Big Issue North pulled from the street again during third national lockdown

Wednesday 6 January, 2021

As England enters a third lockdown, Big Issue North vendors face a dire predicament: they are once again not permitted to sell the magazine.

The 350 people who sell Big Issue North are self-employed, buying magazines from offices across the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber for £1.50 before selling them on the streets for £3. This means that they are not eligible for furlough, and as they cannot work from home, hundreds of homeless and vulnerably housed people now find themselves without a source of desperately needed income.

During the first lockdown, frontline staff paid out a total of £500 each day to support vendors' cost of living, from rent and bills for those in their own accommodation to essential shopping and transport. This time, we expect to pay out even more, as we experienced an influx of new vendors when the first lockdown was lifted, and the bitter cold will lead to an increased need for help with accommodation and bills. We estimate that we will need £10,000 to support all of our vendors through this period of lockdown.

There are several ways that members of the public can help:

1. Make a donation to our hardship fund, providing everything vendors need to survive the weeks ahead, by texting HARDSHIP to 70970 to give £5, going to http://easydonate.org/HARDSHIP, or scanning the QR code.
2. Continue to buy Big Issue North either in Sainsbury's (including online), Co-Op, McColl's or Booths, or online at https://issuu.com/bigissuenorth. Half the cost of each magazine will go directly to our hardship fund, with the rest covering production costs.
3. Subscribe to Big Issue North, either by purchasing a three, six or twelve month subscription package at https://shop.bigissuenorth.com/, or by taking out a weekly direct debit at https://pay.gocardless.com/AL0003E9T4AAG1.
4. Shop at the official Big Issue North online shop, https://shop.bigissuenorth.com/. Our top product is our new quarterly subscription magazine, The New Issue, which contains real stories – beautifully told. It offers stunning photography combined with high-quality independent writing, covering everything from changing landscapes and social issues to lifestyle and fiction. Other items include back issues, music merchandise, handmade jewellery and homeware and the Big Issue North 2021 calendar, featuring recipes for twelve vendors' favourite dishes, transformed by The Creameries chef and Eat Well MCR founder Mary-Ellen McTague.
5. Buy a mask from www.etsy.com/uk/shop/MancMadeltd, with £1 from every sale going to the Big Issue North hardship fund.

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