

## An evaluation of the social value of the Get into Reading initiative in Wirral, Merseyside

Final report, May 2013

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### Applied Health and Wellbeing Partnership

*The Applied Health and Wellbeing Partnership supports the development, delivery and evaluation of the Wirral Health and Wellbeing Strategy, through the innovative generation and application of evidence for effective and sustainable health and wellbeing commissioning.*

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## Executive summary

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Reading, whether aloud or on your own, has many benefits, ranging from improved literacy skills, greater imagination, fulfilment and enjoyment. Research has begun to highlight the impact reading can have on an individual, yet little has looked at the greater benefit that reading, and specifically shared reading collectively in a group and aloud, has on improving health and wellbeing. Reading groups are an ideal way for many to discover literature, providing an excellent place to meet new people, make friends, and to become more socially included in a community.

Get into Reading is a social inclusion shared reading project, based on a collective reading model in group settings which was developed by The Reader Organisation (TRO). The initiative aims to improve mental wellbeing, extend reading pleasure and build community cohesion through shared reading. In weekly groups, short stories, novels and poems are read aloud, with pauses for group discussion and shared personal responses. The project has been running since 2002, and now has 362 groups across the country, including more than 100 on the Wirral.

This evaluation aimed to explore the impact and social value of Get into Reading on its stakeholders, specifically focusing on the health and wellbeing changes brought about as a direct result of engagement in the project. A social return on investment (SROI) analysis was used to determine the impact and social value of the initiative and the health and wellbeing implications for all service users and providers, including volunteers, facilitators and partner organisations.

The research specifically focused on three groups: an open group; sessions among looked-after children; and sessions among those in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction.

The SROI involved: a scoping exercise to identify key stakeholders (service users and providers); desktop-based logic modelling to identify the inputs (activities), outputs (results) and outcomes (impacts) associated with the initiative; and engagement activities to identify the wider impact of the project on stakeholders. Engagement involved a series of interviews and focus groups with a follow-up questionnaire among group attendees to determine the financial value of changes in stakeholders' quality of life. Secondary analysis of monitoring data was also carried out.

The SROI evaluation found that Get into Reading created reading communities, where weekly get-togethers had resulted in new friendships, a newfound love of literature and acceptance of others.. For most stakeholders, the positive changes experienced as a direct result of Get into Reading were related to: social factors, mental health, health and wellbeing, confidence and new skills. There were many outcomes associated with these changes that were often interlinked. These included socialising more often, which for some led to learning or gaining new skills. Confidence and empathy was reported as occurring as a result of the sessions which led to better understanding and acceptance of others and consideration of their views. Many reported that the groups were akin to a support group, where stakeholders could easily and comfortably discuss their thoughts with others. Often group attendees felt relaxed and stress-free after sessions, and actively looked forward to weekly sessions.

As a result of the confidence gained from their Get into Reading sessions, many group attendees felt empowered by their own achievements and had become involved in volunteering within their own communities. Many donated both time and effort to their reading groups, or to other, usually third sector, organisations. Some stakeholders had progressed to find paid employment as a result of the new skills and confidence and because of the experience they had gained through Get into Reading. Moreover, many of the benefits were experienced by all group members, irrespective of their individual needs or personal circumstances.

The evaluation shows that for every pound input into Get into Reading, a social return average of **£6.47** was generated. This incorporates: looked-after children with a SROI of £7.00; open group with a value of £6.38; and recovering addicts' group return of £6.04. A separate SROI calculation also found that one paid facilitator delivering nine sessions a week to approximately 108 adults could deliver a minimum return on investment of **£3.20**.

This evaluation highlights that Get into Reading is a great asset to the Wirral community, providing a good social return on investment, irrespective of the group involved. With many positive health and wellbeing benefits experienced by all group attendees, the continuing knock-on effects for their families and the wider community are potentially very large. Get into Reading not only provided many with a much-needed and vital social network, it also provided stakeholders with experience, knowledge and confidence that had very positive impacts on their lives, as well as their future prospects. Potentially, looked-after children have the most to gain from engagement with Get into Reading. The project worker becomes a trusted part of the child's life and as such is key to supporting them through their formative school years. The social value created by this group was largest of the three studied groups and the impact of engagement with Get into Reading is something that has the potential to change the quality of life for vulnerable children for the longer term.

### **What does this SROI value mean?**

In return for an average investment of **£4,014.76** per group during the twelve-month study period, a total of **£26,129.25** of social value was created by engagement with Get into Reading. This generated an SROI return of **£6.47** when discounting for other attributable factors and the chances that changes would have occurred anyway. This figure is in no way comparable to other evaluations where SROI calculations have been used. This amount must be considered in conjunction with the accompanying report, and with consideration of the five themes of positive changes identified in the research as having occurred as a result of engagement with Get into Reading: social factors, mental health, health and wellbeing, confidence and new skills. This value can be used to consider what is working well within the organisation, while identifying any areas for future development in order to meet the aims and objectives of Get into Reading groups. The financial proxies arrived at have been agreed and developed with stakeholders who have been involved in the research. To this extent, the SROI ratios presented in this report are subjective and relevant to the individuals on the day that the research was conducted. The ratio presented offers an insight into the holistic health and wellbeing benefits that are gained, and not an actual financial representation of what has actually been spent by stakeholders. The SROI figure is important in understanding that Get into Reading generates a good return on investment: that the benefits experienced have a much wider impact that resonates outside of the reading group and into the wider community.

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May 2013



**Picture 1: Reading group members in a library setting**

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## 1. Introduction

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This report has been prepared by the Applied Health and Wellbeing Partnership, (AHWP) at the Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University in conjunction with The Reader Organisation (TRO). The AHWP supports the development and delivery of the Wirral Health and Wellbeing Strategy, by generating and applying evidence to ensure effective commissioning, while identifying innovative approaches to sustainable health and wellbeing. This report presents a social return on investment (SROI) on the Get into Reading project delivered by TRO, a charitable social enterprise which brings people together through shared reading.

This research project is one of a series of evaluations conducted by the AHWP as part of a wider project to map community assets in Wirral, highlighting examples of individual or group initiatives that improve and enhance health and wellbeing. This evidence will be used to inform the development and delivery of health and wellbeing activities in Wirral.

### 1.1 Get into Reading

*“Books are a holding ground in which to do our life thinking both separately and together. One significant effect is that books are profoundly normalising; they are able to show that what the individual might have felt to be isolating and un-shareable has been felt and is felt by others too. And not only this, it is a big enough subject for literature” The Reader Organisation, 2011.*

Get into Reading is a social inclusion shared reading project, based on a collective reading model in group settings which was developed by The Reader Organisation (TRO). The initiative aims to improve mental health and wellbeing, extend reading pleasure, and build community cohesion through shared reading. In weekly groups, short stories, novels and poems are read aloud, with pauses for group discussion and shared personal response. The project has been running since 2002, and now has 362 groups across the country, including more than 100 on the Wirral alone. Get into Reading groups have also been set up as far as Denmark and Australia. There are usually between four and 12 members in each group which meet on a weekly basis for one to two hours. Each group facilitator is specifically trained by TRO. A Reader in Residence initiative also runs where staff are trained to facilitate reading groups in their own workplace (such as a library or care home). This allows groups to be self-sustained, and delivered at the convenience of the host organisation. TRO also runs Read to Lead training for volunteers, which equips volunteers with the knowledge, confidence and ability to deliver their own Get into Reading groups.

In Wirral, Get into Reading is delivered to a range of individuals, with sessions run in a variety of settings, including care and residential homes, hospitals, schools, libraries and community centres (examples of these settings can be found in pictures 2 and 6). TRO deliver many of these sessions as a result of its partnerships with a range of organisations and agencies, which include Wirral Libraries, Wirral NHS, and Mersey Care Mental Health Trust, amongst many others. Whilst open groups are for anyone to attend, the project aims to improve the lives and experiences of certain population groups, including individuals experiencing mental ill-health, the elderly and those with dementia, individuals involved with the criminal justice system, and young people. Sessions are led by a facilitator who begins the reading aloud, skilfully brings the group together, and prompts conversation without pressure. Once a book, short story or poem has been chosen, the group spends each session reading from beginning to end until completed. The chapters are only read during the sessions, so there is no additional ‘homework’, and attendees take it in turns to read aloud to the rest of the group, if they feel confident enough to do so. At key points, the facilitator asks members about what they have read, how they feel about the book and its themes and how the literature affects them. Discussions are free-flowing and most sessions have a refreshment break with tea and coffee supplied so the group have opportunity to chat among themselves and most often, catch up on each others’ news. This social aspect of the group allows group members to learn more about each other and often facilitates a friendly and warm atmosphere.

## 1.2 Reading aloud

Evidence shows that reading, specifically aloud, has many benefits, ranging from improved literacy skills, greater imagination, fulfilment and enjoyment to more specific benefits such as improved memory and concentration (Robinson, 2008a; CRILS, 2012). Reading can have a profound impact on individuals, for example, through personal development and social integration and through improvements in mental health (Robinson 2008a,b), including a reduction in depressive episodes (Dowrick et al, 2012). However, little research has looked at the greater benefit that reading has on individuals' overall health and wellbeing and the specific gains of reading collectively (Billington et al., 2010; Hodge et al., 2007). For example, reading groups are an ideal way for many to discover literature; but the group setting also provides an excellent place to meet new people, make friends, and to become more socially included in a community. Prior research into the benefits of a reading group organised as part of the Get into Reading initiative, explored reading in dementia patients and those on a neuro-rehabilitation ward, and found that the groups elicited and evoked memory and reflection and were an important factor in maintaining social contact (Robinson 2008a). Specifically, reading poetry was good for concentration and maintaining attention. However, whilst this research looked at benefits specific to these patients, it is not fully understood what the exact health and wellbeing benefits are for all group attendees, relating to social, mental and emotional and psychological wellbeing and the value this can have for society and local communities.



Picture 2: Get into Reading project worker leading a Get into Reading session

## 1.3 Aims and objectives of Get into Reading

Through TRO, the Get into Reading project aims to build a 'reading revolution' in which everyone has access to literature, and where personal responses to books are freely shared. It is hoped that the groups create 'reading communities' in every area of life in which understanding and acceptance is reached across social and cultural boundaries. The groups aim to improve social and personal wellbeing while promoting the reading of literature as a vital life skill. As a result of engagement with Get into Reading, group attendees gain many personal skills whilst finding pleasure in reading.

Get into Reading reaches approximately 600 people each week on the Wirral. The reading groups aim to improve individuals' mental, physical and emotional health and wellbeing through shared reading experiences and open discussion. The groups help to: improve personal wellbeing through interaction, self-reflection and encouragement of expression in talking about the text while providing valuable structure and a meaningful activity. The sessions encourage people to read aloud, thereby increasing self-confidence by: focusing on the positive within each individual; providing a safe, comfortable environment; increase empathy and insight; and helping people to connect with, and understand, a rich variety of reading material.

TRO anticipates that the Get into Reading groups will become established as a deeply integrated community enterprise; and that with this will come the development of a culture of shared reading. TRO aims to continue to find ways of bringing individuals from all walks of life together in mutually supportive relationships, whether as individuals, groups, volunteers or facilitators.

#### **1.4 Social return on investment**

The aim of this evaluation is to evidence the benefits of shared reading in relation to health and wellbeing, and the social value that is gained by engagement with the project. With the Public Value (Social Value) Act 2012 requiring public authorities to consider how services they procure might improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of communities, it is also timely to consider the wider impacts of community projects on the areas they thrive in.

A social return on investment (SROI) has been chosen as the most appropriate method of analysis for this evaluation as it involves assessing the social, economic and environmental impact of Get into Reading through direct involvement with key stakeholders – service users (service users) and service providers (session facilitators, partner organisations and volunteers). The SROI process involves identifying changes as a direct result of an individual's engagement with a project. The analysis uses a combination of qualitative, quantitative and financial information to estimate the amount of 'value' created or destroyed by the project, which is typically expressed as: *'for every £1 invested in the project, £x of social value is created'* (Nicholls et al., 2012).



## 2. Methodology

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An SROI valuation has been chosen as the most appropriate method for evaluating the Get into Reading initiative, as this is an effective and meaningful way to evaluate a project by outlining its worth and benefits. SROI methods actively involve key stakeholders (service users and providers), which enables a true understanding of the value of change resulting from involvement in the project to emerge. Stakeholders' direct involvement in the SROI processes ensures that these changes are openly measured, and its value accurately calculated. SROI analysis requires a mixed-methods approach, adopting both quantitative and qualitative tools to assess the wider impact of the project on individuals' health and mental wellbeing, and accounting for the value of any change.

The project methods were developed in collaboration with key TRO staff members: including business and project managers. The evaluation approach, feasibility and appropriateness of the selected methods were discussed and agreed upon during the initial phase of the evaluation. This evaluation SROI has looked specifically at the past twelve months and has considered outcomes for just one year.

### 2.1 SROI Analysis

SROI analysis involves three distinct stages: scoping; logic model; and engagement activities.

#### 2.1.1 Scoping exercise

A scoping exercise was undertaken to identify and clarify what the SROI analysis would measure and how. This scoping exercise, facilitated by the principal researcher, took the form of a meeting held with Get into Reading project staff, including TRO business managers and director and the Get into Reading Wirral project leader. This stage of the research also identified key stakeholders to include in the research, and considered the best approaches to engage with them during the next phase of the SROI. During this scoping stage, the purpose, audience, background, resources, activities, population groups, and the timescale to be considered for the evaluation period was agreed upon. Following on from this, project management staff identified a number of service providers who were actively involved with the day-to-day running of Get into Reading, and who would be approached to be involved in the research.

During this scoping exercise, it was established that the evaluation would focus specifically on three Get into Reading sessions: Wallasey Library (open group); Arch Initiatives (recovering addicts) and one-to-one sessions with looked-after children. These groups were chosen for the diversity of the people attending.

*Wallasey open group:* At the time of evaluation, sessions were delivered every Tuesday afternoon between 1pm and 3pm at Wallasey library. There were around 12 regular members who attended weekly from Wallasey and the surrounding area. The group has been running for more than seven years. It is open to anyone, but there was a waiting list at the time of the evaluation.

*Arch Initiatives recovering addicts:* The reading group was set up two years ago. At the time of evaluation, the group met once a week at The Archway Centre, Birkenhead, with upwards of ten people at each session, who may have been residents, or visitors to the hostel. Because of this, numbers vary each week, and there tends to be a high turnover of attendees.

*Looked-after children:* Sessions with looked-after children (those vulnerable or in a care setting) have been running for five years. At the time of evaluation, the sessions were one-to-one between the Get into Reading facilitator and the young person, and usually took place in the child's home. The two-hour long weekly reading sessions run for as long as the child is happy to participate, usually for between two and five years. Around ten children have experienced regular one-to-one sessions as part of this initiative, and a number of these have subsequently formed the weekly Reading Stars group, aimed specifically at former looked-after children who want to continue reading aloud with Get into Reading.

Initially, it was anticipated that the research would involve two focus groups for each of the adult reading groups (Wallasey Library and Arch Initiatives), with a further ten interviews with a selection of group members from all three groups. A further ten interviews were planned with service providers involved in project management of Get into Reading, or in delivering any of the three chosen reading groups. This number of interviews and focus groups was chosen as it was felt this would be a representative sample of the Get into Reading attendees and those delivering its services.

### 2.1.2 Ethical approval

Ethical approval for the research was sought by Liverpool John Moores University's Research Committee prior to starting the evaluation to review the ethical implications of the evaluation. In June 2012, the evaluation design and methods were approved as being ethically sound (ethical approval reference 12/hea/037).

### 2.1.3 Logic model

As a result of meetings with key stakeholders, a desktop-based logic model was created based on findings from the scoping exercise (Appendix 1). This outlined the inputs, outputs and outcomes of the project and was used to inform the changes that occurred as a result of being involved in the Get into Reading project. The logic model helped to identify the benefits gained from engagement in the project and helped to steer questions for the focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

### 2.1.4 Engagement activities

A number of engagement activities were organised according to the specific needs of the groups being studied (Table 1). Although the scoping stages had identified that at least two focus groups would take place for each the Wallasey group and Arch Initiatives groups, only three were necessary (two with Wallasey open group and one with Arch Initiatives). Fewer interviews were also conducted than originally planned, based on the number of participants willing to engage with the research, however interview content had reached saturation and no further interviewees needed to be recruited.

	<b>Research participants and engagement activity</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Focus groups</b>	Wallasey open group	2 (6 and 7 persons in each)
	Arch Initiatives	1 (4 persons)
<b>Interviews</b>	Service providers (covering all three groups <sup>1</sup> )	8
	Wallasey open group	6
	Looked-after children	3
<b>Completed questionnaires</b>	Arch Initiatives	1
	Wallasey open group	7

### *Focus groups*

A total of three focus groups were conducted: two with Wallasey open group and held a month apart, involving six people in the first and seven in the second. Another focus group was held with Arch Initiatives' reading group members and facilitators (n=4). The focus groups worked on validating and identifying key themes gained from the interviews and logic model. A number of financial values were agreed at the focus groups, which were then expanded upon with questionnaires. Although planned as part of the scoping exercise, a focus group was not conducted among looked-after children due to smaller numbers of children involved in reading sessions, and was also limited by those willing to engage in the research.

<sup>1</sup> Some service providers were involved in delivering all three reading groups, and therefore have not been counted separately.

### ***Semi-structured interviews with service users:***

To further support the findings of the focus group and to provide additional evidence to inform the SROI, one-to-one service user interviews were conducted with reading group members took place across the Wirral to gain in-depth views on Get into Reading and how being involved with the project had affected their quality of life, health and wellbeing, and relationships (with friends and family, the volunteers and their community). A further three interviews were conducted among looked-after children, who completed a draw and write activity to help engage them in the research (Appendix 2). The reading group facilitator asked the children to complete a workbook activity which allowed them to draw, and/or write how attending Get into Reading made them feel. This was used as a discussion point for the interviews and helped identify key changes as part of the SROI.

### ***Semi-structured interviews with service providers:***

To further inform the SROI, one-to-one interviews were also conducted with eight service providers who were involved in management of Get into Reading, or in delivering or commissioning the three chosen Get into Reading groups. These interviews gained in-depth views on the project itself, its management and the perceived benefits on service users and providers, and their personal experiences.

### ***SROI Questionnaires***

A questionnaire was designed to gain further understanding of the value of the changes identified during the focus groups and interviews. Questionnaires were distributed amongst users of the Wallasey and Arch Initiatives reading groups. This information was collected to gather more detail on the value of the service impact, asking specifically for more details about the changes experienced as a result of Get into Reading and the potential involvement of other organisations in these changes, such as other groups they may attend elsewhere. The questionnaire aimed to gain financial values from the four key changes identified from interviews and focus groups: I have gained new skills; I have a better social life now; my physical health has improved; and my mental health has improved.

A total of six questionnaires were fully completed by research participants involved in the Wallasey and Arch Initiatives reading groups. One was only partially completed and excluded from analysis.

#### **2.1.5 Secondary data**

To further supplement findings from the primary data, a range of monitoring data, collected routinely by TRO, was included in the SROI analysis. These data included information regarding age, sex, employment and disability.

#### **2.2 SROI calculations**

A range of financial information was sent by TRO to the principal researcher, costing each of three study groups. This included cost of salaries, travel and expenses, equipment and project management fees. These inputs were balanced with social value calculations, based on qualitative data collected in interviews, focus groups and from the questionnaires. These financial proxies were sourced either directly from the service users themselves, or from other sources, including a database of financial proxies ([www.wikivois.org](http://www.wikivois.org)) or directly from the Internet. These calculations were input onto the impact map and a pre-set formula determined the social return on investment.

##### **2.2.1 Sensitivity testing**

Further verification of the SROI process and financial amounts was also conducted among focus group attendees. Furthermore, a sensitivity analysis was conducted which tested any assumptions made as part of the financial calculations process. This helped to identify which assumptions had the greatest impact on the final calculation, and how this changed the final SROI total. This analysis tested changes to estimates of deadweight, attribution and drop-off (aspects which assess whether the change would have happened anyway and whether other organisations contributed to the change financial proxies, such as cost of courses); the quantity of outcomes; and, the value of non-financial inputs. This final process ensured transparency in analysis results.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 The Reader Organisation monitoring data

TRO maintains a monitoring system in order to capture key demographic information on those attending its groups (for example, ethnicity, gender and age). This information was completed by a selection of group attendees during 2012. This data has been shared by TRO and analysed as part of this evaluation to inform the context of the SROI. Data from the England and Wirral sample were collected and analysed.

##### *Wirral sample:*

A total of 282 forms were completed by individuals living in Wirral and attending Get into Reading groups (this represents just less than half of the 600 or more regular group attendees each year on the Wirral). More women than men attended these sessions (57%, 160/282). In this sample, the most common age group attending the Wirral sessions were under 18s, (61%, 173/282) where sessions were delivered through reading groups in schools. A fifth (22%, 61/280<sup>2</sup>) were aged over 55. The majority of attendees classed themselves as British and Irish (97%, 270/279). As a large section of the sample were under 18, this was represented by the number stating they were in full-time education (60%, 167/278). Just 5% (13/278) of attendees were in full or part time work, 5% (14/278) looking after the home, 18% (49/278) retired, and 16% (45/278) unemployed. Over a fifth of attendees (22%, n=62) stated they had a disability (Table 2).

##### *England sample:*

A total of 844 forms were completed. More than half (56%, 471/844) of service users were female and the majority (94%, 783/836) were English. Ethnic minorities accounted for just 6% (53/836) of the sample. The most common age group attending the sessions was 18-year-olds and under (37%, 310/830), and just under a third (30%, 245/830) were aged 55 and over. The high number of under 18s is reflected in the fact that 31% (255/827) of the sample selected that they were in full-time education. Just 5% (41/827) were in part or full-time work, or self-employed. Almost a fifth (19% (154/827) were retired and 16% (124/827) were unemployed, the majority of whom (79%, 95/124) of which stated it was due to ill health or disability. Almost a third (32%, 259/789) classed themselves as disabled (Table 2).

*Table 1: Types of disability among sample*

Type of Disability	Wirral sample		England sample	
	No.	%	No.	%
Physical impairment	18	6	67	8
Visual impairment	8	3	19	2
Learning disability	16	6	36	4
Hearing impairment/deaf	8	3	19	2
Mental health/mental illness	9	3	59	7
Long-term limiting illness	10	4	31	4
Other	10	4	19	2
No response	1	0	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>		<b>254</b>	

#### 3.2 Interview and focus group analyses

Thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected from the interviews and focus groups revealed four key themes: social, confidence, mental health and wellbeing, and skills. Many of these were interrelated, for example, an improvement in confidence often led to socialising more, and greater

<sup>2</sup> Not all respondents completed all sections

confidence in themselves led to greater feelings of wellbeing. The following section is divided into analyses of service users and service providers separately. Although the same themes emerged in both stakeholders, the discussions and experiences were different, and responses from each bear different findings for the financial calculations in the next chapter. A number of quotes have been included for each stakeholder to illustrate the key themes. For the purposes of this report, interview and focus group participants have been anonymised, and their comments identified by interviewee number. Focus group attendees are also identified by number and which focus group they attended.

### 3.2.1 Group members

#### *Social:*

For all participants, the most important part of the Get into Reading groups and their structure was the social aspect. As all reading sessions are run on a weekly basis in public spaces such as libraries and community centres, this meant that the sessions were easily accessible. As there were several venues with waiting lists for their groups, some participants were willing to travel further afield, using mainly public transport, so they could attend a session elsewhere. One elderly lady booked taxis to ensure she could get to her reading sessions and two teenage girls travel from their separate schools to attend after-school reading sessions together.

The Get into Reading sessions brought routine to attendees' life, and there was a sense that the weekly meetings brought purpose to the attendees' days, which may otherwise be mundane and sedentary. Many reported that without the reading group, they would be "doing nothing", watching TV, doing housework or gardening. For some, it was the regular weekly sessions which brought structure and meaning to the day and week and was something they looked forward to.

*"It gave me a reason to come out of the house"* (Interviewee 2)

*"I love it, it's great. It's been my lifeline, I've taken baby steps but it has been exciting"* (Interviewee 1)

The reading sessions are set up so that they are informal and intimate, with usually no more than 12 people per session. Most attend regularly, and in instances where sessions were postponed, members have been so keen to continue, that groups have been held in attendees' homes so that the group still has its weekly get-together. The continuity of attendance means that there quickly becomes a bond between members. All research participants reported making new friends at the reading groups and stated that these friendships had grown to become very worthwhile and an important aspect of them being 'social' and being part of a community. Attending the sessions also helped combat loneliness and isolation. Following hospitalisation after a knee operation, group members came to visit one attendee and helped out at home.

*"That made a tremendous difference to my recovery. I haven't felt lonely"*  
(Focus group 1:3)

*"It makes me feel part of a community again. You belong somewhere, you know people, make friends"* (Interviewee 4)

*"I feel I belong, I feel a million dollars because I belong"* (Interviewee 3)

The fact that the sessions have broad appeal, meant that there was a good mix of personalities and ages, and along with rich personal experiences, this facilitated a "reading support group". It gave attendees the chance to feel part of a group and to feel valued, and to be able to freely give their opinion. There was a sense of acceptance also that attendees are not judged and that their own personal experience and opinions count and are also valued.

*"You are learning about yourself, getting in touch with your emotions. It's like therapy. A nice way of doing it in a library surrounded by nice people"*  
(Interviewee 7)



*“You don't have to be good at anything – you don't have to prove yourself. You can just sit there quietly if you want to” (Focus group 1:2)*

*“I'm gregarious now, I want to mix. My life has changed completely since joining Get into Reading. (Interviewee 3)*

*“It's been nice meeting people and I share some interests with other members of the group” (Interviewee 1)*

*“The sessions make me feel very welcome. I normally feel intimidated in groups, feel a bit awkward. But I don't feel awkward at all in this group. I've been made to feel really important” (Interviewee 7)*

*“Through attending this reading group, I have begun trusting people again after having my confidence knocked by insensitive comments. [Since Get into Reading], my social skills have improved. I no longer feel isolated from the world” (Interviewee 8)*

The friendships, relationships and routine borne out of regular attendance at the reading sessions meant that attendees' confidence levels had increased, which had enabled them to want to try new things. As a direct result of the friends they made in the reading sessions, many maintained these friendships outside of the groups, organising and participating in many social events, some organised by The Reader Organisation such as 'Penny Readings' and trips to watch Shakespearean plays, while others took up line dancing and visits to the cinema.



**Picture 3: The Liverpool Harmony choir at one of The Reader Organisation's Penny Reading events**

For many, attending Get into Reading sessions had led to a number of further opportunities, including volunteering. For some, it was due to the increased confidence and self-esteem that meant they were able to build on existing relationships (often with other Get into Reading members) by socialising more. Attendees were also more willing to try new things, such as creative arts courses and line dancing. Spurred on by life-changing experiences and their own feelings of confidence and self-esteem, many Get into Reading attendees said that they now had a desire to help others and to do something meaningful with their free time outside of their usual reading sessions. Some interviewees had become volunteers for TRO and were offering support during other Get into Reading sessions, including organising literature for the groups, refreshments and

administrative work. Others also volunteered with third sector charities and organisations. A number of reading group attendees had also received Read to Lead training by TRO, which equips them with the skills and knowledge to facilitate their own Get into Reading sessions. A number of those trained have subsequently set up and now run their own Get into Reading groups across the Wirral.

Children were also given the opportunity to meet new people and to participate in a number of Get into Reading social events. For example, a number of children travelled to London with TRO patron, author Frank Cottrell Boyce, to promote his book, *The Unforgotten Coat* and to launch Our Read 2011, an initiative to give away 50,000 books to children (picture 4). Written especially for TRO, the book was launched during a 'chain' reading session on a train with the author, and was something that all child interviewees had been involved in. They reported feeling especially proud at having met an award-winning author and at being given the opportunity to be involved in the initiative.



Picture 4: Author Cottrell Boyce with a young reader at the launch of Read 2011

### **Confidence:**

Confidence was for many, one of the greatest things gained from attending sessions. Confidence and the social aspect of Get into Reading occurred concurrently, and often as a consequence of the other. Initially, confidence came from feelings of self-worth; attendees felt they were accepted as part of the reading group and that even from the beginning, they were part of a team, and believed that their opinions counted. Many stated that they felt normal and were accepted, and that this had contributed to feelings of being part of a community. Attendees felt proud that they were personally able to contribute to the sessions – whether it was the opportunity to read aloud to other group members or to engage in discussion about a book they were reading.

*“I felt proud when I read – it was a big step” (Interviewee 1)*

*“I feel I am more interesting and I have something to offer. I feel as important as everyone else” (Interviewer 1)*

For some, their new-found confidence had led them to being able to speak to an audience. Many had struggled initially with reading aloud, and were shy and embarrassed. However, over a series of weeks, they gained confidence to be able to read literature in turn with other attendees. This had led to one attendee taking a public speaking course as she had enjoyed the experience and wanted to be able to speak publicly in other circumstances.

The confidence gained from attending Get into Reading sessions had been a catalyst for many new experiences. For some, it had been to change their lives by giving a purpose and a new perspective to life, and to try new things, such as volunteering and reading for pleasure.

*“Eventually gave me the confidence to go on and do other things”*  
(Interviewee 2)

*“The reading group has motivated me to find a way out [of current circumstances] and is supportive of my direction”* (Interviewee 1)

### ***Mental health and wellbeing:***

The majority of attendees spoken to stated that their mental health had positively changed as a result of attending Get into Reading. Participants had experienced a range of previous illnesses including substance addiction, depression, anxiety, stress and personality disorders. Some reported vast improvements since attending, linked with the focus, and relaxation that they felt they gained from attending the reading sessions. One member reported that if they were feeling stressed prior to the session, negative feelings were alleviated once there.

*“When I’m feeling anxious and worried, coming to the group lifts my spirits”*  
(Focus group 2:8)

*“There are facilities for people with serious mental health problems, but not much for people with depression. I’ve seen how much it has improved the mental health of other members in the group too. It’s a good way to keep out of hospital”* (Interviewer 2)

*“Get into Reading is my relaxation”* (Interviewee 4)

*“I’m a lot more focused now - reading keeps my mind active”*  
(Interviewee 3)

*“The method of book reading was unique to me at first but I began to relax and enjoy it”* (Interviewee 5)

*“I am on top of the world with it all* (Interviewee 6)

Many reported that the act of reading aloud in a group setting and the concentration accompanying the essential discussions during the sessions, helped bring a sense of focus for members, improving mental wellness and feelings of wellbeing. As the Get into Reading session venue was typically based in the heart of the community, for some it was a chance to feel better without a medical setting and/or medication, and to be actively involved in a community they may not have otherwise been involved in. This new reading community came with new friends and opportunities and made many feel “normal”. The session’s non-medical setting also contributed to improved feelings of self-worth.

*“This is one of the first places I went to where you were with ordinary people, and treated normally”* (Focus group 1:1)

*“It gave me another path in my life. The time I spend reading and sharing ideas with the group and the facilitator is good medicine for me”*  
(Interviewee 4)

*“The group deals with physical and emotional aspects of things [books and individuals]. It’s like therapy, a nice way of doing it, in a library surrounded by nice people” (Interviewee 6)*

Get into Reading attendees self-reported a range of health problems, which included deafness, multiple sclerosis, Asperger’s syndrome and autism, heart disease and a range of mental health illnesses. Whilst most of those involved in the research stated that they had experienced mental health improvements or their general wellbeing had improved, few stated that attendance at the Get into Reading sessions had directly affected their health. One individual stated they visited the hospital less times since attending sessions. A number of attendees also reported needing to take fewer antidepressants, and one had stopped taking them altogether.

When asked about how Get into Reading made them feel, many group members said happy: that they felt happier now than before they started attending sessions and that generally, they felt more positive about their lives. This positivity also contributed to “trying new things” and actively looking forward to each Get into Reading session. The sessions were thoroughly enjoyed by all and this was very apparent from all interviews and focus groups.

*“I just love it, it’s great. I feel good about myself, I feel happier” (Interviewee 1)*

### **Skills**

As a result of Get into Reading, many attendees reported having learnt new skills. Many of these were related to personal traits, such as increased empathy, sensitivity and trust in other group attendees. These traits stemmed from the non-judgemental and friendly atmosphere of the reading sessions and the open discussions that came with reading of the literature.

*“The group has opened me up to people with different views – you accept that it’s ok for people to have a different opinion and everyone respects your view” (Interviewee 7).*

*“It’s opened up a sensitive side to me” (Interviewee 7)*

*“You are learning about yourself, getting in touch with your emotions” (Interviewee 7)*

As a direct result of the reading sessions, attendees had attended a range of courses, including photography, creative arts, sewing and volunteer-based training sessions. This had the purpose of equipping the attendees with more skills to go on to do further things, such as write poetry and volunteer. Attending Get into Reading for one group member had reignited a love of literature, and they had gone on to attend a creative writing course and begin writing for pleasure again. The additional courses also served the purpose of adding more value to the attendees’ day, they had something more to look forward to, and it was another opportunity to meet new people and expand their horizons. Many of the interviewees reported feeling more intelligent since having joined Get into Reading groups. This was brought on by reading a range of literature, and often novels and poems that they would never have otherwise considered reading. Younger attendees specifically reported learning more words and their meanings, being able to spell better, and learning the pronunciation of words.

*“I feel clever. I didn’t think reading would be fun but it is” (Interviewee 11)*

*“I feel brave, as I wouldn’t have done a lot of things before that I do now” (Interviewee 11)*

*“You can understand more by reading aloud” (Interviewee 13)*



*“I didn’t do reading before, but it’s fun and I love it now. It’s like you’re on an adventure” (Interviewee 13)*

*“I can write much neater and I know more big words and my spelling and handwriting has improved” (Interviewee 13)*

Many group attendees reported learning new personal skills such as confidence, self-esteem, empathy and better acceptance of other people’s opinions. This had made them feel better empowered, but it also had the effect of facilitating an improved social life, both during Get into Reading Sessions, and afterwards. Get into reading sessions had resulted in a great many achievements, from routine, order and purpose to pride and a sense of reciprocity. Many attendees had gained so much from the sessions that they had actively gone out of their way to train and attend more sessions and to volunteer so that they could in turn give something back to their community. An example of this is the annual Out of the Blue music festival in Everton Park, where staff and volunteers delivered reading sessions to young children attending (picture 4).



Figure 5: A children’s reading session as part of Everton Park’s Out of the Blue music festival.

### 3.2.2 Service providers

The key themes of social, confidence, mental health and wellbeing and skills, evolved from the thematic analysis of interviews with service providers.

#### **Social:**

The social aspect of Get into Reading groups was equally as important for service providers as for group members. Many of those involved in the SROI commented on the value the sessions had both for the groups they were involved in delivering Get into Reading to, or personally. It was recognised that that the groups were socially inclusive, and offer an opportunity for all attending to feel part of a team.

*“It exercises social muscles...muscles that they need to use to move on in life” (Interviewee 1)*

It was felt that there was no recognised division between the groups or between facilitator and attendees. Each felt that they were equals, and that facilitators aided, but were not necessarily ‘in charge’ of sessions. This led to feelings that each member’s opinions and input to the sessions were valid, and this led to a non-judgemental and unconditional regard for group attendees.



*“Others attending the reading groups have gone on to attend reading groups in their library and it’s supporting reengagement with the wider community” (Interviewee 1)*

It was evident from the interviews with group members that the groups built up trust between members, and this is where friendships thrived. Service providers expanded upon this and noted that the social aspect was more marked for the elderly, children and those in recovery. Service providers perceived benefits for the elderly to be an opportunity to meet like-minded individuals and share common interests. For those in addiction recovery, it was seen to be a chance to take their minds away from addiction and the processes of rehabilitation they maybe undergoing, and to have the chance to have an input in a group.

The routine and focus that came with sessions was also important for recovering addicts, whose lifestyles may be chaotic, typically experiencing a range of emotions as part of their addiction and/or recovery. Service providers described how the Get into Reading sessions offered stability as well as the chance to improve addicts’ self-esteem and self-worth.

Interviews highlighted that children and young people seemed to gain the most from the social inclusivity of Get into Reading groups, specifically those classed as vulnerable or looked-after. Service providers explained how the relationship forged with their reading facilitator often was the only consistent face involved in their care. Social workers, foster families and local authority staff were often changing depending on circumstances, but for the duration of their one-to-one Get into Reading sessions, the facilitator was the same person, who they met with at a set time every week. This consistency in routine was seen to be important in helping to build trust and cement the relationship between child and facilitator. This continuity also enabled children to feel safe and build up trust in adults. This was highlighted by the fact that many young people choose to continue reading sessions once they had reached the age of 18 or are no longer under the care of the local authority.

Service providers also noted that the sessions offered a level of support for all attendees, and were extremely beneficial for looked-after children and recovering adults. Referred to as a support group by many participants, the reading groups offer the chance to discuss meaningful issues under the guise of the literature they are reading.

*“It’s a support group without the tag, it’s something which comes naturally out of it” (Focus group 3:3)*

Discussions typically took on a personal aspect, without the need to delve too personally, which was cathartic for many. The groups also had the added effect of ‘normalising’ the attendee, with many service providers reporting that the sessions made their attendees feel normal, and the routine and consistency in the groups made them feel they were not ‘labels’, for example vulnerable child or recovering addict, they were simply a group attendee without any ‘associated baggage’. In the case of recovering addicts, service providers felt that their attendance at the sessions also had an effect of cementing their recovery with their family and friends.

*“It’s the knock-on effect as well. Having the stories available for people to be taking home, I found, has bridged the gap between the client and their family, because they’re doing something proper, doing something normal. And when they have been in the chaos and their family as a knock-on has also been in the chaos.” (Focus group 3:3)*

Service providers described how reading aloud offered the group a unique chance to discuss book themes and to relate this to their own personal experiences. For many this is a support group and the chance to improve literacy skills also and develop and maintain positive relationships. There was also a layer of dependency with the sessions, the group quickly formed a “dependent

relationship” with literature and their fellow attendees, where they stick together and look after each other, whilst in the hostel and outside.

*“I think because you have the literature there to anchor the issues that do come up, that’s what makes it so safe. I don’t know any other medium where you can do that. And it’s the support for the person that’s upset rather than a change of subject; it’s like a support for them”*  
(Focus group 3:4)

### **Confidence:**

As with group members, service providers also felt a sense of achievement, both personally and as a result of the groups they facilitated. Personally, they saw their members grow intellectually, socially and gain confidence whilst learning new skills. They noted that group attendees also experienced a sense of achievement for reading aloud, especially with ‘difficult’ literature and particularly among those who were nervous or anxious about reading aloud at first. Each person interviewed recognised their members’ individual achievements when taking new steps and developing personally, for example, one interviewee noted that one session attendee with Asperger’s had come on “in leaps and bounds”, gaining newfound confidence since attending sessions as a direct result of her involvement with the group. From initially being quite shy and quiet, the attendee had socially grown and the individual now kept in touch with other members outside of reading sessions and was no longer shy about reading aloud and contributing to sessions. The confidence they had gained had empowered them to volunteer outside the session at a local charity and to attend a number of social events.

*“The difference in confidence has been amazing”* (Interviewee 2)

For recovering addicts, the reading sessions were set up with the aim of giving attendees a boost, and to help build their confidence. The reading sessions empowered attendees which also contributed to greater feelings of self-worth. For some service providers, there was a sense of reciprocity that they also gained as much from Get into Reading as group members did. This was the case particularly for one session volunteer, who described her role as creating “a warm feeling like I have done something good”. As a result of involvement with Get into Reading this service provider had gained confidence which resulted in public speaking at a conference in front of hundreds of people and travelling as part of her role.

*“Because of working here my life is different and I know it’s only a job, but it isn’t just a normal job, it’s a job that changes people completely”*  
(Interviewee 4)

### **Mental health and wellbeing**

Service providers, as well as group members, agreed that Get into Reading positively affected their mental health, with all looking forward to weekly sessions, which were described by many as the highlight of their week. The sessions also resulted in more positivity and improved moods. Many reported that attendees saw the sessions as one of the highlights of their week and they made an effort to travel, even if it meant using public transport, booking taxis or working shifts/volunteering around the timing of the sessions. Service providers also noted that they personally gained a lot from the reading groups and from being a part of the reading community with group attendees. It was relaxing for them and the experience was uplifting.

*“The best thing I have ever done, Tuesday afternoon is the high spot of the week, reading, talking, discussing and socialising with the group make it an enjoyable afternoon”* (Interviewee 3)

*“Reading a book has completely taken my mind off it and then the rest of the day I am fine”* (Interviewee 4)

*“My experience of the [Get into Reading] culture is that it has a positive impact, it’s uplifting and it rubs off” (Interviewee 1)*

*“I love it. The response from people is fantastic, but I probably get more out of it than they do! From the early stages it was the sudden realisation that your opinion counts. It’s a big step” (Focus group 3:2)*

Many service providers stated that the groups were a form of therapy for recovering addicts. Concentrating and thinking about the literature in sessions distracted them from any negative thoughts associated with rehabilitation from addiction during recovery. It was also a distraction from any cravings and they gained a sense of pride for what they were achieving, whether it was through reading aloud or the newfound interest in reading.

*“They [Get into Reading sessions] do seem to make a person intellectually and mentally fitter, but at the same time, they’re blocking potentially destabilising cravings that can come into mind if it’s not occupied” (Interviewee 1)*

*“It stops relapses. It puts structure in your life, both as a facilitator and as an attendee” (Focus group 3:2)*

*“It’s a bit of rehabilitation of the body, rehabilitating the mind muscles” (Interviewee 1)*

*“That is the magic of literature. It takes you out of yourself. And when your self is in chaos and craving, there can’t be anything better than to take you out of that” (Focus group 3:3)*

*“Strong therapeutic value – helped mental wellbeing” (Interviewee 3)*

### **Skills**

A great number of skills were learnt, or reawakened, as a result of involvement with Get into Reading. Many attendees and facilitators had attended educational courses including Maths and English GCSEs as well as computing courses. One interviewee, who started as a group member, now leads Get into Reading sessions through her paid employment. The groups have helped to transform her life, and offered her a career route. This now drives her to want to try and transform others’ lives in her work with TRO. Another interviewee joined TRO as an apprentice and has developed both personally and professionally since starting her role. She has completed a range of courses as part of her role, including maths and customer services. Her role has involved taking on more responsibility and this has helped her develop more confidence in her work.

*“Because of working here my life is different and I know it’s only a job, this isn’t just a normal job it’s a job that changes people completely” (Interviewee 4)*

As a direct consequence of the reading sessions, many interviewees reported improved literacy: they knew the meaning of more words, and could use them in context. Stakeholders involved in look-after children sessions, reported that the reading ages of children involved in the initiative had also improved, with some individuals surpassing targets set at the start of their involvement with Get into Reading.

For sessions specifically involving children (for example, picture 5), it was hoped that Get into Reading would provide an opportunity for young people to develop a love of books and reading in a way that would carry on, potentially for life. Service providers stated that children had reported that they were better at their school lessons because of their love of reading.

The sessions have also led to fun opportunities to make reading more amenable, with visits to libraries, organised trips and opportunities to meet with authors. TRO also donated books to children that they were able to keep.



Picture 6: Get into Reading sessions among secondary school children

### 3.2.3 Session structure:

The delivery and structure of Get into Reading was an important aspect of the project that was discussed by both service users and service providers. The sessions encouraged discussion in an arena where everyone felt their comments mattered and they would not be judged for what they say. The routine was also a major factor, especially for children and those experiencing mental health illness or disabilities. The sessions were held at the same time most weeks, and in the same venue. As they often involved the same people from one week to the next, it made the forming of relationships and building of trust between group members far easier, especially for children and adults with learning disabilities including Autism and Asperger's syndrome, who initially may take longer to become active members of the group and start to read aloud in sessions. However, once they had gained that confidence they felt happy about joining in. Listening to others and following the sessions offered a sense of calmness and was supportive in aiding concentration.

For trained facilitators, the sessions also helped bring more structure to their lives, and they were more organised as a result of it.

*"It does solidify my recovery because I'm a bit more organised. It does give you responsibility to be organised, and to enjoy it as well. From where I started, with me meekly going in to see what's going on, to facilitating is a great leap" (Focus group 3:1)*

One-to-one sessions with children were deemed successful by both children and service providers. As the Get into Reading facilitator was the same person throughout, they were able to develop a close relationship with the child where trust was easily built. For some children this was important and there was little stability in their lives and while their circumstances, including social workers or foster parents may change, their Get into Reading sessions remained a constant.

Both group members and service providers found there were no negative aspects to the Get into Reading sessions, and any issues that were discussed in focus groups and interviews related to events outside the control of TRO. These related to transport issues in travelling to and from the sessions, and this was particularly an issue for those with mobility issues, who were reliant on private taxi companies, and for those reliant on punctual public transport so they could arrive at

reading sessions on time. Time was also a factor for some due to work hours, however, this only meant that some attendees were not able to attend every week, or would arrive slightly later than the rest of the group, or leave earlier.

### 3.3 Questionnaire analysis

Divided into four sections, the questionnaire covered the four key changes associated with engagement in the project. These included: gaining new skills, better social life, improvements in physical health, and improvements in mental health. The questionnaire findings have been analysed descriptively, with financial aspects being analysed separately in the SROI calculations section.

#### *New skills:*

Respondents stated they had gained new skills as a result of attending Get into Reading sessions. The skills were wide-ranging, and included: increased confidence; volunteering, reading different types of books; having more empathy for others; being more accepting of others' opinions; attending new courses or workshops; and, public speaking. One respondent stated they had started to write as a result of Get into Reading. The new skills learnt as a result of Get into Reading were mainly applied to volunteering and mentoring within local Third Sector organisations or charities. One individual had obtained a placement with a national newspaper group to write articles for their local newspaper, and had also written for TRO and their local library. Other participants stated they felt more assertive as a result of attending reading sessions and were more willing to give their opinion across confidently on issues they felt were important, while another said they were more ready to listen to others' opinions.

#### *Better social life:*

All respondents reported having better social lives now that they were Get into Reading members. For most, this meant going to the cinema regularly, or for weekly or monthly meals out and coffees. Many also reported that they now attended more TRO events such as the Penny Readings, theatre trips and conferences.

#### *Improved health:*

Respondents felt that over the past twelve months, they had experienced no direct health benefits as a result of Get into Reading. However, two respondents highlighted they had visited their GP less often, with one individual stating they had visited their GP half as much since and felt happier more often.

#### *Improved mental health:*

As a result of Get into Reading, half of respondents stated that their mental health had improved over the past twelve months. All agreed they felt part of a team/community and they were able to concentrate more. Others selected that they felt less lonely, anxious, stressed and depressed, and subsequently felt happier and had increased confidence and self-esteem.



## 4. Social return on investment calculations and results

The section outlines how the SROI was calculated using an impact map to determine the financial amount. The impact map lists the key changes that have occurred over the past twelve months as a direct result of engagement with Get into Reading. Calculated on an Excel spreadsheet, the impact map charts the impact of these changes on individuals, other stakeholders and the local community. Each change is recorded as an indicator on the impact map, and has a financial proxy costed to it. This work forms the SROI calculation. A number of assumptions were made when determining any financial proxies, and this section outlines how these were made, the actual SROI calculations, and a sensitivity analysis which ensures robustness in the calculation.

### 4.1 The impact map

Information collected from stakeholders during the stakeholder engagement focus groups, interviews and follow-up questionnaires was used to identify the key areas where material change had occurred as a direct result of engagement with Get into Reading. This information is captured under a series of headings and presented in the form of an impact map. The impact map identifies the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of each of the identified changes from each stakeholder group, using financial amounts.

#### 4.1.1 Inputs

Inputs considered what stakeholders have financially invested into Get into Reading project. This was used to assess the net social value that had been created or destroyed by engagement with the project. This predominantly is expressed by wages, time and travel (Table 3).

**Table 2: Summary of stakeholder group and inputs**

Stakeholder Group	Inputs
The Reader Organisation	Time, resources, training and development
Group attendees	Time, travel
Volunteers	Time, travel
Get into Reading staff	Time, experience
The Lauries	Venue, room hire, building facilities

#### Outputs

Outputs are a summary of the activities that have taken place as a result of the Get into Reading project (Table 4).

**Table 3: Summary of key stakeholder outputs**

Stakeholder Group	Outputs
The Reader Organisation	Attendance at Get into Reading
Group attendees	Average of 2 hours per week for 12 attendees for 40 weeks a year (sessions run 44 weeks a year).
Volunteers	Approximately 10 hours per week on preparing and assisting in delivering reading groups
Get into Reading staff	Well attended groups
The Lauries	Supporting facilities – reception, cafe

## 4.1.2 Outcomes

The outcomes are the key changes experienced by each stakeholder which could be financially measured. There were multiple changes experienced by each stakeholder group, and these have been narrowed down to the most important outcomes for inclusion in the impact map. The positive outcomes experienced by stakeholders are expressed in the following theory of change statement:

### **Theory of Change**

Get into Reading is a social inclusion programme that provides open reading groups for the general public to attend. These are offered in a range of easily-accessible centres, including libraries and community centres. The reading groups resulted in increased socialising, learning of new skills, including confidence and empathy, improved mental health and wellbeing.

TRO also provide a range of volunteering opportunities to some of its reading group attendees, helping them to gain practical work-related experience such as workplace skills (e.g. administration and decision making) as well as assisting in compiling CVs. Volunteers also are given the opportunity to improve personal skills including confidence and empathy.

While the impact map provides three separate SROI calculations for each of the groups chosen during the scoping exercise (Wallasey open group, looked-after children and Arch Initiatives recovery group), many of the positive outcomes were experienced by all three (Table 5).

**Table 4: Summary of key stakeholder outcomes**

Stakeholder Group	Outcomes - positive
<b>Group attendees</b>	Gained new skills
	Physical health improvement and better quality of life
	Improved mental health
	Socialising
	Increase in volunteering
<b>Volunteers</b>	Gained new skills
	Improved mental health
	Socialising
<b>GIR staff</b>	Gained new skills
<b>The Lauries</b>	Support the role of receptionist and café staff

### *Negative and unintended changes*

Stakeholders were also asked to think of any negative or unintended changes that may have occurred as a direct result of the Get into Reading. It is important that these were included in financial calculations in order to ensure that the SROI analysis is robust and comprehensive. Time and travel costs were the only issues reported by those involved in the evaluation, and these amounts have been included on the impact map.

### *Indicators*

Indicators are used to determine how the outcome reported by the stakeholder is measured. For example, when considering the outcome associated with new skills, the indicator to demonstrate this was reported by stakeholders as reading more books. A further example is the cost of attending TRO organised events and theatre trips; an indicator of increased socialising. Some outcomes reported by the stakeholders had more than one indicator. For example, when measuring increases in socialising for group attendees, stakeholders reported feeling part of a community and making new friends.

### *Quantity*

For each outcome and subsequent indicator(s) identified by stakeholders, a numeric quantity is required for the impact map. For this SROI analysis, the quantity refers to the number of stakeholders a change applied to. This was scaled up from the actual numbers involved in the research reporting an outcome to the representative sample in the whole group. For example, six

questionnaires were completed in one of the reading groups, with the whole sample being the maximum 12 persons at each meeting. Therefore, each questionnaire response represents a quantity of two. For example, five individuals reported reading more books as a result of joining Get into Reading, representing 10 in the quantity column (2 X 5).

For the combined group, the numbers take into consideration the number of Get into Reading group attendees that each project worker can reach each year, approximated at 108 (running nine groups with up to 12 members in each. For calculations on this impact map, the total number of responses among all three groups sampled selecting this option was extrapolated to the total number. For example, for every one person reporting a change, this represented 3 attendees (108/33 individuals involved in the research).

#### *Duration*

How long a change will last varies depending on the change. However, for the purpose of this research, the figure applied is one, as the evaluation looked at the past twelve months and considered outcomes for just one year.

#### *Financial proxies and sources*

In order to determine the 'value' of the key material changes for each stakeholder group, financial proxies were used (tables 7, 8 and 9). The majority of the financial values for key changes reported by the stakeholders were valued by stakeholders during interviews or focus groups or with follow-up questionnaires. However, the interviews and focus groups were not able to put financial values on all indicators, such as gains in confidence and self-esteem. In this situation, values were sourced from elsewhere, namely internet websites, Wikivois (a financial proxy website where indicator values are shared), or costs were valued by the partner organisations.

For example, when considering the changes to a group attendee's confidence and self-esteem, an appropriate proxy is the cost of attending a confidence and esteem-building course (sourced from [www.thinkconfidence.com](http://www.thinkconfidence.com)). It was important that the financial values chosen were relevant for each stakeholder group. As a further example, for children reporting an increase in confidence, this was valued as the cost of a confidence-building course for children (sourced from [www.kiscape.org.uk](http://www.kiscape.org.uk)). This acknowledged the fact that a course specific for children will be run very differently to an adult one of the same topic, and therefore may cost more or less to run.

When considering the cost of services given in kind, this was dealt with in two ways. For time given as a result of volunteering, the time was calculated by multiplying the average weekly hours input into Get into Reading by volunteers (suggested as ten hours by stakeholders) by the national minimum wage of £6.08<sup>3</sup> for 40 weeks a year. For volunteers who facilitate Get into Reading sessions among the recovering community, this was equated to the cost of a part-time Get into Reading facilitator role, as advertised on The Reader Organisation's website. This was assumed based on facilitator accounts of how much time they give to sessions and being involved in setting up more reading sessions in other recovery settings elsewhere.

Wherever a value has been calculated it has been sourced to ensure the costs can be verified.

#### **4.1.3 Impact**

Included within the SROI analysis framework is a series of adjustments that were made by the principle researcher which relate to deadweight, attribution, displacement and drop-off.

- Deadweight – how likely is it that the change would have happened anyway?
- Attribution – are there any other organisations / individuals who have contributed to the change?
- Displacement – has any activity been displaced by the change?
- Drop off – does the change drop off in future years?

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<sup>3</sup> This was the correct amount in the year the evaluation covered (2012).

For the purpose of this research, displacement and drop-off were not calculated and were set at 0%. As this evaluation specifically covers the past twelve months, there was no reported drop-off or displacement. For deadweight and attribution, in the majority of cases, amounts were calculated from follow-up questionnaires. An average total was calculated where responses differed among the group. Wherever fields were left blank and there were no calculations of deadweight and attribution, a base level of 50% was applied for Wallasey open and Arch Initiatives recovery groups on the basis that many reported volunteering (within Get into Reading and elsewhere). An amount of 50% was also applied to children, on the basis that each attended school and therefore the influence of school could always be a possible factor in influencing any outcome.

#### 4.1.4 Calculating the Social Return on Investment

The calculation for the SROI is described in this section. Expressed as a ratio of return, it is derived from dividing the impact value by the value of the investment. However, before the calculation is made, the impact value is adjusted to reflect the present value of the projected outcome values. This is to reflect the present day value of benefits projected into the future. In this social value account, some outcomes are projected for a period of 1 year and so the effect of discounting for this is limited.

The ratio of return for SROI calculates the net present value of benefits created, based upon the net present value of investment required to deliver such benefits. As this evaluation looks at three Get into Reading groups, a separate SROI calculation has been made for each, with an average SROI provided afterwards.

##### Wallasey open group: £6.38

Total Present Value	£33,996.50
Net Present Value	£28,669.54
Social Return £ per £	<b>£6.38</b>

##### Looked-after children: £7.00

Total Present Value	£29,628.87
Net Present Value	£25,394.09
Social Return £ per £	<b>£7.00</b>

##### Arch recovery group: £2.93

Total Present Value	£14,997.15
Net Present Value	£12,514.63
Social Return £ per £	<b>£6.04</b>

The SROI ratio is calculated by dividing the Total Present Value of impact by the investment made:

<b>Social Return on Investment ratio (average)</b>	<b>£1: £6.47</b>
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The SROI calculation indicates that for each £1 invested, there is a social return of **£6.47**. However, this is taken as the average of the three separate SROI calculations. The figures show that the looked-after children yielded an SROI of £7.00, the Wallasey open group was £6.38 and Arch Initiatives recovering addicts group returned a value of £6.04.

With more than 600 members across the Wirral, there is the potential for the benefits of Get into Reading to be far greater than those expressed here, as this evaluation represents just three groups out of more than 100 running on the Wirral, with a maximum of 12 attendees in each group. To

understand the possible benefits for the Get into Reading community as a whole, the data collected for this evaluation have been extrapolated to the average 108 adult members that one trained Get into Reading facilitator can reach in one week (nine sessions with an average of 12 in each session). To do so, common themes (outcomes and indicators) that were experienced by all three groups during the data collection of this evaluation were costed separately on the impact map. This provides an estimate of the SROI calculation that one trained facilitator can bring.

The potential SROI for a trained member of Get into Reading staff is a minimum of £3.20. This figure takes into account the annual salary of a worker with associated costs and the social value benefits it brings to a potential 108 members. There is a huge caveat with this, that the sample chosen for this research does not represent all Get into Reading members and that this figure is an assumption based on commonalities of values collectively experienced by an open group, looked-after children and Arch Initiatives recovery groups. Values for the costs of volunteering have been included in this sample as this was experienced by adults in both the Arch Initiatives recovery and Wallasey open group.

#### Get into Reading project worker SROI: £3.20

Total Present Value	£118,496.40
Net Present Value	£81,505.20
Social Return £ per £	<b>£3.20</b>

#### 4.1.5 Sensitivity analysis

Sensitivity analysis allows the influence of each variable used within the impact map to be assessed for its impact upon the overall result. This can also test assumptions made and determine their impact in the final SROI calculation. Each variable was assessed, and it was found that most changes did not have a significant impact upon the result, thereby providing a degree of confidence over the figures used. In most cases, adjusting proxy amounts did not result in a marked difference in value (usually no less than 10p). Those areas with the largest potential impact have been highlighted in Table 5. Where necessary, the principle of under-estimation has been followed, and as a result no single variable can be assessed to significantly alter the result. The below values in table 5 show that by changing the value of some of the indicators, the final SROI value altered slightly, but not markedly. For example, in the looked-after children group, aspiration of going to university was costed at the price of a three-year cost of a degree (currently approximately £9,000 a year and excluding living costs, resources and expenses). This figure was changed to the cost of a Foundation Degree with the Open University at £10,248.

**Table 5: Financial assumptions significantly affecting SROI calculation**

Stakeholder	Outcome	Indicator	Variable base rate	New assumption	SROI
Wallasey open group volunteer	Gained new skills	Leading and setting up other reading groups	Value: £9,500	Value: £4,400	5.90
Looked-after children group attendee	Gained new skills	Aspiration of going to university	Value: £36,000	Value: £10,248	5.48
		Improved literacy skills	Value: £1,506	Value: £207.74	6.31

When conducting sensitivity analysis testing on deadweight and attribution, a number of assumptions were made where key stakeholders were not able to give actual figures. In this case, a conservative estimate of 50% was applied. However, test calculations were carried out using the higher 75% and lower 25% assumptions. With the higher 75%, this had a reduced effect on the SROI calculations, reducing the amounts, but still providing a return on the original investment. The



50% figure has been used for the final SROI calculations as this is the middle ground and was agreed upon when discussed with focus group attendees.

**Table 6: Sensitivity testing deadweight and attribution assumptions**

Stakeholder	Variable base rate	New combined high assumption	SROI rate	New combined low-assumption	SROI rate
Wallasey open group	50%	75%	5.22	25%	6.69
Looked-after child group	50%	75%	2.58	25%	22.39
Arch group	50%	75%	1.90	25%	12.99
Combined	50%	75%	1.87	25%	5.85

#### 4.1.6 Impact tables

The following tables (7-9) show the changes identified by group attendees and the associated financial values that helped to create the impact map and which contributed towards the social return on investment value. The tables show the three main changes which were experienced by attendees of all three groups which participated in the research: social, mental health improvements and gained new skills. The indicators were suggested as examples by research participants either during interviews, focus groups or in a questionnaire. Financial proxies were arrived at using direct examples (e.g. £14.99 cost of a Me to You Bear necklace set that two best friends who met through Get into Reading bought, representing their friendship).

In instances where no amount could be derived at by the group, proxies were taken from a range of sources. For example, the reading group sessions were described as a therapy group by many research participants. This was calculated as the cost of weekly group therapy sessions per week (£20) for 44 weeks of the year that get into Reading groups run for, totalling £880 per person on the impact map. As each Get into Reading group is supported by at least one volunteer, the time and effort that volunteers gave was also factored into the impact map. It was considered that on average, ten hours per week were given towards preparation and administration for sessions, choosing reading materials, photocopying etc. Although this is given in kind, there is still social value to be gained in the time being given freely, and this was costed at national minimum wage of £6.08, again for 44 weeks of the year per person, totalling £4,451.80 for nine project workers.

For the looked-after children group, the young people involved in the research stated that through Get into Reading and their love of literature, they reported feeling “cleverer” and had aspirations of careers, which involved going to university and gaining qualifications. This was valued at the cost of a three-year degree costing approximately £9,000 a year. For employment hopes this was taken as the minimum value expected to be gained from employment in their first year since leaving the care system, or turning 18, which equated to an average wage of £170 a week as an apprentice, an annual salary of £7,500.

**Table 7: Impact map for social value created by changes: Social**

Change	Indicator	Description	Source	Numbers	Cost	Impact value*
<b>Social</b>	Make new friendships	Cost of travel to see best friend every week	Interviews	6	£220.00	<b>£330.00</b>
		Cost of Me to you Bear best friends sterling silver necklaces	Interviews	3	£14.99	<b>£11.24</b>
		Yearly cost of attendance to The reader Organisation events (including conferences, Penny Readings and theatre trips)	Questionnaire	86	£239.00	<b>£4,110.80</b>
	Better social life	Annual cost of socialising with friends at the cinema/ coffee/meals out	Questionnaire	108	£649.00	<b>£12,960.01</b>
	Mentoring	Cost of counselling and mentor training	Questionnaire and interview	36	£569.00	<b>£2,560.50</b>
	Time	National minimum wage for ten hours each week 44 weeks of the year, at an hourly rate of £6.08 (6.08 X 10 X 44)	Interviews	9	£2,675.20	<b>£4,451.80</b>
*Taking into consideration all deadweight and attribution calculations						<b>£24,424.35</b>

**Table 8: Impact map for social value created by changes: Mental health improvement**

Change	Indicator	Description	Source	Numbers	Cost	Impact value*
<b>Mental health improvement</b>	Relaxation	Cost of a relaxation CD	Interviews	6	£14.99	<b>£22.49</b>
	Positivity	Cost of two-day positivity training £658.80	Interview, questionnaire and focus group	24	£658.00	<b>£2,512.51</b>
	Reduction in stress and anxiety	Stress reduction workshop		24	£25.00	<b>£95.46</b>
	Greater concentration skills	Cost of paperback copy of book: The Art of Concentrating: Enhance Focus, Reduce Stress and Achieve More	Interview, questionnaire and focus group	18	£4.00	<b>£15.12</b>
	Group therapy	Annual cost of weekly group therapy sessions for each group member	Interviews	108	£880.00	<b>£23,760.00</b>
*Taking into consideration all deadweight and attribution calculations						<b>£26,405.57</b>

**Table 9: Impact map for social value created by changes: gained new skills**

Change	Indicator	Description	Source	Numbers	Cost	Impact value*
Gained new skills	Read more books	Read more books - one a fortnight for year	Interview, questionnaire and focus group	86	£207.74	<b>£7,548.23</b>
	More empathy for others	Cost of one-day communications training at the Empathy Factory is £450pp.	Interview, questionnaire and focus group	50	£450.00	<b>£12,656.25</b>
	Increased confidence and self-esteem	Cost of course at Training Hand is £298.80 inc VAT	Interview, questionnaire and focus group	86	£298.80	<b>£7,452.07</b>
	Acceptance of others' opinions	Cost of course at British Psychological Society is £234.00 inc VAT	Interview, questionnaire and focus group	36	£243.00	<b>£2,187.00</b>
	Preparedness for working	Officer administration training five-day course	Interviews	51	£800.00	<b>£10,200.00</b>
	Support to apply for jobs and completing CV	Cost of attending a career development workshop	Interviews	3	£80.00	<b>£60.00</b>
	Public speaking	Cost of private public speaking tuition at Public Speaking Skills is £75 plus travel costs	Questionnaire	12	£89.90	<b>£269.70</b>
	Education aspirations	Aspiration of going to university - cost of a degree	Interviews	2	£36,000	<b>£9,000</b>
	Career aspirations	Aspiration for future jobs - cost of being an apprentice after leaving school/care	Interviews	4	£7,500	<b>£3,750</b>
*Taking into consideration all deadweight and attribution calculations						<b>£53,123.25</b>

## Discussion

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Get into Reading is a social inclusion programme based on shared reading. Its weekly group sessions are run in a variety of venues across the Wirral with more than 600 members attending each week. The groups establish the importance of reading aloud, both for its therapeutic qualities such as listening and for the quietness and calmness the sessions bring. This evaluation has been conducted by the Applied Health and Wellbeing Partnership to determine the health and wellbeing outcomes associated with regular group attendance. Much research has been conducted on the benefit of reading aloud as part of structured sessions, but little has looked holistically at the health and wellbeing outcomes, and the social value of these for individuals and society.

Get into Reading groups have the aim of bringing individuals together from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances in a mutually supportive environment. The structure of the groups allow social relationships to develop, resulting in improvements in personal wellbeing.

Secondary data analysis found that Wirral reading groups were attended by slightly more women than men, with most attendees either over 55 or aged under 18. A fifth of the sample classed themselves as having a disability and almost a third were unemployed. This shows that as many of the reading groups are run during the daytime, this makes them particularly attractive for those not in work, or retired.

This evaluation has involved key stakeholders at the heart of the research to ensure appropriateness of methods and the reliability of its findings. Stakeholders reported a number of outcomes they had experienced as a direct result of engagement with Get into Reading, grouped into five main positive themes: **social, mental health, health and wellbeing, confidence and skills**. Within these themes, stakeholders reported a number of often interlinked outcomes. The social impact was considered one of the strongest and most important themes as Get into Reading had resulted in many new friendships. This had led to an increase in socialising, between new friends and other reading group members outside of the sessions, attending events such as theatre trips, the cinema or going out for meals. With their friends they also tried new things such as line dancing or creative arts courses. Linked with greater socialisation was the sense of social inclusion. The reading groups combated loneliness and isolation, and for many elderly attendees, it was their lifeline, and the only opportunity they had in the week to socialise outside of their homes. This in turn led to a greater feeling of being part of a community.

Stakeholders in both adult groups (Wallasey open group and Arch Initiatives recovering addicts) reported that since joining Get into Reading, they had begun volunteering. For some this was in their own reading groups, providing administrative support and assisting with session delivery, while others also volunteered with Third Sector organisations. A number of attendees had also received Read to Lead training by TRO which enabled them to facilitate their own Get into Reading sessions, and had subsequently set up and run their own Get into Reading groups across the Wirral (picture 6).

Socialising more often also had the consequential effect of learning new skills, such as gaining qualifications in something they were interested in or improving on personal skills. Many reported experiencing greater empathy for others and an ability to better express their feelings and to be more understanding of others' feelings. Much of these skills were learnt by social interaction within the group, but were also due to reading literature that was different from anything else they may have read before. Skills such as empathy and consideration for others was learnt from reading aloud and being able to visualise characters and the ensuing group discussion which dealt with emerging themes and the feelings they evoked in the group. In this sense, the groups were considered a form of therapy: a support group, without the label of being such, where members were able to give their opinions without being judged.

Many stakeholders reported that their confidence had improved since attending Get into Reading and this had been an important factor in changing their lives, whether it was because they socialised more, had made new friends, or because they had gained the courage to try new things. Group



members, facilitators and volunteers all reported that they looked forward to their weekly Get into Reading sessions, and that for most, it was the highlight of their week. They felt positive about the sessions and stated that attending reduced any stress, anxiety or negativity they experienced beforehand. While there were few health improvements reported among stakeholders, other than reducing the amount of medication needed, it was the wellbeing that was generated from attending sessions that was most marked; stakeholders reported feeling happier and healthier and that they had more positivity and generally looked forward to their weekly sessions.

The SROI calculation shows that for every pound put into Get into Reading, an average return of £6.47 is generated. The amount was greatest in the looked-after children group, where the value was £7.00. This amount was limited by the fact that the outcomes reported could not be fully isolated to engagement with Get into Reading alone due to the influence of school. However, the social value created by this group was the largest, considering the facts that the young people reported doing better in school and that they had educational and career aspirations. They reported feeling more confident in school and that many of the activities they had taken part in as part of Get into Reading had equipped them with skills that would be beneficial in the workplace, such as public speaking, increased confidence and a love of literature. Furthermore, if the school children continued attending reading sessions as they do now, once adults, the potential gains could continue and be equivalent to those of the open reading group.

A separate SROI calculation was conducted based on the social value a single group facilitator can bring, which was a minimum of £3.20 per one pound input. This is an assumed value based on commonalities of three evaluation groups, also taking into consideration the volunteering aspect that was discussed among adult reading groups in interviews and focus groups.

Whilst this evaluation looked specifically at the health and wellbeing benefits of Get into Reading on three population groups – open groups, looked-after children and recovering addicts, stakeholders from each group reported similar outcomes that would be relevant to any attendee at any of the Get into Reading sessions. Certain groups experienced additional benefits, for example, recovering addicts were able to prevent relapses and the sessions had the added effect of involving their families into their recovery. Some attendees learnt a love of literature that they took home with them and led to evening reading to their children. And for some, they discussed the books they were reading with family members outside of the sessions. For children, the one-to-one reading had brought structure and continuity to their life during a difficult time. The sessions helped them focus and they developed a love of reading that they did not have before.

This evaluation highlights that Get into Reading is an important community asset for maintaining health and wellbeing. The evaluation demonstrated that Get into Reading provided many health and wellbeing benefits for group attendees and volunteers, regardless of their circumstances (individual health need, age, where they lived). The initiative provides an excellent social return on investment, not only for the groups selected for inclusion in the research, but also for the work of the facilitators. The social benefits of engagement with the project are very positive, with all group members reporting they enjoy reading sessions, and attend regularly. As a direct result of Get into Reading, members learnt new skills, have improved mental health and are more socialised. As an outcome of the confidence gained from attending reading sessions, stakeholders were empowered to do more with their lives: as reflected in this evaluation, this created immense social value, improving both quality of life in stakeholders as well as their family and friends, and that of the greater Wirral community.

### Limitations

The research involves an SROI analysis which relies heavily on qualitative research. The nature of the groups engaging with the research (the open group, recovering addicts and looked-after children), meant that numbers were limited by many factors. For example, only three children were involved in the looked-after children group, limited by the small number who receive one-to-one sessions at this time-point, and who were also willing to take part in the research. Similarly, only three individuals from the Arch Initiatives session participated in the research.

The nature of the SROI evaluation in attempting to quantify the unquantifiable (for example, the value of self-confidence for an individual, or for improved or increased friendships) is that it was often quite difficult to elicit meaningful financial outcomes from participants. The SROI analysis itself is dependent on the responses given by the research participants, which are subjective to that group at that particular time-point. On a number of occasions where group members were not able to arrive at financial amounts themselves, financial proxies were derived at using known proxies used elsewhere in other research or from examples given during qualitative data collection (e.g. cost of a mentoring course, or NVQ course). While the numbers involved in the research were quite small, these were a good representation of the groups involved. For example, the Wallasey Library open group has up to twelve group attendees a week and there are upwards of ten who attend the Arch recovery group. While individual participants have different experiences, they did share many of the same outcomes and their responses to financial valuing of this were quite similar.



Picture 6: Read to Lead training session for Get into Reading facilitators

## 5. Recommendations

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Following this evaluation, a number of recommendations have been made with regards future evaluations and monitoring.

- Although monitoring data was provided for this evaluation, this data could be improved so that data is collected regularly, perhaps annually. This will help determine key demographics of attendees while ensuring more accurate information is known about Get into Reading numbers. Monitoring data will also help provide important information for any forthcoming evaluations. While this evaluation has only looked specifically at the experiences of its reading group attendees over the twelve months, future work could allow for further monitoring which will enable SROI calculations to be carried out forecasting the expected SROI for the next three, five years etc. A discrete register among groups would also identify how often people attend, and will help understand the exact number of Get into Reading attendees there are across the Wirral.
- Continue with TRO and Get into Reading associated social events (picture 7). These have included celebrations for TRO's tenth anniversary in 2012, and regular Penny Readings. Specially organised events encouraged reading group attendees to do more outside of their usual routine and were much anticipated. Events offer an important social element to the work of TRO, which also helps to raise its profile.
- Feedback results of any evaluations and updates directly to group members. Research participants expressed interest in hearing about how Get into Reading affects theirs, and others' lives.
- Identify other ways to maximise the SROI calculation. For example, offering more group sessions, or concentrating on the value that Read to Lead training and the impact this has on individuals' lives, as this has a much reduced input, but could yield high results.
- Potentially, looked-after children have the most to gain from engagement with Get into Reading. The project worker becomes a trusted part of the child's life and as such is key to supporting them through their formative school years. More looked-after children could benefit from Get into Reading and an expansion of this provision could improve the outcomes for many vulnerable children, as expressed through the SROI calculation.



Picture 7: An audience at The Reader Organisation's 10<sup>th</sup> celebration conference, September 2012.

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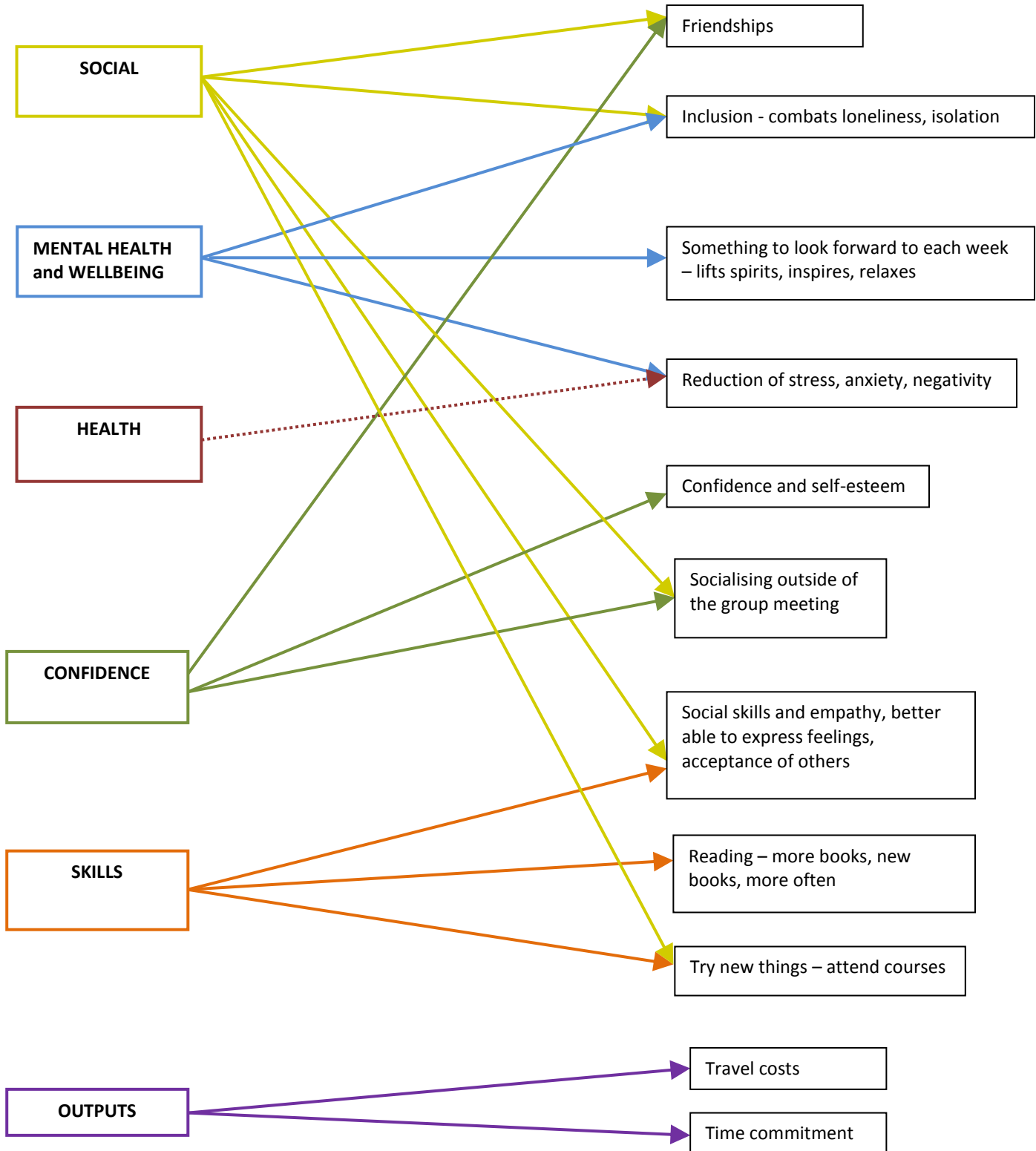
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## 8. Appendices

### 1. Logic model

Following interviews with both service providers and service users, and a focus group session with service users, a logic model was designed, highlighting the key changes and outcomes participants reported occurring as a direct result of engagement with Get into reading. There were five main headings: social, mental health and wellbeing, confidence, and skills.





## 2. Draw and write technique

This is a fun exercise where you get to get to say how Get into Reading makes you feel, using your own pictures and words. Please can you design a book front and back cover that shows how reading makes you feel now, and how you felt before you started the reading sessions. You can then choose to write a story, or a few words and pictures that says more about what you get out of reading. Thank you very much.

This is your front cover which shows what Get into Reading means to you TODAY – please choose a title and draw picture for your book.



This is your back page and shows how you felt BEFORE you started Get into Reading sessions. You can draw a picture or an image, design a story board, write an explanation or use a combination of these.



This is your story: Use this to write your story, or a few key words and explanations about how Get into Reading makes you feel. Write as little or as much as you like, and if you want to add some more pictures, you can do.



### 3. Wallasey open group questionnaire

Change 1

*"I have gained new skills"*

1a. I have experienced this in the past 12 months

- Yes → Answer the rest of the questions on this page**
- No → If no, move onto change 2 on next page**

1b. The focus group identified the following new skills as a result of the Get into Reading sessions.

Which of these new skills have you gained in the past 12 months?(tick all that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I read more books</b>                       | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I read different types of books</b>                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I have attended new courses/workshops</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I have more empathy for others</b>                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I volunteer</b>                             | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I have increased confidence</b>                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I am more creative (arts etc)</b>           | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I have more self esteem</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I have been involved in public speaking</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I am more accepting of others' opinions</b>          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other – please state</b>                    |  |

1c. How have you used these new skills, or what have you done differently with these new skills? (for example, I have joined a library or I have spoke in public at an event).

1d. If you were not attending Get into Reading sessions, how likely is it that you would have gained these skills anyway? (please tick one)

- Not likely at all (0%)**
- A small chance (25%)**
- A 50/50 chance**
- A high chance (75%)**
- Definitely would have happened anyway (100%)**
- Other - please state .....**

1e. Have any other organisations/services/activities/people\* helped you gain these skills, and by how much? (please tick one)

- This change has ONLY happened because I attend Get into Reading sessions (0%)**
- Other organisations/people have contributed a little to this change (25%)**
- Other organisations/people are responsible for about half of this change (50%)**
- Other organisations/people have contributed a lot to this change happening (75%)**
- Other - please state .....**

Change 2  
*"I have a better social life now"*

2a. I have experienced this in the past 12 months

- Yes** → Answer the rest of the questions on this page
- No** → If no, move onto change 3 on next page

2b. The focus group identified they had gained many social benefits as a result of the Get into Reading sessions, including making new friends.

Which have you done in the past 12 months with new friends? (tick all that apply)	For each one you have ticked, how many times do you do this per month or year?	For each one you have ticked, approx. how much do you typically spend each time (£)?
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Gone to the cinema</b> →		
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Gone out for meals/coffee at a cafe</b> →		
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Gone to a Get into Reading event (such as Penny Readings, theatre trip etc)</b> →		
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other – please state</b> → .....		

2c. If you were not attending Get into Reading sessions, how likely is it that you would socialise more with friends and Get into Reading group members? (please tick one)

- Would never have happened (0% chance)**
- A small chance (25%)**
- A 50/50 chance**
- A high chance (75%)**
- Definitely would have happened anyway (100%)**
- Other - please state** .....

2d. Have any other organisations/services/activities/people\* helped or will help you to socialise more with friends and family? By how much? (please tick one)

- This change has ONLY happened because I attend Get into Reading sessions (0%)**
- Other organisations/people have contributed a little to this change (25%)**
- Other organisations/people are responsible for about half of this change (50%)**
- Other organisations/people have contributed a lot to this change happening (75%)**
- Other - please state** .....

Change 3

*“My physical health has improved”*

3a. I have experienced this in the past 12 months

- Yes** → Answer the rest of the questions on this page
- No** → If no, move onto change 4 on next page

3b. The focus group said their health had been affected as a result of attending Get into Reading sessions.

Which of these have changed for you in the past 12 months? (tick all that apply)

- Visited a GP less or more often**  
→
- Needed less or more medication/prescriptions**  
→
- Had less or more hospital visits or admissions**  
→
- Felt healthier more often**  
→
- Other – please state**  
→

Number before attending Get into Reading?

Number since attending Get into Reading?


3c. If your health has improved, how has this affected your life? (e.g. more mobile now, go out more often, I volunteer).

3d. If you were not attending Get into Reading sessions, how likely is it that your health would have improved anyway? (please tick one)

- Not likely at all (0% chance)**
- A small chance (25%)**
- A 50/50 chance**
- A high chance (75%)**
- Definitely would have happened anyway (100%)**
- Other - please state** .....

3e. Have any other organisations/services/activities/people\* helped or will help improve your physical health and wellbeing ? By how much? (please tick one)

- This change has ONLY happened because I attend Get into Reading sessions (0%)**
- Other organisations/people have contributed a little to this change (25%)**
- Other organisations/people are responsible for about half of this change (50%)**
- Other organisations/people have contributed a lot to this change happening (75%)**
- Other - please state .....**

**Change 4**

*"My mental health has improved"*

4a. I have experienced this in the past 12 months

- Yes → Answer the rest of the questions on this page**
- No → Please turn to next page for Question 5.**

4b. The focus group identified aspects in their life that had changed since starting Get into Reading.

Which of these have changed for you in the past 12 months? (tick all that apply)

- I feel less depressed**
- I feel less lonely**
- Having less or more hospital visits or admissions**
- I feel less anxious**
- I am less stressed**
- Other – please state**
- I feel I am part of a team/community**
- I feel happier**
- I have increased confidence**
- I have more self esteem**
- I am able to concentrate more**

.....  
.....

4c. If your mental health has improved, how has this affected your life? (e.g. I do more activities now, I go out more often, I have a new job. Please state the cost of these, or salary if relevant)

.....  
..

4d. If you were not attending Get into Reading sessions, how likely is it that your mental health would have improved anyway? (please tick one)

- Not likely at all (0% chance)**
- A small chance (25%)**
- A 50/50 chance**
- A high chance (75%)**
- Definitely would have happened anyway (100%)**
- Other - please state .....**



4e. Have any other organisations/services/activities/people\* helped or will help improve your mental health? By how much? (please tick one)

**This change has ONLY happened because I attend Get into Reading sessions (0%)**

**Other organisations/people have contributed a little to this change (25%)**

**Other organisations/people are responsible for about half of this change (50%)**

**Other organisations/people have contributed a lot to this change happening (75%)**

**Other - please state .....**

5. Get into Reading is free to participate. However, how much do you value the project and how much would you be willing to pay to attend a session?

The final report *An evaluation of the social impact of the Get into Reading initiative in Wirral, Merseyside* will be available on the Centre for Public's Health website:  
<http://www.cph.org.uk/expertise/population-health/>.



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