

The Big Issue accelerates move to cashless payments as vendors armed with contactless technology see 30% increase in sales

- Since the first lockdown, there has been a 208% increase in Big Issue vendors offering cashless payments via the Zettle card reader, seeing an average 30% increase in sales
- Vendors can now also accept touch-free payments via PayPal QR Codes

London, UK (Monday, 10th May 2021) - Today, The Big Issue Group (TBIG) has marked the milestone of equipping over a third (594) of its vendor network with contactless technology via the Zettle card reader. In addition, TBIG has also announced that vendors can now offer PayPal QR Code payments to their customers, ensuring that they can respond to the need for touch-free, digital payments given our new norm during this global pandemic.

The achievements coincide with the launch of a new, special edition on The Big Issue looking at the 'Future of Work', which details the success of the collaboration with PayPal and its Zettle card reader, and the wider impact of the pandemic on ways of working. Key findings* include:

- A vendor offering cashless payments will sell up to **30% more magazines** using the Zettle card reader, than a vendor that is only accepting cash.
- Before March 2020, 193 Big Issue vendors were offering cashless payments. That number is now **594 and rising, resulting in a 208% increase YoY**.
- During lockdown The Big Issue helped **636 vendors** get set up with smartphones to help them get cashless-ready, taking the number of **vendors with smartphones from 515 to 1,150**.
- Between last July and last month, TBIG helped **1,023 vendors** set up bank accounts so they can process Zettle payments.



Photo: Louise Haywood-Schiefer

TBIG has worked in collaboration with Zettle since 2018 to ensure Big Issue vendors, some of society's most vulnerable people, are financially included and have access to the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly digital world. To meet shift in consumer behaviour and respond to the impact of the pandemic, the organisation rapidly accelerated the drive to rollout contactless payment technology to as many vendors as possible to help increase sales out of lockdown, given social distancing being in place and customers being less likely to carry cash.

In 2020, PayPal launched a new QR code feature which is now integrated into the Zettle point-of-sale app. The latest move means, as well as tapping a card to buy a magazine, customers can scan the PayPal QR Code on a vendor's phone and pay for the magazine out of their PayPal account within seconds.

Dave, 59, normally sells the magazine on his pitch at Tesco, Brook Green, Hammersmith and was one of the earliest vendors to go cashless, so was aware of the benefits of offering contactless sales even before the pandemic. "The Big Issue helped me out, setting up my bank account and I signed up with Zettle. And it definitely helped my sales. And because of the pandemic, card sales increased a lot. I call it 'Covid reasons' – people shop less regular, they shop online, or are just afraid to come out. You get a lot of people who don't engage any more, withdraw into themselves. People don't use cash these days, and they are often in a rush – if they know they can pay cashless they know it's going to be quick and it's going to be secure as well."



Photo: Louise Haywood-Schiefer

Beth Thomas, The Big Issue's Head of Partnerships and Programmes, said:

"The pandemic has only accelerated the need for vendors to accept cashless payments and we began a lot of this work with some vendors whilst still in lockdown. For us at The Big Issue, financial and digital inclusion is so important as it enables vendors to access the same services and products as everyone else, regardless of their personal circumstances. Our partnership with Zettle and PayPal has enabled us to work with our vendors to help them to manage their finances confidently, using technology to enhance this experience and ensure they get the best access to services and the best value of products."

Jacob de Geer, Vice President, Small Business Products and Zettle, at PayPal, said: "We've been a proud supporter of The Big Issue for years and with the impact of the pandemic on small businesses, our joint commitment to creating a more financially inclusive society has never been more important. As the UK is opening back up, it is incredible to see the positive results for vendors using our technology. We're dedicated to continuously innovate and create products to ensure sellers have the tools needed to meet the ever-evolving consumer demands."

For more information or to locate your local vendor and buy an issue directly from them visit bigissue.com/support.

Go to The Big Issue's YouTube channel to see Dave talk about his experience of lockdown, returning to his pitch, his community and how the ability to offer cashless payments thanks to Zettle has given him a boost.

Ends

For more information, please contact Ruth Law, Head of Communications, The Big Issue on 07976 680181

Notes to Editors:

*The Big Issue internal data, 2021.


2020 results from PayPal also show that digital payments are levelling the playing field for small businesses. For example, UK small businesses that joined PayPal between March and May of 2020, just as the pandemic was spiking, experienced over two times the total payment volume (TPV) of small businesses that joined PayPal in the same timeframe in 2018 and 2019. PayPal also reported they had seen a rapid shift toward ecommerce in the pandemic. Last year, PayPal added more than five million merchants to the platform. This is an increase of more than a 100% year on year.

About The Big Issue

- The Big Issue is a social enterprise whose mission is to deliver a world that works for everyone. Creating and offering self-help and sustainable business solutions that dismantle poverty now and for future generations
- The Big Issue is an award-winning weekly entertainment and current affairs magazine, which offers a new hope for homeless and vulnerably housed people across the UK. When vendors are able to sell, they buy magazines for £1.50 and sell to the public for £3, keeping the difference. In this way the magazine provides them with the means to earn a legitimate income.
- Vendors come from a variety of backgrounds and face a range of issues, but all are experiencing the effects of poverty. Upon becoming a Big Issue vendor they receive training, are allocated a fixed pitch from which to vend, and must agree to adhere to a code of conduct whilst selling the magazine.
- Since its launch in 1991, over 200 million copies of The Big Issue magazine have been sold by over 100,000 vulnerable people.
- For further information please go to www.bigissue.com

About PayPal

PayPal has remained at the forefront of the digital payment revolution for more than 20 years. By leveraging technology to make financial services and commerce more convenient, affordable, and secure, the PayPal platform is empowering more than 375 million consumers and merchants in more than 200 markets to join and thrive in the global economy. For more information, visit paypal.com.

Additional assets available online:  [Photos \(4\)](#)

<https://newsroom.uk.paypal-corp.com/2021-05-10-The-Big-Issue-accelerates-move-to-cashless-payments-as-vendors-armed-with-contactless-technology-see-30-percent-increase-in-sales>