# Andy Burnham sells The Big Issue magazine in Manchester

**Friday 21 July, 2023**

Image credit: Rebecca Lupton

*The Mayor of Greater Manchester donned a red tabard and sold the magazine in Manchester alongside his local vendor Colin to gain an insight into what it's like to be a Big Issue vendor.*

On Thursday 20 July, Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham donned a *Big Issue* tabard to try his hand at selling the magazine and gain an insight into what it's like to earn a living as a vendor.

The 53-year-old sold the magazine alongside veteran vendor Colin outside HOME in Manchester city centre on Thursday afternoon.

Burnham is the cover star of this week's Big Issue magazine across the north of England and joined Colin on his pitch to support his local vendor.

The Big Issue magazine has been sold across the UK since May following Big Issue North's decision to cease publication of its magazine in the north of England.

Vendors buy magazines for £2 and sell them on for £4. Customers can also subscribe with a vendor online, which provides a vital additional source of regular income.

Burnham said: "I'm out here doing my bit. It's nice to spend time with the most famous man in Greater Manchester. Truly, Colin is much-loved and I have got to know him quite well over the years since I became mayor.

"We've had a really big change with The Big Issue but it's still a really important thing and a big part in helping people moving on from where they are and we really support it.

"I'm out here showing Colin I support him and supporting The Big Issue more broadly, everything it stands for, everything it's done, everything it's achieved. A lot of people in Greater Manchester are fully behind it and we always will be."

Burnham is one of Colin's regular customers. The vendor was living in a Salvation Army hostel in Birmingham when he first started selling the magazine to earn an income.

He moved to Manchester in 2010 and has been selling the magazine in the city ever since.

In a recent interview with The Big Issue, Colin said the pair "chat all the time".

He said it was a good experience to show the Manchester mayor what it's like to be in a vendor's shoes.

Colin said: "I've known Andy about seven years since I was selling the magazine at the Cornerhouse [now 70 Oxford Street] and moved to here. I see him regularly; he comes here a lot and he usually buys a Big Issue.

"A couple of weeks ago he came past and said, 'I'll give you the money and pick up a magazine off you next time,' so I've just given him a magazine with a picture of me in it from a couple of weeks ago.

"It's nice to have the support of the Mayor of Greater Manchester; we have a good chat."

In an exclusive interview with The Big Issue in this week's magazine, the Manchester mayor speaks out on his efforts to tackle homelessness across Greater Manchester, as well as Prince William's own homelessness campaign and moving beyond the culture wars that have polluted political debate in Westminster.

He also reflects on his previous encounters selling The Big Issue before the pandemic.

"I learned a lot," he said. "It's a street level insight into the world of people and it could be any of us,

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couldn't it? Because of the way life is nowadays.

"I always say this: I think we're all just a couple of bits of bad luck away from being there and I think putting yourself in the shoes, even just for an hour, of somebody in that position is largely affirming."

Thursday's spell in the iconic red tabard was the first time the Manchester mayor had sold the magazine while his face was on the cover.

Burnham said: "It's not the easiest to be honest, I've just bought one off Colin to give to my mum. It's not easy because I think people are doing a bit of a double take at times. It's a bit of an odd thing to do.

"I'm just really proud to be on the front [of the magazine] and to support Colin and everything that he does. A lot of people like to stop to chat to Colin and he's a really friendly face around the city. He really adds something to Greater Manchester and we're really proud of him."

To boost vendor earnings, buy a copy of the magazine or subscribe online by visiting www.Bigissue.com/boost-vendor-earnings.

**Ends**

**For more information, please contact Ruth Law Group Head of Communications on 07429 342292**

**About the Big Issue Group**

- **Big Issue Group**
  is a social enterprise whose mission is to create innovative solutions through enterprise that unlock social and economic opportunities for people trapped in poverty.
- For over 30 years, the Big Issue Group has worked to dismantle poverty by creating opportunity through:
  - Supporting over 107,000 marginalised individuals to earn over £150 million in collective income, improving social and economic prospects through selling the Big Issue magazine
- Facilitating investment in social businesses and charities through Big Issue Invest to deliver social, economic, and environmental impact. Since 2005 we have supported over 550 organisations with over £80 million in funding
- Always at the forefront of social activism, campaigning for policy change in Government
- The Big Issue Group is deliberately constructed to create the greatest level of positive impact for individuals, organisations and communities through alignment to a shared mission. Big Issue Group consists of a number of different entities:
  - **Big Issue Media:** includes the Big Issue magazine, an award-winning weekly entertainment and current affairs magazine, and BigIssue.com, which provides breaking and in-depth news reporting as well as relevant culture, lifestyle and opinion content. Vendors who sell the magazine are their own mini enterprises, buying magazines for £2 and selling them to the public for £4, keeping the difference. The magazine provides a means to earn a legitimate income direct from vendors, through subscription and via our app.
- **Big Issue Invest**: our social investment arm, founded in 2005 offers loans and investment from £20,000 to £3 million to social enterprises and charities across the UK. The capital raised by BII is from private sources and not from sales of the magazine. www.bigissueinvest.com
- **Big Issue Shop**
  offers a platform for social trading that will make social and ethical shopping a truly accessible option for consumers, giving people the opportunity to use their spending power to make a positive difference to the world we live in. For more information go to: www.bigissueshop.com
- **Big Issue e-Bikes**: In 2020, Big Issue Group partnered with ShareBike in the UK to create bike-sharing solutions in combination with social impact. The first eBikes were rolled out in Bristol in early 2022 and have recently launched in Aberdeen with plans to expand nationwide and to provide hundreds of green jobs to under-served communities. To find out more please visit: https://bigissue.bike/.
- **Big Issue Recruit**: is a new person centric recruitment services to support people who face barriers to work into sustainable employment. For more information visit https://jobs.bigissue.com/
- **Lord John Bird's parliamentary office**: Lord Bird, founder of Big Issue Group, is an independent 'People's Peer', appointed in 2015. In 2022, we launched our Big Futures campaign to break the cycle of poverty now, calling for the government to make policy change in the following areas: keeping people in their homes, ending the low wage economy and creating millions of green jobs. For more information visit www.bigissue.com/campaigns/big-futures/

- **Big Exchange:** co-founded by Big Issue Group, enables the public to choose financial

investments that are creating positive solutions to the world’s biggest challenges. Invest through ISAs, JISA’s and GIAs www.bigexchange.com

For further information on the Big Issue Group visit About Big Issue Group or https://www.bigissue.com/group-impact-report-2022/

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