

Case Study: Invisible Cities

Introduction

Invisible Cities offers high-quality training for people who have experienced homelessness to help them gain confidence, self-esteem and transferable skills.

It does this by training people who have experienced homelessness to become tour guides in their own cities so they can share their experience of the city and feel empowered as a valued member of the place where they live.

The work of Invisible Cities is more important than ever. With an estimated 320,000 people homeless or at risk of homelessness, the supportive employment and wellbeing support of Invisible Cities is crucial for many of the UK's most vulnerable people.



Partners:



Scottish Government
Riaghaidh na h-Alba
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THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH





About Invisible Cities

Invisible Cities operated across five cities in the UK in 2019. The four staff members and 12 volunteers have provided training to 23 people to become tourist guides. To date, the organisation has trained 62 people. The range of tours offered enables tour providers to showcase their passion and experience of the cities. Tours include:

THE REAL WOMEN OF EDINBURGH AND MANCHESTER

HISTORY OF THE TRAINSPOTTING GENERATION

OFF THE COBBLES WITH DANNY

YORK'S RAILWAY HISTORY

Invisible Cities also delivers awareness-raising campaigns, training sessions to schools and major businesses and collaboration sessions between homeless people and service providers. This approach to facilitation and shared learning enables the outcomes of Invisible Cities' work to be shared with others.

The Impact of Invisible Cities

The impact delivered by Invisible Cities is achieved both in the direct employment of tour providers and through the wider training and advocacy work delivered by the team. Invisible Cities has supported 13 people directly to generate sustainable income with three going on to suitable further employment. Big Issue Invest has estimated a social value of £187,700 generated by Invisible Cities while accounting for attribution and using National TOMs values.

In 2020 Invisible Cities plans to support guides to develop a bespoke Women of Scotland programme that will specifically aim to support marginalised women to join the Invisible Cities programme. The work will also look to cover key issues facing women across Scotland including period poverty, domestic abuse and accessing clear support services for women, by women.

On top of this, Invisible Cities will set up its Cardiff branch and continue to 2021. The objective is to be in seven cities across the UK.



Impact Indicators for 2019	Achievements	Social Value	Attribution	Proxy	Proxy source
Training hours to guides	82	£4,100	50%	£100	National TOMs
Total guides providing training	23				National TOMs
Total guides hired	10	£135,765	90%	£15,085	National TOMs
Guides on to onward employment	3	£22,628	50%	£15,085	National TOMs
Guides on to education, training or volunteering	3	£19,164	50%	£12,776	National TOMs
Total training and school sessions	16	£44	100%	£15	National TOMs
Total visitors on tours	4,130				
Total tours in 2019	597				
People directly learning about homelessness from invisible Cities	2,360				

How Social value is Created





Big Issue and Invisible Cities: Angus' Little Invisible Story

Big Issue Invest supported Invisible Cities with £30,000 as part of our Power Up Scotland programme.

Invisible Cities and The Big Issue Group support homeless people in the UK. The Big Issue magazine supports our vendors to generate an income that works for them and Invisible Cities provides employment, training and support for their tour guides.

Angus, an Invisible Cities guide in Edinburgh, has worked with both organisations and made an impact on them.

“Four years ago I was told by my Big Issue colleagues about a new initiative in Edinburgh that trains people with an experience of homelessness to become walking tour guides. Being interested in Scottish history and languages I was eager to get involved.”

Angus went on to secure part-time work at a historical attraction in Edinburgh and continued to work with Invisible Cities and The Big Issue. More than this, Angus became a key supporter of The Big Issue by becoming a Romani language translator in the Edinburgh office.



I learnt Romani from a mixture of listening to Roma people at Big Issue, blatantly interrupting them to ask what they meant, and a few books.