

# vendor life

WHO SELLS THE BIG ISSUE IN THE NORTH?



<b>Name</b>	Eddie Fryer
<b>Age</b>	32
<b>Pitch</b>	Liverpool city centre

**I started selling The Big Issue in the North in 1993, when I was 16. I've been on and off the streets for most of my life. The first time I ever got thrown out I was eight, and the police found me and put me in care.**

I've slept everywhere – up by the art gallery, by the Anglican Cathedral.

I'm sleeping rough in the city centre at the moment. I've spent time elsewhere in other parts of the country: Leeds, Bradford, and Blackburn.

I've been all over, not just in this country. I spent just under ten months in Bosnia, working in an orphanage. When I left Bosnia, I travelled all around, and spent quite a bit of time in Italy and France. That was in 1999.

I've had my own places, but I've had a really unsettled life, with drugs and prison in the past.

I've been selling the magazine for about 12 months this time round. I was staying with a

girlfriend, but that broke up and I ended up back on the streets. You've got to survive. It's just human instinct, no matter what you go through. There's a fight in all of us, and it comes out when you are down and out.

I'm fighting just to get through, and hopefully build up a better life. That's all I want. I want to find accommodation and get full-time employment. I have had that for long periods in my life, and I want to go back to it.

I've kept the church in my life. Because I've got a belief, it does get me through the hard times.

It's hard selling the magazine now. Not many people really want to know. It's changed a lot over the years. You struggle to get by.

Selling *The Big Issue in the North* has helped me a lot; it gets me food. There's also the support from the staff. At one time, I didn't like asking anyone for help; I thought I could do it

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all on my own. But as I grow older, I've realised there are times when you've got to ask for help.

I want my own place. *The Big Issue in the North* are helping me to try and get into a hostel. I just hope it's not for too long – and the right sort of hostel.

There's temptation there. I don't want to put myself in a situation where I could end up going back to it.

It's getting a bit warmer. I've got a sleeping bag, but I haven't got a tent. Where I am is not too bad. At least it's sheltered and I'm out of the elements. I've got friends, but most of them are married with kids, so I don't like putting myself on to them. I'll go there to have a shower every couple of days. They'll let

me wash my clothes. But I just feel like I'm a burden in some ways.

Maybe I'll make £10 a day, just enough to buy food. In a sense, I am used to sleeping rough. It's like camping out. Sometimes it's not that bad – I have been in worse situations. The worst place I slept rough was Italy. I think it was because I was foreign. It's totally different when you are not from a country.

When I met those Bosnian kids in 1999, they were really struggling. I count myself lucky every day that I haven't been through what they have been through.

INTERVIEW: HELEN CLIFTON  
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