



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

READ AWAY DERBY

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Dr Jackie Marsh
University of Sheffield
Literacy Research Centre

With contributions from Mandy Hatton, Read On, Write Away!
and Tricia Kings, Independent Consultant.

April 2006

**READ AWAY DERBY
FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

CONTENTS

	Page No.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION	10
SECTION TWO: STATISTICAL EVIDENCE	18
SECTION THREE: OUTCOMES AND IMPACT MEASUREMENT	20
SECTION FOUR: ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST A BROADER FRAMEWORK	32
SECTION FIVE: CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS	37
SECTION SIX: FINANCIAL INFORMATION	40
SECTION SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION	41

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Read Away Derby (RAD) was a books and reading project for 'looked after' children and young people in Derby. Read Away Derby was administered by a multi-agency partnership including the Library Service, Education, Social Services, the Gatsby Project, and Teenage Pregnancy and managed by Read On, Write Away!

The project ran from 2003 to January, 2006. It was funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Gatsby Foundation and the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, with match-funding worker time from the Library Service, Education and Social Services.

Read Away Derby was one strand of the Gatsby Project. The Read Away Derby Project Group reported to the Gatsby Reference Group, which in turn reported to the Gatsby Board. Derby City's Gatsby Project began in 2000. The aim of the Gatsby project is to improve the educational attainment and life chances of children and young people in public care (and also those who have left care) and to develop sustainable strategies to ensure that these improvements can be maintained beyond 2006. The Gatsby Project promotes multi-professional working. Because of the close relationship between the work of the Gatsby project and Read Away Derby, it has not always been possible to distinguish the singular achievements of the latter. Rather, the two projects have worked successfully together, with Read Away Derby enhancing specific aspects of the Gatsby Project, those related to improving the long-term access to books and reading for looked after children and young people in Derby. It should be noted that before the start of Read Away Derby, there had already been much work undertaken by the Gatsby project, the Library Service, Education and Social Services on promoting access to books and reading for looked after children and young people in Derby and so Read Away Derby was able to build on this strong foundation.

ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT AIMS

The aims of the project were largely achieved. It is not possible to state that they were fully achieved because some of the aims were over-ambitious in scale i.e. that 'all' looked after children and young people in Derby could benefit from the project. Whilst it was right that the project aimed to make a positive impact on all looked-after children, it is inevitable, given the constraints outlined in Section 5, that this was not possible

Review of achievement of Project aims

	How far the project met this aim	Evidence
<i>To improve the long-term access to books and reading for all 'looked after' children and young people in Derby.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is greater access to a wider range of texts in most of the residential children's homes• There is increased book ownership of looked after children and young people in Derby	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers• Interview with Project Co-ordinator• Interview with Library staff

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been increased library use by looked after children and young people in Derby 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Observations in visits to residential homes
<p><i>To develop a book and reading culture for all 'looked after' children and young people in Derby - that can a) be sustained after the PHF funding has ended and b) be a model of good multi-agency practice</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book reading culture enhanced in most children's homes • Some foster carers more aware of need to develop reading culture • Long-term plans in place for continuation of elements of the project • Multi-agency practice effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Interview with Library staff • Interview with Steering Group members
<p><i>To complement and support through books and reading Derby's drive to improve the educational outcomes for children and young people in care</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project effectively complemented the work of the Gatsby Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with Gatsby Project staff • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Interview with Library staff
<p><i>To work closely with ROWA! to ensure that the lessons learned from this and the US! Project are disseminated in a national report and local conference with national representation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference planned, October 2006 • Chapter in a book to be published by key national publisher planned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference organised by the Gatsby project • Project Co-ordinator to co-write chapter with external evaluator

KEY SUCCESSES

The successes of the project are outlined in Section 3, but in this section, the key ones will be highlighted and points raised for further consideration.

Effective partnership working

The regular meetings of the Read Away Derby Project Group enabled an effective partnership of key organisations to be built up from the start of the project. The RAD project was able to build successfully on the strong corporate partnership already in place in Derby City, established through the Gatsby Project. The Read Away Derby Project Group did make strong contributions to the shaping and delivery of the project. The outcome of this is that it is possible to identify a corporate vision for the promotion of reading for looked after children and young people in Derby. There are clear shared priorities and agreement about the way forward. The project has built on the strong foundations already in place and has strengthened further the ability of the partner organisations to improve the long-term access to books and reading for looked-after children and young people in Derby.

Clear aims and objectives that were reviewed appropriately

The project began with a clear set of aims and objectives. These were then reviewed and some sensible decisions were made about achievability, given the ambitious nature of the original set of aims. Some members of the the Read Away Derby Project Group did feel that the aims of the project could have been refined further, with a focus on fewer strands (which would have enabled more frequent visits to residential homes), but the majority of respondents interviewed did feel that the strands inter-related well. This level of flexibility and reflexivity with regard to aims and objectives is necessary when working with groups with complex and changing needs and the Read Away Derby Project Group responded well to external challenges and possibilities.

Sustainability of the project built into its conception from the beginning.

The future sustainability of the project was an aspect considered by the Read Away Derby Project Group from the start of the project. The Library Service has proposed the following activities for the future. Provision for some of these activities was already in place at the start of the Read Away Derby Project.

- Linking each Children's Home with a neighbourhood library and a named library contact.
- Depositing collections of up to 25 library books in each home, to be exchanged every 6-8 weeks.
- Making promotional visits to the homes by library staff - probably undertaken at the same time as exchanging the collections.
- Magazines to be passed on to homes from libraries.
- Promotional posters and leaflets about appropriate library activities to be sent to all homes - especially information about the Summer Reading Challenge.
- Information on library activities for young people to be sent to the Fostering Unit for onward distribution to foster carers.
- Copies of the updated 'Recommended Reads' booklists - and any other relevant booklists - to be sent to homes and to the Fostering Unit.
- Maintaining the 'Reading Rocket' library bus stops at one of the homes as long as this is well used by the children.
- Librarians will continue attending the Education Workers' Forum (attended by a worker from each home) and will also continue contact with the young people's groups - KICK and Connectors.

Project design

The design of the project was sufficiently flexible to allow bespoke sessions which met the needs of individual homes. This was a recommendation from a previous ROWA! project (the US! Project), and it was a deliberate strategy of the project to build on this recommendation. Given the varied needs of the residential homes, this was a successful strategy.

Subject knowledge of Project Co-ordinator

The project was successful because of the strong subject knowledge of the original Project Co-ordinator and the temporary Project Co-ordinator who took over when the original Co-ordinator had been on sick leave for some months. Both of them had sound knowledge of children's literature and were aware of the need for the collections to include books which reflected children's own cultural interests. The original Project Co-ordinator completed a Masters dissertation on the reading practices of looked after children and young people whilst working on the project, which further enhanced her understanding of the issues.

Use of a variety of materials

The project did not just focus on books, but recognised that children and young people have a wide range of reading interests, including comics and magazines. In addition, the use of new technologies was embedded into the project, again a highly motivating area for children and young people.

Use of creative approaches

The project developed a range of creative approaches to its work. In particular, the use of one-off events to stimulate interest in books and reading was very effective, such as the 'Potty Poet' visits to residential homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following both the Internal Evaluation (November, 2005) and the Final External Evaluation (March, 2006), a number of recommendations are made.

Continuation of Partnership

The Read Away Derby Project Group has been an important driver of this project. It has also developed as a valuable forum for partners to share and exchange information. Whilst the continuation of the group as a separate forum will not be possible in the future, it is recommended that reading activities and projects continue to feature on the agenda of key strategic meetings (e.g. for Residential Educational Workers). In addition, it is recommended that the Library Service is involved in as many of these meetings as is possible in order to sustain the work of the project. In such partnership work, it is necessary for each service to make clear what its commitment to the shared goals are, setting out its aims and objectives and sharing these with other partners as appropriate.

Reading policies

Derby City does have written guidance on the education of looked after children and young people, including reference to reading materials and provision. All staff should be made aware of the policies in place and training offered to ensure that the policy can be implanted in practice.

Training for Carers and Residential Child Care Workers

RAD made a significant contribution to the training of foster carers and Residential Child Care Workers with regard to books and reading. It is recommended that the Library Service and those involved in the education of looked after children and young people in Derby continue to incorporate the reading needs of children into the regular training on education, which is already well established.

The Internal Evaluation suggested the following possible ways for building this awareness with carers:

- Making use of the Foster Caring training sessions organised through the fostering training team - e.g. libraries could do sessions on storytelling and motivating reading, sharing books, using the library
- Continuing input to the Advisory Service training for Residential Child Care Workers
- Using the link with a named librarian at each children's home to help build awareness of the value of books, reading and using the library - and thus develop reading culture in the homes
- Advocacy - to ensure that carers' senior managers are able to continue to foster an appreciation of the value of reading, and the enjoyment of reading.

Training for Children's Social Care Workers

Whilst a few Children's Social Care Workers have been trained with regard to the importance of books and reading, there is much more scope for ensuring that this training is extended.

Book collections in children's homes

As well as the library deposit collections, it is recommended that homes invest in the maintenance and refreshment of the book collections, which RAD has provided, so that young people continue to have a variety of attractive and relevant books to use and enjoy. Children's homes are therefore recommended to identify an element of their budget (perhaps a minimum of £50- £100 a year) for the regular purchase of new books and magazines. Ideally, the purchase of texts should be mainstreamed in the budgets of residential homes so that books, magazines and other reading materials are bought when needed on a regular basis.

'A Book of My Own'

It is recommended that foster carers and children's homes are encouraged to buy a minimum of two books per year for each child in their care so that they can have their own books. The arrangement whereby key workers and children/ young people buy books for each other should also be continued where possible. Whilst it is recognised that the focus should be on the purchase of books for looked after children and young people, judicious use of funds to encourage children and young people to buy books on shared interests for key workers on an occasional basis would foster greater appreciation for books and promote shared reading.

Special events

The education service for looked after children and young people will continue to collaborate with the Library Service in order to host occasional large-scale events for looked after children and their carers which celebrate reading. These could include fun activities such as author workshops.

Bookstart

From October 2005 Bookstart - the gift of a special book bag (funded by the government) - will be available for parents for their babies, through Early Years, Sure Start, clinics and libraries. LAC nurses and the Leaving Care Service are recommended to make sure that young parents they work with are able to take advantage of Bookstart.

Reading Groups

Derby Libraries runs Chatterbooks children's reading groups in several libraries. It may be possible for young people in homes to take part in these groups. Carers could also be encouraged to set up their own reading groups - libraries could provide a venue if needed, and support with books for the group to read.

Specific Project Worker

Whilst the sustainability of this work long-term can only be maintained by mainstreaming aspects of it, having a dedicated worker does mean that integration of activities across partner organisations can be more effectively co-ordinated. It is recommended that specific funding is sought for the continuation of a co-ordinator role.

Extension of Reading Rocket Project

The 'Reading Rocket' was a very popular service for the Children's Homes that used it. It was not suitable for all the homes because of the age focus of the books included on the bus, in addition to parking difficulties. It is recommended that funding for a similar facility specifically for looked after children and young people living in residential homes is sought elsewhere, with the reading material extended to include older age groups.

Abolition of Library fines

It is recommended that Derby Library services revisits its current policy not to abolish fines altogether for looked after children and young people. Whilst dealing with cases on an individual basis has been effective until now, a more permanent policy needs to be developed which will ensure parity of treatment for all.

There is now national commitment by library services to easing barriers to library book use, for children on the move. The Society of Chief Librarians has agreed to the following arrangement for 'children on the move', including looked after children, which should help with concerns about losing books from collections in homes, when young people move to different accommodation.

'Children and young people who are Travellers, looked-after or refugees/asylum-seekers - and their parents/carers - will be allowed to return library materials to any library in the UK (also without overdue charges being made), and that the library will then make arrangements to return the items to the originating library free-of-charge.'

Relationship between schools, residential homes and foster carers

It is recognised that there are many challenges in developing further the links between schools and residential homes. Teachers sometimes are not sure who the best person is to contact and staff changes in homes serve to exacerbate problems. Nevertheless, there is still work to be done in improving communication with regard to children and young people's reading development. Given the wealth of expertise schools have with regard to supporting children's reading development, more work could be done on offering homes bespoke training sessions on supporting children's reading, particularly in the area of helping children with reading difficulties to develop more positive self-esteem.

Reading spaces in homes

Whilst there have been significant developments in the reading resources and spaces offered in residential homes, there is still further work to be done in ensuring that there are attractive and quiet spaces for reading that are not always associated with homework spaces. Children and young people can use their bedrooms for this purpose, but the provision of shared, attractive reading spaces would be beneficial.

Involvement of children and young people

Because of their involvement with the project, there are now a number of young people with the skills and experience necessary for acting as role models for others, particularly in the Leaving Care Service. It is recommended that these young people are identified and drawn into future developments in the City. In particular, there are a number of young men who are active users of the Leaving Care Service who could offer valuable mentoring and support for other boys, given the concerns about boys and reading.

SUMMARY

The evidence in this report indicates that the Read Away Derby Project has been very successful. It has made a significant impact on the reading cultures of many of the residential children's homes and has increased book ownership for a large number of looked after children and young people. There is still much work to be done on raising awareness of foster carers, Residential Child Care Workers and Children's Social Care Workers of the importance of books and reading, but effective strategies are in place for these future developments. Importantly, the project has built successfully on previous work of statutory services in the development of a long-term strategy to promote reading and access to books for looked after children and young people in Derby.

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Read Away Derby (RAD) is a books and reading project for 'looked after' children and young people in Derby. Read Away Derby is administered by a multi-agency partnership including the Library Service, Education, Social Services, the Gatsby Project, and Teenage Pregnancy and managed by Read On Write Away! (ROWA!).

The project ran from September, 2003 to January, 2006. It was funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Gatsby Foundation and the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, with match-funding worker time from the Library Service, Education and Social Services.

Read Away Derby was one strand of the Gatsby Project. The Read Away Derby Project Group reported to the Gatsby Reference Group, which in turn reported to the Gatsby Board. Derby City's Gatsby Project began in 2000. The aim of the Gatsby project is to improve the educational attainment and life chances of children and young people in public care (and also those who have left care) and to develop sustainable strategies to ensure that these improvements can be maintained beyond 2006. The Gatsby Project promotes multi-professional working. Because of the close relationship between the work of the Gatsby project and Read Away Derby, it has not always been possible to distinguish the singular achievements of the latter. Rather, the two projects have worked successfully together, with Read Away Derby enhancing specific aspects of the Gatsby Project, those related to improving the long-term access to books and reading for looked after children and young people in Derby. It should be noted that before the start of Read Away Derby, there had already been much work undertaken by the Gatsby project, the Library Service, Education and Social Services on promoting access to books and reading for looked after children and young people in Derby and so Read Away Derby was able to build on this strong foundation.

Looked after children and young people were involved in naming the logo used by Read Away Derby (RAD DO READON).

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The project had four main aims:

1. To improve the long-term access to books and reading for all 'looked after' children and young people in Derby.
2. To develop a book and reading culture for all 'looked after' children and young people in Derby - that can a) be sustained after the PHF funding has ended and b) be a model of good multi-agency practice
3. To complement and support through books and reading Derby's drive to improve the educational outcomes for children and young people in care
4. To work closely with ROWA! To ensure that the lessons learned from this and the US! Project are disseminated in a national report and local conference with national representation.

Objectives were identified under six strands, detailed in Table 1:

Table 1: Objectives of the Read Away Derby Project

Strand 1. Work with foster carers and children in foster care
<i>Objectives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To help children and young people in foster care to develop their interest in literacy. ○ To encourage foster carers to interest and involve children and young people in the library. ○ To facilitate access to and ownership of books for children and young people in care. ○ To develop family placement workers' understanding of issues related to literacy and looked after children.
Strand 2: Work with young parents to be, sexually active and pre-sexually active young people
<i>Objectives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To develop specific book boxes containing a wide range of factual and fictional books about pregnancy, child birth, parenting and linked options in order to raise awareness of young parents and young people in care who are sexually active or considering sexual activity. ○ To develop workers' understanding of how these resources can be used with young parents and young people in care who are sexually active or considering sexual activity. ○ To ensure that young parents (looked after or care leavers) receive information about using the library. ○ To develop young parents' awareness of family literacy practices. ○ To encourage young parents to consider returning to accredited learning.
Strand 3: Buddy Mentors
<i>Objectives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To identify and train a number of foster carers, care leavers, residential workers and Leaving Care workers on techniques and practical ideas for engaging young people in reading, supporting them with materials in their work with 'looked after' children and young people. ○ To ensure appropriate accreditation for mentors.
Strand 4: Training/ workshops
<i>Objectives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To develop understanding of a range of practitioners who work with looked after children and young people with regard to the importance of literacy. ○ To provide practitioners with a range of strategies to promote literacy with looked after children and young people. ○ To work towards mainstreaming activities by involving statutory services e.g. library. ○ To ensure that looked after children and young people have a voice in issues regarding the training of practitioners.
Strand 5: Focused work with children's homes
<i>Objectives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To help young people in residential care to develop their interest in literacy. ○ To facilitate access to and ownership of books for children and young people in residential care. ○ To encourage residential workers to interest and involve children and young people in residential care in literacy activities and the use of the library. ○ To ensure that each children's home receives input which meets their specific needs, based on baseline assessment of these needs. ○ To provide inspirational events which promote engagement in literacy. ○ To ensure that looked after children and young people have a voice in activities that

are planned to promote literacy.
Strand 6: Books to children with disabilities
<i>Objectives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ To help children and young people with disabilities in respite care to develop their interest in literacy.○ To facilitate access to books for children and young people with disabilities in respite care.○ To develop respite care workers' understanding of issues related to literacy and looked after children.

A review of these objectives part-way through the project led to a re-focus on some of the objectives in Strand 5 and a decreased emphasis on Strand 3, given the challenges faced in implementing some of the objectives (e.g. Buddy mentors) and building on the recommendations made in a report of a previous project developed by ROWA!, the US! Project. This was a sensible decision, given that the original set of objectives had been ambitious in nature.

1.3 Management of Project

The Read Away Derby Project was managed by a Project Co-ordinator appointed by Read On - Write Away! A Derby City based Steering Group supported the Project Co-ordinator and there was quarterly reporting through the Gatsby Reference Group.¹ Because of the absence of the project coordinator through ill-health, a consultant was employed to work with the project in October 2005, making follow-up assessment visits to the children's homes and providing a training session, through the Advisory Service, for Residential Child Care Workers and foster carers.

The Steering Group met approximately every two months. It was chaired either by the Project Co-ordinator or the Principal Officer of the Education of Children Looked After. The Steering Group consisted of members from:

- Children's Library Services
- Advisory Service
- Children's Participation Officer
- Children's Residential Service Manager
- Fostering Service Manager
- Gatsby Project support officer
- Educational Psychologist
- Education Welfare Service.

1.4 External Evaluation

This Final report has been prepared by an external evaluator. Evidence collected by the evaluator included the following:

(a) *Documentary analysis*

¹ The second phase of the Gatsby Project in Derby, to improve the education and life chances for Children Looked After runs from 2003 to October 2006.

The following documents were analysed in order to inform this evaluation:

- Project Co-ordinators' reports to the Steering Group.
- Minutes of Steering Group meetings.
- Baseline assessment of provision in residential homes, prepared by the Project Co-ordinator and Children's Services Librarian.
- Interim report to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
- Letters, leaflets and posters sent to children and young people.
- Evaluation forms from training sessions.
- Evaluation notes of the Temporary Project-Worker.
- Internal Evaluation (November, 2005).
- Interview data from interviews conducted with 11 young people, undertaken by the Project Co-ordinator.

(b) Statistical analysis

Statistics relating to take-up of project initiatives and activities were accessed.

(c) Interview data

Thirty-five people were interviewed as part of the evaluation:

- Project Co-ordinator.
- Temporary Project Co-ordinator.
- 14 looked after children and young people.
- Principal Officer, Education of Children Looked After and Manager of the Gatsby Project.
- Gatsby Project Support Officer.
- Head of Children's Services, Libraries.
- Children's Services Librarian.
- Looked After Children's Nurse.
- Advisory Teacher for Looked After Children.
- Youth Participation Officer.
- Teenage Pregnancy Officer.
- Two Leaving Care Service workers.
- 3 Residential Home Managers.
- 6 Residential Child Care Workers in Children's Homes.

(d) Observational data

Field notes were constructed from observations undertaken in seven residential homes. The external evaluator observed visits by the Project Co-ordinator and library staff in which children and young people chose books both for themselves and the library collection.

An Internal Evaluation was conducted by the Project Co-ordinator and an Independent Consultant in November 2005. Where evidence collected by the external evaluator corroborated claims made in the Internal Evaluation, extracts from the Internal Evaluation Report have been used in order to avoid duplication.

1.5 Project Activity

The following activities were undertaken during the project, as outlined in the Internal Evaluation Report. These activities built on strategies and activities that were already in place at the start of the Read Away Derby Project.

Strand 1: Work with foster carers and children in foster care

- Eight book parties, held at Derby branch libraries, to which were invited all young people in foster care and their carers, and all young people in residential care. These book parties included a poet, advice to carers about reading and books, library promotion, and time with librarians. Each young person received a book, which they chose for themselves.
- Because of poor attendance it was decided in the second year to change strategy. Book tokens were sent to all young people in foster care, in a gift pack with bookmarks, information about libraries and recommended reads
- Information about books and reading was sent to fostering social workers
- At a big pantomime event run in partnership with the Foster Care Association books were given to 100 young people in care and 66 siblings.
- ROWA Bus at Pride Park offered 'Little Lost Alien' interactive computer activity for young people and their carers.
- The project was involved in planning an 'Aim Higher' transition event.
- At the Young Achievers Award, book tokens were given to young people in care and care leavers.

Strand 2: Work with young parents, parents to be, sexually active and pre-sexually active young people

The aim here was to provide books that would inform and help develop emotional literacy and reduce the likelihood of unwanted pregnancies.

- Facts and Feelings collections were put in each of the children's homes - the workers keep these and use with young people on a one to one basis.
- A collection was also given to the fostering team.
- A more extensive collection was given to the LAC nurses to use across the homes and with young people in foster care.
- A Facts and Feelings collection was also given to the Leaving Care Service for workers to give to young parents
- The LAC nurse spent time with the Leaving Care Service, social workers, and the fostering and adoption team, and the Residential Educational Forum meeting, to talk through the use of the Facts and Feelings books
- In order to encourage young parents in care or who have recently left care with their reading, and to share books with their children, book collections were put in the Leaving Care Service centre. There is now an active book-borrowing system in the centre, set up and managed by one of the workers, and refreshed and funded by the centre. Encouragement is given to boys and young men to participate equally in this
- Basic Skills Agency 'Speaking and listening guides' were put into backpacks for young parents. It was decided not to do separate RAD sessions with them, as it would be more inclusive for young people to access mainstream provision e.g. mother and baby groups in their local community

- To help young parents in keeping up with their studies, support was available e.g. through ROWA courses - but not taken up through this project.

Strand 3: Books and reading mentors

There was no activity to develop mentor training. It was decided that it was more important first to find ways to inspire and support carers' positive attitude to encouraging young people in their reading. See section on Training/workshop days.

Strand 4: Training/workshop days

It was decided not to run whole day multi-agency workshops because of difficulties in staff being available for a whole day and at the same time. . Instead, the project focused on the strategy of identifying training opportunities appropriate to complement other strands, and to take into account needs of specific groups. A key aim in this activity was to improve practice and corporate approaches to developing a reading culture for looked after young people.

The following training was therefore delivered:

- 2 x 1/2 day multi-agency workshops for foster carers and Residential Child Care Workers: here a range of sessions were offered covering ways to encourage reading, education issues (exclusion, placement info etc), information about using the library
- Session for respite foster carers, held in conjunction with the Toy library
- 2 ICT courses for foster carers - and for a Residential Child Care Worker on extra time who would then cascade to workers in other homes: this was done in one home, but the worker was then on long term sickness. An ideal option here, suggested by Social Services, would be a programme of training offered across the homes.
- 2 ICT sessions in 2 children's homes
- Attendance by the project coordinator and the senior children's librarian at children's homes team meetings and Residential Education Forum meetings to disseminate information about project activity - and consult with partners about best ways of delivery
- Input into Advisory Service training for foster carers, and social workers: a project consultant provided a session on books and enjoying reading.

Strand 5: Focused work with children's homes: incorporating 'A Book of my own' and activities about books and reading

A wide range of activity included:

- Initial benchmark assessment of resources in homes.
- Book collections to the value of c£100 put in each home.
- Book parties in the libraries - with poet Mark Gwynne Jones; also an event organised at a pantomime, with the Foster Carers Association

- Book tokens to foster carers - mailing each year, as described above; also given at workshop event, to use at own discretion.
- Opportunity for young people to choose their own book on a visit to supplier, or to have book tokens - young people also helped choose the collections for the homes.
- Buddy book buying scheme - book tokens for young people to choose book for themselves and book for key worker.
- Book tokens for prizes at Young Achievers Awards.
- Visits to homes by RAD project staff and librarians - informal talking with young people about their reading and opportunities to choose books.
- The Big Flick: a selection of magazines sent to each home.
- Potty Poet sessions in 6 out of 7 homes.
- Bus activities at Pride Park including an opportunity for young people to receive a book of their own.
- Storytelling sessions by librarians visiting homes. Librarians also encouraged young people to visit the library, and talked with carers about ways of displaying and making available books in the homes.
- Reading Rocket mobile library stops at 2 of the homes - this will continue.
- Libraries Summer Reading Challenge promoted in homes.
- Carers encouraged to read to children - this already happened in some homes, especially with younger children, and is now developing in other homes. In one home with older children the carer reads newspaper pieces for discussion with young people.
- Bookplates and ROWA bookmarks given with the gift books.

Strand 6: Books to disabled children

It was very difficult to make contact with Family Support Centre for disabled children, as the centre was due to close during the project. Various attempts to make contact were unsuccessful, as Centre staff were unsure as to when the Centre would be moving premises. The Library Service has now arranged to visit the new premises to provide support for library use and to set up a book loan system.

1.6 Young people's involvement in the project

Despite invitations at meetings with the children in the homes, and through the newsletter for young people in care, there was no take-up from young people to join/contribute to a consultation group. It was decided, therefore, to use groups already in existence for consultation; the KICK group- young people aged 12+, and the Connectors group for 12 and under.

Activities to which young people contributed included:

- Visiting book suppliers to choose books for collections.
- Talking with staff and librarians about the books they would like.
- Consultation when visiting homes, about favourite magazines to inform provision.

- A young person attended the first fostering ½ day workshop to talk about her perspectives on education (done informally, talking with small groups of carers, RCCWs and service deliverers).
- Visits to meet with the above groups of young people and talk with them about the project and their reading - and get their ideas.
- Consultation opportunity through Focus on Us newsletter - though not taken up.

A total of fourteen children and young people looked after were consulted as part of the final external evaluation.

SECTION TWO: STATISTICAL EVIDENCE

2.1 Children and young people

Table 2: Total number of children and young people taking part in activities

<i>Activity</i>	<i>No. of Young People</i>
Book Parties	8 (+ 8 private), (7 foster care, 1 residential care)
Foster Care Association event	166 (96 foster care, 4 residential care, 66 siblings)
Bus IT - October	13 (residential care)
Bus IT - February	17 (7 private care, 5 foster care, 5 residential care)
Try IT out together ICT activity in 2 children's homes	9
½ day foster care training event	1 (from Leaving Care)
ICT training for foster carers (Laptop Lingo)	1
Potty Poet sessions in children's homes	20
Book selection for children's homes	9
Interviews with Project Co-ordinator and Library staff to discuss reading attitudes and choices	11
	Total - 263

Young people have also participated in informal visits to children's homes from project co-ordinator and librarians.

2.2 Carers

Table 3: Total number of carers taking part in activities and training

i) Activities

<i>Activity</i>	<i>No. of Adults</i>
Book Parties	4 (1 private)
Bus IT - October	8
Bus IT - February	8
Try IT out together	5
Potty Poet sessions	12
Book selections for children's homes	6
Baseline assessment of children's homes resources	7
	Total - 51

ii) Training

<i>Activity</i>	<i>No. of Adults</i>
½ day foster care training event	10
½ day foster care training event	23
Laptop Lingo	9
Laptop Lingo	8
Workshop for respite foster carers with Toy Library	4
Reading workshop with Advisory Service	5
	Total - 59

2.3 Books/ vouchers distributed

Table 4: Total number of books/vouchers distributed through 'Book of my own'

<i>Activity</i>	<i>No. of Books/Vouchers</i>
Book Parties	12 (10 foster care, 2 residential care)
Foster Care Association	Young People in public care - 96 foster care, 4 residential care 66 to relatives of foster carers
Young Achievers Awards	28 to Young People in residential care 37 to Young People in foster care 29 to care leavers
Book tokens to young people in foster care	462 (160 were provided by Gatsby Project)
Books distributed through consultants visits	94 Young people in residential care
Book Buddy Scheme (4 tokens for each young person distributed in 2 children's homes)	48 tokens
	Total - 828

SECTION THREE: OUTCOMES AND IMPACT MEASUREMENT

In this section, qualitative evidence from the Internal and External Evaluations is used to measure impact of the project on: looked after children and young people; Residential Child Care Workers; foster carers; Read Away Derby Project Group members.. The claims made in the following section do not apply to all of the people in these groups in Derby, as it was not possible to reach all looked after children and carers for the reasons outlined in Section 5, but represent the views of those of have taken part in events and activities during the project. Where relevant, comments from children, young people and adults interviewed have been used to illustrate key points. It should be noted that where such comments appear, they are not atypical, but have been chosen because they represent a number of similar responses.

3.1 Key outcomes for children and young people

3.1.1 *Reading practices*

The project had a very positive impact of the reading habits of many of the looked after children and young people who were given books of their own. Children and young people themselves reported that they had read (and re-read) the books they had been given. The children and young people who were interviewed stated that they enjoyed receiving a book of their own because, as one young girl suggested, *"You can read it again and again and again"*. The majority of children owned very few books of their own and so the project had made a significant impact on the level of book ownership.

The amount of individual reading children undertook varied from individual to individual, with boys were more likely to state that they did not read very often. The children and young people reported reading more frequently since the start of the project, although there were a significant minority of children who reported that they still read very little, despite the enhanced resources. Children stated that they generally read in their bedrooms, as it was difficult to find quiet spaces to read in the homes. Staff commented that they felt that this was a good sign: *"They're actually taking some of the books away and we're finding them in their rooms, that's says something, doesn't it, if you find them in their rooms?"*

The children and young people had liked the range of texts on offer and were very appreciative of the magazines. The project had been aware of the need to ensure that children and young people were engaged with appropriate material and so the inclusion of sessions on computers (on the IT bus) were very popular and had enhanced the participants' IT skills. These notes made by the temporary Project Co-ordinator (an external consultant brought in due to original Project Co-ordinator's sick leave) indicate how well children responded to current titles:

On the second visit three boys and one girl chose books for themselves. One girl was keen on the *Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* - which I didn't have with me but she was happy with *Tin Grin* and *Bend it like Beckham*. The boys were more cautious about choosing and had to be encouraged more. They generally choose digest -sized graphic novels (*Ravemaster*, *Predator*, *Teen Titans*) which had characters that could be seen in films or on TV or

Barrington Stoke books...Whilst the boys were reluctant, they were pleased with their choices and some started reading immediately. The care worker said, "They do enjoy reading. They'll read them in bed on a night." They were keen to own books rather than borrow them from the library. The girl said, " I like to read them again and again. Like these you've given us. That's why I want a copy of the *Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, so I can read it again and again."

There was evidence that the reading material had helped with the development of children and young people's 'emotional literacy', in that children in interviews mentioned the effects of reading on stress ("*It calms you down*") and the benefits of reading about events and issues that related to their own situations (*Tracey Beaker* novels by Jacqueline Wilson being a particular favourite for this reason). For one young boy, reading books had helped him come to terms with his mother's death. In addition, the 'Facts and Feelings' collections, books which enabled children to gain information about and reflect on sexual health and other health and lifestyle issues, had been well used by many of the young people in the homes.

There was little interaction between the children and young people about their reading, as few reported that they discussed books with each other. The children and young people generally stated that they did not talk to Residential Child Care Workers about their reading, nor did the staff act as reading models., although there was good practice in this regard in some of the homes. Three managers of residential homes and two Residential Child Care Workers who took part in interviews had good knowledge of children's literature, were regular readers themselves and talked about books with children and young people. There is further work to be done on developing communities of readers in all residential homes. In two homes, key workers and young people had been given book vouchers to take to a local bookshop in order to obtain books for each other. This was an innovative strategy which could be usefully extended.

One of the most successful aspects of the project was the way in which young people were involved in choosing selections. Those who had been involved in choosing selections of books from the bookshop were very appreciative of the opportunity to do this and felt that it had given them a chance to have a voice. The external evaluator also observed a number of sessions in which children and young people in the residential homes were asked to choose the library books which would be brought into the home once the RAD project ended. They did this with enthusiasm and sensitivity to the interests of others.

Some children and young people were involved in numerous strands of the project, which enhanced their experience of it. The Project Co-ordinator offered this case study:

One particular young person was involved in the project in a variety of ways and was able to use a selection of books, both fiction and non-fiction. I first met this young woman in one of the residential children's homes during one of my visits to talk about books and reading. I spent time with her and was able to involve her in discussions about what would be appropriate choices of books to bring into the children's homes.

In discussing her attitudes to reading she showed she was a versatile consumer of a variety of reading materials. This young woman enjoyed reading, particularly poetry and her favourite book at that time was 'Tracey Beaker'. She had also enjoyed reading adult fiction, particularly 'Lovely Bones'. As part of the discussion she recommended a selection of titles of favourite magazines. This was very useful and informed project activity as I was able to send out an appropriate selection of magazines to the children's homes following her recommendations.

During our discussion she also made recommendations about what sort of books young people might like to have on the book shelves in the children's homes, these included the Tracey Beaker books; other Jacqueline Wilson books; the Harry Potter books; thrillers; poetry books and short stories. When I made the selection of books for the children's home I was able to include these books, along with other recommendations from other young people. I also used this as a guideline for providing books to other children's homes and the Leaving Care Service.

I next met this young woman at the Leaving Care Service when I delivered their selection of books and as she was there she opened the box to see what I had brought. Her immediate reaction was one of enthusiasm and was pleased to see some of the books she had suggested. Her response was: '*Hey, these are all the ones that I chose. I told you to get these.*'

At a later stage in the project, this young person became pregnant and had input from the Looked After Children's nurse, who was able to use some of the Facts and Feelings books with her. The fictional books in particular were the 'Megan' series and the practical books were also useful. This young person particularly used 'The Rough Guide to Teenage Pregnancy', which she used on a daily basis as a reference book, like a dictionary, to follow the stages of her pregnancy and look up the terms used in her antenatal appointments. After the birth of her baby she was given a backpack, which included books for the baby, a fictional book for the mum, a first year calendar and a practical book on parenting for the first months.

This indicates the value of the interwoven strands in that children and young people had the opportunity to engage in various aspects of the project according to their circumstances.

3.1.2 Use of resources in residential homes

At the start of the project, there was great variability between homes in relation to the reading cultures and resources, with strong cultures in some homes and weak provision in others. A review of resources at the beginning of the project highlighted that the resources in many of the residential homes were out of date and not well used. Whilst provision varied, and resources in three of the homes were generally of good quality, the other homes visited did contain outdated and inappropriate material. One of the library staff who visited the homes commented that:

When we first went in we looked at the books that they did have and quite frankly, they were awful. ..I wouldn't want to read them, they looked old,

they looked dirty and they looked horrible and the kids wouldn't have read them, you know, a knitting book from 1960.

This situation had changed by the end of the project. Many of the homes visited in the final months of the project had more up-to-date collections that were displayed in an attractive manner, as this report from the Project Co-ordinator suggests:

Towards the end of the project, further visits were made to look at the impact the books had made and track the progress on the recommendations. In one home there was already a very strong reading culture and the young people had attended the book selection. The books were displayed well and were freely accessible to the young people and staff took an active part in supporting reading. On the follow up visits it was found that the books had been used widely and were in the children's bedrooms. Staff had also been able to select and use books on an individual basis to deal with personal issues, in one case issues around death of a relative. Arrangements had been made for the children's mobile library to park near the children's home every two weeks and it was evident that this was used regularly as the library staff were on first name terms with the young people.

In another home the books were kept in the corner on a shelf and many of the books were old and tatty with torn spines. On the follow up visits there was evidence of the new books displayed on a bookcase in the dining room, with the old books removed. The books were also displayed individually, standing face forward. Further visits showed that the presentation titles had been changed and rotated. Staff were also more aware of appropriate books for the young people and had taken on board ideas for engaging young people in reading activities.

Similar progress had been made in other homes with evidence of books displayed on bookshelves facing forwards, books freely accessible around the home and staff more positive about reading activities. Staff also seemed more informed about relevant book choices for young people and commented on the impact of training sessions.

This was a pattern also observed by the external evaluator. However, there were still a few homes that contained age-inappropriate and/ or old books on the shelves towards the end of the project, mixed in with the new collections. There is obviously still work to do with this minority in terms of emphasising how the resources should be displayed and promoted.

This enhancement of resources had led to increased use by children and young people, as noted by the staff in many homes:

I've had good feedback because some of the books that they've brought, they've really took to them and they've actually engaged in reading them...they're more interested that they were before, anyway.

We had bookcases before, but they were very much outdated...They're interested now because they're more graphic and more 'comicky'-looking.

3.1.3 Use of Library

Staff in many of the homes reported that they visited the library with children and young people more regularly since the start of the project. In some homes, this was a regular event, in others it was organised as requested by the children and young people themselves. The use of incentives such as vouchers for free CD and DVD loans were successful in enticing young people to the library.

There were a number of instances in which the fines that young people had accrued prevented them from going to the library. When these instances were raised with the Children's Services Librarian, the fines were waived and the young people were able to re-join the library. Accumulating large fines appeared to be a regular occurrence for, as one young person who was a care leaver said, "*I lived in children's homes and when you move from one children's home to the other, things get stolen and lost and stuff.*"

Nevertheless, overall there was evidence that many children and young people were using the library more often. The 'Reading Rocket' bus visited a few of the children's homes and this was well used by them. Children and young people stated that they preferred using the bus rather than going to the library, as it was less intimidating.

Summary

Looked after children and young people have:

- Developed a more positive attitude towards reading and libraries.
- Greater access to a range of reading material.
- Increased satisfaction from owning more books.
- Increased use of public libraries.
- Enhanced reading and IT skills.
- Found support and inspiration in books to help with difficult situations.
- Used books to find information out about health and sexual health issues.
- Contributed to planning services and selecting stock through informal discussion at events and one-to-one interviews as part of the project.

3.2 Key outcomes for young parents and care leavers

The books about pregnancy had been very useful when working with young teenage mothers, some of whom had used the books to find out about what was happening at each stage of their pregnancy. The books about being teenage mothers had enabled the girls to feel less isolated, as indicated in an interview with a care leaver:

I borrowed loads, they were brilliant. Oh, there were those ones about being pregnant and it was like reading my own life back, it was so good. When you're going through things as a teenage mum ...you think that you must be the only one feeling stressed and depressed and feeling the things that you feel but reading that book it was actually a true story about a girl's actual experience and it was just ever thing that I felt about hospital and the way people look at you when you're a teenage mum and how at first you might feel a bit trapped until you get used to it, but it was really good...I couldn't put it down.

The backpacks for young parents, which contained a range of material for both parents and children, had been very popular and well used. These were supplemented by the collection of books for babies kept by the Leaving Care Service:

We sit down and read, she loves them. We've got a few books, we've not got that many, but the ones in there are really cool as well because whenever we come down here, she'll go and sit and have a read, so I can chill out

The Leaving Care Service had been particularly successful at engaging care leavers in reading. They had developed a library of their own and felt that the project had enabled them to extend their provision in meaningful ways. The team were in the process of seeking bilingual resources for the refugee and asylum seekers who attended the centre. Their provision was helped by the fact that the workers were passionate and knowledgeable about reading and so offered good role models to the care leavers. In addition, they had helped many young people to join the local library and suggested that being allowed to place the centre as a contact address might help more of their users to meet the library membership requirements.

Summary

Young parents and care leavers have:

- Developed more positive attitudes to reading and libraries.
- Extended their use of libraries.
- Used and enjoyed sharing books more often with their own children, where relevant.
- Used books as a source of information about pregnancy and parenting, where relevant.
- Found books helpful in addressing feelings of isolation.

3.3 Key outcomes for foster carers

The book parties held towards the beginning of the project had been successful in developing foster carers' knowledge about the library and the importance of fostering looked after children and young people's reading habits, although attendance was lower than anticipated. The project then made the sensible decision to offer targeted events which mapped on to provision by other Steering Group partners. The subsequent training sessions for foster carers were very successful in raising the profile of reading. Because of the close work with the Gatsby Project and the Foster Carers' Social Workers team, it is difficult to separate out the specific successes of the RAD project in some of the events that took place, but the effective partnership between these groups meant that the training and provision had been relevant and well-received.

Foster carers had also appreciated the 'Laptop Lingo' IT courses, and reported that they had enhanced their confidence with computers:

I have bought a computer and feel it has boosted my self-esteem. I really enjoy working on a computer now. I hope that there will be follow-up courses,

This increased confidence will, it is hoped, impact on foster carers' support of looked after children and young people's engagement with computers,

Summary

Foster carers have:

- Become more aware of the value of books and reading for young people- including the importance of reading for enjoyment.
- Become more aware of the range of books and reading materials available for young people.
- Gained confidence in the use of computers,

3.4 Key outcomes for Residential Child Care Workers

3.4.1 Awareness and attitudes

The project had a positive impact on many of the staff in the residential children's homes. They reported that the project had raised their awareness of the importance of reading for looked after children and young people:

We've become more aware of it, particularly with the books that we're getting, The books are better.

The fact that the project had focused on bringing books and reading material to children and young people had been a successful factor, in workers' opinions:

The idea of giving books to children in care is really good. ..It comes to them, it encourages reading. If it is something that they're not interested in doing, they're not going to want to go out to it. If you got someone coming in and putting it on a plate, then you've got a good chance.

For some workers, the project had raised their awareness of the potential place of reading in the children and young people's daily lives:

For me it made me more aware of the fact that the kids have now got the books, so if they're saying to me, "Oh, I am bored", you can say to them "You've been given a book, why don't you go and read that?"

Staff who had attended training sessions reported positively on the impact that this had had on their subject knowledge, attitudes and confidence with regard to promoting reading. However, two of the six residential staff interviewed expressed negative attitudes towards reading. For example, one worker said, "If the kids want to do it, they'll do it and if they don't they won't." The Project Co-ordinator suggested that the enthusiasm of children and young people on the visits sometimes challenged these negative attitudes:

When you go in with a box of books and you see the interest of the young people, diving in and choosing them and yet, they'd probably said, "Oh, I'm not bothered, I don't want to read, I don't like books," but they actually do and I think that surprised some of the workers

There were staff who did not read for pleasure themselves and who therefore did not see that it was an important area to focus on with children and young people.

Two staff felt that the children had enough to deal with and that other things took priority. When staff were enthusiastic readers themselves, this appeared to have an impact on the reading culture of the homes:

Personally, by example, I think, they'll pick that up from me because I am an avid reader and love reading books... A love of reading is something that can be observed and kids will think, "Am I missing something here? She seems to be enjoying that, I'll have a look." But some of the staff don't read at all.

Often, the reading cultures of individual residential homes were strongly influenced by passionate readers, such as the worker interviewed here. There were three residential homes that were positively influenced by the strong reading culture promoted by the managers, who were committed to the place of reading and education in looked after children and young people's lives and did all that they could to promote it. Whilst having Residential Child Care Workers who have positive attitudes to reading does have an impact on other staff, the strongest effects can be gained by managers who are in a stronger position to influence reading cultures.

3.4.2 Policies and cultures

There was variability among residential homes in terms of the reading cultures and the implementation of council policies. Whilst many of the homes had made efforts to display resources attractively because of the guidance given by the Project co-ordinator and Library Services, there were often no designated areas for quiet reading in the homes, other than homework spaces (which become associated with schoolwork and not necessarily reading for pleasure). Where this had been raised as a possibility, developments had been hampered by staff changes:

At [name of home] when I first went, they were going to have a story room and they were going to decorate it but the lady who told me that, I have never seen again and I don't know if she's there or she's left.

In homes that had senior managers who were committed to the promotion of reading, there was more general awareness and positive attitudes amongst other staff.

3.4.3. Training

Residential Child Care Workers who had received training on promoting reading felt that this had been very beneficial:

Staff in here would definitely benefit from that because I came away even from that hour session with a different focus. The kind of books that were on offer, I didn't even know about the books that were on offer, these high interest books.

One worker suggested that staff would be more open to such training once current requirements for workers to gain NVQs had been met. Other staff felt that they would welcome more specific training on helping children who had reading difficulties:

[would like to develop] ...our own personal knowledge - what books do we get for this young person? What is he getting out of this book? What can he get from it? What can we get from it? The reading age thing - it's difficult for us to pick up, what is a young person's reading age. We're not really trained for that sort of thing. How much is he bluffing to get to be getting away from things? "I can't be bothered with this tonight." Well, what is he trying to hide, what is he saying in that? And it's the skill of picking that up.

Where staff had received training on the promotion of reading, the extent to which this had permeated the residential home depending on the existing reading culture of the home.

3.4.4 Liaison with schools

The majority of Residential Child Care Workers reported that they would have liked more extensive contacts with schools with regard to the reading behaviours and progress of reading. As one worker stated:

We have a young lad who struggles with his reading at secondary school. We don't get huge amounts of help from the school.

Workers indicated that they would welcome both written advice and guidance and personal contacts with schools.

Summary

Residential Child Care Workers have:

- Become more aware of the value of books and reading for young people- including the importance of reading for enjoyment.
- Become more aware of the range of books and reading materials available for young people.
- Found that sharing books and reading more in the home has provided more opportunities for children to work with staff on a more individual level.
- Developed confidence in supporting young people's ICT use.

3.5 Key outcomes for Library Staff

The library staff reported that the project had sharpened their focus on the needs of looked after children and young people. Staff were asked how far the Library Service were already committed to this area before the start of the project:

I suspect that we weren't particularly committed as such... although we were very aware of social inclusion ideas and the whole agenda, we weren't really doing any particular focused work with looked after children. Certainly, I don't think we'd visited any of the homes, we didn't really have any links with any of the foster carers, either. So it was only those young people just happened to come into the library to join in with...something else that we were putting on and something would just happen to come up that they were looked after children, that we'd know. I

think that has increased a lot. From my own point of view and I think also from my team, the raising awareness, the raising of skills, in order to be able to develop relationships with those young people and assess their needs and work with them, and look at a much more socially inclusive way of working, I think that over the two to three years, we've really extended our way of working and become a lot more aware of it and I think that's been a real benefit to the service and really links in to the rest of the aims and objectives that we have.

For some library staff, realising the daily challenges faces by looked after children and young people provided significant learning opportunities:

From my point of view, seeing how these children, what they have to cope with because I didn't know before, and seeing just how hard a life it is for them and realising how difficult it is for them to live a normal life in these conditions.

Overall, library staff reported that the service was now much more aware of the needs of looked after children and young people and the service had developed good relationships with many of the residential homes. There was, inevitably, still work to do. One member of staff suggested that not all staff were fully aware of the range of initiatives happening to ensure social inclusion:

I think that's one of the problems, because we've got so many initiatives going on in the city for all sorts of reasons, refugees, travellers, homeless; all with this view of making it as easy for them to come to the library as possible without asking questions and having to point out who's who, that staff don't really know everything that's going on...

Despite this, the Library Service had made great progress during the life of the project in raising awareness of the needs of looked after children and young people and had made a range of plans for sustaining the work of the project once funding had ended (see Section 7.2.3).

Summary

Library service staff have:

- Become more aware of services to and the needs of children looked after.
- Become more skilled and confident in work with looked after children.
- Developed partnerships and relationships between libraries and homes/ care staff/ looked after children.
- Developed closer contacts with looked after young people, helping them to make the Library Service more responsive to their needs

3.6 Key outcomes for Partnership Development

The Read Away Derby Project Group provided an opportunity to bring together a range of partners to work together on a focused issue. Members of various services indicated that this had been beneficial in enhancing their working relationships with others:

It's helped our people develop partnerships with other organisations, particularly the education service... I think it's brought us into more contact with people in social services, particularly people in the fostering care unit, people in the homes, but just generally other people who just seem to be attached... the meetings that I go to, for example, there's the nurse who's available for looked after children and sports and leisure, which we've not had too much to deal with.

This work built on the strong partnership already in place through the Gatsby Project. For those services focused on the education of looked after children and young people, the RAD project had offered valuable extra support for their aims:

This project has brought a lot of other people into the scenario...It's been like another pair of hands, bringing someone in who is not part of the main team.

The close relationship between some of the partner organisations did mean that in some areas, joint ownership of outcomes could be claimed. For example, the work of the Gatsby Project and RAD overlapped in a number of areas and, because RAD worked through an existing structure, many aspects of the project relied on this partnership for their success.

The specific expertise that the Project Co-ordinator and external consultant brought with them was greatly appreciated by partner organisations. Having a worker specifically focused on this area was valuable because, for most other organisations, promoting the reading of looked after children and young people was only one element of their work:

We've got that many priorities ...that all that side of it is just another and I think some see it as a very big part of what we do, but it's smaller.

[the project Co-ordinator] had the time to actually work a lot more with libraries than I would have had as only part of the bigger project

The varied interests of members of the Read Away Derby Project Group did mean that some would have liked to have seen slightly different emphases in the project itself. For example, one member of the group felt that there should have been more focused work on residential homes rather than some of the other strands, but this view would not have been shared by other partner organisations who had interests in other strands. Another member felt that the project should have focused a little more on basic reading skills, but this was not an aim of the project. Overall, members of the Read Away Derby Project were overwhelmingly positive about the impact of the project and, whilst recognising that there was much more work to do, felt that it had helped to shift the ground with regard to the reading practices of looked after children and young people in Derby and had built on the strong foundation already in place in order to offer a platform for future work.

The project had clearly contributed to the development of a corporate culture around the promotion of reading and the work of the Read Away Project Group had been instrumental in this. The close relationship between RAD and the Gatsby Project, with the Gatsby Project taking responsibility for the administration of the, Read Away Project Group had benefited the work of both organisations and offers a good model for other projects of this nature.

Summary

Steering group partners have:

- Developed good working relationships.
- Developed knowledge about the work of partner organisations.
- Developed a better understanding of the issues relating to working with looked after children and young people.
- Developed a strong basis for supporting future work in Derby amongst the partners.

SECTION FOUR: ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST A BROADER FRAMEWORK

The Read Away Derby Project has contributed to a number of national priorities, as outlined in Tables 5 to 9.

4.1 Every Child Matters

‘Every Child Matters’ sets out five key outcomes for children and young people’s well-being and achievement. These are mapped against the project outcomes in Table 5.

Table 5: Every Child Matters

Every Child Matters Outcomes	Project outcomes	Evidence
<p>Be healthy <i>Physically healthy</i> <i>Mentally and emotionally healthy</i> <i>Sexually healthy</i> <i>Healthy lifestyles</i> <i>Choose not to take illegal drugs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people enjoyed enhanced mental and emotional well-being through engagement with books and magazines • Young people enhanced awareness of healthy and sexually healthy lifestyles choices through the ‘Facts and Feelings’ collections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers
<p>Stay safe <i>Safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation</i> <i>Safe from accidental injury and death</i> <i>Safe from bullying and discrimination</i> <i>Safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school</i> <i>Have security, stability and are cared for</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with some of the books encouraged young people to consider safety issues (e.g. consequences of anti-social behaviour, keeping physically safe from injury) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers
<p>Enjoy and achieve <i>Ready for school</i> <i>Attend and enjoy school</i> <i>Achieve stretching national educational standards at primary school</i> <i>Achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation</i> <i>Achieve stretching national educational standards at secondary school</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people achieved personal and social development through engagement with books and magazines • Children and young people enjoyed reading for recreational purposes, both in homes and libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Observations in visits to residential homes
<p>Make a positive contribution <i>Engage in decision-making and support the community and environment</i> <i>Engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school</i> <i>Develop positive relationships and choose not to bully and discriminate</i> <i>Develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges</i> <i>Develop enterprising behaviour</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people involved in decision-making (choosing books for collections) • Young children conscious of need for positive behaviour on library visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers, Children’s Services Librarian • Observations in visits to residential homes

<p><i>Achieve economic well-being</i> <i>Engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school</i> <i>Ready for employment</i> <i>Live in decent homes and sustainable communities</i> <i>Access to transport and material goods</i> <i>Live in households free from low income</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people offered the opportunity to reassess the impact of books, reading and libraries in their lives e.g. in terms of education, knowledge, personal development, future employment opportunities • Children and young people more likely to join the library (which may impact on engagement in education and employment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Interview with Library staff
---	---	---

4.2 Framework for the future

‘Framework for the Future’ (2003) outlines the government’s vision for libraries in the next ten years. It identifies three areas of activity that should be at the heart of libraries’ modern mission’ (p7). These are outlined in Table 6 and mapped against project outcomes.

Table 6: Framework for the future

	Project outcomes	Evidence
<i>The promotion of reading and informal learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people more aware of the enjoyment and achievement to be attained from reading • Children and young people engaged in informal learning with some text choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Interview with Library staff
<i>Access to digital skills and services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced access to computers and related activities through project activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with Project C-ordinator
<i>Measures to tackle social exclusion, build community identity and develop citizenship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people engaged in a range of activities which developed citizenship and reduced social exclusion e.g. library visits, visits to book shops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Interview with Library staff

4.3 Inspiring Learning for All

The project outcomes can be mapped against the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) of the ‘Inspiring Learning for All’ framework of the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council.

Table 7: Inspiring Learning for All

	Project outcomes	Evidence
<i>GLO 1: Increase in knowledge and understanding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people enhanced their knowledge of library stock and services • Children and young people enhanced knowledge and understanding in areas addressed by the books and magazines they read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Interview with Leaving Care Service workers • Observations in visits to residential homes
<i>GLO 2: Increase in skills: intellectual, practical, professional</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people developed their book-choosing skills • Children and young people developed social skills and confidence e.g. interacting with each other and library staff and visiting poet; joining the library; collaborative working in activities • Children and young people developed literacy and ICT skills through project activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Observations in visits to residential homes
<i>GLO 3: Change in attitudes or values</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people developed a more positive attitude towards reading and libraries • Some of texts encouraged greater reflection on ethical issues or moral dilemmas • Reading enhanced 'emotional literacy' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Leaving Care Service workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator
<i>GLO 4: Evidence of enjoyment, inspiration and creativity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people enjoying reading more • Children and young people more motivated to read • Children and young people engaged in creative activities e.g. with visiting poet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Observations in visits to residential homes
<i>GLO 5: Evidence of activity, modification of behaviour, progression</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people enjoyed access to a wider range of books • Children and young people owning more books • Children and young people more likely to join the library • Children and young people borrowing more books from the library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Interview with Library staff • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Observations in visits to residential homes

4.4 Shared priorities

'Shared priorities' (2002) identify aspects of public policy on which central and local government have agreed to work together. The project contributed to two of the priorities.

Table 8: Shared Priorities

	Project outcomes	Evidence
<i>Improving the quality of life of children, young people and families at risk (...by maximising the life chances of children in care)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of life for looked after children and young people enhanced through provision of books and magazines • Children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Interview with Library staff • Observations in visits to residential homes
<i>Promoting healthier communities and narrowing health inequalities (...by the encouragement of healthier lifestyles)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people encouraged to develop healthier and sexually healthy lifestyles through the 'Facts and Feelings' collections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Leaving Care Service workers

4.5 Start with the Child

'Start with the Child' (2002) is the report of the CILIP Working Group on library provision for children and young people. The project outcomes can be mapped against the five key areas for successful library provision for children and young people identified in that report.

Table 9: Start with the Child

	Project outcomes	Evidence
<i>Literacy and learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people and carers more aware of the Library Service's contribution to literacy and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers
<i>Appropriate environment and services</i>	Services appropriate for needs e.g. visits by library staff to children's homes; use of 'Reading Rocket' bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Library staff
<i>Services that are relevant and responsive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library staff aware of reading interests and needs of young people • Fines waived when necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with Library staff • Interview with Project Co-ordinator
<i>Appropriate help for children and young people and those who support them</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services targeted at specific needs of looked after children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with Library staff • Interview with Project

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant advice given to Residential Child Care Workers 	Co-ordinator
<i>Support from the community at large to use and benefit from the services</i>	Work of Steering Group effective in ensuring the Library Service meets needs of looked after children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with Library staff • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Interview with Steering Group members

SECTION FIVE: CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS

In this section, reflections from the Internal Evaluation and observations of the External Evaluator are combined in order to outline some of the challenges and problems faced during the project.

5.1 Maintaining ongoing contact with children and young people

The realities of life for many looked after children and young people mean that establishing and maintaining contact did not always go smoothly. Nevertheless, as stated in the Internal Evaluation, 'It is necessary to be conscious that for these young people every contact matters and the person visiting should be aware of how important that one visit can be to individual young people. One worker highlighted that when working with children in children's homes, "*We work with challenging young people with a range of difficulties and what we achieve for individuals is significant.*" The project was successful in ensuring that each visit was meaningful for individuals.

Projects need to ensure that sufficient time is built in at the beginning for establishing contacts. Even after several visits, the staff and children in residential homes may have moved on and so maintaining contacts can be challenging. In addition, there needs to be understanding of the complex rotas and shift patterns of workers in homes, so that expectations are not developed around regular contact. In this project, the Project Co-ordinator did manage to establish working relationships with at least two workers in each residential home, often the manager and one other, and built up relationships with a number of children and young people over the life of the project. A particularly successful strategy was the temporary employment of a library worker who also worked as a relief carer in the children's homes. This gave the delivery of project work the advantage of the familiarity the worker had with the young people and staff.

Sensitivity to issues involved in visiting residential homes is necessary. Homes have many visitors from a variety of agencies and this can sometimes create clashes of commitments, in addition to children and young people feeling potentially resentful about receiving more visitors into their home environment. As one worker commented, making visits to children's homes, "*Demands resilience, patience and tolerance, they are not always settled environments.*" The Project Co-ordinator had to demonstrate flexibility on a number of occasions throughout the project.

Work shift patterns make continuity, regular contact, and arranging visits and activities difficult. Even though pre-arranged, other external factors have overridden events making the planning of activities and visits difficult. The delivery of the project should recognise that because of external factors visits and activities can be inappropriate at times. It should be recognised that children's homes are not always settled environments and therefore workers should be prepared to be flexible with delivery and have persistence.

5.2 Staff perceptions and attitudes

Throughout the project, there were some Residential Child Care Workers who demonstrated negative attitudes and a lack of understanding towards the promotion of reading, although this did vary from home to home and, in some homes, the majority of staff supported the reading culture. Ongoing training, visits and discussion challenged the negative views but in order to maintain changes, training needs to be ongoing.

Staff turnover, rotation and sickness all impacted on the extent to which training permeated the workforce. RAD tried to overcome this by providing a cycle of training sessions for new staff in conjunction with the Gatsby project.

5.3 Misuse of resources

Baseline assessment measures indicated that in almost half of the residential homes, visited, books and / or computers were locked away or inaccessible to children and young people (see Section 3.1.2). This was due to concerns about potential damage to, or loss of, the books and computers themselves. This situation did change during the life of the project, but there were two homes that locked books and/ or computers away on final assessment visits. This was the case in relation to the 'Facts and Feelings' collection, as it was felt to contain books which might be inappropriate in some circumstances. There was variability in the homes, and, as stated previously, the majority of homes in the final assessment visits had attractive displays of books and collections that were up-to-date and appropriate.

There has been concern from the homes and the Library Service about keeping the book collections together, and about loss, damage, or young people taking the books with them when they move homes. This has been addressed through support from the Library Service with the waiving of fines and book losses. The worker from the Library Service has worked with young people on an individual level to sort out these issues and this has impacted on the confidence of staff to approach the problems in a similar way.

5.4 Difficulty of access to some groups

It proved difficult for foster carers to attend book parties and full day training, which made it hard to identify who still needed to receive book tokens. It was therefore decided that was more effective to send book tokens to all children, rather than arrange sessions for distribution to carers. In future projects, the role of designated teachers in school could be considered here, as they will often have developed strong relationships with foster carers and could be drawn into this work.

Another group which proved to be difficult to involve was disabled children, due to the uncertainties about the future location of the centre for disabled children. Now that the centre has moved, it is expected that they will be included in any future work on reading and books undertaken by the Library Service and the Gatsby project.

Finally, communication with the Leaving Care Service was only established later in the project, due to worker changes and perceptions about the suitability of activities by Leaving Care Service workers. In future projects, it would be useful to engage them from the beginning. Nevertheless, once this contact was established, it was a strong one and had a range of positive outcomes, outlined in Section 3.2.

5.5 Project management

There was one Project Co-ordinator for Read Away Derby which meant that when there were gaps in activity because of her illness, these were not immediately covered. In order to address the difficulties caused by this, the duration of the project was extended and an external consultant was employed for a short duration. In addition, the project paid for a library staff member, who also works as a relief carer in children's homes, to be involved towards the end of the project. Despite the disruption, therefore, to the overall project management due to the Project Co-ordinator's illness, ROWA! maintained commitment to the project, enabling progression against aims and objectives.

Whilst a detailed plan for evaluation was drawn up, the timetable for this was not always adhered to because of the Project Co-ordinator's sick leave. However, in November, 2005, a detailed and thorough Internal Evaluation was conducted, which has contributed greatly to this Final Evaluation Report. There was a great deal of triangulation of evidence between the Internal Evaluation and External Evaluation, which indicates the thoroughness of ROWA's self-review mechanisms.

SECTION SIX: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Read Away Derby Total Costs June 2003 to Mar 2006

	TOTAL
Project Coordinator Costs	£28,261
Travel	£2,234
Computer	£75
Venue costs	£480
Equip/Resources/Books	£8,421
Misc	£400
Admin/Mgmt	£3,500
Evaluation	£3,000
	£46,371

SECTION SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Achievement of Project Aims

The aims of the project were largely achieved, as outlined in Table 10. It is not possible to state that they were fully achieved because some of the aims were over-ambitious in scale i.e. that ‘all’ looked after children and young people in Derby could benefit from the project. Whilst it was right that the project aimed to make a positive impact on all looked-after children, it is inevitable, given the constraints outlined in Section 5, that this was not possible

Review of achievement of Project aims

	How far the project met this aim	Evidence
<i>To improve the long-term access to books and reading for all ‘looked after’ children and young people in Derby.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is greater access to a wider range of texts in most of the residential children’s homes • There is increased book ownership of looked after children and young people in Derby • There has been increased library use by looked after children and young people in Derby 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Interview with Library staff • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Observations in visits to residential homes
<i>To develop a book and reading culture for all ‘looked after’ children and young people in Derby - that can a) be sustained after the PHF funding has ended and b) be a model of good multi-agency practice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book reading culture enhanced in most children’s homes • Some foster carers more aware of need to develop reading culture • Long-term plans in place for continuation of elements of the project • Multi-agency practice effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with children, young people, Residential Child Care Workers • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Interview with Library staff • Interview with Steering Group members
<i>To complement and support through books and reading Derby’s drive to improve the educational outcomes for children and young people in care</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project effectively complemented the work of the Gatsby Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with Gatsby Project staff • Interview with Project Co-ordinator • Interview with Library staff
<i>To work closely with ROWA! to ensure that the lessons learned from this and the US! Project are disseminated in a national report and local conference with national representation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference planned, October 2006 • Chapter in a book to be published by key national publisher planned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference organised by the Gatsby project • Project Co-ordinator to co-write chapter with external evaluator

KEY SUCCESSES

The successes of the project are outlined in Section 3, but in this section, the key ones will be highlighted and points raised for further consideration.

Effective partnership working

The regular meetings of the Read Away Derby Project Group enabled an effective partnership of key organisations to be built up from the start of the project. The RAD project was able to build successfully on the strong corporate partnership already in place in Derby City, established through the Gatsby Project. The Read Away Derby Project Group did make strong contributions to the shaping and delivery of the project. The outcome of this is that it is possible to identify a corporate vision for the promotion of reading for looked after children and young people in Derby. There are clear shared priorities and agreement about the way forward. The project has built on the strong foundations already in place and has strengthened further the ability of the partner organisations to improve the long-term access to books and reading for looked-after children and young people in Derby.

Clear aims and objectives that were reviewed appropriately

The project began with a clear set of aims and objectives. These were then reviewed and some sensible decisions were made about achievability, given the ambitious nature of the original set of aims. Some members of the the Read Away Derby Project Group did feel that the aims of the project could have been refined further, with a focus on fewer strands (which would have enabled more frequent visits to residential homes), but the majority of respondents interviewed did feel that the strands inter-related well. This level of flexibility and reflexivity with regard to aims and objectives is necessary when working with groups with complex and changing needs and the Read Away Derby Project Group responded well to external challenges and possibilities.

Sustainability of the project built into its conception from the beginning.

The future sustainability of the project was an aspect considered by the Read Away Derby Project Group from the start of the project. The Library Service has proposed the following activities for the future. Provision for some of these activities was already in place at the start of the Read Away Derby Project.

- Linking each Children's Home with a neighbourhood library and a named library contact.
- Depositing collections of up to 25 library books in each home, to be exchanged every 6-8 weeks.
- Making promotional visits to the homes by library staff - probably undertaken at the same time as exchanging the collections.
- Magazines to be passed on to homes from libraries.
- Promotional posters and leaflets about appropriate library activities to be sent to all homes - especially information about the Summer Reading Challenge.

- Information on library activities for young people to be sent to the Fostering Unit for onward distribution to foster carers.
- Copies of the updated 'Recommended Reads' booklists - and any other relevant booklists - to be sent to homes and to the Fostering Unit.
- Maintaining the 'Reading Rocket' library bus stops at 2 of the homes as long as these are well used by the children.
- Librarians will continue attending the Education Workers' Forum (attended by a worker from each home) and will also continue contact with the young people's groups - KICK and Connectors.

Project design

The design of the project was sufficiently flexible to allow bespoke sessions which met the needs of individual homes. This was a recommendation from a previous ROWA! project (the US! Project), and it was a deliberate strategy of the project to build on this recommendation. Given the varied needs of the residential homes, this was a successful strategy.

Subject knowledge of Project Co-ordinator

The project was successful because of the strong subject knowledge of the original Project Co-ordinator and the temporary Project Co-ordinator who took over when the original Co-ordinator had been on sick leave for some months. Both of them had sound knowledge of children's literature and were aware of the need for the collections to include books which reflected children's own cultural interests. The original Project Co-ordinator completed a Masters dissertation on the reading practices of looked after children and young people whilst working on the project, which further enhanced her understanding of the issues.

Use of a variety of materials

The project did not just focus on books, but recognised that children and young people have a wide range of reading interests, including comics and magazines. In addition, the use of new technologies was embedded into the project, again a highly motivating area for children and young people.

Use of creative approaches

The project developed a range of creative approaches to its work. In particular, the use of one-off events to stimulate interest in books and reading was very effective, such as the 'Potty Poet' visits to residential homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following both the Internal Evaluation (November, 2005) and the Final External Evaluation (March, 2006), a number of recommendations are made.

Continuation of Partnership

The Read Away Derby Project Group has been an important driver of this project. It has also developed as a valuable forum for partners to share and exchange information. Whilst the continuation of the group as a separate forum will not be possible in the future, it is recommended that reading activities and projects continue to feature on the agenda of key strategic meetings (e.g. for Residential Educational Workers). In addition, it is recommended that the Library Service is involved in as many of these meetings as is possible in order to sustain the work of the project. In such partnership work, it is necessary for each service to make clear what its commitment to the shared goals are, setting out its aims and objectives and sharing these with other partners as appropriate.

Reading policies

Derby City does have written guidance on the education of looked after children and young people, including reference to reading materials and provision. All staff should be made aware of the policies in place and training offered to ensure that the policy can be implanted in practice.

Training for Carers and Residential Child Care Workers

RAD made a significant contribution to the training of foster carers and Residential Child Care Workers with regard to books and reading. It is recommended that the Library Service and those involved in the education of children and young people looked after in Derby continue this training. Because of staff movement, training in some form should be offered regularly, every few months, to ensure that new staff coming into the service are aware of the reading needs of children and young people. This training should be integrated with other relevant training (e.g. on education) in order to ensure take-up.

The Internal Evaluation suggested the following possible ways for building this awareness with carers:

- Making use of the Foster Caring training sessions organised through the fostering training team - e.g. libraries could do sessions on storytelling and motivating reading, sharing books, using the library
- Continuing input to the Advisory Service training for Residential Child Care Workers
- Using the link with a named librarian at each children's home to help build awareness of the value of books, reading and using the library - and thus develop reading culture in the homes

- Advocacy - to ensure that carers' senior managers are able to continue to foster an appreciation of the value of reading, and the enjoyment of reading.

Training for Children's Social Care Workers

Whilst a few Children's Social Care Workers have been trained with regard to the importance of books and reading, there is much more scope for ensuring that this training is extended.

Book collections in children's homes

As well as the library deposit collections, it is recommended that homes invest in the maintenance and refreshment of the book collections, which RAD has provided, so that young people continue to have a variety of attractive and relevant books to use and enjoy. Children's homes are therefore recommended to identify an element of their budget (perhaps a minimum of £50- £100 a year) for the regular purchase of new books and magazines. Ideally, the purchase of texts should be mainstreamed in the budgets of residential homes so that books, magazines and other reading materials are bought when needed on a regular basis.

'A Book of My Own'

It is recommended that foster carers and children's homes are encouraged to buy a minimum of two books per year for each child in their care so that they can have their own books. The arrangement whereby key workers and children/ young people buy books for each other should also be continued where possible. Whilst it is recognised that the focus should be on the purchase of books for looked after children and young people, judicious use of funds to encourage children and young people to buy books on shared interests for key workers on an occasional basis would foster greater appreciation for books and promote shared reading.

Special events

The education service for looked after children and young people will continue to collaborate with the Library Service in order to host occasional large-scale events for looked after children and their carers which celebrate reading. These could include fun activities such as author workshops.

Bookstart

From October 2005 Bookstart - the gift of a special book bag (funded by the government) - will be available for parents for their babies, through Early Years, Sure Start, clinics and libraries. LAC nurses and the Leaving Care Service are recommended to make sure that young parents they work with are able to take advantage of Bookstart.

Reading Groups

Derby Libraries runs Chatterbooks children's reading groups in several libraries. It may be possible for young people in homes to take part in these groups. Carers could also be encouraged to set up their own reading groups - libraries could provide a venue if needed, and support with books for the group to read.

Specific Project Worker

Whilst the sustainability of this work long-term can only be maintained by mainstreaming aspects of it, having a dedicated worker does mean that integration of activities across partner organisations can be more effectively co-ordinated. It is recommended that specific funding is sought for the continuation of a co-ordinator role.

Extension of Reading Rocket Project

The 'Reading Rocket' was a very popular service for the Children's Homes that used it. It was not suitable for all the homes because of the age focus of the books included on the bus, in addition to parking difficulties. It is recommended that funding for a similar facility specifically for looked after children and young people living in residential homes is sought elsewhere, with the reading material extended to include older age groups.

Abolition of Library fines

It is recommended that Derby Library services revisits its current policy not to abolish fines altogether for looked after children and young people. Whilst dealing with cases on an individual basis has been effective until now, a more permanent policy needs to be developed which will ensure parity of treatment for all.

There is now national commitment by library services to easing barriers to library book use, for children on the move. The Society of Chief Librarians has agreed to the following arrangement for 'children on the move', including looked after children, which should help with concerns about losing books from collections in homes, when young people move to different accommodation.

'Children and young people who are Travellers, looked-after or refugees/asylum-seekers - and their parents/carers - will be allowed to return library materials to any library in the UK (also without overdue charges being made), and that the library will then make arrangements to return the items to the originating library free-of-charge.'

Relationship between schools, residential homes and foster carers

It is recognised that there are many challenges in developing further the links between schools and residential homes. Teachers sometimes are not sure who the best person is to contact and staff changes in homes serve to exacerbate problems. Nevertheless, there is still work to be done in improving communication with regard to children and young people's reading development. Given the wealth of

expertise schools have with regard to supporting children's reading development, more work could be done on offering homes bespoke training sessions on supporting children's reading, particularly in the area of helping children with reading difficulties to develop more positive self-esteem.

Reading spaces in homes

Whilst there have been significant developments in the reading resources and spaces offered in residential homes, there is still further work to be done in ensuring that there are attractive and quiet spaces for reading that are not always associated with homework spaces. Children and young people can use their bedrooms for this purpose, but the provision of shared, attractive reading spaces would be beneficial.

Involvement of children and young people

Because of their involvement with the project, there are now a number of young people with the skills and experience necessary for acting as role models for others, particularly in the Leaving Care Service. It is recommended that these young people are identified and drawn into future developments in the City. In particular, there are a number of young men who are active users of the Leaving Care Service who could offer valuable mentoring and support for other boys, given the concerns about boys and reading.

7.3 Conclusion

The evidence in this report indicates that the Read Away Derby Project has been very successful. It has made a significant impact on the reading cultures of many of the residential children's homes and has increased book ownership for a large number of looked after children and young people. There is still much work to be done on raising awareness of foster carers, Residential Child Care Workers and Children's Social Care Workers of the importance of books and reading, but effective strategies have been put in place for these future developments. Importantly, the project has found ways of sustaining some of the work by ensuring that it is integrated into the long-term strategies of statutory services in Derby.