Northern vendors to sell Big Issue UK magazine as Big Issue North ceases production

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From 15 May, Big Issue North vendors will sell the national Big Issue UK weekly magazine, as Big Issue North magazine ceases production.

The change will not have an impact on people experiencing poverty and homelessness across the region, who will continue to earn an income through selling a magazine on the streets of the North. They will still be in towns and cities, selling Big Issue UK magazine, keeping the profit they make.

They will continue to visit the same offices and see the same members of Big Issue North's team. And they will still buy a magazine for £2, selling it on the streets for £4; the only change will be the magazine they buy. While they buy their magazines, vendors are offered support, guidance and advice on everything from housing and employment issues to healthcare and financial concerns.

Since 1993, Big Issue North has been an independently produced magazine, focusing on regional stories and profiling some of the biggest names across the Northern cultural landscape. However, a decline in sales in the aftermath of the pandemic as town centre footfall decreased, alongside increased print, energy and paper costs, mean that continuing to produce Big Issue North is no longer financially viable.

To make sure that Big Issue North continues to provide a local and regional voice, the organisation will publish stories via the Street News app and its social and web channels and offer content to Big Issue UK and the whole of the International Street Paper Network. These stories will focus on amplifying the voices of marginalised communities, shining a spotlight to people who do not typically get their fair share.

Fay Selvan, CEO of Big Issue North, said: "We could not be prouder of the impact that the magazine has had, both in giving marginalised people a chance to work their way out of poverty, and in the stories we have told from our communities.

"We have explored a number of alternatives, but ultimately, ceasing production and offering the national Big Issue magazine to vendors in the North is the route that gives the best possible opportunity for the most people to earn an income and change their lives."

"We will continue to support vendors and to raise income through our charity, Big Issue North Trust, to do more than ever to give people the opportunity to earn an income and change their lives.

"This decision is incredibly hard. We don't take it lightly, but we believe that this is the best possible route to take to ensure that for many years to come, marginalised people in the North facing poverty or homelessness are supported to earn an income, gain support in all areas of their lives, and work towards a more hopeful future."

Kevin Gopal, editor of Big Issue North, said: "This is a sad moment for independent northern-based publishing and a sign of the difficult commercial outlook for much of the media industry. But I'm grateful for a great 16-year spell - thanks to readers, sources and contacts, a brilliant band of freelance contributors and especially the wonderful editorial team here.

Hopefully we've done good journalism and helped vendors. I'm pleased the vendors will continue to get the support they sorely need."

A souvenir issue of Big Issue North magazine will be on sale from vendors from Monday, 8 May. From 15 May, the public will be able to buy Big Issue UK from their local northern vendor.

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