

Big Issue North vendors return to the streets - with card readers and PPE

Friday 12 June, 2020

From Monday the 15th of June, our vendors will start to resume selling Big Issue North on the streets of the north. As the government has identified this date as the point at which non-essential businesses will be allowed to open, it makes sense that vendors would have the option to sell the magazine – provided they can do so in a safe manner, for them and their customers.

During the lockdown, we temporarily paused sales of Big Issue North to vendors, and – thanks to incredible public generosity – have been able to provide a hardship fund to support our vendors through the crisis. However, we feel that it is important that vendors, as people with little or no other means of earning an income, are able to come back to work as soon as it is safe to do so.

Ensuring the safety of vendors and customers has been our number one priority in making this decision to resume selling. In order to guarantee this, we have put in place a number of measures:

- Vendors will be provided with hand sanitiser and PPE, including a visor, reusable face mask and gloves.
- Vendors will only be able to return to the streets provided they are able to receive contactless card payments, reducing the risk associated with cash transactions. To make this possible, we will provide vendors with card payment machines, bought using public donations, and work with them to make sure they can operate them.
- Vendors will only sell on a limited number of our agreed pitch locations, in places where social distancing is possible.
- No vendors who are shielding, or who have members of their household who are, will be able to sell the magazine. These vendors will continue to be able to access the hardship fund.
- Modifications have been made to our offices from which the vendors buy their magazines, balancing the ability of our team to support vendors with appropriate safety measures.

As before, our vendors will be working, not begging. They will buy the magazine from us for £1.50, and sell it for £3, keeping the profit they make. We'd encourage the public to find their local vendor, safely welcome them back to work and buy the magazine.

While vendors are still gradually returning to work, there will be a period where we sell in stores, including Sainsbury's, McColl's, Co-Op, Asda, One Stop, Morrisons, Waitrose and Booths, and at issuu.com/bigissuenorth, as well as on the streets. This will allow customers whose local vendor has not yet returned to work to continue to support the magazine.

To find your nearest pitch, you can go to www.bigissuenorth.com/find-a-vendor

If you would like to make a donation to our hardship fund to help us to purchase PPE and card machines, and to continue to support vendors who cannot yet return to work, you can text HARSHIP to 70970 to give £5, or go to easydonate.org/HARSHIP to give another amount.

You can also buy PPE directly for our offices in Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds or Sheffield at www.hope-revolution.org/ppe-shop

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