



National Youth Agency

read

the reading agency

Out of the box

Phase 2 Report



Contents

1. Background	1
2. The Projects	2
2.9 North West	3
2.10 North East	5
2.11 Yorkshire & Humberside	6
2.12 South East	9
2.13 South West	11
3. Feedback from the projects	15
3.4 Supporting young people to read more widely and more often	15
3.9 Enabling and encouraging young people’s personal and social development	17
3.17 Raising young people’s awareness of library facilities and opportunities	20
3.20 Developing effective partnership working	22
3.23 Increasing understanding of ‘what works’	23
4. Conclusions	25
4.8 Barriers	27
4.12 Questionnaires	27
4.15 Support	28
4.23 Benefits of <i>Out of the Box</i>	29
4.25 Phase 3	30
APPENDIX 1: The National Youth Agency & The Reading Agency	31
APPENDIX 2: Project Advisory Group	32
APPENDIX 3: Project Staff	33
APPENDIX 4: Participants	35
APPENDIX 5: Reading and Materials	36

1. Background

- 1.1 *Out of the Box* is a joint project between the National Youth Agency (NYA) and The Reading Agency (TRA), funded by the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 Its aim is to support developmental opportunities for reading for young people aged 14-19 who are disaffected and/or disengaged from formal education through:
 - Encouraging young people in youth work settings to read more widely and more frequently.
 - Supporting stronger library-youth work partnerships and a range of development activities to help build active reading communities in youth work settings.
- 1.3 *Out of the Box* was planned to be delivered in three phases over a period of two years.
 - Phase 1: Pilot projects (January – March 2009)
 - Phase 2: National implementation (April 2009 – March 2010)
 - Phase 3: Evaluation (April – August 2010)
- 1.4 **Phase 1** (January – March 2009) of the project aimed to develop awareness of effective models of delivery in library/non-formal/youth work partnerships that help to build active reading communities in non-formal settings. This phase of the project therefore focused on 'what works' in relation to:
 - Partnership working between library staff and youth workers/workers in nonformal settings
 - Developing opportunities for young people's reading in non-formal settings
 - Young people's engagement and journey
 - Changed attitudes about young people's reading
 - Sustainability of reading activity
 - How reading can support the informal education process
 - Pre-requisites to success.
- 1.5 Projects were developed by six local partnerships of youth workers/workers in non-formal settings and librarians across a geographical spread – Dorset, Hertfordshire, Lancashire, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Stockton-on-Tees. Learning from Phase 1 included:
 - The importance for partnership working of a common goal, enthusiasm, effective communication, flexibility, mutual support, a willingness to reflect, a shared sense of ownership, and commitment to young people's enjoyment of reading.
 - The need for librarians to be comfortable and confident in working with young people in non-formal settings.
 - The need for youth workers to be highly skilled in interacting effectively with young people, and creating and managing an informal learning environment in which librarians are able to engage with young people.
 - The critical importance of developing the relationship with young people as the single most important aspect of developing opportunities for young people's reading in non-formal settings - starting with where young people are and being informed by their input.
 - The need for youth workers to be enthusiastic about reading and have an understanding of its benefits for young people in order to successfully initiate and sustain the 'conversation' which underpins the informal education process.

- 1.6 The report from Phase 1 is available at www.nya.org.uk www.readingagency.org.uk
- 1.7 **Phase 2** (April 2009 – March 2010) involved 18 projects developed by youth worker/librarian partnerships across five regions in England focusing on how reading can support the informal education process through providing young people with:
- A conduit to wider discussions of social and personal issues.
 - Opportunities to explore feelings and emotions.
 - A trigger for the reflective process.
 - A source of experience that informs the youth work 'conversation'.
- 1.8 This is the report of Phase 2.
- 1.9 *Out of the Box* was supported by an advisory group including representatives from DCSF, NYA, TRA, the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) and the Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services (CHYPS). (Appendix 2)

2. The Projects

- 2.1 Phase 2 built on the learning from Phase 1 by supporting projects nationally to develop practice that focuses on the areas identified in paragraph 1.5 above, and specifically in terms of the development of youth worker/librarian partnerships in exploring how reading can inform the informal education process. For example through providing:
- An opportunity for young people to explore their relationship with reading (e.g. why they want to/ do not want to read, what information they want to access and why, why they are interested in fiction or non-fiction, why reading is a pleasure or not).
 - A conduit to discussions of wider personal and social issues.
 - A trigger for the reflective process through which young people explore their lives, feelings and emotions.
 - A source of experience that underpins the youth work conversation - in the same way as doing (e.g. an activity), watching (e.g. a film), or listening (e.g. to music) are all sources of experience which form the basis of youth workers' conversations with young people.
- 2.2 **Development and Support**
The Regional Youth Work Units, in association with regional ASCEL representatives (Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL)), facilitated the identification of potential projects in their region. Initially, 25 projects were identified. However, as the planning process progressed it became clear that only 18 of these would proceed.
- 2.3 Projects were supported by Regional Youth Work Units and the National Project Manager through:
- Regional development days
 - Telephone coaching to support project leads
 - One year free subscription to groupthing¹ for participating youth projects
 - A small development grant towards project expenses.

2.4 **Regional development days** (July 2009, October 2009, January 2010)

- Planning projects/opportunities for young people
- Reviewing progress
- Developing the 'youth work conversation'².

2.5 **Telephone coaching**

Sessions were based on a problem solving/solution-focused approach which encouraged project leads to think in a solutions oriented way and move forward towards positive solutions and actions.

2.6 *Groupthing*

All participating youth projects received a year's free subscription to groupthing with planned training in its use.

2.7 **Development grant**

A small development grant of £500 was made available to all participating projects.

2.8 See Appendix 3 for a list of projects staff.

2.9 **North West**

Blackburn	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To engage young people with library services so they become aware of the various services and opportunities on offer ● Encouraging reading among young people by showing them a range of reading material and various genre of books ● Supporting young people's involvement in consultation with library services so as to shape services for them. <p>Planned Activity:</p> <p>Series of workshops with reading time supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion about books and stories ● Discussion about stories in poems ● Discussion about pictures and illustrations in books, and graphic novels ● Choosing reading from selected titles ● Discussion about the reading undertaken by young people ● Blackburn Central Library tour ● Quiz about the Blackburn Library Service ● Introduction to the reading club concept. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase in library membership by young people ● Increase in library issues to young people ● Young people have started to use other facilities in the library (e.g. music facilities)
-----------	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Young people have developed their skills in listening, speaking and critical analysis in a safe environment ● The book club was a fantastic way for young people to express their views and opinions ● Using film and other means (e.g. video games, networking sites) has helped to stimulate discussion and encourage young people to read more.
Lancashire	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To support a young volunteer to establish a young people’s reading group ● To encourage and facilitate young people who do not read ● Increase young people’s confidence with reading (as confidence, rather than ability, was identified as the key barrier) <p>Planned Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Design and distribute publicity for reading group ● Programme to support each young person to recommend books, promote written media or suggest a creative activity ● Make links with other young people’s reading groups in Lancashire ● Involve young people in reading a book of their choice. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Involvement of young volunteer in encouraging participation by other young people ● Young people positive about reading a book of their choice ● Youth workers and librarians meet to discuss young people’s views about their reading ● Challenges in engaging hard to reach young people in the community.
Sefton	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To encourage a group of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) to read more widely and more frequently ● To develop innovative reading based activities with young people through which they can discuss and explore emotions ● Support young people to become more confident using library resources and understand the relevance of the library to their lives. <p>Planned Activity:</p> <p>Residential weekend focusing on emotional literacy including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using reading as a way of exploring and understanding emotions (e.g. song lyrics, poetry, literature) ● Understanding own emotions and how to empathise with others ● Understanding how to manage emotional responses to situations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding what the library has to offer in services and opportunities for involvement. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NEET project ended and original group of young people no longer available ● Challenges in identifying suitable group of young people ● Challenges in sustaining library/youth worker partnership.
Tameside	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To work with a group of teenage parents who are not engaged in education, employment or employment ● To support the group to develop their skills and interest in reading for themselves and their children ● To raise group members' awareness and confidence in using the library and the services they offer (overcoming barriers that prevent them from accessing library facilities). <p>Planned Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and establish the group of young parents (in association with Connexions) ● Provide opportunity for group to develop their interest in reading through engagement in group meetings and a supportive structure ● Encourage young parents to share reading with their children ● Produce a resource to be used by other teenage parents groups to be available in libraries ● Work with other services (e.g. Tameside College, Connexions) to provide information and support relating to education, employment and training opportunities. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Challenges in making contact with target group of young people ● Challenges in establishing effective working relationship with partners ● Challenges in getting 'buy in' from relevant organisations

2.10 North East

Stockton-on-Tees	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>To promote reading in young people's everyday lives through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A reading/activity pack designed to enable youth workers to promote reading in youth clubs ● Youth workers engaging people in conversation about what they have enjoyed reading in the past and what they would like to read in the future
------------------	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Linking young people to their local library and encouraging their use of library facilities <p>Planned Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of reading/activity pack distributed to youth centres with support to youth workers ● Young people sharing reading topics through activities with peers and youth workers ● Young people writing and editing stories ● Conversations between youth workers and young people about the rewards of reading and authors/books that inspire them ● Close working between youth workers and libraries to promote reading among young people in an informal setting. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Structured approach through the reading pack ● Reading pack can be used in the future by other workers ● Reading linked to other activities and conversations with youth workers ● Large number of young people able to be involved across a five youth centres ● Christmas book choice for each young person.
--	--

2.11 Yorkshire & Humberside

Calderdale	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To work with young people with low reading ability in 2 local high schools to encourage interest, raise confidence and develop skills ● To develop project work with a group of young people with low reading abilities ● To work with a group of young people with a common interest in sport but with no basic literacy skills and no interest in formal learning. <p>Planned Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Holocaust project involving reading, film, poetry workshop, research and visit to local radio station for young people to talk about the experience and their findings ● Project to visit sporting venues in the Yorkshire region to stimulate motivation and create a practical and fun aspect to reading and learning. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunities to learn in different ways (e.g. reading, researching the topic, watching videos, poster design, poetry workshops, visit to local radio station) ● The more practical the activity the more it engaged the young people ● This raised their confidence with a positive impact on learning
------------	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is important to make the experience fun, practical and enjoyable ● For some young people, their level of ability is too low to engage in the <i>Out of the Box</i> project.
Kirklees	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To develop a project based on the 6 Book challenge ● To introduce the idea that reading is fun and not hard work ● To engage with young people who have literacy issues and encourage them to become regular readers and library users. <p>Planned Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work in 2 locations (i) using outreach work centred around the mobile library and community centre in a socially deprived area (ii) working within a recently established young people’s space in a library in an area where there is a perception that there is nothing to do for young people ● Develop reading in the widest sense – using poetry, rap and song writing, newspapers, manga, text language, book and film tie-ins, and audio books ● Deliver activity sessions including author visit, performance, cinema trip, visit to local museum for ghost walk and stories ● Opportunity for groups from both locations to meet and interact ● Reward of excursion to a leisure activity for young people attending 75% of sessions. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshops facilitated by local poet stimulated young people’s interest ● Innovative opportunities (e.g. visit to a recording studio to record the play written by the young people) ● Rewards (e.g. visit to see a racing car used in competitions) and a celebration event at the end of the project ● Additional resources from library service (e.g. funding for poet to continue work with young people to produce their story on CD and DVD) ● Young people better able to focus and increased skills in working together – cooperation, negotiating ● Young people completing the 6 book challenge by reading children’s stories based on adult themes (e.g. fostering, bullying).
North Lincolnshire	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To work with a group of young people who currently have contact with a Connexions PA and have been identified as having poor and/or negative reactions to reading experiences ● To encourage conversation about reading and raise awareness of reading as a part of everyday life

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To develop experiences that will encourage positive use of leisure time. <p>Planned Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish weekly group meetings at the youth centre where young people will undertake activities aimed at developing their skills and self-esteem ● Develop a supportive relationship that helps young people to become more confident in their reading ability and find reading a more enjoyable experience ● Initially the group will focus on aspects of reading that do not involve books (e.g. computers, texts, recipes, etc) to reflect on and develop positive reading experiences ● Encourage use of other medium (e.g. music, poetry, art or storyboards) ● Explore the local library and discover what it has to offer. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Challenges in establishing contact with Connexions PA ● Challenges in establishing suitable group of young people ● Transportation issues for young people from small rural communities ● Challenges of time commitments.
Rotherham	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To engage with young people for whom reading is low on their agenda in order to increase confidence and self-esteem and encourage thinking skills ● To challenge young people’s perception of libraries through contact with library services provision and support ● To introduce youth workers to the storybox concept. <p>Planned Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish young readers group ● Young footballers – football related books and reading materials and theatre trips to see ‘There’s Only One Wayne Matthews’ ● Storytellers group for disabled young people ● Storybox workshop to be delivered at youth service staff conference. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Multi-strand project (readers’ group, footballer group, storytellers’ group, storytelling workshop for youth workers) ● Survey of young people about their use of libraries ● Flexible and effective partnership working between youth workers and librarians.

2.12 South East

<p>Medway</p>	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To support and encourage young people’s reading in the youth centre ● To use song lyrics and poetry to explore young people’s ideas about issues in their lives ● To engage young people in discussion about their reading by comparing the similarities and differences between a book and the film of the book. <p>Planned Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with boys (MCing) group using song lyrics and poetry – both reading and writing; recording young men’s work on new youth club equipment ● Work with girls group to read book, watch dvd and compare the two. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Challenges in establishing suitable group of young people ● Challenges in sustaining young people’s interest ● Challenges of time commitments.
<p>Milton Keynes</p>	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To increase interest in reading amongst young people aged 10-15 so as to raise attainment in English and encourage young people to read for pleasure ● To encourage learning through reading and apply to other activities – e.g. drama workshop, art, book reviews ● To encourage reading and discussion in a group which builds on listening, reflection and debating skills. <p>Planned Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage young people and parents in the project, discuss different reading materials, books, comics, magazines, newspapers ● Encourage young people to attend weekly reading sessions ● Encourage young people to engage in activities broadly related to reading – e.g. designing book covers, debates, reviews, drama ● Encourage young people to read at home with friends and family ● Develop book exchange and other initiatives – e.g. book of the month ● Explore peer reading with older young people as mentors. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular reading sessions for young people ● Opportunities for reading linked with other activities such as drama, art and creative writing ● Trips (e.g. to the cinema to see Fantastic Mr Fox with linked follow-up activities comparing the film and the book, mask making, comic book. Trip to the library)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth workers and young people reading aloud to each other ● Birthday book choice for each young person ● Starting where the young person wants to start and introducing new ideas or activities as their confidence grows ● All young people working towards accredited awards (ASDAN, AQA) ● Access to library for young people through books taken out on youth club library card.
Oxford	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To develop young people’s interest in reading and writing through a lyrics and recording project that encourages them to explore issues in their own lives through comparing poetry and lyrics from popular artists, and writing their own lyrics ● To develop a wide range of activities in the youth centre that involve reading different kinds of materials ● To develop good working links between the library and youth centre to provide reading and materials to support sessions. <p>Planned Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Djing, lyrics and recording sessions ● Creative activities sessions supported by books from the library (e.g. jewellery making) ● Film night supported by materials related to the film or subject matter ● Sessions on healthy lifestyles supported by relevant books from the library (e.g. recipe books) <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Librarians visit youth centre to observe, talk with/make relationships with young people and develop plan for developing good links between the library and work in the youth centre ● Youth centre activities supported by relevant books and resources from the library ● Reading activities linked to youth centre sessions across the week – Monday film club, Thursday creative activities, Friday DJ-ing, Saturday healthy lifestyle – all sessions being supported by books and resources from the library ● Youth workers discuss with young people the sort of resources they would like to see in the library and support young people to visit ● Regular visits from librarians to the youth centre.
West Sussex	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To work with a group of young carers with mixed abilities and interest in reading to support their social development ● To introduce the young people to reading as a means of relaxation and escape from the stresses of the everyday lives

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To break down barriers that stop young people from accessing libraries and increasing their awareness of what is on offer. <p>Planned Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To build on the group’s interest in graphic/manga style books through the development of workshops that support them to produce their own graphic novel in their chosen style, incorporating their ideas and chosen interests ● To enable young people to work with a local artist to inspire them and support them to develop their graphic novel ● To engage young people in other activities and practical workshops that encourage young people to read more frequently and widely ● To introduce the young people to the library and the services offered so that they become more confident about choosing books, talking to library staff and using facilities. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sessions facilitated by a local artist to stimulate young people’s interest in producing a graphic novel ● Extremely positive and effective working relationship between youth worker and youth librarian ● Structured sessions at both youth centre and library for young people to work on their graphic novel ● Huge collection of books provided by the project librarian to support young people in their work, which meant they read books – an activity rarely undertaken outside of school ● Accredited outcomes using ASDAN Activities Award.
--	---

2.13 South West

<p>Bournemouth</p>	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To work with a group of young parents to encourage them to develop their reading skills and move towards more challenging reading materials of their choice ● To introduce reading informally into generic youth club sessions ● To support young people to participate in designing a young people’s area in the new library being built in the area. <p>Planned Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitated discussions with the young parents’ group on subjects of interest to them ● Library visits with the young parents’ group to introduce them to the facilities and services on offer
--------------------	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using magazines, newspapers and the Internet to generate informal conversations with young people in the youth centre about their reading habits and abilities ● Involving young people in consultations related to the design of the young people's space in the new library. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planned library visits followed by facilitated discussions about reading and issues of interest to the young people ● All members of the young parents' group now library members along with their children ● Formal training courses to help with reading skills (e.g. CSCS – construction industry health & safety test) ● Use of magazines, newspapers and the Internet to informally introduce reading in generic youth work sessions ● Challenges in trying to introduce a more formal reading group within the youth centre.
Gloucestershire	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To explore with young people their attitudes towards reading ● To identify barriers to reading and develop appropriate initiatives to stimulate young people's interest in reading ● To develop a relationship with local library staff and obtain their support. <p>Planned Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Informal conversations with young people about their reading habits (texting, social networking sites, magazines) ● Gathering ideas from young people about reading material to be made available in the youth club (e.g. magazines) ● Involving young people in conversations that critically analyse the magazines (e.g. the significance of celebrity, the nature of fashion, the 'message' in music). <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Challenge in establishing reading group as young people resistant to reading books ● Challenge in establishing partnership arrangements with library service ● Informal approaches more successful in enabling conversations with young people about reading – reading habits, attitudes and barriers ● Magazines, newspapers etc more successful in stimulating young people's interest in reading.

<p>Plymouth</p>	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To organise a programme of sessions in the library that encourage young people to explore a variety of reading materials in different formats – especially those who are not currently readers ● To engage with young people in conversation about their reading and the issues/ subjects that interest them ● To get more young people aged 14-19 to use the library. <p>Planned Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weekly workshops including sessions on music & lyrics, magazines, graphic novels, 'Twilight' night, ballroom dancing, Disney ball, book buying ● Creative activities with young people to generate discussion – e.g. collage, quizzes, social networking (blogging and Facebook), games, cooking, karaoke) ● Themed discussions with young people – e.g. the meaning behind lyrics in their favourite songs; the messages their favourite magazines give them ● Engaging young people in discussion about the content and format of the programme. <p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular structured sessions held at library as a part of HeadSpace programme ● Wide range of creative activities ● Themed discussions ● Sessions facilitated jointly by youth worker and librarian.
<p>Somerset</p>	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To encourage reading in youth clubs through a book box type project ● To support young people to participate in the selection of books to be included in the 'box' ● To develop young people's links with the library through a library visit. <p>Planned Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visits to youth clubs to engage with young people in conversations about their reading habits/choices and involve them in compiling a list of book titles/topics that would be of interest to them ● Once the books arrived, taking the books to youth centres and engaging with young people in conversation about reading and the material in the box ● Regular trips to centres to engage with young people in conversation about what they have been reading – sharing experiences, enthusiasms and views on materials read ● Encouraging young people to take books home with them to read.

	<p>Success Factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Young people's involvement in compilation of book list ● Challenge in persuading the young people to take the books home with them to read. None comfortable about the responsibility of taking and returning books ● Perseverance leading eventually to 3 young people taking books home with them ● Challenge in getting young people to make library visit ● Book box idea captured young people's interest and they continue to add to the title list.
Dorset	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To work with young people on the E2E and pre E2E programmes encouraging them to read, talk about and understand their reading experiences and explore the types of reading they enjoy ● To work with the young mums/young mums to be group to encourage reading for pleasure, relaxation and information seeking; and also to support young mums to read to their children ● To offer young people the opportunity of library membership and interaction with the youth librarian. <p>Planned Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weekly informal reading sessions (for young people and staff) in a setting in which young people feel comfortable and have already built a relationship with staff ● Those with limited reading skills to be offered 1-2-1 support ● Monthly visits from the youth librarian to bring book box and discuss selections and recommendations for reading ● Creative activities involving reading (e.g. cooking from recipes) ● Library visit to introduce young people to what the library has to offer and to encourage membership ● Trip to a bookstore for book buying visit. <p>Success factors/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular fixed reading times at the youth project, including workers as well as young people, creating a 'culture of reading' ● Linked activities (e.g. quizzes) ● On-going conversations with young people about reading ● Reading material (e.g. magazines, newspapers) informally available – in prominent positions and regularly updated ● Regular visits from the youth librarian ● Excellent working partnership between youth worker and librarian ● Organised activities for young mothers and their children (e.g. 'Fantastic Family Fun and Rhyme Time') ● Mobile library visit – with all young people eventually persuaded to go onto the bus.

3. Feedback from the projects

- 3.1 Projects report a total of 336 young people participated in *Out of the Box* Phase 2. Projects were asked to collect a range of data including the number of young people involved (with breakdown by personal characteristics) and were fairly reliable at providing information on total numbers and gender of participants. However, due to the informality of the settings and the unpredictable nature of young people's attendance, projects were less consistent in respect of data relating to other personal characteristics of participants - i.e. age, disability, ethnic background. (See Appendix 4)
- 3.2 Although under reporting makes it difficult to be precise it is clear that young people's participation in *Out of the Box* has resulted in:
- A number of young people taking library membership
 - An increase in library issues to young people participating in the project
 - An increase in young people's use of library and facilities
 - A range of both recorded and accredited outcomes (e.g. ASDAN, 'V' accreditation, CSCS test³)
 - A number of young people sharing reading outside of the project (e.g. supporting reading activities with younger young people) as well as other related activities (e.g. participating on an interview panel for a library manager; consultation on design of young people's area in a new library).
- 3.3 Project staff were also asked to report on the five *Out of the Box* objectives. Specifically:
- Supporting young people to read more widely and more often
 - Enabling and encouraging young people's personal and social development through informal education
 - Raising young people's awareness of the facilities and opportunities that libraries have to offer
 - Developing effective partnership working between youth workers and librarians
 - Increasing understanding of what works for whom in what circumstances in developing effective models of delivery.

3.4 **Supporting young people to read more widely and more often**

Many projects reported young people's generally negative attitude towards reading and the observation that those who read are seen as 'geeks'. Indeed, as one worker commented:

"To date our surveys demonstrate that reading is low on young people's agenda and that they are either 'banned' from libraries or think that libraries are either 'too posh' or 'for saddos.'"

Quotations from young people include:

"Books are boring. I don't have the time to read any way"

"I don't want to read it. I've watched the film. If books are good enough then I'll watch them when they come out on DVD. Really good books always come out on DVD eventually. If they don't they're not good enough to read anyway."

"We do enough reading at school. We don't want to read when we come here or at home. We get enough homework and coming here is our time to do what we want."

3.5 However, involvement in the project did change both attitudes and behaviour for some young people.

"The Out of the Box project helped to get me reading books, as I have never bothered before."

"As a young single parent it helped as I enjoy reading in the evenings when my children are in bed."

"I am now a member of the library and feel confident reading with my children."

"My little boy goes to sleep better now that I read to him instead of letting him fall asleep on the coach watching tel. I am surprised at how well it works. I'll do it forever now".

"Now I've read the Twilight books I see how much fun reading can be."

3.6 In addition, project workers have described the experience of *Out of the Box* as follows.

"All the young people participating in the project have shown much more of an interest in reading than at the start when they were reluctant to read and didn't feel confident about their ability."

"When the young people first started the project most were unenthusiastic about reading and did not feel confident reading aloud. Many said they struggled with reading and writing. Looking at the original surveys completed by young people, words that were used to describe reading included 'boring', 'frustrating', 'difficult' and 'hard work'. Now, the young people are enthusiastic about reading and we have four young people who are always keen to go on trips to the local library."

"From conversations with the young people it is clear that they are more adventurous in what they read and that they are now more willing to read in sessions than at the beginning of the project which is really positive."

"In terms of the progress made in relation to the outcomes, most of the group now read more than they did at the start and also more in depth than previously. This can be evidenced by the fact that some of them not only joined the library, but took out books to read in their own time."

3.7 In some instances individual young people have been enabled and supported to pursue particular reading interests. For example:

"One young person began the project with no interest in reading. However, he greatly enjoyed writing his own lyrics and also reading other people's. He had not realised that reading lyrics 'counted' as reading. He was encouraged by a youth worker to read lyrics from artists he would not usually listen to. From this he progressed to reading some of the manga stories provided by the library. He is still reading them, and is now asking youth workers about specific films that he knows were based on book, which he has now expressed an interest in reading. This is a significant change for someone who, at the beginning of the

project, had no interest in reading.”

“At the beginning of the project she said that she did not mind reading, but would most likely not do it for pleasure. She became involved in the animation project, which involves the young people writing storyboards. This means they need to create their own plotlines and characters, as well as construct the characters and backdrops from play dough. Through this she found a lot of pleasure in creating her own stories, and gradually became more and more interested in reading. She is currently reading ‘The Colour Purple’ and says that she enjoys discussing the books with the youth workers.”

3.8 In other instances, reading has become an integral part of projects and their work with young people.

“Out of the Box has become a culture at Tides now on Wednesday afternoons between 1pm and 2pm when the young people come in and start reading immediately. At other times when young people are waiting for cooking to finish or for staff members they will take themselves off to a sofa and pick up a book and read it, or take a magazine from the rack and scan the pages. We have also noticed that young people who are not part of the courses available at Tides, but who drop-in for help and advice, also read magazines and books whilst they wait for workers. This is due to the fact that books and magazines now have a prominent position at Tides and are regularly updated.”

Ciaran (aged 12) has low literacy skills and poor social skills. He has little interest in academic areas. He reads very little but spends much time on *Facebook*. Ciaran was probably the biggest success story of the group, being the only boy who showed any interest in the project. By default he had to read much to be able to do his sketches which are very good. The project hasn't made a big difference to his skills but he is more positive about reading now and has certainly grown in confidence. He now has much less of an aversion to books!

Tyler (aged 14) is a positive member of the group and always keen on getting involved in any activities. However, he shies away from giving clear answers to questions related to what he has read. Tyler spoke to a worker to explain that he has dyslexia and struggles to read even the name of a country.

After asking for another free DVD which we couldn't give again, Tyler was persuaded to borrow a book with pictures and some text about his favourite footballer Steven Gerrard. The librarian ordered new copies of books about Liverpool his favourite football club and Steven Gerrard his favourite player for him to borrow. Tyler was happy with this and will ask for help from us to read the text with him. Tyler was particularly interested in finding out about Steven's career and how he got to play in the Premiership from being a 14 year old too. As he left the library Tyler said "I want that football book next week!"

3.9 **Enabling and encouraging young people's personal and social development through informal education**

Informal education is based on 'conversation'. In the youth work context, this conversation is a critical dialogue in which young people are supported to reflect on their experience; consider different views of the world; and formulate general principles about everyday life.

- 3.10 The premise of this Phase of the project was that such a conversation epitomises the Socratic Method in supporting young people in coming to know what they think, believe and feel. It is an exercise in the development of practical reasoning and rational judgement, central to which is the moral human agent who, deep inside, has the knowledge about what is 'right' and 'wrong' and how we ought to live.
- 3.11 As such, 'conversation', or Socratic dialogue, was envisaged as encouraging and supporting young people to:
- Develop skills and qualities such as listening, openness, reflection, practical reasoning, patience, trusting one's doubts, suspending judgement.
 - Examine the fundamental nature of philosophical questions and concepts in everyday life.
 - Reach consensus, not as an aim in itself, but as a means to deepen investigation and understanding.
 - Weigh new insights in terms of their significance for their own lives.
- 3.12 However, as one worker observed:

"We asked the young people to identify what magazines they were interested in. The young women mentioned 'Mizz', 'Bliss', 'OK' and 'Heat' – magazines relating to fashion and celebrity. The young men mentioned music and computer gaming magazines such as 'Kerrang', 'Metal Hammer' and 'Mac'. We are attempting to involve young people in conversations that involve critical analysis of the magazines - for example, the significance of celebrity, the nature of fashion, the 'messages' in music. Whether these discussions are Socratic is a moot point, but they are certainly stimulating and insightful."

- 3.13 Yet while the Socratic dialogue idea would need much more work to become grounded in practice, conversations with young people have explored many topical issues:

"Recent discussions from newspapers and magazines have included the importance of football and family influence (e.g. many support teams that their whole family have followed for years), footballers and their wages, and the impact this has on their lives (e.g. becoming celebrities and open to scandals, such as John Terry and Ashley Cole). Also discussed has been the subject of death through careless driving, in young men in particular, and how random some punishments seem for drivers who kill passengers or pedestrians whilst driving."

- 3.14 Other conversations have enabled young people to explore feelings and personal issues.

"Their overall feedback was that they really enjoyed the opportunity to be creative in both drawing and words for their graphic novel. This means of expression allowed some to show feelings about personal issues they would probably not have revealed in normal conversations and thus allowed workers to find out more about them to offer support. We made use of images and poems from the internet as well as books, which appealed to them as most are really into that form of media and communication."

- 3.15 Some project workers comment on changes in young people's behaviour:

"Young people's social development has greatly improved since participating in this project. The facilitated conversations about subjects that interest them has encouraged young people to gain

confidence and discuss their opinions and concerns about things that have, do or may affect them in the future. It has also given them the opportunity to listen to each other, offering support and advice, and engaging in debate in a calm mannered way."

"Young people have learnt to be quiet during the Out of the Box sessions and respect other people's chance to read, even though they personally may not be engaged in reading for the whole hour. This is a huge improvement in their social development."

"Although they were working to a script at the recording session, there were opportunities to ad lib, which they did very successfully. Behaviour witnessed at this event included the use of negotiation skills, including everyone and giving them all a role, sharing of microphones and headsets rather than the usual jockeying for position. All the time they were there none of them found the need to go for a cigarette break and their behaviour was excellent. Everyone engaged with the process and wanted to finish the project to a high standard."

"Some of the group listen when he reads aloud and some don't, but what is interesting is that none of them tease him or prevent him from doing so. This is a huge step for a group that thrive on aggressive banter."

3.16 While for others, conversations have focused on young people's 'meanings':

"Tattoo books have been extremely popular with both males and females. This has led to the 'tattoo conversation' in which young people say that tattoos have meaning (for example their date of birth or their own name in Chinese characters). One young person has 'R.I.P' and the date of her uncle's death tattooed on her forearm. She explained that she had no time to grieve for him because she was having a difficult time herself when he died. She feels guilty about this, so the tattoo reminds her of him and gives her the opportunity to think about him every day. She seems very positive about this rather than melancholy. The same young person also has 'MUM' tattooed on the back of her neck, even though they have a volatile relationship. She says it is a form of respect and indicates the importance of family.

Other young people believe that tattoos are an art form. One young woman says she is addicted to tattoos and once she has one she immediately plans for the next. They don't necessarily have meaning for her but are like choosing a pair of shoes or an item of clothing. The long-term consequences are not considered. The television programme 'Miami Ink' seems to influence those who see tattoos as an art form and drives them to look through any books on tattoos that are available. Any young person who has a tattoo is proud to display it to everyone at as soon as it is done."

Initially Jade (aged 16) refused to read to the point of crossing her arms and sitting in silence whilst others read magazines and newspapers around her. She then started to read the Dorset Echo (the local newspaper) after some motivating by staff, which involved picking out stories she was interested in and then discussing them with her.

After the first meeting with the youth librarian Jade started reading much more, because he had

tapped into her love of the Simpsons by producing books for her to read. Jade has now read every Simpsons book. She reads throughout the week and is expanding her reading to include Horrible Histories, Horrible Sciences, Dr Who books and some celebrity magazines.

Jade's attitude to reading has changed very little if you ask her about it. She still says that reading is boring. However, at the project she reads almost every day. She prepares for *Out of the Box* by requesting magazines the day before and talks about her reading experience when she is not at the project.

Jade enjoys the quiet time during the *Out of the Box* session on Wednesdays and is able to be less guarded about her personal life. She takes part in discussions about celebrities, for example, and is less outraged about talk of sex and flirtation – although her opinions remain strong.

3.17 Raising young people's awareness of the facilities and opportunities that libraries have to offer

One project surveyed young people about their use of library facilities and reported its findings as follows:

- Many young people are not aware of the location of their nearest library
- Young people are not aware of the variety of services that are available to them
- A general perception is that libraries are boring and full of 'nerds'. Only clever kids go to the library
- No time to visit because of other commitments
- A perception that libraries would not have books that appeal to them – although after discussion and looking at the books on display they seemed really interested
- Format of books too formal, not enough illustration, don't want to slog through 300 pages of text
- Some of the young people are already members
- Unsure of the response they would get from library staff if they wanted to join
- Not aware that they are reading, even though they are looking things up on the internet, messaging etc
- Have difficulty in communicating what they would like to see in their libraries
- Would visit the library in groups if their friends came more
- Belief that libraries would be accessed by young people if they were located next to other leisure venues
- Incentives to join
- Regular fun activities for 13–18 year olds.

3.18 Another project commented:

"We asked all of our young people how they felt about libraries. They said that even though they now knew the library staff and enjoyed reading the books that the staff brought with them, they would not go to a library. We asked them why, and the most common response was that they felt like it was a place where they just didn't belong. They said they felt that it was a very adult place, where they had to be quiet and could not be themselves. As well as this, most young people that we spoke to felt that a library was just not 'the place to be' as a young person. This was less to do with what is in the library and more to do with how youth culture perceives reading."

- 3.19 However, involvement in *Out of the Box* has enabled young people to develop new perspectives about libraries and the opportunities they have to offer:

“Through the visit of the mobile library the young people are now aware of the different types of activities and facilities available to them at their local library. In the future we intend to take them to the library on Wednesday afternoon (when the library is closed to other users) and allow them to browse and have a tour of the library. We intend to initiate their interest by setting up a project using the computers.”

“All of the young people participating in West Howe’s young parents’ sessions are now members of the library along with their children. We, as a group, visited the library a number of times allowing the young people to feel comfortable with in the library setting. They all learned something new about the library; they learned about play sessions for their children, that they can access the Internet and were all very impressed with their toy library. These young people are more regularly reading at home with their children and feel confident doing so.”

“AA is a young person who has hardly accessed library services since he was a child. He has given the reading practice a go and has taken part in the reading activity. He is now looking to develop his reading interests, actively looking into graphic novels for instance. He is doing a training course and often comes into the library to read up and therefore uses the silent study areas”.

“The young mums to be will be visited by Weymouth Library and Children’s Centre staff who will come to run a Fantastic Family Fun session in the project centre. This will show the young people what the library can offer to families and let them know who the members of staff are, if they want to go to the sessions in the library.”

Jack (aged 15) chatted to a detached youth worker about his interest in boxing. The youth worker told him about a great autobiography of a boxer called ‘The Guv’nor’ which he really enjoyed. Jack took a book from the shelves about ‘hard men’ from history and present day and discussed it with the youth worker. Jack then showed a librarian the pictures at the counter. He explained that the book he was trying to find was about a boxer and helped the librarian to find the correct title on Amazon and the library catalogue, browsing other books in the process.

Jack asked if he could reserve the book and asked “When will it be in to collect?” and was pleasantly surprised that he would be able to collect it at the next HeadSpace session the following Tuesday. Jack has never borrowed an item from the library before.

Jodine (aged 16) finds reading boring, but is comfortable spending time in the library. She can usually be found using Facebook and is very motivated to help out at *HeadSpace*. Jodine read magazines and has taken part in online quizzes with us during *Out of the Box* sessions.

Jodine has developed a positive attitude towards books and reading, although she still feels that reading lots of fiction would not be for her. She reads more non-fiction and magazines and has read some Manga with our younger *HeadSpace* group.

She recently became a volunteer with the younger (11-14) group at HeadSpace and now helps with reading and youth club activities, as well as the weekly Manga group supporting them to write and perform their own anime, draw Manga and host visiting writers/artists.

Jodine will be starting paid work with the library service as a casual library assistant in the near future.

3.20 **Developing effective partnership working between youth workers and librarians**

Supporting stronger library-youth work partnerships has been and continues to be one of the central aims of the *Out of the Box* project, and is seen as a key element in the development of activities to help build active reading communities in youth work settings.

3.21 Through the project, this relationship has been developing at a number of different levels. For example:

"The library staff continue to visit the youth centre at least once a month. They have built good working relationships with the young people at the centre, who now know who they are when they visit. Although the young people do not yet feel comfortable with visiting a library, they have become more comfortable with the idea of reading, which is in part due to the presence of the librarians at the youth centre."

"Communication between library workers and PAYP staff was strong initially, including an introductory meeting to identify each other's role in the project. Since this meeting, there has been a lot of email contact and library staff were extremely helpful in setting up group membership for PAYP when the group visited the library in the half term holidays."

"Before the project, the youth service had very little contact with the library, although we had just started the youth café project on Friday nights there. So Out of the Box was the first time that I'm aware of where we actually worked together to deliver a project from scratch. Working together has been a very useful and beneficial experience. Lucy is not a typical librarian if there is such a thing, She is very much like a youth worker, which is why she fitted in so well and so quickly with a group she didn't know at the start. She's very easy to work with and if she wants any part time youth work hours, I'm sure we'll find some slots for her to fill."

3.22 Emma Sherriff (Outreach Support Officer Plymouth Libraries) describes her experience of partnership working.

The HeadSpace team at the library and Plymouth South East Locality Youth Work Team were already working in partnership to deliver HeadSpace to an older group of young people in the area. When the proposal came for *Out of the Box* we instantly saw the potential to work together to increase our focus on developing the young people's reading skills and fostering a love of reading.

The aims of *Out of the Box* fit very well with the aims of HeadSpace and the youth work curriculum. Both the youth service and library service had workers present at every session, on occasion two detached youth workers also called into the sessions.

From discussions, it is clear that the youth service involvement in both HeadSpace and the *Out of the Box* project has both increased their awareness of resources available at the library and developed a greater understanding of library initiatives, which work to encourage young people to read more widely and more often.

Emma Sherriff works closely with youth worker, Rebecca Coslett, to develop session plans and deliver activities that fit. Both have committed to the project and encourage those young people involved to develop their reading skills.

Our joint-working has developed to another level as we are in regular contact to prepare sessions as a partnership and, in knowing our plan, support each other to deliver the activities in the best way. We do not see each other as external agencies rather as a team working for the benefit of young people in Efford. This was established before *Out of the Box* but has grown stronger as a result of the project.

Rebecca works to develop a dialogue with the young people concerning how their reading relates to them and the world around them. This is a vital contribution to the project as librarians we are not so experienced in having those conversations with young people and dealing with sensitive issues which may emerge.

Becca also develops informal quizzes at the end of sessions which maintain the interest of the young people. At the end of our magazine session the sexual health quiz developed by Becca was very informative and answered many misconceptions the young people had about their health in a non-stigmatising way. Becca has the ability to deal with questions and give correct information on these issues in a way that librarians do not. Our team of librarians are able to learn from Becca and also to contribute the relevant resources to support her discussions.

Out of the Box has also led to Becca developing knowledge of young people's literature. This has increased her confidence and has led her to incorporate reading into other youth work sessions in the area and to promote HeadSpace and *Out of the Box* to young people attending other sessions.

Becca is also now hosting a local youth forum group at another local library.

3.23 **Increasing understanding of what works for whom in what circumstances in developing effective models of delivery**

Phase 2 of the project has identified four key features of 'what works' in developing opportunities for reading for young people who are disaffected and/or disengaged from formal education. These are:

- Keeping the work with young people practical
- Starting where young people are
- Linking reading to other activities
- Working in informal ways with young people.

3.24 Keeping the work practical

“With both groups the more practical things we did the more we got from the group. When it came to reading and writing both groups lost interest very quickly.”

“It was challenging to motivate this group to do any sort of formal work; they had little or no interest at all. When the group participated in practical activities they worked quite well.”

3.25 Starting where young people are

“Youth workers now have a greater understanding of what works for the young people in terms of initial engagement through to sustaining interest and gaining outcomes. We know that it is best to start where the young person wants to start and then once they become confident, introduce new ideas or concepts.”

3.26 Linking reading to other activities

“In terms of the activities that have taken place, most have been well received, even if not all the tasks completed. Most importantly we have learned that the content and developing creative sessions are really significant factors in planning activities for young people who struggle with reading.”

“There is a lot of scope for this project including more opportunities for reading linked with drama, art and creative writing. The young people made a comic and took part in drama activities and this is an area that could continue to develop.”

3.27 Working in informal ways

“Reading was informally introduced within the sessions. Staff used magazines, newspapers and the Internet; we held informal facilitated conversations enabling staff to gain knowledge about young people’s reading abilities so that we could offer a suitable reading scheme. Staff tried to organise a reading group but couldn’t gain any interest from young people.”

“The learning style that worked best with the young people was mainly based around discussion. The young people are happy to discuss their lives and interests. However, they do not like sitting down one to one and discussing, because they feel like it puts them under pressure. The same applies to reading and writing. Young people feel that by being asked to sit and write they are working, but if they become involved in an animation project they are happy to sit and write a storyboard.”

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 Feedback from the projects provides evidence of the ways in which the objectives of Phase 2 have been achieved. Specifically, the ways in which young people have been:
- Supported to read more widely and more often;
 - Enabled and encouraged in respect of their personal and social development; and
 - Helped to increase their awareness of the facilities and opportunities that libraries have to offer.

- 4.2 Feedback from projects has also demonstrated:
- How youth work-library partnerships have been strengthened; and
 - Project workers' increasing understanding of 'what works'.

- 4.3 In focusing on 'what works' learning from Phase 2 suggests three critical conditions for success. Firstly, there needs to be an **effective partnership**, since experience shows that the projects failing to establish such a partnership struggled to get started or sustain themselves. For example:

"In retrospect, the lack of support from the library service is a major disappointment. Following my inability to engage local staff I contacted more senior library managers who passed me around a few colleagues via email. This eventually petered out with the library service team leader for development and access failing to reply to my messages. This leads me to conclude that commitment at a senior level between the participating agencies is crucial at the outset."

"Due to problems with communications in accessing information from other organisations, the project got off to a late start. Originally, via e-mail and telephone, we contacted several agencies/organisations that we expected to be in contact with young parents, explaining about the project and asking for their support in contacting young parents to pass the information on. This process took several weeks, as we had to keep getting back in contact with the agencies as we had received very little feedback from them. Our conclusion, in relation to the delays, is that we were not making contact with the appropriate people in the different organisations and it was taking time for information to filter through to them."

"Finding a library partner was an initial problem, however once this was confirmed and initial meetings were held the partnership was a productive one. The library partner ordered the books requested and also added other titles to the list to broaden the appeal of the box contents and include some books that the group had not heard of, but that they might like. Good communication created a positive working relationship between both the lead worker and the library partner. However, we did not develop any joint work with the project."

- 4.4 Conversely, projects with an effective youth worker-librarian partnership in which both sides are enthusiastic about reading and committed to the project, flourished.

"In October I attended the regional development day. It was helpful to meet people from other projects and share our experiences. I was struck by the quality of work described by the projects successfully working as a partnership between youth service and library service. I was reminded that this partnership is an integral part

of the project and acutely aware that I had not been able to forge this type of partnership myself.”

“The partnership working has been excellent. Andrew Blake and other staff from the library service have been friendly and enthusiastic, and we hope to continue the partnership in future. I have found the library staff to be very professional and an enormous help in recommending books. Andrew in particular chooses relevant and related books for our young people and they now trust him to select for them.”

4.5 From Andrew Blake’s point of view:

“I think it could be very easy after the project to lose the structure of the partnership work we are doing. I hope that this will not be the case and will endeavour not to let it be. I think regular contact, via e-mail, phone or by having meetings, would help to keep the project going and ensure it was beneficial for both the project and the library service.”

4.6 Secondly, the young people need to be an already **established group**.

“Contact details from a couple of parents were passed on to us and we did arrange to meet them. Unfortunately, for various reasons, the parents did not turn up although several different meetings were arranged. Reasons such as ill health for either the parent or children themselves were given ... We commenced with weekly meetings, times and venue arranged to accommodate the young parents. Unfortunately, these meetings were not well attended, to the point of only having one or two young people turning up each time. Those not attending were contacted on a weekly basis and, although still expressing interest in the project, were also putting forth excuses as to why they couldn’t attend.”

“I had the nucleus of a group in mind from my youth club membership. I was confident that the relationship that I have with the young people would enable me to explore attitudes towards reading, identify barriers and provide appropriate reading materials to stimulate their interest. I was wrong. I had underestimated the resistance to reading books that was the case for several potential group members. Despite the inducement of free snacks, the promise of ‘no pressure’ and the existing positive relationships, there was a dogged resistance to the notion of joining a reading group.”

“Our initial aim was to work with a group of 16/17 year olds from a nearby hostel for young people with multiple issues no longer living at home as most of them fitted the bill of either not reading at all or very little, often due to lack of ability and motivation to do so. After a first meeting with a few of them, it seemed a good possibility, but afterwards we were unable to meet with them as a group to put forward the idea and lost a good deal of time hoping it would come to fruition. This left us with no real time to get any sort of similar group together, so we had to opt for an established one.”

4.7 Thirdly, it is critical to **start where young people are and work with them in practical and informal ways** as described in paragraphs 3.24 to 3.27

In respect of the lower age range (10-15 years) worked with in Milton Keynes, the project worker commented:

"It is very difficult if you cannot read or have fears of reading when you go up to secondary school. It makes school very difficult. That is why we wanted to focus on this age group and we have had massive success. We linked reading to poetry, art, drama and other creative activities, and now we have young people enthusiastic about reading and this is reflected in a massive improvement in their grades."

4.8 **Barriers**

Barriers to progress or success included high levels of learning difficulties and disabilities. For example, as one project worker comments:

"Half of the group consider they have a disability including dyslexia, learning difficulties, depression, anorexia, panic attacks, anxiety and ADHD."

4.9 Some young people also possess extremely low levels of literacy skills. *"As much as we tried to disguise the learning and make it fun, practical and enjoyable it just did not work with this group. Maybe their abilities were just too low for the project, since within this group there has been a great failure in formal education. For 14 year olds not to have basic literacy skill in 2010 is not acceptable. Out of the Box did not intend for us to teach them to read, but that may have been more beneficial to this group."*

4.10 Although youth centre 'group membership' was possible in some instances, difficulties were experienced for some individual young people joining the library, particularly for those who do not live at home with parents or have no guarantor. Even for some young people living at home, their parents or carers might not necessarily feel inclined to countersign or act as guarantor.

"We have been told by the library workers that the parents must accompany the young person to the library to join and have proof of address, even for 'quick membership'. So this unfortunately has prohibited these young people from joining as their parents will not take them to the library."

4.11 Time was also experienced as a barrier.

"It is very difficult to determine any personal or social development from this project as yet, other than an increase in willingness to talk about books and reading."

"We have identified that the young people need to take part in Out of the Box sessions in the longer term to foster a love of reading. The six months we have spent working on the project has not been sufficient to alter the young people's attitudes to reading. They have however, changed some of their behaviour, for example reading magazines more often."

4.12 **Questionnaires**

Indeed, the issue of changed attitudes compared to changed behaviour was interesting as project workers felt that the 'before & after' questionnaires were of little help in gauging the changing attitudes or behaviour of young people. Reasons for this included:

- Young people completing the questionnaire on the basis of how they thought they should respond as opposed to how they really felt.

- Informality of groups meaning that not all young people completed both before and after questionnaires.
- Difficulties in matching before and after questionnaires to the same young person.

4.13 Despite these difficulties, some projects did find the questionnaires enlightening.

“An analysis has been undertaken of questionnaires, which were completed at the start of the project and more recently. Due to the nature of the PAYP group, some young people are no longer participating and we have some new young people who did not complete a questionnaire when they joined. Despite this, it is clear from feedback that the young people feel much more positive about reading now overall, and comments have gone from “I know enough words, I don’t need to read” to “When are we next going to the library?” Words used to describe how the young people felt about reading before the project included hard, boring, not as good as television and scary. Now, the young people describe reading as worthwhile and interesting and they enjoy it. They really enjoy reading together as a group and sharing what they have read – especially when it is from the Guinness Book of Records!”

4.14 Also, what young people say about their attitude to reading does not necessarily reflect how they behave.

“Having spoken to several young people about the impact of the Out of the Box project I was surprised to learn that many felt it had not changed them at all. They still maintained that reading was boring, that they didn’t like it, and that they got nothing from it. However, their attitude belies their behaviour. As an observer, I have found that they are reading more, and that their reading matter is becoming more varied. For example, enjoy reading sat and read The Guardian from cover to cover! A young woman who feels comfortable reading in front of people has now encouraged two friends to use her library card and visit the library with her.”

4.15 **Support**

Projects were supported by Regional Youth Work Units and the National Project Manager through:

- Regional development days
- Telephone coaching to support project leads
- One year free subscription to groupthing for participating youth projects
- A small development grant towards project expenses.

4.16 The contribution of the Regional Youth Work Units was valued from the early stages of *Out of the Box* in identifying and supporting the establishment of projects across the regions. RYWUs also supported the organisation and administration of the regional development days and this too was appreciated.

4.17 **Regional development days**

The development days were seen as supportive, inspiring and enjoyable. Specifically, project workers mentioned the opportunity to:

- Meet other project staff and share information, experiences and learning
- Get feedback from others
- Become energised by others

- Reflect on the *Out of the Box* 'journey'
- Put thinking and activities in perspective
- Swap Ideas and materials with others
- Gain confidence.

4.18 Telephone coaching

The telephone sessions were viewed as supportive and useful for the opportunity to:

- Talk 1-2-1 about individual projects
- Think out loud - as one worker put it "to put stuff out there and discuss things you might be struggling with"
- Engage in detailed planning and review.

4.19 Groupthing subscription

In the end, *groupthing* did not emerge as a major part of Phase 2 despite the fact that some projects did register. However, difficulties with the planned training days resulted in disappointment with only one project reported to have actually used the site. For this project, *groupthing* was described as a 'big hit with young people'.

4.20 Other observations about *groupthing* were less glowing with project workers remarking on the difficulty in getting young people involved due to:

- Young people being hooked on *Facebook*
- Not enough young people currently involved on the site
- Site not user friendly
- Young people cannot link up with their friends
- Existing groups have been set up by staff (as opposed to young people)
- Access to computers is limited at the youth centre
- Young people not particularly focused on books
- Young people more engaged face-to-face than being on the computer.

4.21 Development grant

Each project received a small development grant of £500. This enabled the purchasing of books, transport costs (e.g. for library visits) as well as the purchase of some incentives (e.g. book vouchers, vouchers for e-books, i-tunes downloads, food and refreshments).

4.22 While this is not a great deal of money, projects did feel that it provided a sense of security in the sense that without any funds they might not have taken the risk with a new initiative about which they were unsure. In addition, projects now face the question of how to sustain their *Out of the Box* work within existing budgets.

4.23 Benefits of *Out of the Box*

The main benefits of the project were seen as threefold in terms of:

- Bringing the library to young people.
- Building bridges across agencies and making relationships that result in a ripple effect across the community.

- Developing a team and approach that can be rolled out in different areas.

4.24 For young people, the great success of the project was seen as its potential to make a difference to young people's lives. As one worker commented "*You can make a relationship with young people, and engage them, and make a difference.*" Or in the words of one young person "*All my friends thought that I was sad but a couple have started to read the books now and they love them as much as I do. It's given me a reason to look forward to being on my own and something to talk to my friends about.*"

4.25 **Phase 3**

The original proposal was that Phase 3 of the project would focus on the development of training materials. However, given experience to date, this does not seem appropriate.

- Firstly, all of the projects have been very different in approach and it is therefore difficult to envisage a set of training materials that could comprehensively address such different needs and different circumstances.
- Secondly, attempting to produce a 'how to' guide cannot take into account, or build effectively, on the different skills, structures and relationships that exist at local level.
- Thirdly, and most importantly, the most successful projects have been those with first-rate youth worker-library partnerships, a shared passion and enthusiasm for reading, and collective commitment to the success of the project. These cannot be captured by writing training materials and putting them on a website.

4.26 The proposal, therefore, is that Phase 3 of *Out of the Box* should focus on the delivery of regional events which invite local authority youth services, voluntary youth organisations and library services which have not taken part to engage with project workers from the Phase 2 projects.

4.27 This could be through a combination of presentations and facilitated workshop sessions focusing on projects' experience to date and what lessons can be drawn to stimulate developments by other people in other places.

4.28 The central objective of this would be to let the energising quality of face-to-face contact stimulate interest and inspire others to 'have a go'.

APPENDIX 1: The National Youth Agency The Reading Agency

THE NATIONAL YOUTH AGENCY

The National Youth Agency supports those involved in young people's personal and social development and works to enable all young people to fulfil their potential as individuals. We achieve this by:

- Informing, advising and helping those who work with young people.
- Influencing youth policy and improving services for young people.
- Promoting young people's participation, influence and place in society.

www.nya.org.uk

THE READING AGENCY

The Reading Agency is an independent charity, working to inspire more people to read more. We believe passionately in the power of reading in people's lives and want everyone to have an equal chance to become a reader. Much of our work is with public libraries, and we also team up with prisons, publishers, unions, businesses, broadcasters, and others.

www.readingagency.org.uk

APPENDIX 2: Project Advisory Group

Sue Houlton	Programme Manager: Learning and Achievement	National Youth Agency
Elizabeth Dubber	Director of Programmes	The Reading Agency
Ruth Harrison	Senior Project Manager	The Reading Agency
Claire Styles	Senior Project Manager	The Reading Agency
Jan McIntosh	Gender, Class and Books Team Narrowing the Gaps	DCSF
Liz Hassock	Head of Integrated Youth Support Service Representing the Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services (CHYPS)	London Borough of Hounslow
Helen Boothroyd	Children, Young People and Schools Library Service Manager Chair of the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL)	Suffolk Library Service Representing
Kerry Young	Project Consultant	Harrington Young

APPENDIX 3: Project Staff

North West

Blackburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mubashar Khaliq: Youth Action ● Angela Robinson: Library Service
Lancashire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Michelle Sisson: Library Service ● Sadaqut Amin: Youth Service ● Leesa Amin: Youth Service
Sefton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Claire Tinsley & John Phillips: Youth Service ● Zoe Clarke & Lesley Davies: Library Service
Tameside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jose Johnson, Azra Puri & Jean Peters: Youth Service

North East

Stockton-on-Tees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diane Simms, John Greenan & Danny Lorraine: Youth Service ● Helen Wilberforce: Library Service
------------------	---

Yorkshire & Humberside

Calderdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jonathan Moore: Youth Service ● Elaine Duffy: Library Service
Kirklees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Janet Pearson, Louise Hazell, Julie Walker, Pamela Chew & Jackie Newby: Library Service ● Rob Cooper: Youth Service
N. Lincs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jean Carter: Youth Service ● Jemmima Kelly: Library Service ● Zoe Parsons: Connexions
Rotherham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ian Whitehead, Caz Andrews & Claire Haddon: Youth Service ● Claire Leary: Library Service

South East

Medway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tyler Wilkins: Youth Service ● Clare Agass: Library Service
Milton Keynes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Becky Hughes, Maria Cameron, Clare Grego-Buey, Lisa Lovell & Hilary Solway: Youth Service
Oxford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kathryn Curnock & Dayne Daniels: Youth Service ● Anna Cotsell, Kate Robinson & Gillian Elliot: Library Service
West Sussex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dave Allen: Youth Service ● Lucy Gill & Karen Brown: Library Service

South West

Bournemouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sam Whelan: Youth Service
Gloucestershire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chris Walsh: Youth Service
Plymouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emma Sherriff: Library Service ● Becca Coslet: Youth Service
Somerset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ruth Cooksey: Youth Service ● Joy Tollington: Library Service
Dorset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Julie Walsh: Youth Service ● Andrew Blake: Library Service

APPENDIX 4: Participants

Total number of young people participating in the project: 336

GENDER	Male	171	Female	137	Unspecified	28
---------------	-------------	-----	---------------	-----	--------------------	----

Milton Keynes with permission from DCSF to work with younger age group

AGE	8	9	10	11	12	15
	1	2	2	4	1	1

All other projects

AGE	14	15	16	17	18	19	Unspecified
	17	16	26	23	8	11	224

DISABILITY

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	YES	NO	Unspecified
	38	15	283

ETHNIC BACKGROUND

Black		White		Asian		Other	
Black – African	5	White –British	143	Indian		White and Black Caribbean	5
Black – Caribbean	6	White – Irish		Pakistani		White and Black African	1
Black –Other	1	White other		Bangladeshi		White and Asian	
				Chinese		Other mixed	
Unspecified	175			Other Asian		Other	

APPENDIX 5: Reading & Materials

Guinness World Records 2010
Where's Wally? by Handford, M
Megamath by James Stazzer
Doctor Who Files – The Cult of Skard
Charlie and the Giant Glass Elevator by Roald Dahl
Vicky Angel by Jacqueline Wilson
Famous Five Book 1 by Enid Blyton
The Horrid Henry Collection
Charlie and The Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl
The Cat Mummy by J Wilson
Pickle Hill Primary – Mr Bloods Body Lessons by Michael Cox
Goosebumps – How I learned to Fly by RL Stine
The Enchanted Wood by Enid Blyton
James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl
The BFG by Roald Dahl
Silly Story Laboratory by The Happy Puzzle Company
Revolting Rhymes by Roald Dahl
Religions of the World – Islam by Sue Penney
Narnia series by CS Lewis
Pets by T. Hearne
Doctor Who Activity Book
Diary of a Chav by Grace Dent
Asbo Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Asbosen
Twilight series (Twilight, New moon, Eclipse, Breaking Dawn) by Stephanie Meyer
Mona the vampire by Sonia Holleyman
The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson
In the name of Gog / Chuck Austen ... et al.
Creating superheroes & comic book characters / artwork Jim Hansen / colorist
Scared by Anthony Horowitz
Skulduggery Pleasant by Derek Landy
Clean break by Jacqueline Wilson ; illustrated by Nick Sharratt
Courtney Crumrin and the night things by Ted Naifeh
Officially Osbourne/opening the doors to the Land of Oz by the Osbournes
These our actors by Ashley McConnell and Dori Koogler

Star wars episode 3 storybook
Write your own ... chillers by Pie Corbett
The hidden by K.A. Applegate
Surf holiday
iD entity by Hee-Joon Son, Youn-Kyung Kim. Vol. 1
Yu-Gi-Oh! duelist: story and art by Kazuki Takahashi/translation & English
Things I know about love by Kate le Vann
Yu-Gi-Oh! : duelist : vol. 2 : the puppet master by Kazuki Takahashi
The witching hour by Jeph Loeb & Chris Bachato
Demon thief by Darren Shan
Justin Timberlake by Dan Whitcombe
How to draw superheroes by Jim Hansen
Awesome facts about snakes by Claire Llewellyn
Gruesome grub and disgusting dishes by Susan Martineau ; illustrations by Mar
Smarties incredible monsters by Mike Ashley/illustrated by David Mostyn
Why eating bogeys is good for you: and other crazy facts explained! by Mitch
UFOs by John Duncan
Incy wincy spider by Louise Cooper
Spies and secret warriors : true stories of intrigue, courage and camouflage
Acceleration by Graham McNamee
The wee free men: a story of Discworld by Terry Pratchett
Vampires by Martin Jenkins
Simpsons comics presents the big beastly book of Bart
The fall of the House of Blodvat by Michael Cox/illustrated by C
The story of the X-Men : how it all began by Michael Teitelbaum
Write your own thrillers by Pie Corbett/illustrated by Peter Bailey
Bollywood babes by Narinder Dhani
Acceleration by Graham McNamee
Justin Timberlake by Dan Whitcombe
Short and spooky : a book of very short spooky stories by Louise Cooper
A-haunting we will go and other spooky rhymes illustrated by Chris Mould
Stunt double by Jameson Anderson
Simpsons comics presents the big beastly book of Bart
Why eating bogeys is good for you: and other crazy facts explained! by Mitch
iD entity by Hee-Joon Son, Youn-Kyung Kim. Vol. 1
The Empire strikes back by Donald F. Glut/based on a story by George Luc
UFOs by John Duncan

Vampires by Martin Jenkins
Demon thief by Darren Shan
"Scientific progress goes ""boink"" : a Calvin and Hobbes collection"
Roald Dahl's revolting recipes/illustrated by Quentin Blake/with photographs
My best book of martial arts by Lauren Robertson
The Usborne book of secret codes by Eileen O'Brien and Diana Riddell/edited
Gruesome grub and disgusting dishes by Susan Martineau ; illustrations by Mar
Smarties incredible monsters by Mike Ashley/illustrated by David Mostyn
Awesome facts about snakes by Claire Llewellyn
How to draw superheroes by Jim Hansen
Black Cat (manga Edition) by Kentaro Yabuki
Simpsons Comics – Simpsorama/Simpsons on Parade
Table Tennis by Bernie Blackall
Cartooning by John Byrne
Drawing Faces by Rosie Dickens and Jan McCafferty
Doctor Who: The Pirate Loop by Simon Guerrier
Transformers Adventures, Robots in Disguise by Simon Furman
Starwars Visionaries by Mike Richardson
Instruments of Death by Stewart Ross
How to draw Shoujo by Robert Acosta and Paul Kilpatrick
Summers of the Sisterhood by Ann Brashares
Nothing can keep us together: A gossip girl novel by Cecily von Ziegesar
Starwars: General Grievous by Chuck Dixon
Stormbreaker: The Graphic Novel by Antony Johnston
Doctor Who: The Glorious Dead by Clayton Hickman
Watchmen by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons
Fantastic Four: Where stalks the Sandman by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby
Spiderman: Jumping to Conclusions by Todd DeZago
Terminator, Judgement Day: The Graphic Novel by Gregory Wright
The Magic of Drawing by Cliff Wright
Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon: The graphic adaptation by Andy Seto
Transformers: Revenge of the fallen – the Graphic Novel by Chris Mowry
Transformers: Energon – the Graphic Novel by Simon Furman
The Crow by J. O'Barr
Doctor Who: The Resurrection Casket by Justin Richards
Draw Manga Villains! by Christopher Hart
Manga for the Beginner by Christopher Hart

Indiana Jones Adventures: Curse of the Invincible Ruby by Mark Evanier

Hellboy: Weird Tales by Mike Mignola

Terminator Revolution by Simon Furman

Starwars Rebel Force: Target by Alex Wheeler

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass by Frederick Douglas

Shadows: Dexter v Merton by Paul Blum

Judge Dredd: Total War by John Wagner

Graphic Novels by Andy Seed

How to Draw Manga Monsters by Peter Gray

Ultimate X-men: Magnetic North by Brian K. Vaughn.

Tattooing by Paul Mason

Big Bratty Book of Bart Simpson by Matt Greoning

Big Brilliant Book of Bart Simpson by Matt Greoning

Simpsons Comics Barn Burner by Matt Greoning

Simpsons A Go-Go by Matt Greoning

Dangerous Book for Boys by Conn and Hall Iggulden

Magic Tricks by Peter Eldin

Ultimate Sports Car by Quentin Wilson

Street Art: the Graffiti revolution by Cedar Lewisohn

Wall and Piece by Banksy

Sex Bomb: the life and death of Anna Nicole Smith by Erric Redding

Tattoo Bible (No Author Listed)

The Best Friend's Guide to Pregnancy

The Best Friend's Guide to Surviving the first year of Motherhood

Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

Gruffalo's Child by Julia Donaldson

The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson

The Gruffalo's Song by Julia Donaldson

Change your life in seven days by Paul Mckenna

Style by Kate Moss

Slaine: the horned god by Pat Mills

PLUS

- Local and national newspapers (e.g. Daily Express, Daily Mirror, Guardian, Dorset Echo)
- Magazines (e.g. Bella, Heat, More, Closer, OK!, Reveal, Pick Me Up, Grazia, Glamour, Now, Best, Star)
- Miscellaneous 'special interest' magazines on request (e.g. Pregnancy and Birth, Mother and Baby, Xbox 360, Match, Kick, New Scientist, Kerrang!, Inside Soap, The Simpsons, Metal Hammer, Futurama, Top Gear, Fast Car, Empire, Dr Who, Hair).

Notes:

- 1 *groupthing* is The Reading Agency website for young people (aged 13-18) which provides a safe and accessible space for them to log on and have conversations about books and reading materials. Young people can set up groups, rate and review, upload their own creative work and start chats.
- 2 Using Socratic dialogue as conversation to support young people to reflect on their experience, consider different views of the world, and formulate general principles about everyday life.
- 3 Health & safety test for the construction industry

read

the reading agency

About the Reading Agency

We're an independent charity which inspires more people to read more. Why? Because we believe that reading can transform people's lives. The more you read, the more you know. The more you read, the more you imagine. The more you read, the better you understand other people, and the better you connect to them.

We've got ideas and the energy to make great things happen. We'll work with anybody who wants to get more people reading more. Much of our work is with public libraries, but we also team up with prisons, publishers, unions, businesses, broadcasters, and others. We run big national reading programmes, like the Summer Reading Challenge for children and The Vital Link for adults trying to improve their literacy skills. We try new things out, like reading groups with a radio strand, or a new website to attract teenage readers.

We're used as a resource by people working directly with readers. We can provide training and advice as well as toolkits, websites and promotional materials. We use our connections to join up organisations interested in promoting reading. For example, we help libraries form partnerships with major organisations like publishers and the BBC.

We have a research and events programme which leads to new evidence and thinking about the impact of reading. We're also active in public policy and advocacy, working with government departments and think tanks. And we're experienced at working with the corporate sector, through sponsorship or corporate social responsibility programmes.

The Reading Agency Free Word
60 Farringdon Road
London EC1R 3GA

Tel: 0871 7501207

Email: info@readingagency.org.uk

Website: www.readingagency.org.uk

For more information, visit
www.readingagency.org.uk





About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

National Youth Agency
Eastgate House
19-23 Humberstone Road
Leicester LE5 3GJ

Tel: 0116 242 7350
Email: nya@nya.org.uk
Website: www.nya.org.uk

For more information, visit www.nya.org.uk

