

Education and Training



The Scottish
Government

Evaluation of Reading Rich



EVALUATION OF READING RICH
NCH SCOTLAND'S READING RICH PROGRAMME
DELIVERED BY THE SCOTTISH BOOK TRUST

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Scottish Government Social Research
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. This report sets out the findings of the evaluation of the Reading Rich programme commissioned by the then Scottish Executive in 2004 (now Scottish Government). The programme comprised a series of literary interventions with the aim of:

‘Promoting a reading rich environment for children and young people who are looked after in order to promote all of the known benefits of a reading rich environment, within which more privileged children are raised’¹.

2. The programme was delivered between 2004 and 2007 through 7 different projects in a range of care settings throughout Scotland. The aim was to work with 50 young people in the first year and to roll out the programme to others in years 2 and 3. National Children’s Homes Scotland (NCH Scotland) formed a partnership with Scottish Book Trust (SBT) to deliver the programme.

Evaluation aims and methodology

3. The key aims of the evaluation were to:

- Identify and evaluate the benefits of a ‘reading rich’ environment for children in residential and foster care settings in Scotland
- Identify examples of good practice to inform the development of looked after children policy

4. The evaluation planned to measure impact using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The evaluator conducted face-to-face interviews with young people and carers based on questionnaires. Information was also to be extracted from the participants’ educational attainment records and Personal Care Plans to assess shifts in attitude and ability over the research period. However, eighteen months into the project the research methods were altered as a result of a range of unforeseen challenges, including:

- Difficulties in recruiting and maintaining anticipated numbers of young people, usually due to frequently changing care placements
- Insufficient time to determine whether there was a measurable impact on the young people
- Limited access to information on the young people to inform baseline research
- Problems in involving a sufficient number of the foster carers and residential care staff in the project

Findings relating to impact on young people

5. Although participation numbers were lower than expected (74 young people), post-intervention interviews with 41 young people and many of their carers revealed that the Reading Rich approach had the capacity to:

¹ NCH Application to Scottish Executive (2004)

- address basic literacy skills and provide the tools for reading and writing, where many other approaches had failed
- provide a safe environment for young people to discuss and form attitudes and values relating to the most challenging things in their lives, for example, separation, bigotry, substance abuse and death
- offer a range of conditions to enable the young people to develop and extend their communication skills with their peers and carers
- provide pleasure and enjoyment, which was reflected in participation levels
- inspire the young people by introducing them to new genres of books, cartoon illustration, the world of theatre and, in some cases, filmmaking.
- offer unprecedented opportunities to excel and, in doing so, raise self-esteem
- motivate new actions and behaviour; some young people developed a reading habit that may remain with them for life, some have new tools for continuing to tackle their literacy problems and some have a clearer idea about what they might want from their future lives regarding a career.

Lessons learned from the delivery of Reading Rich

6. The feature, which appeared to have the greatest impact, was the writers' interventions. This aspect of the programme had the capacity to motivate, inspire, and increase the young people's expectations, and in many cases improve their behaviour.

Clearly, the involvement and commitment of care staff was key to the success of Reading Rich. It emerged that carers held a wide range of knowledge and experience of young people's literature. Some reported inadequate knowledge of children's books, some were unsure of how to share reading, and some felt vulnerable by becoming involved in the programme because they did not have a reading habit of their own.

7. A range of organisational challenges hindered Reading Rich's delivery. To an extent the two main partners, SBT and NCH Scotland, were able to address these. The partners are now acutely aware of the conditions required for creating a Reading Rich environment for looked after young people and have taken the following actions within their own organisations to ensure a legacy beyond the life of the project:

- NCH Scotland will seek to promote a reading rich culture across its services
- SBT will ensure that all projects aimed at young people take into account the needs of looked after children and include them as a target audience, as in, the Live Literature Scotland funding scheme, which now prioritises applications which involve looked after children
- SBT are targeting looked after children in all current and future initiatives such as through the 'On the Money' resource and through participation in the Royal Mail Awards for Scottish Children's Books
- SBT is willing to offer a direct consultancy service to those working with looked after children.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1. This is the final report on the evaluation of the Reading Rich programme. The evaluation report was commissioned by the Scottish Government (formerly Scottish Executive) in 2004. The Reading Rich programme began in 2004 and ran until 2007. It was delivered in two phases, phase two beginning in May 2006.

1.2. This introduction begins by setting out the background to the Reading Rich programme, its key aims and some of the thinking behind the Reading Rich approach. The original aims for the evaluation are described very briefly, as they are discussed in more detail in the following chapter. The introduction goes on to describe the partnership that managed the programme along with a summary of the participating groups and settings.

1.3. The remaining chapters present the findings of the evaluation in the following way:

- Reading Rich was delivered in 2 discreet phases therefore Chapter 2 begins by describing both the programme and its evaluation at Phase 1
- Chapter 3 describes the programme and evaluation at Phase 2 along with the modifications that were made at the end of Phase 1.
- Chapter 4 outlines the main evaluation findings in relation to the programme's impact on the participating young people. It references both the initial research framework and the Generic Learning Outcomes framework, which was introduced at Phase 2.
- Chapter 5 evaluates the programme and its delivery through the responses of participating staff and organisations.
- Chapter 6 concludes by summarising the programme's achievements and lessons learned.

Background to Reading Rich

1.4. In 2004 National Children's Homes Scotland (NCH Scotland) approached Scottish Book Trust (SBT) to support them in delivering a pilot programme of literary interventions for looked after children in residential and foster care settings in Scotland. Section 17(6) of the Children Scotland Act 1995 defines children who are 'looked after' as essentially those who are the subject of a 'supervision requirement' made by a children's hearing or court warrant, or those who are provided with accommodation (e.g. in a children's home or foster home).

1.5. The two institutional partners, Scottish Book Trust and National Children's Homes Scotland, brought a complementary range of experiences to the management of the programme. Reading Rich had the benefit of integrating with both NCH Scotland's and SBT's strategic development programmes. NCH Scotland runs several initiatives throughout Scotland, including the groundbreaking 'Community Alternative Placement Scheme' (CAPS), which provides family placements for young people who would otherwise enter or remain in secure care, and Lisallana, where the focus is on working with children and on young people with disabilities. Reading Rich was entirely integrated with SBT's aim of supporting and inspiring readers at every stage of their lives. It sat at the heart of SBT's social inclusion activity, which aims to reach children and young people in areas of social deprivation, with the aim of increasing their literacy skills.

1.6. The strategic direction of Reading Rich was informed by an Advisory Group, which had representation from both NCH Scotland and SBT management, with the Director of Policy Development from NCH Scotland acting as chair. The evaluator, the Programme Co-ordinator and staff from the participating projects also attended the Group.

Reading Rich programme's aims and rationale

1.7. Reading Rich programme's main purpose was: '*to promote reading for children and young people who are looked after in order to promote all of the known benefits of a reading rich environment within which more privileged children are raised*'.

Weinberger, 1996 (p.3) states that 'literary development starts soon after a child is born' and that those children who live in a literary environment are positively affected by the experience. The research shows that, for various reasons, some of which are discussed in this report, many looked after children have very limited exposure to books in their home settings. The Reading Rich programme began by addressing this issue.

1.8. A key outcome for the programme was to improve educational attainment through reading and, in doing so, to find out what were the barriers to achievement in literacy. The 2001 report, *Learning With Care*, provided a helpful reference by highlighting some of the main issues with the care and education of looked after young people in Scotland at the time. Following the publication of *Learning with Care*, the Scottish Executive commissioned work to develop training and other support materials aimed at all those who are involved in the education and care of looked after children and with the overarching aim of improving educational outcomes. The following key points helped inform the Reading Rich planning process. They have been extracted from the *Learning with Care Training Material* and describe some of the factors, which are known to negatively affect looked after children's educational achievement:

- Moving to different schools as a result of changes in placements
- Educational records going missing resulting in no continuity
- Residential and foster homes lack educational materials
- Carers have limited knowledge of school work
- Teachers may have low expectations
- Poor liaison between social work and educational professionals

1.9. Statistics suggesting that reading attainment and writing ability are positively associated with reading for enjoyment influenced Reading Rich programme design.² The programme was therefore concerned to develop strategies that would bring reading into the lives of looked after children through informal settings that focussed on creating pleasurable experiences.

1.10. There is evidence to suggest that young people's amount of reading can also have a positive impact on social skills and community participation (Guthrie, Schafer and Hutchinson, 1991). With this in mind, the Reading Rich programme was also expected to provide benefits beyond educational attainment, for example, through improvement in the

² *Literacy in the Information age: Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey, OECD, 2000*

development of soft skills, including 'heightened emotional maturity and increased empathy with others.

1.11. The programme undertook a short review of similar initiatives with young people to understand more fully the challenges of running reading-related programmes with this group. The most relevant projects are referenced in Annex 4. The key points from the review that informed the design of the Reading Rich programme were:

- The importance of informal settings to encourage participation in reading, particularly with young people who were underachieving through the formal system
- Meeting writers and celebrity readers is one of the most effective strategies in motivating reluctant readers
- Younger children are more likely to discuss books with an adult whereas older children will want to talk to someone of a similar age
- When promoting regular reading there is a benefit from making links with popular leisure activities and venues enjoyed by young people

1.12. Reading Rich also aimed to tackle issues with self-esteem and recognised that to engage looked after children successfully it was important to be responsive to the difficulties that they were experiencing in this area. Sinclair, Wilson and Gibbs (2005) state:

Children in foster care are likely to have difficulties in three main areas:

- Attachment (if they have frequently suffered multiple rejections and losses)
- Behaviour (their behaviour is frequently difficult for those who live with them)
- Self-esteem (they typically lack the skills and success on which a sense of worth is built and have suffered numerous assaults on their pictures of themselves)

The evaluation aims and objectives

1.13. The then Scottish Executive commissioned this independent evaluation of Reading Rich to inform future policy on looked after children. The key aims of the evaluation, as described by the Scottish Executive in 2004, were to:

- Identify and evaluate the benefits of a 'reading rich' environment for children in residential and foster care settings
- Identify examples of good practice to inform the development of looked after children policy.

Intended outcomes

1.14. The evaluation set out to assess the programme outcomes by gathering information about the experiences of a range of young people in residential and foster care settings and assessing the impact of Reading Rich over an appropriate period of time on their:

- Level and nature of reading activity
- Wider academic activity

- Educational attainment
- Development of confidence and self-esteem
- Behaviour and activity in other areas

1.15. The evaluation aimed to draw comparisons between impacts on looked after children at different ages and settings: foster and residential. It also aimed to unpick the rationale behind each of the programme's components in each of the settings with a view to recommending transferable models. It also planned to look at the roles of care staff and the agencies involved in the everyday care of the young people to assess what factors contributed to creating reading rich environments.

Groups and settings

1.16. The programme was delivered in 2 phases with a total of 81 initial participants. Twenty three young people began the programme in Phase 1. However, 7 dropped off almost immediately and were discounted from the records, leaving 16 at Phase 1 and an overall total of 74 participants in the programme. The research was interested in the reasons for such early drop off and a summary of reasons is given in Table 4.

1.17. Tables 1 and 2 describe the project settings, care types and length of involvement at each stage. Number of participants is broken down into planned numbers (those who agreed to participate in the programme), actual numbers (those who actually began the programme) and those who undertook a pre-intervention and post-intervention interview for the evaluation. The total number of young people who undertook evaluation interviews is 59 pre-intervention (16 in Phase 1 and 43 in Phase 2) and 41 post-intervention (4 in Phase 1 and 37 in Phase 2). A full description of participants by gender, age and care setting is provided as Annex 10.

Table 1: Phase 1 groups and setting

Project	Type of care	No. of participants			Project duration
		Planned (actual initial nos.)	Pre-intervention interviews	Post-intervention interviews	
NCH Scotland Moray	Foster/Residential	20 (10)	10	4	Jun 05 – Aug 06
NCH Scotland Western Isles	Residential	8 (3)	3	0	Jun 05 – Aug 06
NCH Scotland CAPS Central	Foster	22 (10)	3	0	Jun 05 – Jan 06

Table 2: Phase 2 groups and settings

Project	Type of care	No. of participants			Duration
		Planned (actual)	Pre-intervention interviews	Post-intervention interviews	
Hillside School, Aberdour, Fife	Residential	24 (18)	18	16	Aug 06 – July 07
Aberlour Child Care Trust's Sycamore Project, Fife	Residential	21 (12)	12	8	Feb 07 – Sept 07
NCH Scotland (CAPS) Glasgow / Central	Foster	6 (8)	-	7	June 06 – Sept 07
NCH Scotland (ISSC) Intensive Supervised Structured Care Ayr	Residential	6 (13)	13	6	July 06 – Sept 07
Edinburgh Secure Services, St Katherine's	Residential (secure unit)	6 (6)	-	-	July 07 – Oct 07

Note: Pre-intervention interviews were not carried out with young people at CAPS and Edinburgh Secure Services due to the short-term nature of the interventions at these settings. Instead, staff and/or young people have been interviewed following the intervention.

CHAPTER TWO PHASE 1 PROGRAMME AND EVALUATION

2.1. This chapter describes what the Reading Rich programme and evaluation set out to do, specifically at Phase 1, and the problems it encountered. It begins by describing the planned host settings as well as the role of the Programme Co-ordinator.

2.2. During the first year the programme and the evaluation ran side-by-side. The initial aims for the evaluation were agreed with Scottish Executive in 2004 but, following difficulties with carrying out the fieldwork over the first year, it was necessary to modify both the programme and the evaluation's aims and methods. This report refers to all programme and evaluation work during the first 16 months as Phase 1 with all subsequent work, following the methodology revisions, is referred to as Phase 2.

2.3. This chapter goes on to describe some of the difficulties that were encountered in gathering data against the original research framework and how this was addressed, including through the introduction of the Generic Learning Outcomes, a supplementary framework for ordering information, most commonly used to evaluate library-based initiatives.

Phase 1 programme settings

2.4. In Phase 1, the programme set out to work in 3 settings:

- NCH Scotland, Moray Assisted Placement Scheme (MAPS)
- NCH Scotland, Community Alternative Placement Scheme (CAPS)
- NCH Scotland, Hillcrest, Stornoway, Western Isles

2.5. Of the 3 settings in Phase 1, the MAPS project, which offers foster and residential placements to young people in Moray, was the most successful. Ten young people were recruited and, although only 4 were available for interview at the end, most reported benefiting from several aspects of the programme.

2.6. In the other 2 settings the programme failed to gain momentum. Hillcrest is a residential unit in Stornoway in the Western Isles. Due to geographical remoteness, the programme focussed mainly on sending books to the young people (the so called 'book drops'). The Programme Co-ordinator made two visits to the unit to meet staff and 3 young people volunteered to participate. Three were available for pre-intervention interviews and none of the young people was available for interview after a year.

2.7. The final setting, NCH Scotland's Community Alternative Placement Scheme (CAPS) offered foster placements to older children in households across the central belt. Several awareness-raising events were held for carers and young people with 22 expressing interest in the project. Although 10 young people were visited by the Co-ordinator in their homes, only 3 were interviewed at the pre-intervention and none was available post-intervention. Like Hillcrest, CAPS Reading Rich programme failed to gain momentum in Phase 1. Much was due to geographical distances (spanning from Ayrshire to Fife) and limitations on the Co-ordinators time in maintaining contact with both carers and young people.

The role of the part-time Co-ordinator and the familiarisation visits

2.8. It was common for the participating young people to have issues around attachment due to the many changes of placement they had experienced. In some cases this had resulted in problems trusting new people, particularly adults, in their lives. The Reading Rich Co-ordinator therefore felt it was vital to place emphasis on familiarisation visits to establish a trusting relationship between herself and the young people. The aim was for the Co-ordinator to:

- become a regular, dependable and accessible feature in the young people's lives for the duration of the programme
- provide services that fitted in with the young people's current needs or that would prove useful in the near future
- provide activities that were fun or that the young people would not normally have access to

The Co-ordinator also planned to employ a range of strategies including regular home visits supported by letter, phone and email communication between visits as well as involving a range of arts professionals in the young people's lives.

Programme features

2.9. The 5 features of the programme emerged following a review of other projects that set out to improve literacy for looked after children and young people. The features for Phase 1 were:

- Reporters' Files
- Home library development (book drops)
- Writer interventions
- Personal creative projects
- Carer development sessions

Reporters' files

2.10. Reporters' files were distributed to each child and were prepared with several intentions:

- To give Reading Rich an identity and a physical presence in the young people's lives
- To maintain the momentum of the project between Co-ordinator's visits
- To integrate books and reading with other related activities, particularly through visual art.

Additionally, the term 'Reporters' file' suggested the young people take on a purposeful role, i.e. by reading and reporting on books for other looked after children.

2.11. The files took on the secondary function of engaging the young people in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme. The evaluator worked closely with the Co-

ordinator to devise file activities. These were designed to be fun and participative and care was taken to ensure that they did not resemble schoolwork.

Home library development (book drops)

2.12. Several studies had identified that young people would read more if they could find reading material to interest them (e.g. National Literacy Trust). The Co-ordinator made a first visit with an introductory pack of 5 books for each young person. The books were used in several ways:

- To prompt discussion about the young persons' interests
- To assess willingness to read and share the experience - done either by reading together or by discussing what had been read
- To make an informal assessment on reading ability as, for most young people, it was difficult to gain access to formal reading records

Additional 'book drops' were sent by post or delivered on subsequent Co-ordinator's visits. Most children who remained with the programme over a year received around 5 book drops and an average of 30 books each.

2.13. Another notable feature of many looked after children's lives was the absence of books they could call their own. The pre-intervention study at Phase 1 showed that 2 of the 4 young people did not own any books and 2 owned less than 5 (Annex 6). To address this issue, the Co-ordinator emphasised to the young people that they could keep the books that had been sent to them if they had enjoyed them.

2.14. An initial idea to issue each child with a shelf for books failed, as many of the young people's placements were so short-term. Instead, book boxes were distributed to all participants, with the aim of providing safe places to keep the growing book collections and with the added bonus of being able to move easily when the placement changed.

2.15. Initially, the home library development aimed to assess whether the books would become a regular feature of both the carers' and the young people's lives. However, in some cases they appeared to have limited impact with the young people unable to find books during the Co-ordinator's and evaluator's visits – even after receiving the book box. Attitudes varied greatly as in one residential unit where the books were stored in communal bookshelves but within a locked room, as staff felt that some of the young people might destroy them.

Author interventions

2.16. Reading Rich set out to bring successful writers into the lives of the looked after children, building on the positive outcomes of recent national initiatives where young people have been motivated by direct experience of sporting heroes, celebrities and reading champions. The writer, Des Dillon was commissioned to work with the young people in Moray, initially in one-to-one situations and then in groups. He was also commissioned to write a short story based on his experience of the residency. The resulting work 'The Rose of Moray' was able to weave aspects of the young people's lives into the storyline. The young

people were overjoyed on receiving their own copy of the book and recognised their own character in it. The realisation that their own lives were interesting enough to form a story had an enormous impact on their confidence levels as writers. The following extract is taken from Phase 1 Interim Report and relates to a 13 year-old female in residential care.

D was recruited to Reading Rich at 13. She was pregnant, had been excluded from school and was unhappy about her current care situation. The Co-ordinator set up a strong link with the local librarian who suggested supporting D in writing her own book for her baby. She was offered a computer and space to write. Motivated by this she began to visit the library regularly. Following the birth of her baby she moved to a residential unit and was introduced to the author Des Dillon, who had a profound effect on her reading. After reading his book 'Me and my gal' she went on to read a wide range of books that related more to the reality of her own life, for example, 'Baby Blue' by Julia Greene – previously her interests had been weddings, soap operas and fanzines. D was inspired by the author who was writing a book based on his residency in the area, "I love Des's book - he's so down to earth, just like me". She abandoned the idea of a book for her baby and decided to write about her own life saying, 'It'll be like a horror story!'. The author made several visits and helped her develop her own writing. D had no access to a computer in her residential unit which limited her work.

2.17. The author interventions proved to be the most popular feature of Phase I. Every young person reported enjoying meeting and working with the author and most were able to describe what they had gained from the experience. Following this success, the author intervention was presented as an incentive for Phase 2 with the hope of encouraging higher levels of participation and limiting drop-off incidence.

Personal creative projects

2.18. The programme encouraged each of the young people to find ways to communicate their own story. The aim of the personal creative projects was to emphasise that, as well as writing, there are other ways to communicate a story. This programme element was developed between the carer and young person over 4-6 weeks and culminated in a personal session with either the writer or a specially selected art form specialist. One young person made a sound recording of his story with a musician in a professional recording studio. In several cases specialist equipment was sourced and many of the young people were issued with their own digital recorders.

Carer development sessions

2.19. The initial aim was to provide carers with the relevant information to support the young people in developing a reading habit at home. Development sessions were informal and usually held in a central venue or in the residential units. Carers came with a wide range of attitudes, experiences and expectations, therefore sessions were designed to be fairly responsive to their different needs. The programme included:

- How to use storytelling techniques with looked after children
- Understanding how authors get ideas to write stories and how to encourage young people to write or tell their own story
- How to identify suitable books for all needs and interests

Challenges to the programme during Phase 1

2.20. All participating staff who were involved in Phase 1 were interviewed (and the findings presented in an interim report). Interim findings highlighted the challenges the programme had faced in Phase 1 and many of the causes. The most important issue was that the planned levels of contact by the Co-ordinator were unrealistic. The report suggested:

- The geographical spread of the young people, particularly in Moray and with CAPS, meant that the Co-ordinator's limited time was wasted on travel and not on the planned home visits.
- The unpredictable nature of the young people's lives often resulted in cancelled meetings and non-attendance at events. This was particularly worrying when time and budgets were extremely limited.
- Placement changes occurred more often than had been expected. Sometimes the young people would be moved out of the area or to a different authority. The Co-ordinator struggled to re-establish contact within the limitations of her resources
- At the beginning of sessions, some residential care staff had often not been briefed on the background and ambition of Reading Rich. This meant that they were not able to provide the level of commitment that the Coordinator relied on to support the initiative.

2.21. The key recommendation regarding the design of Phase 2 was for the Co-ordinator to have a less hands-on role and to work more strategically with staff. Phase 2 would rely on developing the support networks that already existed around the young people to deliver the everyday aspects of the programme, in particular the role of the young person's main carer.

Identifying a reading rich advocate for each young person

2.22. As a result of constraints on the Co-ordinator's time in Phase 1 Reading Rich needed to ensure the commitment of a carer who would take overall responsibility for developing reading at home. The interim evaluation report to the Scottish Government showed that, in many cases, where foster carers were willing to take on the role, they did not feel equipped to provide the necessary support for the young people. Informally, foster carers reported the following areas where they lacked confidence and would welcome support:

- Knowledge of literature appropriate to their young people's needs and interests.
- Communication and literacy skills; many did not read with the young people and were unsure of how to share reading, particularly with older children.
- Own reading habits; in some cases the carers did not read literature themselves

2.23. Staff at residential units presented a different set of challenges to foster carers. In this context the difficulty was in identifying a single member of staff, who would consistently

lead on Reading Rich and who could commit to being the key contact for the young people. The manager of one residential unit said:

“Staff time is difficult. They are too concerned with the day-to-day welfare of children and making sure that placements are successful. This project is additional to all that”. Manager, NCH Scotland

How to ensure carer commitment?

2.24. If carers were to be asked to take more responsibility for the programme in Phase 2 it was identified that appropriate carer training and awareness raising would need to be offered in parallel. However, where Reading Rich had already offered carer events, attendance had been poor. High attendance relied on the individual enthusiasm of the carers and, as one staff member said, ‘*an absence of any other crisis’ on the day*’. A general observation was that staff in residential units were less receptive to the benefits of training and how this, in turn, might impact on young people, while foster carers were less able to find the time to commit to training. It was recognised that Phase 2 would need to work with senior managers to provide incentives for front-line staff to take part in training.

Operational issues raised at Phase 1

2.25. To understand how the logistical problems associated with project ownership might be tackled in Phase 2, the evaluation also conducted interviews with key personnel from NCH Scotland and SBT. The interviews revealed a much more complex situation:

- Both partners would have benefited from a more thorough planning exercise at the outset of the project to ensure a shared vision. At the outset, SBT had a limited understanding of the fragmented nature of some young people’s lives and some NCH Scotland staff had limited understanding of the potential of literature in supporting their young people’s social, educational and emotional objectives.
- Several changes in senior staff within NCH Scotland, in the first phase had weakened ‘top down’ endorsement of Reading Rich. In Phase 2, not just carers but all staff needed to ‘buy into’ the programme if it was to work.
- Carers are not literacy experts and some may have recognised their own weaknesses through the programme, becoming unwilling to place themselves in positions of vulnerability. Their development needed to be planned sensitively for Phase 2.
- The programme’s success relied on creating a wider support network for Reading Rich carers and young people. Teachers, librarians, and social workers could all become involved in supporting Reading Rich. This approach also chimed with government promotion of the role of the ‘corporate parent’ at the time.

Phase 1 Evaluation

Evaluation methods

2.26. Research has shown that reading for pleasure has direct links with a range of social, emotional and educational attainments. The Reading Rich programme was concerned to discover exactly what activities would influence the young people to begin reading or to read more. The programme also understood that certain organisational conditions would be necessary to produce a robust programme of reading development. To this extent the evaluation had two separate research elements. The first was concerned with the experience of the participating young people and aimed to measure the programme's impact on their:

- Level and nature of reading activity
- Wider academic activity
- Educational attainment
- Development of confidence and self-esteem
- Behaviour and activity in other areas

The second element related to the infrastructure that would be required to deliver the benefits to the young people. This would include:

- Examples of good practice in the planning, implementation and management of Reading Rich
- Commentary on the extent to which the benefits of Reading Rich were sustainable over time

2.27. The evaluation planned to measure impact using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The main research activity at Phase 1 was to gather data from the programme participants through interviews at two times: pre-intervention and post-intervention, with a time lapse of at least 1 year. The interviews were intended to be carried out face-to-face by the evaluator and were based on the original research framework (see Annex 1). The face-to-face interviews would also allow for observation of the young people in their living environments. At both times there were plans for information to be extracted from school educational attainment records and Personal Care Plans to assess any shifts in attitude or ability over the period. A questionnaire-led interview was also to be carried out with the main carers who were responsible for the young people at the time to allow corresponding information to be gathered. Table 3 summarises the planned data gathering modes for Phase 1.

Table 3 – Phase 1 data gathering modes

Indicator	Mode
Level and nature of reading activity	Face-to-face interview and questionnaire pre- and post-intervention for LAC (Annex 7) Author recognition test for LACs
Wider academic activity	School attainment records
Educational attainment	School attainment records
Development of confidence and self-esteem	Face-to-face interview with carers and LACs
Behaviour and activity in other areas	Face-to-face interview with carer Personal care plan

2.28. The interviews were based on a questionnaire, which was to be used with all young people. To encourage participants to commit to either a positive or negative response rather than ‘sitting in the middle’ a 4-point ratings scale was used for most questions or statements, for example:

I enjoy reading now

1= strongly agree

2= agree

3= disagree

4= strongly disagree

Probing questions to gain qualitative data followed up the scaled questions, for example, ‘*Can you tell me why you disagree?*’

2.29. To address the second element of the framework, the evaluation developed two research questions, which underpinned interviews with care staff and partners:

- In relation to the programme content: What are the most effective strategies for influencing positive reading habits in looked after children?
- In relation to staff, settings and programme management: What are the conditions that create positive reading environments?

These questions formed the basis of a framework of indicators which were to be used in interviews with care staff, key stakeholders and staff representatives from the two project partners (see Annex 2). The interviews were conducted face-to-face and by telephone during the project, depending on staff availability and geographical distance. An additional set of questions was distributed to senior managers at the end of the project to assess the impact of the programme on the participating organisations and to predict levels of sustainability. These were distributed and collated electronically and by phone (see Annex 3).

Interview procedure and reporting

2.30. The interviews were undertaken with full consideration of ethical standards. Each of the pre-intervention interviews was carried out in person by the evaluator, who had enhanced security clearance (Disclosure Scotland) accompanied by one other adult. Each of the young people was invited to participate in the programme and they were made fully aware of the aims of the evaluation. This report respects the anonymity of both participating young people and adults. Following direct quotes, gender, age and care setting are indicated. Where a specific young person is referred to in a text, gender and age are abbreviated, for example M13 (male, 13 years-old). Where care staff are quoted, the term 'carer' is used to describe staff at both residential units and foster carers. Given that participants ranged in age from 5 to 17 the term 'young people' is used throughout the report and refers to all the looked after and accommodated children who participated in the programme.

Challenges faced by the evaluation in Phase 1

How to measure educational attainment?

2.31. The proposed quantitative evaluation elements required that young people's educational attainment levels were collated to assess the programme's impact on their achievement. From the outset, it became clear that the available data would not provide reliable evidence. Not only was it difficult to locate who held the information but also, where levels were available, they were devised through a range of different sources and assessment systems, formal and informal. This was particularly true of young people who did not continuously attend mainstream schools. In addition, the participants were not involved in the programme for a sufficiently long period to assess its educational impact. Formal education successes and failures could be associated with a variety of influences when observed in the short term. For these reasons, and within the parameters of Reading Rich, it was difficult to gain a quantitative measure of educational attainment. This resulted in changes to the evaluation's stated objectives.

2.32. In agreement with the Scottish Executive the objectives that related to the young people's educational attainment were left out. The revised evaluation aims were:

To what extent can a reading rich environment impact on looked after children's:

- Nature, level and knowledge of reading
- Attitude to books and reading
- Social and emotional behaviour

Validation through carers

2.33. The planned methods also relied on a carer to validate the young people's responses pre- and post-intervention. Over the course of the first year many of the young people in foster care changed setting and therefore carer. In residential units it was difficult to gain continuity through the identification of one, or a limited number of, care staff who would

represent the young person. The revised approach was to limit the main study to information obtained through interviews with the young people rather than to also rely on carers.

Interview procedure

2.34. Carers reported that some of the young people had been particularly nervous with interviews in the past, particularly the younger children. This may have been due to the fact that the organisation of many of their lives required a multitude of formal review meetings, which they knew could have a direct impact on them. With this in mind, the interviews were designed to be as informal as possible and, in some cases, the evaluator met the young person several times before gathering information. All interviews began with a discussion around a book to gain common ground.

2.35. Where the young people were particularly young or, as in some cases, had learning difficulties it was not appropriate to undertake a questionnaire-led interview. Poor concentration levels were unable to sustain the amount of questions. Some young children were not capable of describing their own experience and older children were often unwilling to do so.

2.36. Each participant was issued with a Reporters' File, containing a series of paper-based activities in Phase 1. The young people were encouraged to complete the file regularly, thereby providing insights into reading habits throughout the project. The file was also to be used to inform the evaluation. Unfortunately, the majority of young people did not use the file and most were unable to find them during the Co-ordinator's or evaluator's visits.

Recruiting young people and maintaining participation

2.37. The programme aimed to work with 50 young people in Central Scotland, Moray and the Western Isles in the first year, with a view to rolling out to two additional groups in Years 2 and 3 including young people affected by a learning disability and 16-21 year olds in throughcare. NCH Scotland area managers were responsible for identifying the participants for the programme. The criteria for selection was that the young people:

- were part of one of NCH Scotland's residential or foster care projects
- were of school age when they began the programme
- showed willingness to participate

2.38. The programme began optimistically but failed to reach its target of 50 young people. Following introductory home visits by the Co-ordinator 23 young people agreed to participate in the programme in Phase 1. By the time of the pre-intervention interview (usually a month after recruitment) 7 had dropped out, leaving only 16 young people. A further 12 dropped out over the course of the programme, leaving only 4 still involved when the post-intervention interview was carried out 12 months later. For reference, the data from this exercise is available as Annex 6. Table 4 summarises the main reasons for drop out.

Table 4 - Reasons for remaining/dropping out

Remained with the programme - Interviewed after 1 year	4
Moved to a more secure unit/school (behavioural problems)	2
Moved to a different foster carer or residential unit	5
Project ended in area	2
Refused to engage with the programme/lack of carer involvement	7
Moved out of care (to be with family or because over 16)	4
Total LACs	23

2.39. A high number of young people who dropped out at the early stages did so because they refused to engage with the programme. At this point the motivating role of a carer was vital. By comparison, the reasons for drop out during the course of the programme were mainly outwith the control of the young people - primarily because their living circumstances changed and the Co-ordinator had insufficient time and resources to track them.

Table 5 – Length of participation by gender, region and care type

	Immediate drop off	Participating at pre-intervention interview (1-2 months)	Participating at post-intervention interview (12 months)
Total	7	16	4
Gender			
Boy	7	9	2
Girl	0	7	2
Region			
Moray	0	10	4
Western Isles	0	3	0
Central	7	3	0
Care provision			
Residential		10	3
Foster	7	6	1

Discussion on participation by gender, region and care type

2.40. Table 5 divides the Phase 1 participants by gender, region, and care type. This information confirmed the logistical problems reported by the Co-ordinator in the delivery of the programme:

- In CAPS, where 7 of the 10 fostered young people dropped out between recruitment and the start of the programme, the Co-ordinator reported difficulties in engaging with carers and young people. As their homes were widely dispersed geographically (Ayrshire to Fife) they found it difficult to travel to central venues for training events. Two early information and training events had been poorly attended.
- In addition, the participants who dropped out within a month were all male. Foster carers reported that many boys were unwilling to attend the early group events for fear of peer criticism. In reflection, they required one-to-one motivation, which the Co-ordinator was unable to provide.
- All but 2 of the young people in Moray were in residential units making it easier to contact them and to organise events. Additionally, the 2 children who were in foster care in Moray lived within easy reach of central venues and carers were able and willing to transport them.

Summary of Phase 1 evaluation and Phase 2 approach

2.41. It became clear that the limitations placed on the evaluation described in this chapter would not produce the data required for the planned research commissioned by Scottish Executive. In summary, the evaluation progress was hindered by a lack of available educational attainment records, compressed timescales, and low numbers of participants.

2.42. These constraints drew attention to the difficulties in tracking looked after children for research purposes where it was common for placements to change continually. The proposed scale of the programme and the evaluation meant that the focus changed from recording, analysing and comparing data to a more general account of the programme approach and a more modest qualitative and quantitative account of impacts on young people.

2.43. The interim project report discussed the challenges of Phase 1 and suggested the following approaches for Phase 2:

- To tackle high levels of drop-off, the programme should recognise and address the two different contributing factors: those young people who resist engaging with the programme due to lack of motivation and those who are unable to engage due to unsettled placements.
- With regard to unsettled placements, Phase 2 should be willing to move outwith NCH Scotland projects and find settings where young people are likely to remain for at least one year.

- Regarding motivation, those who had participated were most motivated by the inspirational role of the writer-in-residence. As a result, this feature of the programme should be used to promote the programme to the young people in the earliest stages of Phase 2.
- The programme may have set out to be unrealistically ambitious in expecting a measurable impact on the lives of the young people. Evidence has suggested that the type of knowledge, experience and skills gained in projects such as Reading Rich are more likely to have delayed impact, often throughout the young people's lives and they will rarely be immediately measurable. For that reason, Phase 2 should consider how to report on potentially longer-term outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE PHASE 2 PROGRAMME AND EVALUATION

Phase 2 programme

3.1. This chapter describes the programme as it was delivered to the 5 different settings in Phase 2. The programme features are described for each of the settings along with the how the duration of projects, staff experience and care setting influenced them. The chapter concludes by describing the evaluation approach at Phase 2.

3.2. Following 16 months of running the programme, the interim evaluation report confirmed that the initial approach was neither economically viable nor practical, given the limited time and budget available to the Programme Co-ordinator. It was also clear that some of the initial strategies for engaging the young people were ineffective given the fragmented nature of some of their lives. Consequently, the familiarisation activities, the reporters' files and the personal creative project elements were discontinued. The modified Reading Rich programme for Phase 2 focussed on:

- Establishing home libraries
- Writer interventions
- Carer training
- Making local library connections

3.3. The planning of Phase 2 also coincided with the resignation of the original Programme Co-ordinator. The Phase 2 Co-ordinator took the opportunity to review the constraints from the previous phase and develop the model to work more strategically with the care providers and other agencies, such as libraries. The revised Co-ordinator's role resulted in much reduced face-to-face contact with each of the settings.

3.4. Around the same time, the Advisory Group took the decision to include settings outwith NCH Scotland. The two additional settings, Sycamore Project and Hillside School were based in Fife and provided residential accommodation for looked after young people. They were approached to help the study increase numbers of young people, provide more settled groups and reduce the problems with geographical logistics that had come with Phase 1. These changes coincided with the appointment of a new Senior Social Worker to NCH Scotland's CAPS project. The appointee expressed enthusiasm in becoming involved in Reading Rich resulting in the Advisory Group taking the decision to relaunch the programme at CAPS. The 5 settings for Reading Rich Phase 2 were:

- Hillside School, Aberdour
- Sycamore Project, Aberlour Child Care Trust, Fife
- NCH Scotland, CAPS
- NCH Scotland, ISSC, Ayr
- Edinburgh Secure Services, St Katherine's Unit

Hillside School

Background

3.5. Hillside is an independent school providing education with residential care for boys experiencing complex social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Care is provided on a 52-week basis if required. All pupils have suffered disruptive school experiences and have failed to succeed in mainstream education. As a result, their overall levels of attainment are significantly impaired.

How Hillside provided a context for the evaluation

3.6. Hillside School provided the evaluation with the most reliable data. Although the setting was in fact a school, Reading Rich was presented to the boys as an out-of-school activity, being entirely optional. This provided the evaluation with an opportunity to assess interest in participation. A staff member, who was passionate about developing reading as a therapeutic tool volunteered to be the key contact (from here referred to as the carer) throughout the project adding further to the stability. Most elements of the programme were delivered successfully at Hillside, allowing the evaluation to assess which were the most stimulating features for the boys over the course of a year.

3.7. The carer had already instilled an ethos of recreational reading with a limited number of the boys who were in her direct care during out-of-school hours. Reading Rich provided her with the incentive to try to link reading more broadly with all of the boys' living environments. The carer recruited one member of staff from each of the four residential units within the school and gave each of them responsibility for spending at least half an hour a week reading and discussing books with each boy in their unit. The evaluation was also interested to learn whether the boys would enjoy reading more when they had a dedicated adult to support them.

Carers' expectations of the project

3.8. Staff at Hillside had a sophisticated understanding of the potential social and educational benefits of recreational reading, almost certainly because of the educational setting. The carer articulated her aims for the programme for each of the boys. They most recurring aims were to:

- Relieve peer pressure which existed for some of the boys by using the writer to make books appear to be 'cool'
- Use reading groups to eradicate some of the difficult social relationships which existed in the units
- Use gritty youth stories as the focus of discussion to help several boys who were having difficulties dealing with their own challenging home situations
- Provide support for boys who were having difficulties relaxing and structuring their time

The programme

Establishing a home library

3.9. Although there were positive attitudes towards reading at Hillside before participating in Reading Rich, the carer felt that the existing range of literature was not particularly effective in engaging the boys. The pre-intervention interview revealed that 10 of the 18 boys owned no books of their own. As a result, the programme of book drops was aimed at providing books that the boys might make a connection with and, in doing so, encourage a regular reading habit. The boys were fairly typical in their interests for their age and gender although a few had reading abilities, which were below average for their age group. This prompted the Co-ordinator to also distribute some titles by Barrington Stoke.

3.10. Staff encouraged the boys to respond to the Reading Rich books and make new requests. The boys' views were fed back to the Reading Rich Co-ordinator who sourced appropriate books to build on the boys' previous reading experiences. This also allowed the evaluation to assess the extent to which the new and relevant books increased reading patterns.

3.11. Over the course of one year 8 batches of books were sent to Hillside with a total distribution of:

- 137 books, including a range of fiction and non-fiction (cars, motorbikes, football)
- 3 audio books
- 10 Barrington Stoke titles

3.12. The carer at Hillside used the Reading Rich books to create a shared library in a central location. A room, which was previously used for counselling, was lined with bookshelves and comfortable chairs to create a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. The aim was to create an association between reading with the young people's social activity. The Co-ordinator provided books of general interest to the age and gender to begin stocking the library as well as the specific interest books for each of the boys. The books could be borrowed by any of the boys – and if they liked a particular book, they were able to keep a copy. They were also encouraged to start recommending books to each other.

The author interventions

3.13. Following the set up of the new reading club in the library a series of author visits was planned to break the barriers that existed between some of the boys and reading. The pre-intervention interview identified that 5 boys could not give the name of any author and 8 could only name between 1 and 3 authors. (Annex 7)

3.14. Keith Gray was commissioned as the writer-in-residence. He visited the school once a week for 10 weeks. He began by introducing the boys to his own publications and worked with them to develop their own writing skills. As they were used to working in small groups – class sizes were a maximum of four – they worked in pairs with the writer. A teacher was present for every session. Additionally, the writer was commissioned to produce a piece of writing, which would relate to the boys experience at Hillside. It was planned to be published

on the Internet and as a printed pamphlet which each of the boys would keep. Staff were also offered sessions with the writer if they felt they would be helpful.

3.15. Keith introduced the boys to writing by describing his own life stories. In doing this he was able to instil a sense that, if he could do it, anyone could. He used a range of techniques to develop relationships with the boys and to encourage participation. The following extract is taken from an interview with the writer.

A 15-year-old boy had at first presented himself as quite threatening to me and to other pupils. An initial aim had been that the project would help him mature socially, gaining greater acceptance from the other boys. During the workshop, when asked to choose a talent, he suggested 'killing' and a personal ambition was 'world's best killer'. However, when asked about 'a deep dark secret' he revealed that he had a great fear of blood. I was able to develop a good rapport with him and turned a difficult relationship around by asking him to recommend books to me. He was encouraged by this and went on to evaluate a draft version of a Barrington Stoke manuscript for the publishers. He responded well to the role although he thought it was 'not scary enough' for his taste. The work that he produced during the residency was of an exceptionally high standard.

Library connection

3.16. The school had previously taken boys on visits to the local library but issues over fees and missing books had hindered the relationship. Reading Rich was able to ensure that any missing or damaged books were overlooked and the Fife children's librarian was given a budget from Reading Rich to initiate a relationship with Hillside. Initial plans for librarians to go to the school to read with the boys were felt to be intrusive and a new approach was being discussed at the time of writing.

Sycamore Project

Background

3.17. Sycamore Project offers a range of provision for extremely disturbed children in Scotland, including four residential units, which are located in normal urban neighbourhoods. All residents will have had numerous past placements and attachment disorders are common. The units, which are divided by age, aim to offer permanence and normality with mainstream schooling and day-to-day functioning in ordinary communities. Placement breakdown is rare and most children are resident for years, facilitating attachments and an ability to function within the expectations of society.

3.18. Reading Rich concentrated its delivery on all of the residential settings. Participants ranged from 6 to 13 years. Twelve young people were interviewed pre-intervention and 8 post-intervention. Patterns of reading varied between the settings. The pre-intervention questionnaire reported that the 4 younger children interviewed (6-8 years) read either daily or one - 2 times a week. This was usually with support from a carer. The two older boys (13 years) reported hardly ever reading but there was a feeling that one was affected by the others' negative attitudes.

3.19. Sycamore was offered all features of the programme with the exception of carer training. The Co-ordinator felt that this was not necessary as staff reported already being confident in supporting the young people's literacy. They were also familiar with hosting residencies, as the units had previously hosted visual and performing artists.

Programme features

Establish a home library

3.20. The Co-ordinator visited one of the Sycamore units (8-12 years) and was able to gather useful information to inform the selection of books for the young people. These books were enthusiastically received and on follow-up visits the young people went to their rooms to find and show the books that they had received. In the other units the book drops were less successful. The Co-ordinator relied on staff to provide her with information on the young people. This did not happen and although books were sent to these units the Co-ordinator felt the opportunity was missed to match books to each young person's needs and interests.

- Each of the 4 units received between 2 and 4 consignments. The number was dependent on level of staff feedback.
- A total of 171 books and 2 audio books were distributed between the Sycamore residences.

Artist / illustrator interventions

3.21. Each of the units was offered 4 sessions over 4 consecutive weeks with author Viv French and writer/illustrator Theresa Flavin. The writers planned a series of activities to engage the young people in story making, including character development, creating heroes and villains, and making comics and personal books. Theresa reported having difficulties achieving much success with the sessions as the young people were constantly being distracted.

3.22. Viv French visited each of the units to meet the young people and gain inspiration for a shared story. She moulded a plot with each of the young people's names mentioned. At a celebratory event to mark the end of the project, Viv read extracts from the book and the young people were issued with their own version.

Library connection

3.23. Fife children's librarian was given a budget through Reading Rich to liaise with Sycamore and develop a way of working together. At the time of writing the connection had not been made.

Community Alternative Placement Scheme (CAPS)

Background

3.24. The NCH Scotland CAPS project places young people with foster families in Central Scotland. Reading Rich was introduced to several families in Phase 1 but due to the distances between homes and the central offices the Co-ordinator was unable to deliver the model in its Phase 1 format. The Phase 2 Co-ordinator reconnected with CAPS and this coincided with the new appointment of a senior social worker who was highly enthusiastic about Reading Rich. She took a lead role in co-ordinating activities. She used a CAPS 10th anniversary celebration event to relaunch Reading Rich via a stall laid out with a variety of books provided by Scottish Book Trust. She also took the opportunity to consult the young people on what reading material would interest them and whether they would be willing to participate in Reading Rich. The young people responded positively and several took away books from this stall and completed the introductory questionnaire. They also made requests for further reading material including books, comics and a subscription to a magazine. Many carers engaged in conversations about books they had read, made recommendations to each other and encouraged their young people to try some of the books available.

3.25. The senior social worker reported that one of the main strategies used at the launch was to attempt to 'normalise' reading by encouraging both carers and carers' own children to get involved in Reading Rich in order to take the focus away from the 'accommodated' children who already felt very different in so many other ways.

Programme features

Carer training

3.26. The senior social worker was able to co-ordinate an initial training day, which was attended by 12 care staff. The programme involved:

- An introduction by the author Des Dillon, who read extracts from one of his own books and described how he tackled motivating the young people to read
- A presentation from Fraser Ross Associates who provided detailed information and examples of inspiring books for each of 4 age ranges
- A presentation from the reading rich co-ordinator who described the benefits of the programme and what both carers and young people might expect to get from it

All carers were extremely enthusiastic and left with positive attitudes. The Senior Social Worker reported that the day had galvanised the carer's commitment to the scheme, which in turn generated encouragement of the young people to participate.

Establish home libraries

3.27. Following the launch event, the training for carers and the author workshops the young people were comfortable making requests for books both through the Senior Social Worker and directly to the Co-ordinator at SBT. Carers have described the great pleasure

experienced by the young people when packages of books arrive, addressed to them personally.

- There were 52 requests for books and several for comics from carers and young people
- 21 books 2 audio comics and 2 audio books were distributed at the carer-training day
- 23 books plus comics were distributed during the celebration launch day

Author-led workshops

3.28. Two workshops were held for young people, led by Des Dillon. Eleven young people attended each day and seven gave a post-intervention interview for the evaluation. The sessions involved conversations about language, writing and poetry exercises. On the second day Des also read some of his own short stories to the group and this seemed to have the greatest connection with the young people. The senior social worker described the value not just of encouraging young people to access reading material but to do so via direct story telling which she recognised to have many therapeutic benefits and, when done in the right way, can engage young people of all ages.

NCH Scotland Intensive Supervised Structured Care (ISSC)

Background

3.29. ISSC is a residential unit, which can house up to 5 young people and which has strong links with 5 special foster carers in the area. There is a reasonably high turnover of young people through the unit, although some can move on to live with the specialist foster carers.

3.30. A central concern with this group was how to penetrate highly negative attitudes towards education providers and how to initiate a dialogue between the young people and the programme.

Programme features

Establish a home library

3.31. A special area was designated for creating a book display. SBT provided a range of appropriate material but, in the main, it was felt that it was only the resident writer's books and those recommended by him that were borrowed. The non-fiction books and magazines were more popular than general fiction and these were always very visible in the communal social area.

3.32. A total of 4 consignments were sent to the unit:

- 73 books including 17 Barrington Stoke titles
- 4 magazine subscriptions for one year, including TeenVogue, Empire and World Cup Football
- 3 audio books

- The third book drop was predominantly made up of writer, Des Dillon's titles and was timed to coincide with the residency.

Author intervention

3.33. Des Dillon was appointed as writer-in-residence. Des was selected due to his experience of working with young people with social, emotional and behavioural problems. His strategy was to place the onus on the young people to initiate a relationship, waiting until they were sufficiently interested in him as a person. He was also concerned never to adopt any aspect of the formal teaching, which, in many cases, had already failed most of the young people. Des used a range of different strategies in an attempt to engage the young people in literature in the broadest sense. He identified two building blocks to developing the relationship with the young people:

- Language – Des believed that the young people would not engage if they sensed he came from a different cultural background and he therefore used familiar, informal language
- Content – he believed there must be areas of shared experience between his own life and those of the young people

3.34. The young people were rarely available as a complete group; most sessions involved only one or two participants. Initially, the writer visited the centre weekly for between one and two hours over a period of ten weeks. There was no fixed programme. The author took his lead from the young people, sometimes talking about his own life and reading excerpts from his writing. In an open and positive environment they discussed issues which were real and present in the young people's lives such as relationships, self-harming, living in care, bigotry, and use of strong language.

3.35. In an attempt to broaden the young people's experience of writing, the writer arranged for them to attend a theatre performance by Scottish comedienne Elaine C Smith, who was a personal friend of his, and who also provided free tickets. Most of the young people had never been to a theatre. The writer also arranged for the young people to attend a performance of one of his own plays in an Edinburgh theatre. A third event brought another of the writer's plays to the young people in a special showing, performed by professional actors, one of whom was a leading actor in a Scottish 'soap'³.

Edinburgh Secure Services (ESS) St Katherine's

Background

3.36. Edinburgh Secure Services is made up of Howdenhall Centre and St. Katherine's Centre. The services provide both secure and open residential placements and education for young people, aged between 10 and 17, in the southern outskirts of Edinburgh. ESS supports young people whose behaviours, at the point of admission, make them a significant risk to themselves or others. Some of the young people will have experienced many forms of

³ It is appropriate to include here some events which were initiated through two further 10-week residencies with Des Dillon and funded by NCH Scotland as a follow-on to the initial project.

traumatic abuse, some may have engaged in self-harming, some who use drugs and alcohol in a destructive way, and some who have acted in an extremely aggressive manner.

The programme

3.37. St Katherine's was already part of Edinburgh's Reading Champions Project, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation 'Right to Read' scheme. Through the scheme, a Reading Champions Officer works directly with children, young people and staff and the mobile library service visits fortnightly. The main objective of the project is to increase the number of looked after children and young people who read for pleasure. This involves:

- Increasing the number of books and magazines utilised within the unit
- Increasing the range of reading material available
- Building on staff reader development skills
- Providing activities to inspire reading

3.38. The focus for Reading Rich was to bring the additional element of the writer residency to the scheme. SBT arranged for writer Keith Gray to run a series of 4 workshops over 4 weeks. 6 young people attended with no non-participants. By way of introducing the residency the Reading Rich Co-ordinator sent 12 books and 6 Barrington Stoke titles in advance. The consignment contained 3 books by Keith Gray. The evaluator did not conduct interviews with the young people following the workshops as she felt they would not have responded well to the extended list of questions. Instead the Unit Manager was interviewed.

3.39. When asked whether such a short-term intervention would have an impact on the young people, the Unit Manager stressed that in many cases these short timescales were all these young people had. The short intervention was actually mirroring their experience of life. Many of the young people had already tried all aspects of the care services and ended up at St Katherine's as a last resort.

3.40. The unit bases much of its work on attachment promotion and seeks to understand what the young people's early years experience has been. The Manager felt that the workshops with the writer helped the young people in trying to make some sense of their own life stories. She also felt that the experience of working with Keith had made the young people feel valued. The staff was also enthusiastic about the sessions. The Manager believed that, although the staff have many social work tools to support the young people, the residency was really helpful in supporting the use language-based tools as well.

3.41. Again, in this setting there were issues with staff buy-in. The Manager tackled this by ensuring that all staff knew that she was participating in sessions herself. Although the staff involvement was necessary from a security point, the manager felt that those staff who had been involved had the added benefit of a shared writing experience with the young people. They were able to use this in discussions outwith the sessions.

Phase 2 evaluation

3.42. A supplementary framework of indicators was proposed for the evaluation of most of the settings in Phase 2. The model was based on the Museums, Libraries and Archives' (MLA's) Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) and was developed through the Learning Impact Research Project (LIRP)⁴: It focuses on:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills
- Values, attitudes and feelings
- Enjoyment, creativity and inspiration
- Behaviour (activity, modification and progression)

3.43. The framework is most commonly used by libraries to assess the impact of their services on informal learners. The model has been designed to place emphasis on measuring outcomes, as perceived by the participants, in this case, the young people themselves. For the purposes of this evaluation it had the added benefit of not relying on validation from care staff or from formal records – the main challenges encountered in evaluating Phase I. The framework is most effective when used in conjunction with quantitative data gathering methods, however this was not possible in all Phase 2 settings. See Annex 5 for a summary of evaluation indicators in relation to the GLOs.

3.44. Using the framework as a starting point a series of questions and statements was presented to the young people in Phase 2. They were designed to assess how the young people felt about the Reading Rich experience and what they felt they had gained from it. The framework provided a structure for the evaluator to present a range of qualitative data.

3.45. As well as mapping Phase 2 responses to the GLO framework, the evaluator continued to respond to the initial framework of indicators. It was hoped that numbers would be more consistent in the new Phase 2 settings, however, similar problems to Phase 1 were encountered in tracking the young people. Hillside provided the only stable data where 18 young people were interviewed pre-intervention and 16 post-intervention. The Hillside setting has been used in Chapter 4 to describe the main measurable impacts on young people. Although numbers are low, the information is also provided in percentages to allow some comparisons to be drawn. Full statistics are provided as Annex 7.

3.46. The research approach in Phase 2 was mainly qualitative. Anzul et al (1991) state, "...qualitative researchers want those that are studied to speak for themselves, to provide their perspectives in words and other actions." (p.4). As well as the young people's perspectives, carers', unit staff's and the writers' perspectives were also recorded.

3.47. Data was also gathered and analysed qualitatively from 2 other settings: Sycamore and ISSC. At Sycamore 12 young people began the project with only 8 interviewed at the end. This information is provided in Annex 8 but has no commentary, as the responses were not convincing. Several of the young people insisted on answering as a group and 2 of the younger children were not able to fully understand the questions. Also, the level of input the young people received from the programme varied enormously between the residential units.

⁴ The Learning Impact Research Project carried out by RCMG, University of Leicester on behalf of MLA (The Council for Museums, Libraries and Archives)

3.48. At ISSC in Ayrshire, 12 young people completed pre-intervention questionnaires, provided as Annex 9, and 6 completed post-intervention questionnaires. The evaluator was not able to conduct the interviews face-to-face due to the young people's lack of availability and many of the questionnaires lack detail. However, valuable qualitative information was provided by staff and has been fed into the GLO framework and is presented in Chapter 4.

3.49. On reflection, the predominantly quantitative research methods which this evaluation set out to use were not the most appropriate given the context in which the study was being carried out. More useful findings might have been gained through an action research project where practitioners were actively involved in the planning, design and the modification of the interventions. Additionally, to quantify the extent to which Reading Rich has impacted on reading, a control group of non-participating looked after children would be required.

CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS: IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

4.1. This chapter presents the findings with reference to the programme's impact on the young people at each of the settings. The report makes no attempt to compare outcomes between settings given that the contexts were so varied. The chapter begins with a summary of findings from two settings, presented through the initial research framework: the MAPS project in Moray at Phase 1 and Hillside School at Phase 2. The chapter concludes by presenting findings from each of the other settings at Phase 2 with reference to the GLO framework.

Phase 1: Findings from Moray

4.2. The following information was gleaned from the post-intervention interviews with 4 young people and, although in many ways unreliable in formal evaluation terms, it gives the reader an indication of the programme's impact on the few who followed it.

Nature of Reading

4.3. Each of the young people developed a regular reading habit. Two young people progressed to reading daily from previously reading only once or twice a week and 2 from having never read at home to reading daily. The main reasons associated with the positive outcome were the interest in new books and the appropriateness of the reading levels and subjects.

4.4. Three of the 4 young people who completed the programme increased the duration of their regular reading. Two progressed from no reading activity to reading between 30 min to an hour every day and one increased her reading to over an hour daily. As one LAC said, *"I'll keep reading on and on if the book's right"*.

4.5. Unfortunately, by the end of the intervention, only one young person had developed and sustained a 'book buddy' relationship. The other 3 young people had no obvious person to discuss books with apart from the Programme Co-ordinator on a six-weekly basis. The high level of instability in the young people's lives meant that they rarely developed long-term relationships with a constant adult who might have supported their reading habit out of school.

4.6. At the end of the programme, 3 of the young people owned over 20 books and one owned between 5 and 20. This compares with a previous ownership of none for 2 young people and less than 5 for the other 2. The young people were given the option to keep or give back the Reading Rich books depending on whether they were of interest to them. All stated that it was important for them to own the books. Ownership was also linked to positive reading habits. When prompted, the 4 young people were able to give oral descriptions of the storylines in many of the books that they owned, suggesting that they had read them or, at least, part of them.

4.7. Each of the 4 young people had visited the library through the programme. They had also had contact with library staff and, where necessary, had membership tickets made or renewed. It was encouraging that 3 of the 4 participants who completed the programme continued to use the library; 2 unaccompanied and 1 with a carer. None of the young people

was aware that the library staff was available to support them and none of the carers had ever made contact with library staff.

Knowledge of books and reading

4.8. Each of the young people increased their knowledge of children's books and authors. One went from knowing between 4-6 authors to being able to name 7-10 and the other 3 young people went from knowing 1-3 authors to being able to name 4-6.

Attitude

4.9. Each of the 4 young people said that they 'liked reading a lot'. This compared with their mixed and less positive responses pre-intervention. The pleasure gained from reading appeared to be directly related to the motivational activities that were offered. In particular, the author's involvement had a huge impact on the enjoyment of his own books.

4.10. Of those who were interviewed, 3 thought that they were now a better reader than before the programme started. Interestingly, the one young person who thought that her reading had not improved said that she had been an excellent reader at the beginning of the programme. One boy, in particular, was so proud of his ability that he asked if he could read his latest book aloud during the exit interview.

Behaviour and Self-esteem

4.11. The interviews with carers and young people produced a range of anecdotal evidence to support the view that the programme had notable impacts on individual participants in the areas of self-esteem and behaviour. The following excerpt is taken from the Interim Report and refers to information taken from an interview with a 14 year-old girl and her carer:

At the beginning of the programme A would not read books. She now reads daily and recommends books to staff and other young people in the residential unit where she lives. She became motivated when, through Reading Rich, a carer began reading aloud in the unit. The Co-ordinator arranged for A to become a Barrington Stoke manuscript consultant. She also made a personal connection with Catherine McPhail and read all of her books. The Co-ordinator carefully expanded her selection to include a range of authors writing on similar themes. She now actively seeks out new books, which reflect her aspirational attitude and calls the Co-ordinator with requests. The carer believes that she has progressed emotionally as a result of beginning to read. She now aspires beyond 'teenage girl with baby' role to using books to interpret the reality of her life situation, for example, with 'A boy called it' by David Pelzer.

Phase 2: Findings from Hillside School

4.12. Hillside School was the only setting where it was possible to use the initial outcome indicators since the programme lasted for over a year. The boys were asked questions to find

out about their individual reading habits. They related to frequency, duration and place. The study was interested to find any general patterns of reading behaviour between able and less able boys.

Nature of reading

4.13. The programme had a direct impact on the frequency of reading at Hillside. At the beginning of the programme 10 of the 18 boys ‘never’, or ‘hardly ever’, read. By the end of the programme the figure had reduced to 5 of the 16 interviewed. The amount that read daily rose from 3 to 6. The carer believed that the improvement in frequency would have an impact on social relations. At Hillside, the programme was less concerned with improving ability. The carer’s main ambitions were almost all related to social and emotional benefits for the boys.

4.14. Frequency of reading also related to the boys’ own impressions of their academic success in language. Of the 4 boys who ‘never’ read pre-intervention, all cited ‘English’ or ‘writing’ as one of the subjects that they found difficult at school.

4.15. Unsurprisingly a pattern emerged with the follow-up question, ‘*Where do you read?*’ At the pre-intervention interview most of the boys who said that they were good or excellent readers said that they read in their rooms, while those who said that they were poor readers reported only reading in school. The carer felt that those boys who were only reading in school were getting a limited experience of books. The selected school books were less likely to be able to provide a connection with the boys’ emotional needs. The carer felt that it was those boys who would most benefit from Reading Rich.

4.16. There was a slight increase in amount of time dedicated to reading. The pre-intervention figure of 9 boys who read for over 30 minutes rose to 11 by the post-intervention stage. The 5 boys who read for less than 30 minutes fell to 1 boy. There was little shift in those who spent no time reading. At the pre-intervention interview one 14-year-old boy said, “*I start reading but get bored because I’m no good and then I give up quite quickly*”. Six months later the boy was reading regularly with a staff member and when asked if he still gave up quickly he said, “*I can carry on where Jo and I left off for quite a while now*”.

4.17. The boys appeared to fall into one of two reading patterns; they either resisted reading completely, usually due to poor ability or they read very regularly for long periods. One 14-year-old boy who read every night said, “*Once I get started I can’t stop – like the new Harry Potter I just stayed up all night with that*”.

4.18. It was also apparent that it was more difficult to change reading patterns in the older boys. Many expressed negative attitudes towards reading and in several cases this was accompanied by negative views on education. With these boys, the author was able to play an important role. He was able to create positive associations with books, reading and writing that related to each of the boy’s own lives, past and present.

Improved reading ability

4.19. Hillside School provided a different context from the other settings in being a residential school. Although the residential units were in separate buildings from the main school there was an obvious connection with formal education by the very nature of the place. As a result of the connection, the carer was able to provide accurate reading levels for the participants at the pre-intervention interviews. Of the 18 boys, only 4 had attained reading test levels that were below average for their age, with one boy having not been tested at the time of interview. This data did not match current reports stating that a high percentage of looked after children had below-average reading levels. Consequently there was no significant shift in the boys' perceptions of their own reading ability, as most had not identified ability in reading as a problem to begin with. Hillside was unique in this respect, as the data seemed to indicate that levels were better than the national average for looked after children.

4.20. At Hillside there was a clear distinction between the few boys who resisted reading because of poor ability and those who lacked motivation. Pre-intervention, the 4 boys who had poor reading levels confirmed this by describing themselves as 'poor' readers and they were also in the category that said that they would 'like to become a better reader'. By comparison, 3 competent readers also described themselves as poor readers, but stated that they did not wish to become better readers. The research revealed a range of negative attitudes from these boys to reading. When asked about reading for pleasure they said that they '*didn't like it*' or '*hated it*' and when probed, responses included "*I can't be bothered with it*", and "*What's the point?*".

4.21. The carer commented that boys who had low reading ages were likely to make up a range of different excuses to hide their embarrassment. This view was supported by the boys' comments. Of the 10 boys who 'never' or 'hardly ever' read pre-intervention 4 had difficulties with reading books for their own age. Some of the reasons for not reading given by these boys were, "*I don't like reading*", "*It's not cool*" and "*I'm no good*".

4.22. Reading Rich encouraged the more competent readers to discuss books while the less competent shared reading with the carer. The one-to-one attention certainly proved to have motivational benefits although the educational impact is difficult to assess over the short duration of the project. One boy said, "*I used to go past a word but now I've got someone to read with I go back and get it right*" while another said, "*The books are teaching me to learn different words*". The motivation also appeared to have stemmed from the careful selection of books, suggesting that it is vital to make books available that relate to the young people's interests and abilities.

Knowledge of books and authors

4.23. Reading Rich revealed positive findings relating to the boys' knowledge of books and authors. At the beginning of the study 5 could not name any authors' compared with only one post-intervention. The amount that could name between one and 6 authors shifted from 12 out of 18 pre-intervention to 13 out of 16 post-intervention.

4.24. The boys' experience of genre had widened through the project. The pre-intervention interviews revealed that the competent readers were limited to a few genres, namely crime

and horror. At the post-intervention interview, all of the boys were able to describe a book that they had recently seen or read, many out with the crime and horror genres, and including real-life stories, fantasy and mystery. One 14-year-old boy who could not name any authors at the pre-intervention interview was able to describe stories, which he had read by Anthony Horowitz, Michael Morpurgo and the resident writer, Keith Gray. Not surprisingly, almost all of the boys could name J.K Rowling in the post-intervention interview, but the reason for this familiarity is likely to be due to the success of the Harry Potter films and the accompanying media coverage.

4.25. The author played a pivotal role in introducing the boys to a wider range of books. He made suggestions regarding what he thought they would like and asked them to recommend books back to him. The approach not only encouraged the boys to try different books, but also helped them appreciate the pleasure to be gained from discussing stories.

Attitude to books and reading

4.26. At Hillside several boys were reluctant to engage with the programme and to take part in the evaluation. Staff reported high levels of peer pressure and some difficulties with social relationships. The carer said that one of the main reasons for boys not participating was because their friends did not want to. At the post-intervention interview one boy began by saying that he never read, but the carer informed the interviewer that he had devoured 7 Reading Rich books since this project started and, when prompted, he agreed.

4.27. At the pre-intervention interview, over half of the boys reported owning no fiction books of their own. Almost all had large quantities of magazines and some owned non-fiction that related to their interests, mainly football, cars and motorbikes. When asked what books they would like, requests often related to popular culture and media with several requests for biographies (Jordan and Beckham). Although the scheme offered an opportunity to keep the books if they liked them, most boys did not see it as important to keep their own copy. The carer suggested that the lives of boys at Hillside tend to be rather more settled than the average looked after child, which may explain why they feel less of a need to build up possessions.

Impact on social and emotional behaviour

4.28. The boys gave mixed responses to the idea of sharing reading and discussing books. Again, attitudes appeared to relate to peer pressure within the unit. One 12-year-old boy clearly enjoyed reading but did not want his habit to become common knowledge within his unit, saying, *“It’s my choice. What’s the point in telling anyone about books? I keep it to myself because my mates would laugh.”* Another boy valued the attention that came through sharing books, saying of the author, *“It’s good talking to him about what I’ve been reading. He knows loads and then he tells you.”*

4.29. Although 10 of the boys at the pre-intervention stage said that they would not like to become a better reader, almost all could describe the emotional benefits, *‘Helps me get to sleep at night’, ‘You get to relax’ and ‘Makes me happier’* as well as educational benefits, *‘I’ll understand bigger words and not be struggling...I’ll be able to look words up in a dictionary’* and *‘You can’t get good exam passes if you’re not good.’*

4.30. The programme seemed to have an impact on pleasure gained from books and reading. Nine of the 18 boys enjoyed reading a lot or quite a lot pre-intervention with an increase to 11 of the 16 boys in the post-intervention interview. This report has already referred to some of the reasons why the boys might say that they ‘hate’ reading - 4 pre-intervention and 2 at post-intervention - many relating to poor ability and peer pressure. On the other hand, an important aspect of Reading Rich was to relate books and reading to a broader range of experiences. Although a few boys may have got limited pleasure from reading most did report enjoying listening to the author read his own stories and writing about their own lives. The carer also reported the pleasure gained through the new book relationships, for example, between carer and boys, writer and boys and between the boys themselves.

Phase 2: Findings in relation to GLO framework

4.31. This section describes the impacts of Reading Rich programme against the Generic Learning Outcomes. The GLOs have provided a framework around which to arrange descriptions of the experiences of the young people from all of the settings, particularly where conditions of participation meant that they were not eligible to be included in the initial framework. Most of the information comes from questionnaires and interviews carried out post-intervention.

4.32. The young people were presented with a series of statements and questions relating to the Reading Rich programme and which fall under the main GLO headings. The statements have been designed to provoke personal opinions, for example ‘I can find books that interest me’. The information has been structured around the following headings:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills
- Values, attitudes and feelings
- Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity
- Activity, behaviour and progression

GLO 1 Increase in knowledge and understanding

Increased knowledge of books and authors

4.33. With the exception of one unit, none of the settings that participated in Reading Rich began the project with a rich reading environment. Few books, if any, were on display in communal areas and, when asked, the majority of young people were unable to say where they could find books or authors that interested them.

“If I could find a good book I’d read all the time.” Female, 12 years, residential care

4.34. The programme was able to expose the young people to different types of books and reading material. There was anecdotal evidence across the settings to suggest that this wider experience of books and genre provided the stimulus required for developing more regular reading patterns.

“F,13 now reads daily and continues to request more new titles... she didn't really like reading before, but it gives her something else to think about now.” Carer

Understanding of types of books that can interest self

4.35. It was important to recognise that, to develop a long-term reading habit, the young people had to want to take ownership of their own reading activity and, in doing so, they had to understand what material motivated them. The programme provided them with opportunities to do this.

“M,14 had the confidence to request a number of 'How to...' books which were aimed at a younger age group but which suited both his developmental / reading age as well as his areas of interest.” NCH Scotland social worker

“Another young lad very strongly resisted suggestions of books, but requested a subscription to a football magazine and thereafter accepted a couple of books and comics on the strength of this.” NCH Scotland social worker

“I think that other people's books are good now. They've got interesting stuff that you've never learned before. Every writer has a different speciality and you can get stuck into it.” Female, 9 years, residential care

GLO 2 Increase in skills

Increased reading or writing ability

4.36. The one-to-one sessions that Reading Rich nurtured between carers and young people appeared to have impact on perceived reading ability, while the writers' interventions had an additional impact on writing ability. The writer's role as motivator worked mainly because in the first instance the young people accepted them as role models; they were often given celebrity status. The writers were able to build on this acceptance and were able to introduce the young people to writing techniques that they could use to express their own ideas. One young person in foster care described how her writing had been helped:

“The (writer) workshop helped me with my exams, like how to present a story for English. I got a 2 for writing and a 3 overall... I expected a 4 overall. I'm still at school now and I'm going to do hotel management.” Female, 15 years, foster care

“These workshops have given F16 a framework for writing. She has now been given the simple skills that she needs to write about herself. She is very isolated and this will be a therapeutic tool for her.” Manager, St Katherine's

Ability to use library

4.37. The pre-intervention interviews revealed that most young people did not visit a library regularly but many had library cards and almost all said they knew how to use the

library. Unfortunately, this information could not be confirmed as planned initiatives between the care settings and local librarians were not underway at the time of writing this report. The programme was however, influential in setting up home libraries to be shared among the young people at ISSC and Hillside.

“The young people are able to come and use the room as a retreat; they learn to treat the books and the room with respect.” Carer

4.38. At an awareness-raising session for CAPS carers, the programme Co-ordinator gave an introduction to using local libraries with looked after children and described what carers could expect from the service.

“They told us at the training that librarians love to be asked. I thought I’d just give it a bash. They were brilliant at Bannockburn; the librarian gave me a list of authors. Now I’m there all the time.” Carer

“After the project I took F15 to the library with me and my son. She now uses it to study for her exams. She would never have done that before.” Carer

Ability to communicate ideas for writing

4.39. The author workshops reflected the view that successful outcomes were not only about improved ability or even attitude. Many staff saw the smallest changes in behaviour as a marked achievement for many of the young people. Some had not been expected to participate at any level and the fact that they were willing and able to communicate their thoughts and ideas in writing was seen as a huge achievement.

“It was great when he got us to make our own stories. He made it so it wasn’t hard. I’d like to try that again.” Female, 14 years, foster care

“Haikus are brilliant – you can say anything you think.” Male, 13 years, residential care

GLO 3 *Change in values, attitudes and feelings*

The project has helped me

4.40. Each of the participating young people had their own set of complex needs based on a range of difficult life experiences. The programme had the advantage of being able to help in a range of different ways, whether through carer support, specialist book choices or through motivation by the writers.

“F15 is more confident in herself now. She was struggling with relationships and was only reading fairy tales – ordinary things scared her. I got advice on writers that would help her from the Book Trust. I explained to F15 why I had asked for help and that was useful too.” Carer

“F16 didn’t need encouragement to read but he struggled with relationships. He always wanted to be right at everything. Working in a small group (with the writer) was important. He seemed much less of an outsider and the boys accepted him more during these sessions.” Carer

4.41. Several young people’s interviews suggested that they had low self-esteem, often indicating that this was as a result of poor reading skills and poor exam grades. They seemed to be somewhat resigned to low achievement and surprised at some of their own successes through the programme.

“One reluctant reader (M14) performed one of Des’s plays in front of his mum, who had come up from England. He became completely confident and his mum saw him in a completely different light.” Carer

Expresses pleasure gained from project

4.42. Many aspects of the programme had brought the young people great pleasure and, in doing so, a greater sense of their own importance. Some were surprised by the attention and especially at being given the privilege of meeting the writers.

“Can I meet more authors? Would you be able to tell people that I really, really, really, really, really want to meet Jacqueline Wilson now?” Female, 10 years, residential care

“F15 was over the moon about getting a signed copy of his book. She loaned it out to her family with pride.” Carer

Communicates value of books and reading to others

4.43. At the beginning of the programme some of the older children were unwilling to place themselves in perceived positions of vulnerability with their peers by appearing to be enthusiastic about books. However, word-of-mouth recommendations from the most popular young people had a huge impact, particularly in residential units. Often the Co-ordinator would be asked for multiple copies of books, which had been recommended in this way.

“It’s funny how a culture can develop around some of the books. If one of the popular boys reads and enjoys a book it will soon be in demand by everyone else.” Carer

“M13 was placed in care due to his main carer being admitted to prison. Due to his involvement in Reading Rich he became an avid reader, he went to theatre performances and would often discuss storylines of books in great detail with staff. He gained greater self-awareness and self-confidence and would often be the driving force in ensuring that other young people took part in the weekly sessions with the writer.” NCH Scotland, ISSC, Manager

Value of books in understanding own life and other young people's lives

4.44. Many of the young people developed a sophisticated understanding of the hidden emotional benefits that books could offer. They found they could empathise with fictitious characters, in many cases providing some reassurance that they were not unique in their own situations.

"I wish an author would write a book where someone dies or something. This would help me feel better because I always know that the ending in a book is going to be an OK ending." Female, 9 years, residential care

"Yes, I like it because the girl loses her dad and has no money and her mum and boyfriend go to Australia". Female, 10 years, residential care

"I'd like to be a better reader because I'd understand more things. It helps me when I'm bored and it helps me to forget the crap that's going on in the unit." Male, 14 years, residential care

"F15 is very bright and is under pressure from her parent to read academic books, like psychology. What she needs is these kinds of fiction books that can help her understand her own life better." Manager

4.45. On the other hand, some young people were not able to understand the concept of books in helping them in their situation.

"How can a book possibly help you unless it's a biography?" Male, 13 years, residential care

4.46. It was important that staff could anticipate how young people might respond to certain books, particularly where they had severe emotional problems. One carer felt that it was important to make a connection with the boys' lives but also thought that too much personal relevance could be off-putting. Ultimately, staff needed to use their knowledge of the young people in their care to make informed choices.

"For some boys a gritty, chilling or realistic genre will be effective whereas it will have a negative effect on others." Carer

GLO 4 *Evidence of enjoyment, inspiration, creativity*

Inspired by author to try something new

4.47. At the ISSC residency in Ayrshire the writer focussed on broadening the young people's perceptions of writing. He introduced them to the world of plays, theatre and filmmaking. This produced many unexpected benefits; the writer and staff are able to provide accounts of unprecedented improvements in attitude, behaviour and motivation levels. In particular, the approach provided a platform for some young people who struggled with basic literacy skills to participate and experience a sense of achievement through their previously untapped creativity.

“F17 was bright and articulate but very disruptive. The author introduced her to theatre and she ended up finding an outlet in working with disabled kids with drama when she got back home.” Carer

“M16 was a persistent offender and arrived in ISSC from secure accommodation. He did not attend mainstream education and was a regular absconder. Through his contact with the project it was discovered that he was dyslexic. Although he struggled sometimes, he managed to take part in plays, which tackled subjects like bigotry, and cultural differences. He gained a great deal of self-esteem from being involved in the project.” NCH Scotland, ISSC Manager

Creativity

4.48. Increasingly, educational policy emphasises the significance of ‘creativity’ in raising attainment and tackling disaffection. The writer/illustrator who worked on the Sycamore project recognised the difficulties of getting the young people to concentrate in the challenging workshop environment. She tackled the problem by designing a series of short-term creative activities, such as designing characters, comic strips and mini-books. Some of the young people who had previously been reluctant were inspired by the approach and began to participate.

“I started designing my character, Clawman. I’ve done a picture of him and I’ve made up all the things that he can do.” Male, 11 years, residential unit

4.49. Another author motivated the young people in a variety of ways. One strategy was to leave the young people with a challenge to consider in the lead up to the following workshop.

M15 was writing his own story after week one. He brought it to the following session to show the writer. The teachers at the school felt that the writer had motivated him to write where others hadn’t been able to.” Carer

“During one of the sessions with the writer one young man stood up and presented his own rap song to the group which he had been working on.” CAPS Senior Social Worker

Pleasure

4.50. From observation, it was clear that many of the older participants had become disaffected by the educational system and were unable to make a connection between personal educational development and pleasure. They expressed pleasure at the activities Reading Rich exposed them to and many went from being reluctant to anticipating the next session with great excitement.

“Can you not come again on Tuesday? I’m free on a Tuesday.” Female, 9 years, residential care

“That drawing was really good fun. I’m going to do another one on my own.” Male, 11 years, residential care

4.51. At ISSC there was also evidence of the staff gaining pleasure from the programme. Their enthusiasm was subsequently passed on to the young people.

“Staff were really enthused and would practise the plays when the writer wasn’t there, often during late shifts.” Manager ISSC

GLO 5 Evidence of activity, modified behaviour and progression

4.52. At the earliest stages of the evaluation it became clear that the long-term impact of Reading Rich would be difficult to measure within the timeframe of the project. Some of the young people’s statements indicated that the changes in their reading behaviour were likely to remain with them.

“As long as I can get the right book I’ll read and read.” Female, 9 years, residential care

4.53. There was evidence that both the young people and their carers were now reading a wider range of books than previously.

“The author kept telling me about books that I didn’t know about. I would never have tried them myself.” Male, 14 years, residential unit

4.54. Several young people were motivated to improve behaviour through the programme.

“M10 had had severe disciplinary problems the previous day and it was not clear whether he would be allowed to participate in the session. I assured care staff that he would be well-behaved working with me – and he was.” Writer/illustrator

“M13 had absconded that week. He had spent time sleeping outdoors and as soon as he came back the first thing he asked was if he could do the writer’s workshop.”
Carer

4.55. Almost all participants could give reasons why reading would help them in their lives in the future:

“You need it to be able to read and write. You need to write to get a job.” Male, 14 years, residential care

“When you’re stressed you can read a book.” Female, 9 years, residential care

“You’ll need to fill in a form to become a footballer and if you say you can’t do it, they’ll say, ‘Until you can read – you can’t play’.” Male, 12 years, foster care

“You’ll be beside your son and you’ll say, ‘I can read that.’” Male, 12 years, foster care

CHAPTER FIVE FINDINGS: PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

5.1. This chapter discusses findings relating to the second aspect of the research:

- In relation to the programme content: what are the most effective strategies for influencing positive reading habits in looked after children?
- In relation to staff, settings and programme management: what are the conditions that create positive reading environments?

The chapter discusses the appropriateness of the Reading Rich approach and goes on to discuss its implications on the people who were involved. It concludes by addressing the sustainability of the model.

5.2. The information in this chapter comes from interviews with care staff and managers in the partner organisations. They were carried out after 16 months for the Interim Report and then again at the end of the project. In addition, managers were invited to respond to the questions in Annex 3 at the end of the programme. The following is documented:

- Three written responses from NCH Scotland, one from senior management
- One written response from SBT
- One telephone interview with Hillside School

Telephone interviews were carried out with:

- Three NCH Scotland project managers at Stornoway, ISSC and CAPS

Face-to-face interviews were carried out with:

- Manager, St Katherine's Secure Unit
- Three participating writers

Planning and rationale

5.3. Reading Rich was a pilot programme. Those undertaking a pilot can usually expect a reasonable amount of modification in its implementation. However, certain factors contributed to Reading Rich becoming particularly challenging to all who were involved in its delivery.

“SBT was unaware of a lot of the challenges of working with looked after children and a fuller briefing from NCH Scotland and wider discussion would have been useful so that we could have had more realistic expectations of the impact of the project. It would also have ensured a clear, shared understanding between partners of their respective roles and responsibilities, the project's parameters, and its target audience”.

SBT Manager

Delivery

5.4. The role of the Co-ordinator was revised half way through the project. At Phase 1 the Co-ordinator had a high level of personal contact with the young people and, although the benefits were evident, the approach was unsustainable with increasing numbers and a wider geographical spread. The revised role at Phase 2 aimed to be more strategic by establishing contact with existing local services, such as libraries, to support the delivery of the programme.

5.5. An added concern at Phase 2 was the marked increase in administrative and organisational tasks, for example, the continual distribution of books and attempts to co-ordinate dates of workshops and events. Lower level administrative support to do this kind of work would have freed the part-time Co-ordinator to work more strategically with staff at each of the settings.

5.6. The format of the writer workshops was agreed in advance between the Co-ordinator and staff at the host organisations. Particular attention was paid to planning a conducive environment so that each of the young people would participate. However, in some cases, writers were disappointed when staff restricted young people's attendance due to behavioural issues during the week prior to the visit.

5.7. In one residential unit the writer reported that the learning was negligible because the workshop was located in the main thoroughfare and that the television remained on. The young people were continually distracted and drifted away regularly. The writer was concerned that non-participants were deliberately disruptive to gain attention. In her comments she wrote that she had achieved very little. Her feeling was that the situation would have been helped with more co-operation from staff and that the young people would have benefited from knowing that staff supported the initiative. This would have been achieved by staff participating in activities and by providing an appropriate environment.

5.8. Timing was an important issue. The Co-ordinator felt that a one-week intensive residency would have had more impact when the young people's lives were so unpredictable. However, the host settings were not receptive to the idea as it was thought to be too disruptive to normal timetables.

Learning methodologies

5.9. Each of the writers was noticeably adept at gauging the young people's moods and modified their approach accordingly. The experience of Phase 1 had demonstrated the need for writers to develop relationships with the young people before attempting the workshop sessions. Each writer employed a range of strategies, for example, Des Dillon limited his engagement to everyday, and often mundane, conversations until he had the attention of the young people. Only then would he progress to talk about books and writing. This approach required confidence and patience on the part of the writer.

5.10. Two of the writers engaged the young people through stories of their own lives. This approach made the concepts of 'the writer' and 'the writing process' accessible to the young people. Building on their growing relationships with the young people, the writers shared simple frameworks, which the young people could use to develop their own writing skills.

Activities were short and achievable, and took place in an informal atmosphere. The environments usually provided opportunities for humour, self-deprecation and honesty.

“The self-confidence that each of these young people gained from taking part in the workshops could be seen immediately but I feel will never be able to be measured in a short time scale.” Manager, NCH Scotland, ISSC

5.11. The organisers were surprised by the popularity of the storytelling element. In Phase 1 a storytelling workshop to teenage boys, which was delivered by professional storytellers rather than an established writer, had been unsuccessful. The boys had not engaged with the activities and they appeared to be uncomfortable with the format. By contrast, when the writers read extracts from their own work in Phase 2, the young people were noticeably absorbed for long periods, without exception.

“These workshops ... strongly reinforced the value, not just of encouraging young people to access reading material, but also to do this via direct story telling, which we know to have many therapeutic benefits and if done in the right way can engage young people of all ages.” Senior Social Worker NCH Scotland CAPS

Communication

5.12. Levels of communication relating to planning and organisation were in the main inconsistent. The Co-ordinator relied on initial meetings with managers of participating organisations to establish the terms under which the project would run. Particularly in Phase 2, she stated that without the co-operation of staff on the ground, the programme would not succeed. Unfortunately, communication within one of the organisations failed regularly. On several occasions the writer and the evaluator arrived for visits and found that they were not expected. Additionally, the young people were often unavailable, as other social arrangements had been organised.

Monitoring and flexibility

5.13. During the pre-intervention interviews the young people were asked which influencing factors they thought would make them read more (Table 6). They were able to select as many, or as few, categories as they wanted, although most only selected one or two. By far the most popular aspect was to meet more writers. This was followed by the need to find interesting books. The programme design recognised the young people’s opinions with the most popular features being placed at the heart of the programme at Phase 2. These proved to continue to have a motivating impact on the young people, regardless of the different settings. Additionally, the evaluator, although independent, continually fed any relevant findings and information back into the programme allowing for continuous modification.

Table 6: What would make you read more?

	Hillside n(18)	Sycamore n(16)	Phase 1 n(4)	Total
Going to a library regularly	1	1	2	4
Someone to help with reading or to talk to	2	7	1	10
Meet more writers	13	12	4	32
Find interesting books	6	8	4	18
Write book reviews	1	1	3	4
Money to buy books	4	3	4	13

Implications on staff and carers

5.14. Throughout the project, carers' levels of involvement were extremely mixed and appeared to be a direct reflection of their own attitudes to books. One carer said that she did not make time for reading with her looked after young person as she thought that, "...*she didn't need it*". She said, "*The older kids tend to have stopped reading by the time they get here*". Another carer took her own children to the library but did not go with the looked after child in her care.

5.15. In tackling carers' attitudes, initiatives need to focus on helping carers understand the wider benefits of literature on the young people in their care. Carers would benefit from being able to use simple strategies which would allow them to incorporate books and reading into everyday life. The model, which has emerged at the CAPS project, of encouraging carers to involve their own children in activities with looked after children was seen to be valuable to the process.

5.16. Initial meetings with librarians about Reading Rich were positive in all areas. Most were already developing strategies to work with groups of young people who were difficult to target and welcomed the project and their opportunity to be a part of it.

5.17. The Co-ordinator was aware that some writers connect more successfully with looked after children than others. In sourcing a pool of names she found that there were very few writers who were both available to take on work with looked after children and who had the necessary skills to be effective to the project. Additionally, it was difficult to find writers who lived in the vicinity of some of the projects. Most lived in or near the main cities in central Scotland and incurred hefty costs for travel in addition to their residency fees.

5.18. At several stages the success of the project was threatened when senior staff were unable to progress Reading Rich within their own organisations. Generally, staff at management level of the participating organisations were enthusiastic to buy into the project at the planning stage but, in several cases, they failed to oversee the involvement of their own staff on the ground. As a result, the Reading Rich Co-ordinator based at Scottish Book Trust wasted time trying to communicate within organisations with which she was unfamiliar. For the project to be more successful, senior staff would have needed to have maintained a role in monitoring the programme's progress and dealing with issues as they arose.

Sustainability of the structure

5.19. The delivery of Reading Rich was dominated by a range of organisational challenges and, to an extent, the two main partners, SBT and NCH Scotland, were able to address many of these within their own and participating organisations as they arose. The partners are now acutely aware of the conditions required for creating a Reading Rich environment for looked after young people and have subsequently taken the following actions within their own organisations to ensure a legacy beyond the life of the project:

- NCH Scotland will seek to promote and develop a reading rich culture across its services
- SBT will ensure that all projects aimed at young people take into account the needs of looked after children and include them as a target audience, as in, the Live Literature Scotland funding scheme, which now prioritises applications which involve looked after children
- SBT are targeting looked after children in all current and future initiatives such as through the 'On the Money' resource and through participation in the Royal Mail Awards for Scottish Children's Books.
- SBT is willing to offer a direct consultancy service to those working with looked after children

CHAPTER SIX DISCUSSION AND POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

“The last 12 months have been very encouraging and we seem to have established a platform on which to build further success, both in terms of the Reading Rich scheme as it exists but also potentially to progress towards helping young people develop their own potential for creativity, writing and performing skills.” Senior Practitioner, NCH Scotland, CAPS

Introduction

6.1. This chapter concludes the report by revisiting the programme and evaluation objectives and summarising the extent to which these objectives have been achieved.

6.2. Above all this evaluation set out to measure the impact of the Reading Rich programme on the lives of looked after children. The key aims of the evaluation were to:

- Identify and evaluate the benefits of a ‘reading rich’ environment for looked after children and young people in residential and foster care settings
- Identify examples of good practice to inform the development of looked after children policy

6.3. Between 2004 and 2007, 7 literacy projects were successfully delivered in a variety of settings throughout Scotland. The research provides a range of evidence to support the view that the programme has had an impact on all settings. Although, unexpectedly, each young person in each different setting presented a different set of challenges, they each in turn offered the programme organisers valuable insights into how Reading Rich can impact positively on their lives.

6.4. None of those involved in the delivery, monitoring or evaluation of Reading Rich anticipated the unforeseen challenges of trying to deliver this type of programme and in many ways the process has raised as many questions as it has answered. Nevertheless, a great deal has been learned and the discussion in this chapter may be useful for those agencies who participated in Reading Rich as well as for those who plan to initiate or manage similar projects.

Meeting the aims of Reading Rich for looked after children

6.5. The evaluation focussed on two settings to gain a quantitative measure of the impact of the programme on the young people’s nature, level and knowledge of reading, as well as their attitudes to books and reading. In these areas, although the number of participants was very low, the data confirmed that the Reading Rich interventions of writer’s residency and home library development had a positive influence on basic reading habits.

6.6. The evaluation also recorded anecdotal evidence to confirm that the programme has positively influenced a range of behaviour and attitudes to reading and writing in all of the 7 settings. This information was presented in relation to the Generic Learning Outcomes Framework through the following headings:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills
- Attitudes and Values
- Enjoyment, creativity, progression
- Activity, behaviour and progression

6.7. Through questionnaires and interviews, young people, carers, writers and managers were asked to provide their personal feedback under these headings. The key findings from the responses demonstrated that the Reading Rich programme:

- made a measurable difference to looked after children's knowledge, frequency and breadth of reading.
- impacted on basic literacy skills and provided some young people with accessible tools for reading and writing, where other approaches had failed.
- proved to have emotional benefits in helping many young people to understand the worlds of others and to make sense of their own worlds.
- provided a safe environment for many young people to discuss and form attitudes and values relating to the most challenging things in their lives, for example, separation, bigotry, substance abuse and death.
- offered a range of conditions to enable the young people to develop and extend their communication skills with their peers, with their carers and in public.

6.8. Reading Rich programme also set out to promote reading for pleasure. Reports suggested that it accomplished the task of always being enjoyable, a view that was reflected in unexpectedly high participation levels in some projects. Some young people who would typically resist participating were seen to attend regularly. Additional outcomes included:

- The writers were able to inspire many of the young people by introducing them to new genres of books, cartoon illustration, the world of theatre and, in some cases, filmmaking.
- The young people were given opportunities to excel and, in doing so, raise their self-esteem. As a result, many young people went on to do new things; some have developed a regular reading habit, some have new tools for continuing to tackle their literacy problems and some have a clearer idea about what they might want from their future lives, regarding a career.

Discussion of issues arising

Motivating non-participants

6.9. Over the 3 years those charged with delivering Reading Rich have continually been faced with young people who have refused to participate. Although in most cases the programme has succeeded in motivating the young people, it has been useful to distinguish between the two different types of non-participants: those who lacked confidence and those who were reluctant.

6.10. Recognition of the two types has led to different approaches for engagement. Unconfident readers are apprehensive about participating in activities for fear of being

embarrassed about their low reading and writing abilities. Often they maintain dignity through non-participation. Useful strategies have been to initiate arts-based activities that give an instant sense of pride and achievement. Reluctant readers (in this study, usually older boys) will have developed negative attitudes towards education and may also be responding to peer pressure. A well-selected writer has the capacity to change attitudes in this context and offer an aspirational role model for young people.

Reading Rich and Education

6.11. Running Reading Rich highlighted the necessity to connect with the formal education system. Although the programme set out to support informal learning, it was necessary to be aware of young people's formal educational ability - or more particularly, their perception of their ability. Some young people, rating themselves as 'poor readers', appeared to form this perception on present or previous school reports and attainment levels. Where the school examination system was their only benchmark for success, issues with lack of confidence and self-esteem seem to have been exacerbated. In the programme it became necessary to expand young people's perceptions of what a 'successful reader' might actually mean.

6.12. The Co-ordinator felt that although Reading Rich changed reading attitudes and inspired young people to begin reading, in some cases they also needed a structured programme of skills development to help develop their reading. Without this, they might become frustrated and the Reading Rich motivational activities would be lost. A relationship between care providers and education providers would be necessary to support this finding.

The role of writer as motivator

6.13. Reading Rich set out to confirm the use of several strategies in motivating looked after children to participate in reading-related activities. The programme recognised past research, showing that working with artists and writers can have profound impacts on young people's educational attainment and motivation to learn, and the interviews with the Reading Rich participants confirmed this view. The research also discovered some of the more subtle benefits of working with writers, particularly in:

- Providing 'child-centred' learning opportunities, where participants are able to initiate activities which are motivated by their own personal interests. This approach is often only successful when the adult is a confident, creative individual and where there is a low 'adult to young person' ratio. With this approach, Reading Rich witnessed many looked after children develop their hidden potential.
- Improving behaviour. In all residencies, positive relationships were based on two seemingly opposed factors - the young people's perception that they shared a relationship on equal terms with the writer, and that the writer was famous, a fact which earned respect.
- Having an authoritative voice. After having 'proved themselves' by engaging the young people with their own work, writers gained respect and were able to influence the young people's reading choices and attitudes, as well as broadening their perspectives of the world of writing.

- Raising expectations. The writers who were selected were able to share their own career journey. None had come from a noticeably privileged background and one in particular shared very similar life experiences with some of the participants. Whatever their own concerns, the young people could see, through the writer, something that was achievable for themselves.

Writer development in Scotland

6.14. This research discusses the benefits of working in partnership with writers. However, it is worth also recognising some of the potential concerns. The Co-ordinator described the difficulty in finding writers with the necessary skills for some of the projects. This may be partly due to there being less of a culture of writer residencies in Scotland. In England, where inclusion projects involving writers are common (such as those funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation) more writers are working in this way to supplement incomes. To be successful in this type of work, writers will need to be aware of the challenges of working with young people and how to get support and advice. In return, host organisations will need reassurance that the writer can provide the needed skills and be able to empathise with young people. The Programme Co-ordinator suggested a need for the development of writers in Scotland who can work in a looked after children context.

Professional development of care staff

Skills exchange

6.15. In two residential settings the literary tools provided by the writers were effectively merged with the staff's social work tools. This powerful combination was particularly successful in sessions where care staff became actively involved. The level of skills exchange was invaluable for both parties. One senior social worker described how she had been motivated and now had the confidence to use the writer's techniques in her own everyday practice.

Literature development

6.16. At times, the delivery of the programme was hindered by inconsistent levels of involvement from some foster carers and residential care staff. The main issues appeared to be with some of the carers' own lack of knowledge and confidence. Interviews with the carers revealed that this was due to a variety of factors including:

- Inadequate knowledge of literature appropriate to their young people's needs and interests.
- Limited communication and developing literacy skills; many said they did not read with the young people and were unsure of how to share reading, particularly with older children.
- Insecurity over their own reading experience; a few carers were not confident readers themselves and felt vulnerable.

How to ensure that every looked after child has access to appropriate books?

6.17. The pre-intervention research discovered that a high percentage of the young people began this project owning less than 3 books of their own. Although this statistic was greatly improved through the delivery of the Reading Rich programme, the information was of concern as it suggested that many young people were living in non-literary environments. The challenge was not only to increase the level of exposure to books but also to ensure that relevant reading material was available.

6.18. Sourcing relevant books requires specialist knowledge and skill. Firstly, an in-depth knowledge of the looked after child is required, to ascertain social, educational and emotional needs. It is also useful to have a knowledge of the different roles that books can play, i.e. distraction, inspiration, escape, positive association. Most importantly, a good knowledge of children and young people's literature is required. If carers are to take on this role, they would need to be supported in developing their own knowledge and skills in parallel with the young people. There is a range of sources of help available, such as the local children's librarian or the Scottish Book Trust web site.

How to tackle the issues of joined-up service delivery?

6.19. Despite best intentions, the Reading Rich delivery infrastructure did not appear able to support the programme's early ambitions. A contributing factor was that care staff were required to act at the front line of many projects without adequate briefing or support, leaving delivery of parts of the programme uneven. To fully succeed, Reading Rich required direction from the highest level of participating organisations. Additionally, the formation of a partnership to lead and deliver on Reading Rich would also need to include the relevant local authority departments, for example, education. By working together all partners would benefit from Reading Rich's undoubted value and be able to integrate it with their existing services. There is already evidence of the programme's impact on the two lead partners, SBT and NCH Scotland, where new projects have adopted many of the elements of Reading Rich into their approach.

ANNEX 1 PHASE 1 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

To what extent does a Reading Rich environment impact on the LACs’:	Indicators	Evidence	Evaluation outcomes/outputs
Reading level and nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved reading level • Improved attitude to books and reading • Increased knowledge of books and authors • Regularity of reading habit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School attainment records • Pre- and post-intervention interviews • Author recognition test • Reporters’ file 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on perceived barriers to reading • Survey analysis
Wider academic activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in wide range of school activities • Engages with learning out of school • Improved attendance patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre- and post-intervention interview • Interviews with LAC, teachers, OOSHL staff • Attendance records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on relationship between reading level and wider academic activity
Educational attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved writing level • Improved maths level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School attainment records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment analysis
Confidence and self-esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive statement of aspiration (AAR 1D14) • Observed motivation to participate in RR elements • Personal critique of project work • Positive attitude to reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and Action record • Carer and author interviews • LAC interview • Pre- and post-intervention interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample narratives on emotional impact • Survey analysis
Behaviour and activity in other areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in clubs and services • Improved relationship with carer • Improved relationship with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and action records • Interview with carer and LAC • Interview with teacher • Social work interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on relationship between reading activity and behaviour • Sample narratives

ANNEX 2 CARER/STAFF FRAMEWORK

Programme outcome/objectives	Indicators	Evidence
<p>Staff recognise the most effective strategies for influencing positive reading habits in LAC</p>	<p>Staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make time for regular reading sessions - Provide support and motivation - Provide inspiring books and materials - Provide areas for reading - Provide access to computers for story writing - Arrange regular library visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carer planning files - Post-intervention face to face interviews with managers, carers, staff and co-ordinator - Observation from home visits
<p>Staff and carers buy into project and adopt the conditions that create positive reading environments</p>	<p>Staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrate an awareness of the RR context and can describe the educational and emotional benefits of project - Provide LAC background information - Help monitor LACs' progress - Contribute to project planning with Co-ordinator and author - Attend training and information sessions - Develop relationships with library staff - Identify one member of staff to take responsibility for RR for each LAC in residential settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre- and post-intervention interview with managers, staff, carers and co-ordinator - Training evaluation forms - Increased carer knowledge of LAC literature

ANNEX 3 MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

What has been the value of Reading Rich for the young people in your care?
To what extent has the Reading Rich vision been shared within your organisation?
What have been the barriers to Reading Rich within your organisation?
To what extent was communication and co-operation between partners and agencies successful (consider planning, problem solving and sharing achievements)?
Can you suggest how communication may have been improved?
What were the barriers to care staff being able to commit to the project? How might these have been overcome?
What will be the legacy of Reading Rich within your organisation?
Can you suggest how the model might be improved for the future?

ANNEX 4 PROJECTS SURVEY

Project	Description	Key learning points for Reading Rich
<p><i>'NE1 4 Reading'</i>, Lancashire County Council</p>	<p>Social services and the library service formed a partnership to encourage young people in care homes to enjoy reading for fun. 6 homes were given a selection of 80 books with 'teenager appeal'. Training to residential social workers and librarians was also part of the project. Group sessions with a poet encouraged the young people to write creatively. The project was not formally evaluated but early feedback suggests increased reading activity in young people and an increase in staff confidence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people did not respond to authority. Staff recognised the unique value of working with the poet in creating informal settings for creative activity.
<p><i>Reading Connects</i>, The National Literacy Trust, 2005</p>	<p>A survey of 8,000 primary and secondary pupils in England to discover why some people choose to read and others do not. The resultant report <i>Children's and young people's reading habits and preferences: the who, what, why where and when</i> recognises research regarding the benefits of reading for pleasure alongside recent research that young people's reading enjoyment may be declining.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When asked what activities would encourage them to read more, half the sample stated that meeting authors/celebrity readers, designing websites and reading games would motivate them.
<p><i>Inspiring Children: The impact of the Summer Reading Challenge</i> The Reading Maze, 2003 National Participant Survey</p>	<p>Beginning in 1999, the Summer Reading Challenge runs in libraries across the UK encouraging primary school-aged children to visit libraries and read through the summer. Motivational activities include reading and discussing books, drawings, puzzles, receiving stickers and medals for completion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Younger children are more likely to discuss books with adults while older children are more likely to get pleasure from discussing books with a friend

<p><i>Book bars</i> A new initiative funded by the National Lottery's Young People Fund</p>	<p>Book Bars are libraries with a difference and can be based in libraries, community centres or youth cafes. They are run by young people for young people and integrate books with fun and socializing. Young people can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select the book stock • choose what is served in the café • plan writing, art or drama workshops • work as a Book Waiter, serving drinks, recommending new books, CDs, games and websites • get involved in finding sponsors • design and market the Book Bars • get accreditation and skills for CVs • share ideas with young people in other book bars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For this age group (teenagers) reading activities need to be presented in the context of what is seen to be cool. They need to relate directly to the lives and interests of LACs and their peers. • LACs will be more likely to get involved if activities are seen to have a sense of purpose
<p>Raising the educational attainment of looked after children: <i>Storytelling Initiative/DVD</i> South Lanarkshire Council</p>	<p>The storytelling initiative was part of a larger council-wide programme to develop literacy within residential units, which involved intensive multi-agency working, reducing school exclusions and promoting ICT within residential units. A range of strategies aimed to promote literacy including identifying reading co-ordinators in units, building home libraries, creating links between home and school and offering storytelling programmes for LACs, with training for key staff. On completion of the programme the young people were filmed participating in a special storytelling event and each received copies of the resultant DVD.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with psychological services the project also developed a Framework of Assessment and Intervention (FAIR), a practical tool for working with LACs. Reading Rich would benefit from a generic assessment system, which involves all participating agencies in its development.

ANNEX 5 REVISED INDICATORS IN RELATION TO GLOS

Impact	Phase I Indicators/statements	In relation to GLOs
Nature and level of reading and knowledge of books.	Increased regularity of reading habit Improved reading ability Increased knowledge of books and authors Can use library	GLO 1 Increase in knowledge and understanding GLO 2 Increase in skills
Attitude to books and reading	Reads voluntarily Communicates value of books and reading to own life Expresses pleasure at owning books	GLO 3 Change in attitudes and values
Social and emotional behaviour	Willingness to share reading habit Gives positive view of self as reader Expresses pleasure gained from books and reading Participates in full range of RR activities Can identify what motivates him/her to read/learn Can describe future reading-related activity	GLO 4 Evidence of enjoyment, inspiration, creativity GLO 5 Evidence of activity, modified behaviour, progression

ANNEX 6 FINDINGS FROM PHASE 1

The following information was gleaned from the post intervention interviews with 4 young people and, although in many ways unreliable in formal evaluation terms, it gives the reader an indication of the programme's impact on the few who followed it.

Nature of Reading

Table A6-1 How often do you read?

	Daily	1 -2 times week	Hardly ever	Never
Pre-intervention		2		2
Post-intervention	4			

Of those who finished the programme all developed a regular reading habit and started reading daily. 2 young people progressed from reading only once or twice a week and 2 from having never read at home. The main reasons given for the positive outcomes were that the new books were interesting and that they were at the right reading level.

Table A6-2 How long do you read for?

	1 hour +	30m – 1 hour	>30 min	Don't read
Pre-intervention	1	1		2
Post-intervention	2	2		

Three of the 4 young people who completed the programme increased the duration of their regular reading. Two progressed from no reading activity to reading between 30 min to an hour every day and one increased her reading to over an hour daily. As one young person said, "I'll keep reading on and on if the book's right".

Table A6-3 Who do you read or discuss books with?

	Carer	Teacher	Other	No one
Pre-intervention				4
Post-intervention	1			3

Unfortunately, by the end of the intervention, only one young person had developed and sustained a 'book buddy' relationship. The other 3 young people had no obvious person to discuss books with apart from the Programme Co-ordinator on a six-weekly basis. The high level of instability in the young people's lives meant that they rarely developed relationships with a constant adult who could support their reading habit out of school.

Table A6-4 How many books do you own?

	20+	5 - 20	Less than 5	None
Pre-intervention			2	2
Post-intervention	3	1		

Three of the young people who completed the programme owned over 20 books. This compares with a previous ownership of none for two young people and less than 5 for the other 2. The young people were given the option to keep or give back the books depending

on whether they were of interest to them. All stated that it was important for them to own the books. Ownership has also been linked to regular reading. When prompted, the all of the young people were able to give oral descriptions of the storylines in many of the books that they owned, suggesting that they had read them or at least part of them.

Table A6-5 How often have you visited a library in the past year?

	Regularly	Quite often	Not very often	Never
Pre-intervention			1	3
Post-intervention	1	3		

Each of the 4 young people interviewed had visited the library through the programme. They had also had contact with library staff and, where necessary, had membership tickets made or renewed. It is encouraging that 3 of the 4 participants who have completed the programme continue to use the library; 2 unaccompanied and 1 with a carer. None of the young people was aware that the library staff was available to support them and none of the carers had ever made contact with library staff.

Knowledge

Table A6-6 How many authors can you name?

	7 -10	4 - 6	1 - 3	None
Pre-intervention		1	3	
Post-intervention	1	3		

Knowledge of books and authors increased with the number of book drops that the young people received. Research showed that all who completed the programme increased their knowledge of children's authors. One went from knowing between 4-6 authors to being able to name 7-10 and the other 3 went from knowing 1-3 authors to being able to name 4-6.

Attitude

Table A6-7 How much do you enjoy reading?

	A lot	Quite a lot	Not very much	I hate it
Pre-intervention		1	3	
Post-intervention	4			

Each of the four young people said that they 'liked reading a lot'. This compared with their mixed and less positive responses pre-intervention. The pleasure gained from reading appeared to be directly related to the motivational activities that were offered through the programme. In particular, the author's involvement had a noticeable impact on the enjoyment of his books.

Table A6-8 How would you describe yourself as a reader?

	Excellent	Good	Poor	Can't read
Pre-intervention	1	1	2	
Post-intervention	1	3		

Table A6-9 Are you a better reader than you were before you started Reading Rich?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Post-intervention	3	1	

Three young people thought that they were a better reader than before the programme started. Interestingly, the one LAC who thought that her reading had not improved said that she had been an excellent reader at the beginning of the programme. One boy, in particular, was so proud of his perceived new ability that he asked if he could read his latest book aloud during the interview.

Behaviour and Self-esteem

The interviews with carers and young people produced a range of anecdotal evidence to support the view that the programme had notable impacts on individual participants in the areas of self-esteem and behaviour. For example:

At the beginning of the programme A would not read books. She now reads daily and recommends books to staff and other young people in the residential unit where she lives. She became motivated when, through Reading Rich, a carer began reading aloud in the unit. The Co-ordinator arranged for A to become a Barrington Stoke manuscript consultant. She also made a personal connection with the writer, Catherine McPhail and read all of her books. The Co-ordinator carefully expanded her selection to include a range of authors writing on similar themes. She now actively seeks out new books, which reflect her aspirational attitude and she calls the Co-ordinator with new book requests. Carers believe that she has progressed emotionally as a result of beginning to read. She now aspires beyond 'teenage girl with baby' role to using books to interpret the reality of her life situation, for example with 'A boy called it' by David Pelzer. A has said, "I like reading because you can shut out the world and escape in a book."

Information gathered through interviews with a 15-year-old girl and the Co-ordinator

B joined the project with his new carer. To begin with he was unable to sit still in the room and the carer described him as 'uncontrolled, aggressive and untrusting'. He was unable to read and communicated with the Co-ordinator through an art pad in which he would draw beautiful cartoon illustrations. The Co-ordinator provided cartoon and illustrated story books to begin with. Inspired by the programme, B's foster carer began to do bedtime reading. He also requested help in developing B's literacy skills over the holiday period and was given 'Toe by Toe' reading scheme, which was successful in progressing B's skills. B's main motivation came after the summer at an event with author Des Dillon. B's whole class was invited along with his teacher and carer. The event was deemed to be cool and classmates held B in high esteem for getting them invited to the event and introducing them to the cool writer. B's interest and ability in reading continued to improved although, ironically, his carer feels that his behaviour worsens with his increased ability and confidence.

Information gathered through interviews with a 12-year-old boy and the Co-ordinator

C was extremely disaffected. He was reticent to participate in Reading Rich. Motivation came through an introductory activity with a musician, which made links between books and music. This also encouraged C to continue with an earlier interest in music, which was waning at that point. C made a successful music CD using the narrative from a book he had read. He was extremely proud of his achievement. C was able to appreciate the value of well-chosen books in helping him come to terms with his own emotions. He enjoyed reading Robert Swindall's 'Stone Cold' about a homeless boy living in extreme circumstances and was able to identify with the character. He became the centre of class discussions on the book and was able to describe and communicate with authority in his class. He agreed to write reviews for other young people, giving excellent accounts.

Information gathered through interviews with a 15-year-old boy and the Co-ordinator

ANNEX 7 FINDINGS FROM PHASE 2 HILLSIDE

How often do you read?	Daily	1 – 2 times a week	Hardly ever	Never
Pre-intervention	3	5	6	4
Post-intervention	6	5	3	2
How long do you read for?	Over 1 hour	30 min – 1 hour	Less than 30 min	I don't read
Pre-intervention	4	5	5	4
Post-intervention	5	6	1	4
Who do you read or discuss books with?	Carer	Teacher	Other	No one
Pre-intervention	7	3	1	7
Post-intervention	8	1	1	6
How many books do you own?	More than 20	5-20	1-5	None
Pre-intervention	2	3	3	10
Post-intervention	1	7	6	2
How many authors can you name?	More than 7	4-6	1-3	None
Pre-intervention	1	4	8	5
Post-intervention	2	7	6	1
How often do you visit a library?	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Pre-intervention	6	3	2	7
Post-intervention	6	4	1	5
How much do you enjoy reading?	A lot	Quite a lot	Not very much	I hate it
Pre-intervention	2	7	5	4
Post-intervention	5	6	3	2
How would you describe yourself as a reader?	Excellent	Good	Poor	I can't read
Pre-intervention	3	8	7	0
Post-intervention	3	7	6	0
Would you like to become a better reader?	Yes	No	I don't know	
Pre-intervention	3	10	5	
Post-intervention	4	8	4	

Pre-intervention (n) = 18

Post-intervention (n) = 16

ANNEX 8 FINDINGS FROM PHASE 2 SYCAMORE

Nature and level of reading habit - Sycamore

How often do you read?	Daily	1 – 2 times a week	Hardly ever	Never
Pre-intervention	6	1	3	2
Post-intervention	6	1	1	0
How long do you read for?	Over 1 hour	30 min – 1 hour	Less than 30 min	I don't read
Pre-intervention	1	1	8	2
Post-intervention	0	3	5	0
Who do you read or discuss books with?	Carer	Teacher	Other	No one
Pre-intervention	4	1	0	7
Post-intervention	5	1	1	1
How many books do you own?	More than 20	5-20	1-5	None
Pre-intervention	7	4	0	1
Post-intervention	5	3	0	0
How many authors can you name?	More than 7	4-6	1-3	None
Pre-intervention	0	1	5	6
Post-intervention	1	5	1	1
How often do you visit a library?	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Pre-intervention	1	2	6	3
Post-intervention	0	1	4	3
How much do you enjoy reading?	A lot	Quite a lot	Not very much	I hate it
Pre-intervention	3	5	4	0
Post-intervention	4	3	1	0
How would you describe yourself as a reader?	Excellent	Good	Poor	I can't read
Pre-intervention	2	4	6	0
Post-intervention	3	3	2	0
Would you like to become a better reader?	Yes	No	I don't know	
Pre-intervention	5	5	2	
Post-intervention	5	3	2	

Pre-intervention (n) = 12

Post-intervention (n) = 8

ANNEX 9 PRE-INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRES - ISSC

Nature and level of reading habit - ISSC

How often do you read?	Daily	1 – 2 times a week	Hardly ever	Never
	1	5	3	3
How long do you read for?	Over 1 hour	30 min – 1 hour	Less than 30 min	I don't read
	2	3	4	3
Who do you read or discuss books with?	Carer	Teacher	Other	No one
	1	0	3	8
How many books do you own?	More than 20	5-20	1-5	None
	0	1	0	11
How many authors can you name?	More than 7	4-6	1-3	None
		1	10	1
How often do you visit a library?	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
		6	3	3
How much do you enjoy reading?	A lot	Quite a lot	Not very much	I hate it
	2	6	1	3
How would you describe yourself as a reader?	Excellent	Good	Poor	I can't read
	5	2	5	
Would you like to become a better reader?	Yes	No	I don't know	
	6	6		

N=12

ANNEX 10 LAC INVOLVEMENT AT PHASES 1 AND 2

Table A10-1 – LAC involvement at Phase I

LAC/ gender	Age	Date of visit 1	Duration	Area	Care type	Pre	Pst	No. book drops	Author Interve- -ntion	Identified book buddy
A/M	13	1/05	4m	M	R	X		3	X	Carer
B/M	10	2/05	11m	M	R	X		5	X	Key worker
C/F	15	5/05	6m	M	R	X		3	X	Librarian
D/M	12	2/05	12m	M	R	X	X	6	X	Librarian
E/M	15	2/05	9m	M	F	X	X	4		Carer
F/M	12	1/05	12m	M	F	X	X	6	X	Carer
G/F	13	2/05	12m	M	R	X	X	6	X	Librarian
H/M	15	9/05	2m	M	R	X		1		
I/F	14	9/05	2m	M	R	X		1		
J/M	12	1/05	2m	M	F	X		1		
K/M	13	12/05	n/a	C	F	X		2		
L/M	15	10/05	n/a	C	F			1		Carer
M/M	12	10/05	n/a	C	F			1		Carer
N/M	14	11/05	n/a	C	F			1		Carer
O/M	14	10/05	n/a	C	F			1		Carer
P/M	12	12/05	n/a	C	F			1		
Q/M	8	10/05	n/a	C	F	X		1		
R/M	9	10/05	n/a	C	F	X		2		
S/M	10	10/05	n/a	C	F			2		School
T/M	10	12/05	n/a	C	F			1		
U/M	13	2/05	10m	WI	R	X		6		Carer
V/F	14	10/05	4m	WI	R	X		2		
W/F	15	2/05	10m	WI	R	X		6		

‘Pre’ stands for pre-intervention interviews; ‘Pst’ stands for post-intervention interviews

Table A10-2 Involvement at Phase 2 – Hillside

Young person	Age	Reading age	Duration	Area/Care type	Pre	Pst	Author intervention
A	11	11+	12m	R	x	x	x
B	15	14	6m	R	x	x	x
C	13	10+	12m	R	x	x	x
D	15	14	12m	R	x	x	x
E	15	14+	12m	R	x		x
F	15	15	9m	R	x	x	x
G	14	13+	12m	R	x	x	x
H	12	11+	12m	R	x	x	x
I	15	11+	9m	R	x	x	x
J	14	9/10+	9m	R	x	x	x
K	12	Not assessed	6m	R	x	x	x
L	13	poor	12m	R	x	x	x
M	15	good	9m	R	x	x	x
N	13	good	9m	R	x	x	x
O	14	good	9m	R	x	x	x
P	14	good	9m	R	x		x
Q	12	poor	12m	R	x	x	x
R	14	very poor	12m	R	x	x	x

‘Pre’ stands for pre-intervention interviews; ‘Pst’ stands for post-intervention interviews

Table A10-3 Involvement at Phase 2 - Sycamore

Young person	Age	Duration	Area/Care type	Pre	Pst	Author intervention
A	7	12m	R	x	x	1 session
B	8	12m	R	x	x	3 sessions
C	8	12m	R	x	x	3 sessions
D	7	12m	R	x		2 sessions
E	6	12m	R			4 sessions
F	12	9m	R	x		3 sessions
G	12	10m	R	x		
H	10	12m	R	x	x	5 sessions
I	12	12m	R	x	x	3 sessions
J	11	10m	R	x		
K	9	12m	R	x	x	2 sessions
L	13	12m	R	x	x	3 sessions
M	13	12m	R	x	x	3 sessions

‘Pre’ stands for pre-intervention interviews; ‘Pst’ stands for post-intervention interviews

Table A10-4 Involvement at Phase 2 - CAPS

Young person	Age	Duration	Area /Care type	Pre	Pst	Author	Carer training
A	14		F		X	X	X
B	16		F		X	X	X
C	15		F		X	X	X
D	15		F		X	X	X
E	11		F		X	x	
F	16		F			x	
G	16		F		X	x	
H	16		F		X	x	

‘Pre’ stands for pre-intervention interviews; ‘Pst’ stands for post-intervention interviews

Table A10-5 Involvement at Phase 2 – ISSC

Young person	Age	Duration	Area/C are type	Pre	Pst	Author
A	14	6m	R	x		X
B	16	6m/i	R	x		X
C	15	6m	R	x		X
D	15	6m/i	R	x		X
E	11	2m/i	F	x		x
F	16	4m/i	R	x		x
G	16	6m/i	R	x		x
H	16	6m/i	R	x		x
I	16	9m	R	x		x
J	16	6m	R	x		x
K	17	4m/i	R	x		x
L	14	4m/i	R	x		x
M	17	6m	R	x		x

‘Pre’ stands for pre-intervention interviews; ‘Pst’ stands for post-intervention interviews

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