, coordination with several agencies and persistent advocacy. The outcome has been life-changing. Mara is now living in a safe home, receiving wellbeing support and working part-time during school term-time. Her child is also being connected with the right support. With patient, trauma-informed support, Mara has moved from crisis towards safety, stability and a more independent future.



IMPACT PILLAR

HOUSING

HOUSING

Safe housing is the foundation for almost everything else. Without it, it is harder to stay well, manage money, keep work, build confidence, or plan ahead.

Many people we support are dealing with insecure housing, poor-quality accommodation, rising rents, energy costs, or the risk of homelessness. Around 30% of the people we support are currently homeless or vulnerably housed.

Our support is practical. We help people understand their housing options, access safe accommodation, deal with eviction risks, manage energy costs, and get help with essentials such as fuel vouchers.



In 2025/26:

54
people received advice and guidance on their housing situation

8 people
supported to find new, secure places to live

331
people supported across **461** Energy Check-ins resulting in **1,844** positive interventions

576
fuel vouchers distributed in partnerships with British Gas Energy Trust and Fuel Bank Foundation

219
people received support and funding to purchase white goods for their home

7.3/10 average
quality rating for our Health & Wellbeing support

HOUSING

Moving from crisis to security through fuel poverty support

This story has been anonymised at the request of the individual. "Elena" is used as a pseudonym.

Energy costs continue to put serious pressure on families with low incomes. Department for Energy Security and Net Zero 2026 data show that 7.63 million households in England spend more than 10% of their income on energy to keep their homes heated. National Energy Action estimates that 6 million children across the UK are living in fuel poverty.

For families in this position, rent, energy bills and basic essentials compete for the same limited income. The risk is even sharper for households using pre-payment meters, where a sudden cost or missed payment can quickly mean no heating or power. Language barriers, low digital confidence and complex supplier systems can make it harder to get help before a crisis point is reached.

Elena lives with her husband and young children in council accommodation. English is not her first language, which made it harder for her to understand supplier letters, access budgeting advice and manage her energy account. Caring responsibilities meant she could not take on extra work, so the flexible income she earned as a Big Issue vendor was a vital support for her family.

Practical help when it was needed most

Through the Fighting Fuel Poverty project, Big Issue Changing Lives provided targeted support to Elena and other vendors in urgent need. Face-to-face support was important because Elena had limited English and low digital confidence. Staff met her at the office, talked through her situation and provided clear energy advice. To deal with the immediate crisis, we issued emergency fuel vouchers. We also provided winter footwear and a Warm Room Kit with small items to help keep heat in the home.

Building confidence and reducing future risk

The emergency fuel vouchers prevented two periods of complete disconnection, keeping the household heated during the coldest months. The support also helped Elena build confidence. Staff broke information down into clear, repeated steps so she could better understand her options. She began using simple energy-saving actions, including controlling heating times and reducing unnecessary appliance use.

Staff have continued working with Elena and her husband on family budgeting, including encouraging use of the Hand-Up Fund as a way of dealing with unexpected financial pressures. As a result, Elena's family moved away from the threat of disconnection and towards greater stability, with better tools to manage energy costs in the future.



7.63 million households in England spend more than 10% of their income on energy to keep their homes heated.



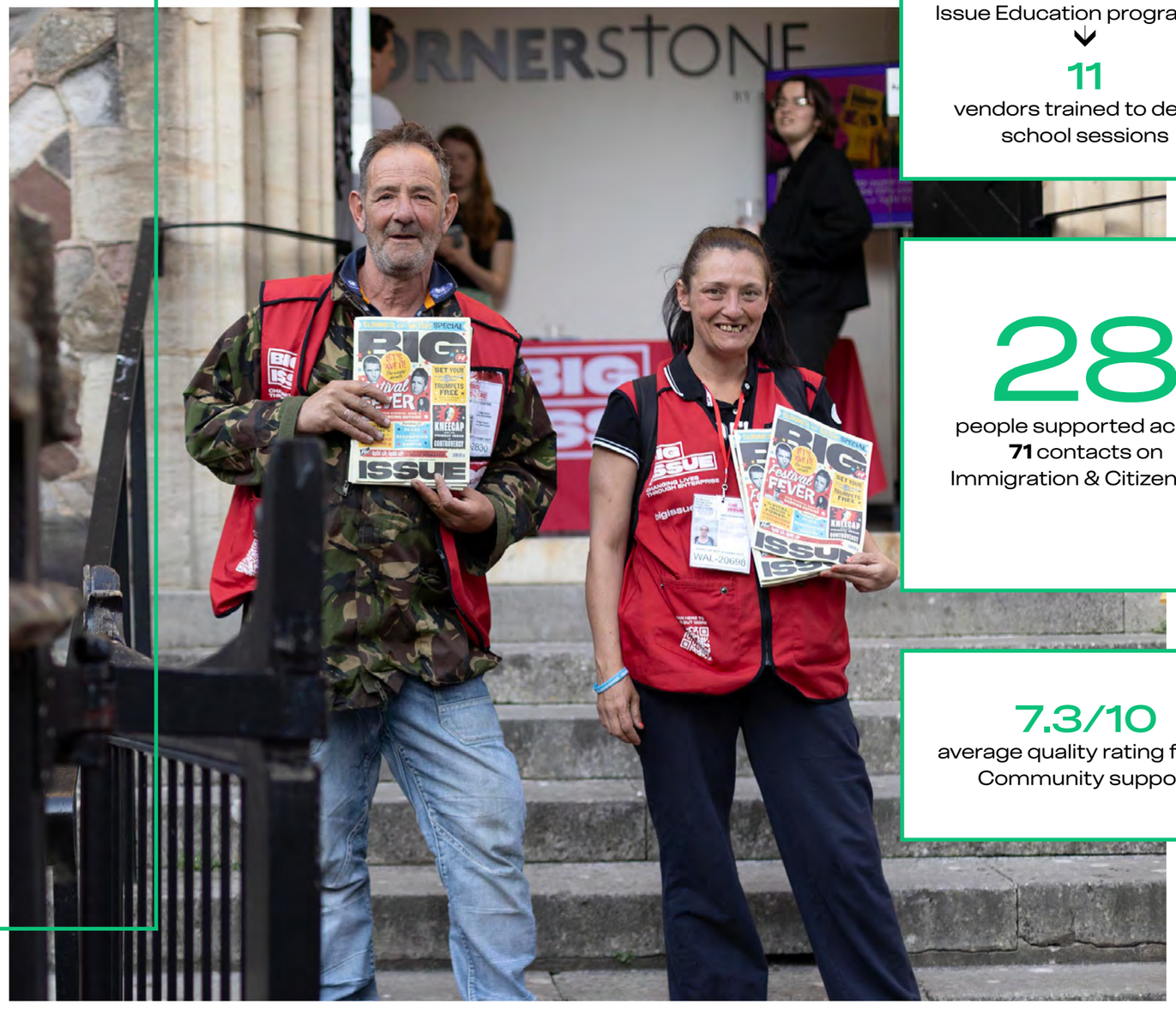
IMPACT PILLAR

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT

Big Issue has always been rooted in local communities. For vendors, selling the magazine is not only a way to earn. It is also a way to build regular relationships, be seen, and feel part of everyday life on the high street.

As communities change, our work is changing too. We help people access ID, develop language skills, build confidence, and connect with local support. We are also developing new ways for young people to earn through community reporting and local storytelling.



In 2025/26:

Over
2,000
pupils reached through our Big Issue Education programme

11
vendors trained to deliver school sessions

28
people supported across **71** contacts on Immigration & Citizenship

7.3/10
average quality rating for our Community support

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT

Big Issue Education: helping young people understand poverty

Learning from real experience

In late 2025, we launched Big Issue Education to help young people understand the realities of homelessness, poverty and inequality. The programme brings Big Issue vendors into primary school assemblies and workshops, where they share their own experiences in a safe and structured way.

The aim is simple: to help children see the person behind the problem. By hearing directly from vendors, pupils learn that homelessness and poverty have many causes, including health, housing, work, family and wider economic pressures. The sessions give children space to ask questions, challenge assumptions and think about fairness in their own communities.

As Sue Lomax, Big Issue Education Programme Coordinator, explains: “We want young people to appreciate how fairness, compassion and social justice shape a stronger society”.

Changing how pupils think and talk

The programme has now reached over 2,000 pupils across 15 schools in London, Bristol and Wales. We have delivered 36 sessions and trained 11 vendors and five facilitators to share their stories with confidence.

The impact on pupils has been clear. Meeting vendors face to face helps replace stereotypes with real stories. One Bristol primary school teacher said: “It’s transformed how our pupils talk about homelessness. They’ve moved from seeing it as an individual problem to understanding the wider causes. That shift in thinking is powerful”.

A head teacher in London saw the same change: “Students aren’t just learning about inequality – they’re debating it, questioning it and thinking about solutions”.

> **“It’s transformed how our pupils talk about homelessness. They’ve moved from seeing it as an individual problem to understanding the wider causes**



Confidence for vendors, learning for pupils

The programme also matters for vendors. Standing in front of a classroom gives them a chance to be heard, respected and recognised for their experience. One vendor said: “It is a privilege to stand up and talk with anyone and let them know my story, but a bigger privilege to tell it to the children who were animated by the story itself. For me, it is a challenge suffering from severe anxiety to do this, but I think it helps me enormously”.

For pupils, the human connection makes the issue easier to understand. One Year 6 pupil said: “I didn’t realise how many reasons there are for someone not having a home. It’s not just about money – it can be about mental health or losing a job. We should make sure everyone has a fair chance”.

Another pupil linked the lesson directly to everyday action: “The assembly showed me that the Big Issue gives people a chance to work and earn money instead of being left on the street. Now, whenever I see a vendor, I will try to buy a magazine or at least say hello and have a friendly chat”.

Following the success of the pilot, we are preparing to expand the primary school programme across all Big Issue offices nationwide. We are also developing a new curriculum for secondary school and post-16 students, so more young people can learn about poverty, fairness and the role they can play in their communities.

THE SOCIAL VALUE OF BIG ISSUE CHANGING LIVES

THE SOCIAL VALUE OF BIG ISSUE CHANGING LIVES C.I.C.[2]

Big Issue Changing Lives understands the importance of being able to express its work and impact through the means of social valuation. Social valuation measures the positive (and negative) value created by businesses through their operations and services that can benefit the economy, communities, and individuals.

Big Issue Changing Lives has established a robust social value framework that demonstrates the monetary social value of its work using rigorous financial proxies. These proxies, influenced by previous Social Return on Investment (SROI) research conducted by Big Issue Group, allow us to express our deep social and economic impact in clear, quantifiable terms. Social valuation measures the positive value created through our operations and services, showcasing how our interventions directly benefit individuals, families, local communities, and the wider UK economy.

In the 2025/26 reporting period, Big Issue Changing Lives achieved its greatest level of social value to date, creating an estimated **£11,700,000**[3] in total present social value. This represents an outstanding **38% increase** in social value compared to the £8.50 million generated in the 2024/25 period. The social value ratio of Big Issue Changing Lives, calculated against operating costs for 2025/26 was **£1 : £4.40**, or for every £1 spent on operational costs, £4.40 of social value was created.

This growth is driven by a significant expansion of our direct support services – most notably the scaling of **Big Issue Recruit (BIR)** – alongside a major push in cashless vendor enablement and digital inclusion.



In 2025/26 Big Issue Changing Lives achieved its greatest level of social value to date, creating an estimated **£11,700,000**

The social value ratio of Big Issue Changing Lives, calculated against operating costs for 2025/26 was **£1 : £4.40** or for every **£1** spent on operational costs, **£4.40** of social value was created.

Impact Area	2024/25 Social Value	2025/26 Social Value	YoY Change
Big Issue Magazine Sales	£4,343,000	£3,844,000	-11%
Learning & Employment	£2,517,000	£5,995,000	138%
Financial & Digital Inclusion	£291,000	£716,000	146%
Health & Wellbeing	£913,000	£962,000	5%
Housing	£368,000	£165,000	-55%
Community & Environment	£60,000	£17,800	-70%
GRAND TOTAL	**£8,500,000**	**£11,700,000**	**38%**
Operational Cost	£2,800,000	£2,700,000	-4%
Social Value Ratio	£1 : £3.00	£1 : £4.40	46%

[2] If you'd like to see the full detail of our social value work, get in touch and we'd love to discuss it with you

[3] This total includes some future value for outcomes that have been valued to last beyond one year. This total presents all values in Present Value terms and future values have been discounted at a rate of 3.5%, in line with the Government Greenbook best practice

CORE NARRATIVE THEMES & ANALYSIS



1 Learning & Employment

The biggest success in social value growth in the 25/26 period is the expansion of **Learning & Employment** outcomes, which more than doubled (+138%) to **£5,995,000**. This increase is directly attributable to the continued growth of Big Issue Recruit.

- In 2025/26, BIR supported **536 candidates** in total, successfully moving **205 individuals** into secure, long-term employment.
  - In 2024/25 the number supported into work was 90.
- This single outcome – moving 205 people facing severe employment barriers into work– generated **£5,459,000** in multi-year social value (accounting for deadweight, displacement, attribution, and a 50% drop-off rate in years 2 and 3).
- Additionally, we delivered **2,680 hours of pre-employment candidate support** and **2,050 hours of post-employment support** to ensure employment retention and long-term stability, creating **£379,000** of social value.



2 Financial & Digital Inclusion

Financial exclusion in a modern economy is heavily compounded by digital exclusion. This year, our Financial & Digital Inclusion pillar saw an exceptional 146% increase, growing to **£716,000**.

- **Cashless Sales Empowerment:** We enabled **379 vendors to accept contactless/cashless payments**, generating **£338,000** in value. Contactless options allow vendors to participate in an increasingly card-reliant high street, boosting their earnings and digital confidence.
- **Connectivity Kits:** In partnership with giffgaff, we distributed **363 smartphones** (valued at **£77,900**) and issued **273 Databank SIM cards** (providing six months of free data valued at **£7,300**). These devices act as essential lifelines, allowing vendors and candidates to stay connected to job coaches, health services, and support networks.



3 Health & Wellbeing

Our **Health & Wellbeing** pillar remained consistent, delivering a total value of **£962,000**.

- **Mental Wellbeing Uplift:** Mental health support remains a cornerstone of our work. Our SWEMWBS (Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale) methodology showed that **1,311 vendors** achieved a longitudinal increase in mental well-being, creating **£698,000** in social value.
- **Welfare & Crisis Interventions:** We conducted **690 welfare check-ins** (valued at **£77,700**) and supported **181 health and medical-related guidance and referral sessions (£20,400)**.
- **Direct Material Relief:** To mitigate severe fuel and food poverty during winter, we distributed **206 FuelBank vouchers and 370 British Gas fuel vouchers (specifically for the Roma community)**, alongside **338 supermarket/food vouchers**, and hundreds of cold-weather winter kits (total value **£31,000**).



4 Housing and Community Outcomes

While our overall social value grew exponentially, certain pillars saw decreases that reflect shifts in recording and strategic focus:

- **Housing (Decrease of 55% to £165,000)**: This decrease was primarily driven by a lower volume of absolute housing placements recorded (5 secured permanent homes this year versus 17 last year).
- **Community & Environment (Decrease of 70% to £17,800)**: The decrease reflects fluctuations in recorded outputs for citizenship and social network support. Despite lower recorded monetary proxies, we achieved vital qualitative successes, including **10 individuals securing legal advice/referrals and 46 immigration and citizenship guidance sessions.**

WITH THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

Every outcome in this report has been made possible through the support of our funders, partners, employers, schools, community organisations and customers. Together, we are creating practical solutions that help people earn, learn, work and thrive. If you would like to learn more about our work, support a programme, become an employer partner, or discuss how we could work together to tackle poverty and exclusion, we'd love to hear from you.

We'd also like to thank our partners for their ongoing support.

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PREVIOUS PAGE