

Big Issue North's 2025 calendar is out now

Monday 4 November, 2024

Big Issue North's 2025 calendar is on sale now from vendors and at shop.bigissuenorth.com

Big Issue North supports around 350 vendors who sell street magazine The Big Issue in the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber. Vendors face numerous barriers to mainstream employment, including homelessness, a lack of formal qualifications or work experience, no ID or bank account, language barriers, health challenges and care responsibilities.

All proceeds raised from calendar sales either go directly to vendors or support the Big Issue North Trust (registered charity 1056041) to get more people working, not begging, and to provide support including access to accommodation, education and skills training, ID and card readers, home furnishing packages and much more.

This year, the calendar explores the north through vendors' eyes.

The north is on the up. While the average monthly rent in the UK is £954, it is almost double in Leeds, at £1,733. Manchester has been a UNESCO City of Literature since 2017, Liverpool was named European Capital of Culture in 2008 and Leeds received the same honour in 2023. But behind the glass skyscrapers of Manctopia and the renovated mills and street art of Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter lie a different reality.

Statistics published in October 2024 found that one in every 200 people in the UK are currently experiencing homelessness. But in Manchester, this rises to one in 74, and the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber are among the five lowest income areas in the UK.

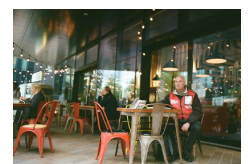
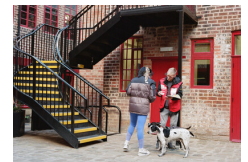
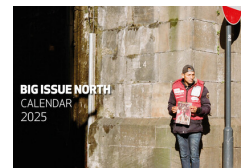
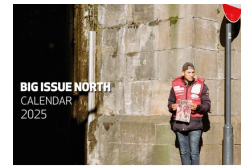
For this calendar, four vendors – Andrew in Sheffield, Colin in Manchester, Vasile in Leeds and Christopher in Liverpool – took two up-and-coming photographers, Cory Schiltz and Abi Black, on tours of their cities as they see them. Through their eyes, the glamour of ultra-modern arts spaces and historic landmarks brush up against the neglected high-rises and unsheltered underpasses that many in these elsewhere prosperous cities are forced to call home.

The north was the beating heart of England's Industrial Revolution, and today, Big Issue vendors continue a centuries-long tradition of hard work. But with our streets never having returned to the levels of activity that they saw pre-COVID, and with fewer and fewer people carrying cash and vendors currently experiencing homelessness unable to take card payments, many struggle to make ends meet in cities where the cost of living is surging.

"The city feels much emptier than it used to," says Chris, who sells The Big Issue in Manchester. "I miss my regulars who used to stop by on their way to work or during lunch breaks. Now it's dead slow, and people just walk by."

Also featured in the calendar are Mabel and Dottie, the beloved canine friends of Andrew and his partner Mel, who also sells The Big Issue in Sheffield. "They're both so funny and sweet," says Andrew. "If we're upset, Dottie will go up and put her head on your shoulder. She can just sense when something's wrong. They brighten your day."

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