



The Literacy Picture Across the North East

Scoping Report

Northern Rock Foundation

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Key Facts and Figures for the North East

Literacy Needs

- **113,110** school age children eligible for the deprivation pupil premium
- **16,455** school age children have a first language other than English
- **4,220** looked after children
- **260** children and young people permanently excluded from school
- **6,176** troubled families have been identified by local authorities
- **246,455** lone parent households with dependent children
- **24.5%** of children are in poverty, compared to a UK average of 20.6%.
- **283,500** adults at or below Entry Level 3
- **671,930** local authority owned or private registered dwelling
- **66%** of children achieved expected levels in communication and language in 2013 compared with 72% nationally.
- **55%** of children achieved expected levels in literacy in 2013 compared with 61% nationally.
- **6,860** 16-18 year olds are not in education, employment and training (7.6%)
- **87%** Pupils achieving L4+ in reading at Key Stage 2 compared with 86% nationally
- **84%** Pupils achieving L4+ in writing at Key Stage 2 compared with 83% nationally
- **59.3%** of pupils achieving 5 GCSE A*-C (or equivalent) including English and Maths compared with 64% nationally
- **22,648** children participated in Summer Reading Challenge in 2013 (9% of 8-12 year olds)

Literacy Support Infrastructure

- **185** Children's Centres
- **2,993** registered childcare providers offering places to 47,324 children
- **480** baby and toddler groups
- **204** libraries
- **1,406** library volunteers
- **5** Children's University programmes
- **14,071** Teaching Assistants
- **36** Teaching Schools

1. Introduction and Context

Report Purpose

- 1.1 Consilium Research and Consultancy (Consilium) was commissioned by the Northern Rock Foundation (NRF) in August 2014 to undertake research into literacy needs and provision across the North East region. The main focus of the research was to assess literacy needs and provision for children aged 0-14, although given the importance of parental involvement in a child's learning and education, additional analysis of adult skills and support has been included.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this scoping report the definition of literacy is taken from the 2009 Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum¹ and includes **speaking, listening, reading and writing**. The importance of developing a child's speaking and listening skills (also referred to as 'oracy') has sometimes been understated both within the education sector and by wider stakeholders whose definition of literacy may focus solely on reading and writing. As demonstrated in this report, there are a diverse range of stakeholders that currently play or could play an important role in supporting children and young people with literacy difficulties. Consequently achieving a shared understanding of what is included when referring to literacy is important as this can enable stakeholders to more clearly identify how their service or activity can contribute towards efforts to raise literacy levels across the region.
- 1.3 There are many reasons why people from all ages struggle with their literacy, ranging from severe educational needs to disillusionment with learning and low aspirations. Although the relationship between literacy and other variables may not always reflect direct causal connections, it is clear that specific groups within society are at greater risk of developing poor literacy skills. It is also evident that adults with poor literacy skills are more likely to experience economic and personal deprivation and that without effective intervention their children are at a greater risk of experiencing difficulties with literacy.
- 1.4 Literacy therefore is part of complex cycle of socio-economic factors that can lead to economic and personal deprivation. Whilst an individual's socio-economic background and many other factors may be outside of their control, improving literacy levels can help to address and overcome other related factors that lock individuals into a cycle of disadvantage and poverty.
- 1.5 Research demonstrates that there is a strong connection between early literacy failure and later social exclusion for young people and adults with consequent long-term effects on employment levels and social cohesion². Delivering sustainable improvements to the region's literacy levels cannot be achieved through short-term fixes but needs to be guided by a longer-term commitment of a range of stakeholders.

¹ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009)- 'Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum: Final Report'.

² National Literacy Trust (2008)- 'Literacy Changes Lives: An advocacy resource'. September 2008

- 1.6 Responsibility for addressing low literacy should not sit solely at the door of schools or early years provision but has to engage a much broader coalition of organisations, statutory and non-statutory services and importantly local communities.
- 1.7 This scoping report has been supported by the time and contributions of a broad number of contributors. Their time and support has been greatly appreciated (see Appendix 1). The research was conducted between August and September 2014. Whilst attempts were made to engage a wide range of organisations the research timeframe covering the summer holiday period and commencement of the new academic year presented challenges in making contact.
- 1.8 The content of this scoping report is based on desk-based research and consultation with a sample of contributors covering a range of services. It is evident that provision of literacy support across the 12 North East local authorities is varied and indeed, to some degree, fluid given changes in local funding arrangements and priorities. Every care has been taken to reflect the complexity of literacy needs and provision across the region. In a number of areas it has not been possible to access relevant data to inform an analysis of literacy needs or take-up of support (either because the data has not been made available or in some cases because the data simply isn't collected).

2. The Profile of Literacy across the North East

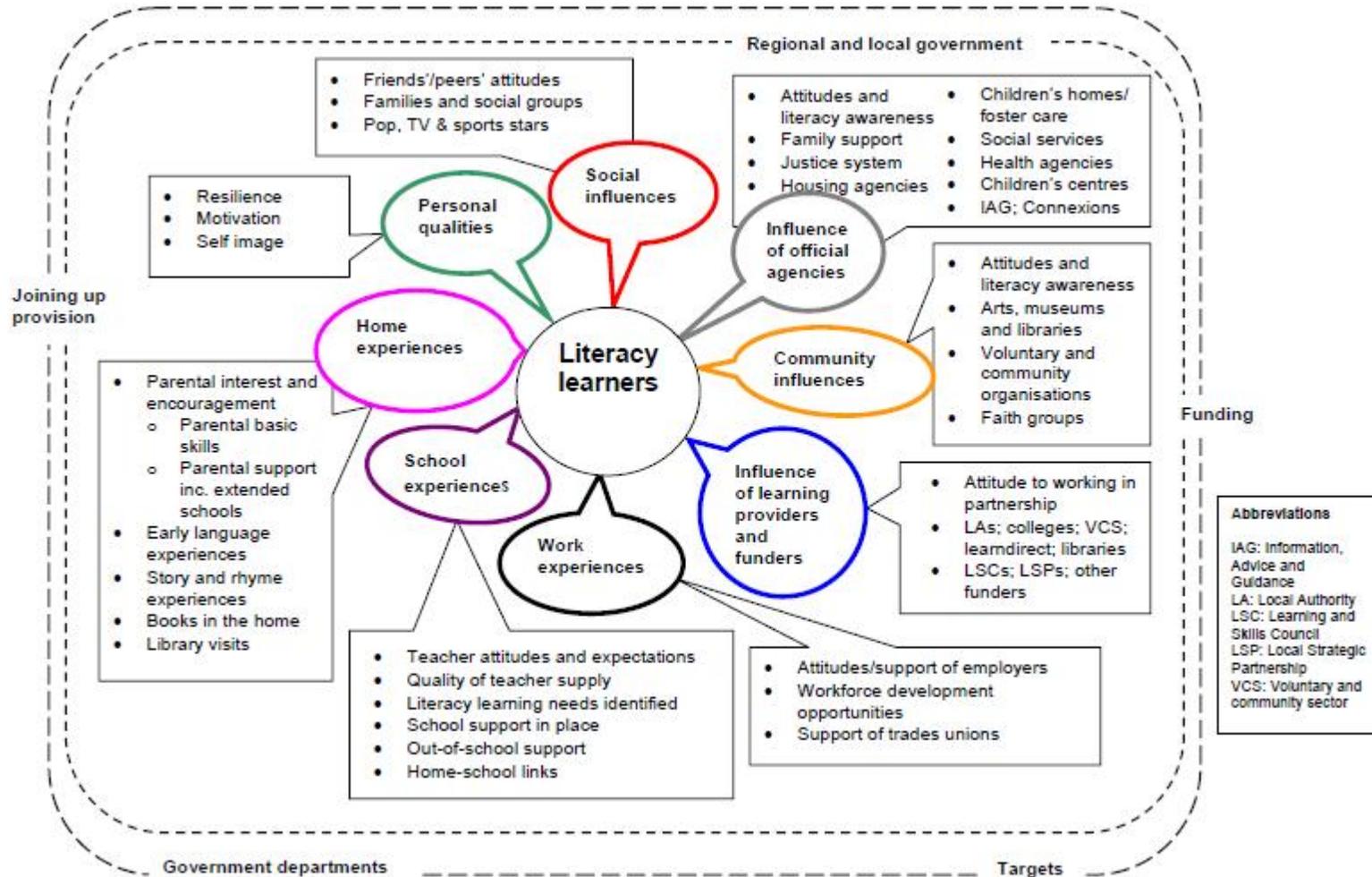
- 2.1 This section of the report provides an overview of the profile of literacy across the North East. The research has drawn on a range of data sources to establish the profile of literacy across the region. References are included in the main body of the report and where necessary further information included in the appendices.
- 2.2 Literacy learning is central to and influenced by a huge range of experiences, agencies and providers. Experiences at home, in school and work all exert an influence on a learner. Equally important are influences of an individual's social network, the wider community and official agencies (see Figure 1). As such, to be successful, efforts to improve literacy levels either on a local authority or cross-authority basis need to recognise the range of influences on learners at early years, primary or secondary stages. This report acknowledges these influences and highlights the various agencies and partners that can play an important role in identifying, engaging and supporting those with literacy difficulties across the North East.
- 2.3 There are previous examples of individual local authorities establishing multi-agency strategies to raise literacy levels. In 2006 **Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council** and Rochdale Local Strategic Partnership published a policy for literacy for the borough³. The policy brought together the aspirations of all those concerned with literacy and oral language of people in the borough in the first months of life, throughout the pre-school school years, in primary, secondary and further education and in adult learning. The policy looked at literacy in the widest sense, in different communities, in homes, as well as in educational settings.
- 2.4 **Sheffield City Council** established a city-wide literacy strategy to ensure that 'Every Sheffield Child is Articulate and Literate' (ESCAL)⁴. The strategy was established as an umbrella for a range of services, projects, initiatives and strategies delivered to parents and young children across the city. The aim of the strategy was to embed literacy across services to families, children and young people and ensure there was a cohesive approach to meeting children's and young people's needs.
- 2.5 National Literacy Trust's Partners in Literacy programme delivered between 2009 and 2011 worked with nine local authorities⁵ to establish whether the use of a partnership approach could be effective in influencing home literacy practices.
- 2.6 It has not been possible to identify previous approaches to coordinating approaches to improve literacy, in the widest sense, on a multi-authority and/or regional basis. However, initiatives such as the London Challenge, launched in 2003 to improve outcomes in low-performing secondary schools and primary schools, have delivered positive results in relation to raising attainment levels above the national average⁶.

³ Rochdale MBC (2006)- 'Literacy Changes Lives'. Rochdale Borough Literacy Policy <http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/pdf/Literacy%20Changes%20Lives.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/education/about-us/plans-partnerships/escal/about/policy-strategy.html>

⁵ Includes Derbyshire, Knowsley, Sheffield and Wiltshire, Coventry, Gateshead, Kent, Lambeth and Suffolk.

⁶ Ofsted (2010)- 'London Challenge'. December 2010.

Figure 1- Literacy and Social Inclusion: The Policy Challenge⁷

⁷ Bird, V. & Akerman, R. (2005)- 'Literacy and Social Inclusion: The Handbook'.

Who suffers from low literacy?

- 2.7 National evidence highlights specific groups who are likely to struggle with literacy. In school there are groups of consistent low attainers across the Key Stages including: boys, pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM), some ethnic minority groups, pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), pupils with high rates of mobility between schools, and looked after children. These characteristics often interact and place a pupil at an increased likelihood of under-achievement. Low attainment is often due to complex interactions of a variety of social/demographic factors⁸.
- 2.8 Using published statistics it is possible to estimate the number of children and young people within some of the above groups across the North East, which highlights the scale of the challenge in delivering effective intervention and support. The most recent School Census data for 2014 reveals there are 113,110 children at primary and secondary school across the region who are eligible for the deprivation pupil premium (consistent with eligibility for FSM)⁹. Some 16,455 children at primary and secondary school have a first language that is known or believed to be other than English (EAL)¹⁰. The region also currently supports 4,220 looked after children (LAC)¹¹ and 260 children and young people permanently excluded from school¹². These groups may be classed as having a higher risk of developing difficulties with literacy.
- 2.9 Other data sets are also relevant in identifying households where children may be at a greater risk of developing low literacy. Across the North East 6,176 troubled families have been identified by local authorities¹³, there are 246,455 lone parent households with dependent children¹⁴ and 15,505 unemployed 18-24 year olds¹⁵. Such datasets can prove helpful in understanding the scale and geographical distribution of households where literacy support may be required. What is less clear is the extent to which these households have access to and/or are willing to engage with existing literacy support services, or put another way, how effective existing services are in targeting support to those with the greatest needs.

The importance of adult literacy Skills

- 2.10 The persistence of high proportions of adults across the region with low literacy skills has both immediate implications for the regional economy and longer-term implications for the future skills base.

⁸ Department for Education (2012)- 'Literacy and numeracy catch-up strategies'. November 2012

⁹ National Pupil Premium Allocation 2013/14. Includes 65,570 pupils at primary and 47,540 at secondary.

¹⁰ School Census 2014.

¹¹ Department for Education (2013)- 'Children Looked After in England: 11th December 2013'.

¹² Department for Education (2012)- 'State-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools: Number of permanent exclusions, by local authority area and region, England 2011/12'.

¹³ Department for Communities and Local Government (2013)- 'Troubled families: progress information at September 2013 and families turned around at October 2013'. Published 25th November 2013.

¹⁴ ONS (2011)- 'Household composition statistics'.

¹⁵ ONS (2014)- 'Claimant count statistics: July 2014'.

- 2.11 Parents with low literacy levels are less likely to get involved in supporting their child's literacy, which in turn perpetuates a cycle of low literacy across generations and within communities. The Marmot Review¹⁶ concluded that *'success in learning at school is rooted in the stimulation and encouragement a child receives at home, in the family and in the community. Where parents have not gained these skills themselves, disadvantage is passed from one generation to another. Schoolbased interventions need to be linked to work with parents, the family and the community, with an emphasis on enabling parents to support their child's cognitive development and life skills'*. Consequently parental skills, and an awareness of the important role they play, are essential to providing children with the best chance of success in learning in school.
- 2.12 However adult skill levels vary considerably. The UK uses five levels to measure literacy and numeracy skills: Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3, Level 1 and Level 2. The Moser Report¹⁷ identified Level 1 literacy and Entry Level 3 numeracy as the standards necessary to function at work and society in general. Level 1 is equivalent to GCSE grades D-G. Adults with skills below Level 1 may not be able to read bus or train timetables or check the pay and deductions on a wage slip (see Appendix 3 for further detail of the five levels).
- 2.13 The Skills for Life Survey¹⁸ conducted in 2003 to assess people's basic skill levels estimated that 16 per cent of the working age population of England (16-65 years), over five million people, lacked Level 1 literacy (broadly one in six adults). The follow-up 2011 Skills for Life Survey¹⁹ reported that literacy standards amongst 16-65 year-olds had not only been maintained, but had surpassed the benchmark set in 2003, with more achieving Level 2 or above than had previously been the case. The growth in high performers, however, reflected an upward shift from Level 1 rather than a reduction in the number of poor performers. The proportions achieving Entry Level 3 or below remains unchanged. In other words, a sizeable proportion of the population were getting left behind with literacy levels below that expected of a 9-11 year old (Entry Level 3).
- 2.14 Adult basic skills, and specifically literacy, are also a priority for government. The 2006 Leitch Review²⁰ stated that unless the number of adults below Level 1 literacy is reduced the UK faces a severe skills shortage in the future. Following Leitch, the Government set the ambitious target that by 2020 95% of adults should achieve functional literacy, a rise of 10% from current levels. Yet employers remain concerned about the absence of employability skills within the labour market.

¹⁶ Marmot, M. (2010)- 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives: The Marmot Review'.

¹⁷ DfEE (1999)- 'A fresh start: Improving literacy and numeracy'.

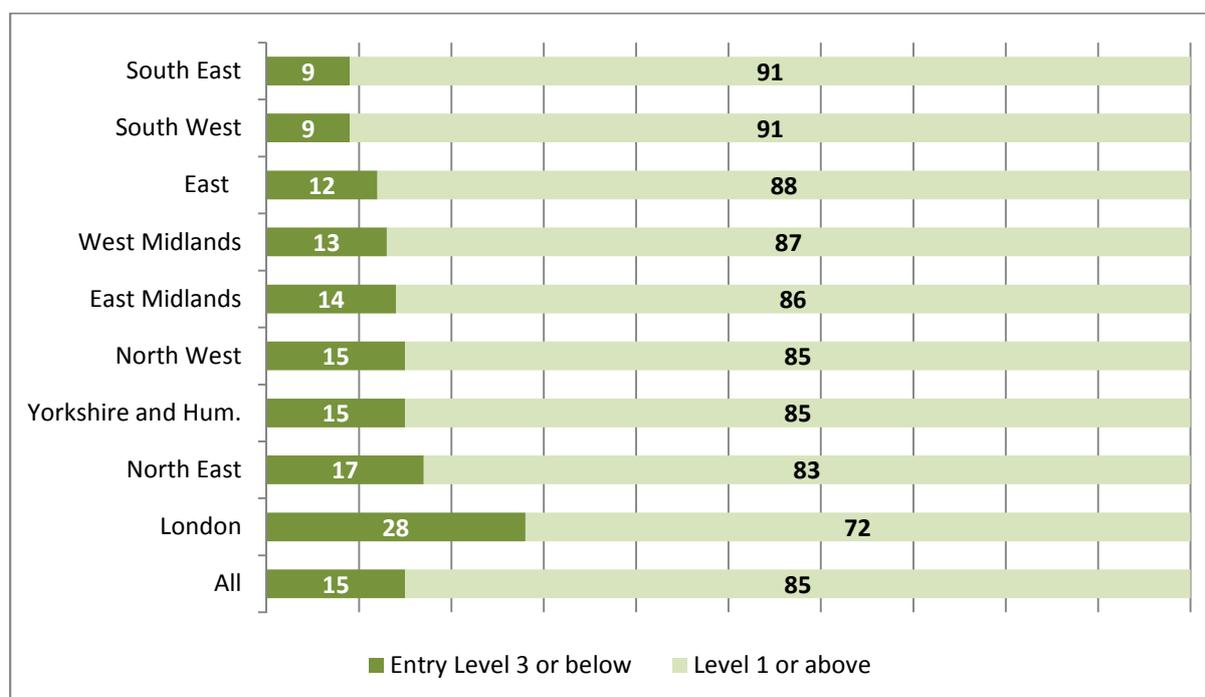
¹⁸ Department for Education and Skills (2003)- 'The Skills for Life survey A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills'.

¹⁹ Department for Business Innovation & Skills (2012)- 'The 2011 Skills for Life Survey: A Survey of Literacy, Numeracy and ICT Levels in England'. BIS Research Paper Number 81.

²⁰ HM Treasury (2006)- 'Prosperity for all in the global economy- world class skills'. The Leitch Review.

- 2.15 The CBI Education and Skills Survey 2012²¹ reports that employers want to see primary schools concentrating on the key enabling skills of numeracy, writing and reading that underlie success in all other learning. For those in the 14-19 age group, employers believe schools and colleges should be prioritising the development of employability skills, with more done to strengthen literacy, numeracy and technology skills.
- 2.16 At a regional level the 2011 Skills for Life Survey highlighted the North East as having the poorest literacy performance along with London (see Table 1). Using the proportions outlined in Table 1 with the most recent mid-year population estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS)²² it is possible to broadly estimate the number of people across the North East that have literacy levels at Entry Level 3 or below.
- 2.17 ONS estimates that there are 1,667,400 people aged 16-64 across the region. The 2011 Skills for Life Survey data would suggest that approximately 283,500 (17%) of these are at or below Entry Level 3 (140,400 males and 143,100 females).

Table 1- Skills for Life 2011 Regional Analysis (% at each level)



- 2.18 The 2011 Skills for Life also includes an analysis on literacy levels by housing tenure (see Table 2). The data reveals that people renting from the local authority are much more likely to have literacy levels at Entry Level 3 or below than other tenures.

²¹ CBI (2012)- 'Learning to grow: what employers need from education and skills'. Education and Skills survey 2012.

²² ONS (2013)- 'Mid-Year Population Estimates'.

Table 2- Literacy Levels by Tenure

	All	Owner-occupiers	All tenants	Renting from private landlord	Renting from local authority
Literacy Level	%	%	%	%	%
Entry Level 3 or below	15	9	24	20	36
Level 1 or above	85	91	76	80	64

- 2.19 Consequently this would suggest that registered social landlords (RSLs) are in strong position to link literacy support to tenants with low literacy levels. Across the North East the most recent data indicates that there are 671,930 local authority owned or private registered dwellings (registered providers of social housing)²³.
- 2.20 There are examples from across the North East of social housing providers playing an active role in supporting literacy and learning for their tenants. The **Northern Learning Trust**, for example, has established Learning Hives²⁴ in partnership with housing providers and local authorities to improve access to learning opportunities (including functional literacy and family learning) in target communities. The National Literacy Trust is working in partnership with social housing providers to deliver its Literacy Champions programme²⁵, which connects community volunteers with local families with children aged two to five years who would benefit from advice about supporting their children's early literacy development.
- 2.21 Sunderland-based **Gentoo**²⁶, which manages over 30,000 tenancies, has established a volunteer programme which encourages staff, corporate partners and members of the community to give their time to activities that facilitate improvements in people's lives. Their 'Turning Pages' project aims to support local school children on a one-to-one basis to help improve their reading. As of September 2014, the project is working with ten schools across Sunderland and more schools are waiting to join. The project is delivered free of charge to local schools and Gentoo is expanding its volunteer base to provide customers (tenants) with opportunities to get involved.
- 2.22 Developing stronger links and improving coordination between organisations providing literacy support and the North East social housing sector can help to improve the targeting of resources and facilitate take-up of support from families where engagement in traditional services is low. The **Homes and Communities Agency**, **Northern Housing Consortium**, **The Chartered Institute of Housing** and the **National Housing Federation** are likely to be able to assist in facilitating cross-sector dialogue and partnership development to support efforts to raise literacy levels for families living in social housing.

²³ Department for Communities and Local Government: Local Authority Housing Statistics 1st April 2013.

²⁴ http://www.northernlearningtrust.org.uk/#!_what-we-do/vstc18=learning-hives

²⁵ http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/literacy_champions

²⁶ <http://www.gentooogroup.com/for-customers/>

- 2.23 The 2011 Skills for Life Survey also highlights the importance of taking into account attitudes to learning, education and qualifications. People who had a positive outlook on learning, indicated by confidence in the learning process and a belief that ‘learning is fun’, tended to be high performers. Likewise for those who believed qualifications were worth paying for and those who felt that learning should be a lifelong process of personal development. Other attitudes were linked to poor literacy scores. For example, people who felt they had got nothing useful out of school tended to have weak skills; though they were the most likely to report that they wished they had continued further with their education.
- 2.24 The evidence base is clear that parents’ educational expectations and aspirations shape their interactions with their children, and in turn parental aspirations and expectations for their children are strongly linked to their own educational attainment²⁷. The Leitch Review found that inequalities in aspirations among adults drive inequalities in attainment for their children at school. Developing positive aspirations is a key factor in securing good educational and occupational outcomes and an important component of autonomy. So to be effective, support should aim to address the literacy needs of children and young people whilst at the same time raising awareness amongst parents of the importance of literacy and lifting their aspirations and expectations for their child.
- 2.25 The 2011 Skills for Life survey also presents an analysis of literacy levels by occupation (Table 3). The data shows that working class households are much more likely to have literacy levels at Entry Level 3 or below. Consequently employers have an important role in ensuring that everyone in their workforce has functional literacy. This, in turn, will facilitate the process of building the capacity and confidence of parents to support their child’s literacy and engagement in a range of family learning and parenting activities.

Table 3- Literacy Levels by Household Occupation

Occupation ²⁸	All	1. Managerial & Professional	2. Intermediate Occupations	3. Small Employers & own account workers	4. Supervisors / craft related occupations	5. Working class
Literacy Level	%	%	%	%	%	%
Entry Level 3 or below	15	7	10	15	18	29
Level 1	28	22	29	34	33	35
Level 2 or above	57	71	61	52	49	37

²⁷ National Literacy Trust (2008)- ‘Literacy Changes Lives: An advocacy resource’. September 2008

²⁸ Based on National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC). For further details see <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/soc2010/soc2010-volume-3-ns-sec--rebased-on-soc2010--user-manual/index.html>

- 2.26 Employers can also play an important role in engaging children and young people to promote the importance of literacy skills in the workplace. This can prove effective in delivering the message to children and young people that improving their reading and writing skills or developing their 'oracy' isn't simply to improve their academic performance in school but is providing the foundations for life beyond school (including but not restricted to the world of work). Links between schools and employers can also help to inspire and motivate children and young people to raise their aspirations.
- 2.27 Across the North East much of the infrastructure to establish links between schools and employers has been dismantled with the loss of Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) in the majority of the region's local authorities. There are examples of effective partnership working within the region including the Brainwave Community Engagement programme delivered by NETPark²⁹ which aims to engage and inspire a range of age groups about science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).
- 2.28 Related to this is the recent announcement by the **North East Chamber of Commerce** of a pilot project that is engaging with businesses and schools to raise career aspirations among young people, with a particular focus on increasing aspirations of girls in STEM careers. The aim of the project is to integrate business leaders with all secondary schools across the North East over the next few years³⁰. Such projects have the potential to reinforce the importance of literacy skills through their engagement with young people in schools across the region. However the demise of EBPs presents a challenge in coordinating partnerships between schools and employers.

Summary

- 2.29 Efforts to raise literacy levels for children and young people have to include support for parents in order to provide them with the confidence and ability to support their child's literacy learning. With approaching 300,000 adults in the region at or below Entry Level 3 this is a major challenge and requires engagement of a range of partners to raise awareness of the importance of literacy and change attitudes to learning. In this regard the region's employers and registered social landlords can play an important role in communicating this message and assisting relevant services to extend their reach into families and communities with literacy support needs.
- 2.30 The next section of this report presents an overview of the literacy picture for children at the early years stage as well as highlights some of the interventions in use to support early language and communication development.

²⁹ <http://www.northeasttechnologypark.com/innovation-community/community-engagement>

³⁰ <http://www.thejournal.co.uk/news/north-east-news/chamber-forge-stronger-links-between-7319073>

3. Early Years

Attainment

- 3.1 Recent reviews of child poverty^{31,32} and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)³³ have identified early language and literacy as building blocks for children's lives and a critical factor in narrowing the gap in life chances experienced by children from poorer homes. Parental influence continues to be highlighted as the most significant factor in life chances, including literacy development. The Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain report³⁴ calls for a step change in the contribution of early years to social mobility and a need for providers, councils and government to prioritise closing the gap in school readiness between poorer and better-off children. The report also states that the UK Government should increase its focus on the role of parents in improving children's early outcomes to develop better parenting styles, increase parental involvement in education and to improve the quality of the home learning environment.
- 3.2 Research consistently indicates that the home learning environment is a crucial factor in predicting, and developing, children's literacy skills and their future life chances³⁵. A child's family and home environment has a strong impact on their language and literacy development and educational achievement. This impact is stronger during the child's early years but continues throughout their school years. Parental attitudes and behaviour, in particular parents' involvement in home learning activities, are crucial to children's achievement and can overcome the influences of other factors.
- 3.3 The Millennium Cohort Study includes a valid measure of the home learning environment for children aged around three years old. This measure includes a set of questions that asks about the frequency with which respondents and their child(ren) engage in the following six activities that are important for creating a good home learning environment:
- reading to their child;
 - taking their child to the library;
 - helping their child learn the alphabet;
 - teaching their child numbers or counting;
 - teaching their child songs, poems or nursery rhymes; and
 - painting or drawing at home.

³¹ Department for Education (2011)- 'A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the causes of disadvantage and transforming families' lives'. April 2011.

³² Field, F. (2010)- 'The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults'. The report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances.

³³ Department for Education (2011)- 'Dame Clare Tickell, The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning'. March 2011.

³⁴ Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission (2014)- 'State of the Nation 2014: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain'. October 2014.

³⁵ Wave Trusty (2013)- 'Conception to age 2– the age of opportunity'.

- 3.4 Acknowledging the important role played by the home learning environment, Tickell's³⁶ review of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum called for the early years curriculum to be recast as a partnership curriculum jointly owned by settings and parents, allowing it to impact more powerfully on the home learning environment³⁷. This requires targeted support to build the capacity and confidence of some parents and carers to support the delivery of an early years curriculum.
- 3.5 Several recent studies found that parents with low literacy levels are less likely to help their children with reading and writing, feel less confident to do so, are less likely to have children who read for pleasure and are more likely to have children with lower cognitive and language development levels³⁸. Consequently, efforts to engage and support parents to create a positive home learning environment are an essential component of improving literacy levels of children and young people across the region.
- 3.6 The most recent EYFS Profile data for 'Communication and Language' and 'Literacy' reveals that the North East continues to perform below the national average. The data presented in Table 4 shows that 66% of children achieved expected levels in communication and language in 2013 compared with 72% nationally. During the same period 55% of children achieved expected levels in literacy compared with 61% nationally.

Table 4- Percentage of children achieving at least the expected level in the Areas of Learning by national deprivation status of child residency for each Local Authority

	Early Years Foundation Stage 2013			
	Communication and Language % children reaching expected levels		Literacy % children reaching expected levels	
	All	30% most deprived national areas	All	30% most deprived national areas
County Durham	60	54	52	47
Darlington	70	63	61	54
Gateshead	64	57	45	39
Hartlepool	70	64	59	52
Middlesbrough	55	50	49	44
Newcastle upon Tyne	68	62	55	47
North Tyneside	72	66	59	51
Northumberland	70	60	59	46
Redcar and Cleveland	68	61	59	50
South Tyneside	69	65	60	53
Stockton-on-Tees	64	50	50	38
Sunderland	72	66	58	53
North East	66	59	55	47
England	72	64	61	53

³⁶ Department for Education (2011)- 'The early years foundation stage: report on the evidence'.

³⁷ National Literacy Trust (2011)- 'Local authorities improving life chances: A review of a new approach to raising literacy levels'.

³⁸ National Literacy Trust (2011)- 'A Research Review: the importance of families and the home'. Revised 2011.

- 3.7 The data also reveals considerable variation across the 12 North East local authorities with achievement across both areas of learning in County Durham, Gateshead, Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees well behind the regional and national levels.
- 3.8 Comparative analysis can also be undertaken using the achievement levels for children from the most deprived communities against the wider local authority level. This reveals the scale of the challenge facing the region with less than half of children from the most deprived communities in County Durham, Gateshead, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland and Stockton-on-Tees achieving the expected levels in literacy.
- 3.9 What is also clear is that early years services are under pressure as a result of budget cuts and reorganisation. The number of Children’s Centres across the region is decreasing and staffing capacity has been significantly reduced, thus removing some of the support infrastructure to engage and support local communities. The most recent data indicates that there are 184 Children’s Centres operating across the region (see Table 5).
- 3.10 This loss of infrastructure presents real challenges for early years services in building links with local communities and providing effective support for the parents and carers of children who are below expected levels for literacy, communication and language.

Table 5- Number of Children’s Centres in the North East by local authority³⁹

	Children's Centre
County Durham	43
Darlington	6
Gateshead	12
Hartlepool	10
Middlesbrough	8
Newcastle upon Tyne	17
North Tyneside	12
Northumberland	20
Redcar and Cleveland	12
South Tyneside	12
Stockton-on-Tees	12
Sunderland	20
North East	184

- 3.11 Whilst Children’s Centres have a clear remit to help parents and carers to develop and extend their parenting skills and supporting ‘*school readiness*’⁴⁰ national evidence suggests that in the most disadvantaged areas a significant proportion of families (15%) are not registered with their local centre and as such aren’t accessing activities and services⁴¹.

³⁹ Source: School Census Data 2014 (January 2014)

⁴⁰ Ofsted (2013)- ‘Subsidiary guidance: supporting the inspection of Children’s Centres’. June 2013

⁴¹ DfE (2013) Evaluation of Children’s Centres in England (ECCE) Strand 2: Baseline Survey of Families Using Children’s Centres in the Most Disadvantaged Areas Research Report . April 2013

Consequently across the North East it is likely that many parents and carers need guidance and support to encourage them to engage in their children's literacy development and access Children Centre provision.

- 3.12 The pressure on resources within Children's Centres presents difficulties in undertaking outreach work and activities designed to identify and engage these families. Yet Children's Centres are only one part of the equation. Across the North East there are 2,993 registered childcare providers offering places to 47,324 children (age range from birth to 8 years old)⁴². These are subject to inspection by Ofsted and rating accordingly. However, not all childcare provision has to be registered including childcare provided by a relative and childcare provided at home where no payment is made⁴³. The absence of any statutory inspection means that it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the childcare is adequately supporting the literacy and communication development of the child.
- 3.13 Evidence from the pilot of free childcare for disadvantaged two-year old children demonstrated that childcare provided in high quality settings delivered a positive impact on the child's language ability and on the parent-child relationship⁴⁴. The roll-out of the pilot has led to all 3 and 4-year-olds in England being entitled to 570 hours of free early education or childcare a year as well as 2 year old children whose parents are in receipt of means tested benefits.
- 3.14 Whilst this undoubtedly provides an opportunity to support the literacy and communication development of children from disadvantaged areas in formal settings it is clearly important to ensure that parents and carers have the skills and confidence to reinforce this development at home. Yet the latest statistics reveal that approximately 30% of the 130,000 children eligible have yet to take up the free 2 year old childcare places⁴⁵. On the 1st September 2014 the number of free 2 year old places has been doubled to 260,000.
- 3.15 It has not been possible to access data on the take-up of the free 2 year old places across the North East, however anecdotal evidence suggests that take-up rates are lower than hoped for. As such, many disadvantaged children across the region may not be receiving the high quality childcare required to support their literacy and communication development and to prepare them for school.
- 3.16 In their 2011 report 'Informal Childcare: Choice or Chance', the **Daycare Trust** reported that 47% of parents in Britain had used informal childcare for their oldest or youngest child in the last six months. This was more than the 31% of parents who said that they had used formal childcare for these children in the same period.

⁴² Ofsted (2014)- 'Registered childcare providers and places: 31st March 2014'.

⁴³ Ofsted (2014)- 'Registration not required: A childcare factsheet'.

⁴⁴ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009)- 'Early Education Pilot for Two Year Old Children: Evaluation'.

⁴⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/92000-2-year-olds-already-receiving-free-childcare>

- 3.17 The report states that grandparents are most likely to provide informal childcare, with 35% of parents using grandparents as their main form of childcare⁴⁶. This would suggest that effective approaches to improve literacy skills in children during early years also have to consider building the skills and confidence of providers of informal childcare as well as the child's parents or carers.

Interventions

- 3.18 A range of professionals are engaged in supporting children and parents in their early years. Health visitors undertake a series of development checks to monitor the child's progress and provide support and guidance to parents. These checks provide an opportunity to identify families where additional support is needed to support the communication and language development of the child as well as the child's social skills, motor skills and vision.
- 3.19 Key messages around the importance of sharing stories, rhymes and talking to babies are provided by the local midwifery service and then reinforced by health visitors. The two year development check conducted by health visitors should identify any development problems relating to communication and language and provide guidance, or if required, a referral to a specialist service (for example speech and language therapists). The process of capturing data on the number of children assessed at the two year check as requiring support for communication and language (specialist or otherwise) varies across NHS Trusts. In some cases this information is included in the child's personal healthcare record (the Red Book) or provided as a short summary report to the parent.
- 3.20 The absence of aggregated data for the region means that it is not possible to determine how many children across the North East are assessed as requiring support for communication and language development. It is also likely that potential providers support such as that provided by children's librarians, trained nursery staff and volunteers, could play a stronger role in engaging and supporting families following the two year development check. However further research would be required across the region to understand how many development checks are completed per year (including whether these are completed in the home, healthcare setting or by telephone), how the data and recommendations are captured, what referral systems are used and the extent to which families in need of support are successfully taking up and engaging with local services. Consultations revealed a desire to initiate a programme of workforce development for health visitors and other professionals such as midwives and family/parent support workers to improve their effectiveness in supporting families with early literacy practice.
- 3.21 The **Big Lottery Fulfilling Lives: A Better Start programme**⁴⁷ is investing up to £50 million into five areas (Nottingham, Southend-on-Sea, Lambeth, Blackpool and Bradford) over the next 10 years to improve the life chances of 60,000 babies and young children. Improving communication and language is one of the key strands of the programme.

⁴⁶ Daycare Trust (2011)- 'Informal Childcare: Choice or Chance'.

⁴⁷ <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/betterstart>

- 3.22 Whilst the North East was unsuccessful in securing investment, the scale of funding provided by the programme, which is in addition to existing mainstream budgets and is predominantly focused on 0-3 years, highlights the challenges facing statutory services and the need within the most disadvantaged communities. The programme aims to deliver a 'system change' involving local health, public services and the voluntary sector working together to put prevention in early life at the heart of service delivery and practice. It is likely that this programme will provide new models of delivery and learning points which has the potential to inform service delivery across the North East.

National Literacy Trust

- 3.23 The National Literacy Trust is delivering a two-year pilot funded by the Department for Education's National Grants Programme to trial a package of support that will help Children's Centres to identify families in need of support around early home learning. The **Early Words Together** programme is currently being delivered in 12 local authorities⁴⁸ including Middlesbrough.
- 3.24 The key aim of the programme is to improve the early home learning environment for families in order to support the child's school readiness. The programme delivers home learning support and resources to identified families in children's centres using a volunteer-led engagement model. Families in need of support are identified using early home learning indicators. The programme aims to support families with children aged 2-5 years old and is due to run until March 2015. The programme is currently being independently evaluated with a view to wider roll-out to other local authority areas.

Booktrust

- 3.25 Booktrust is an independent charity with the aim of encouraging people to engage with books. It delivers a range of projects for different age groups including early years. The **Bookstart programme**⁴⁹ gifts free books to all children at two key ages before they start school. The programme aims to inspire a love of reading and help families enjoy reading together every day. The **Bookstart baby pack** is provided to families in their baby's first year and is usually delivered by health visitors. In 2012-13 a total of 30,210 baby packs were given out across the North East. The **Bookstart Treasure Pack** is provided to children when they are 3-4 years old from their nursery, playgroup or other early years setting. Both programmes are automatically delivered to children and as such they help provide resources for families to use at home. In 2012-13 a total of 28,540 Treasure packs were given out across the North East.

⁴⁸ Local Authorities include: Bristol, Croydon, Derbyshire, Ealing, Lambeth, Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire, Rochdale, Sheffield, Staffordshire, Sutton and Wiltshire.

⁴⁹ <http://www.bookstart.org.uk/bookstart-packs/>

- 3.26 **Bookstart Corner** is a targeted programme which supports Children's Centres across England to help families that need the most support to develop a love of stories, books and rhymes. The support is aimed at families with children aged 12-24 months and allows centres to offer intensive support for parents and carers so that they may read together for pleasure with their children with confidence. The programme involves families taking part in a series of four support sessions utilising selected resources and focused on stories, books and rhymes. The sessions generally involve a member of staff at the Children's Centre visiting the family at home, but on occasion take place in the Children's Centre.
- 3.27 The 2013 evaluation of the Bookstart Corner programme reported statistically significant changes for participating families under four composite outcomes all related to books, stories and rhymes; parental encouragement/interaction with their child; parent confidence and enjoyment; child engagement and enjoyment and child interest. The statistical evidence also suggested that parents felt more confident about reading with their child and gained more enjoyment out of this following the sessions and that they were more likely to spend time reading books with their child as a consequence of the programme⁵⁰.
- 3.28 Across the North East 109 Children's Centres delivered the Bookstart Corner programme (59% of centres) providing a total of 5,350 packs to target families. A range of stakeholders consulted expressed concern that the capacity pressures facing Children's Centres was creating real challenges in delivering a range of interventions and support projects including but not restricted to Booktrust.

Public Library Service

- 3.29 The region's public library service delivers a range of activities designed to support and engage children in their early years. Examples include **Baby Bounce, Rhyme Time**⁵¹ / **Time for Rhyme, Storytelling** and parent and toddler groups. Data from Booktrust indicates that 102 libraries across the North East ran Rhyme Time and Storytelling sessions in 2013-14 (half of all libraries).
- 3.30 Few library services collect details of those attending the sessions (for example name and postcode) with the majority simply logging the number of people attending. As such it is not possible to ascertain the extent to which children and families with the greatest support needs are engaging with library activities that can support early literacy, communication and language development.

Summary

- 3.31 The region is performing below national levels for the proportion of children reaching expected levels for 'Communication and Language' and 'Literacy' at the Early Years Foundation Stage. National evidence indicates that contributory factors to the outcomes achieved by children in their early years are the active involvement of parents and the quality of the home learning environment.

⁵⁰ Booktrust (2013)- 'Evaluation of Bookstart England: Bookstart Corner'. March 2013

⁵¹ Rhymetime is a programme administered by Booktrust but delivered by library staff and volunteers.

- 3.32 There are a range of interventions that focus on supporting and upskilling parents to enable them to engage in their child's early community and language development. However extending the reach of these interventions into some communities is challenging due to a range of factors. The closure of many Children's Centres and libraries is exacerbating this challenge by removing important infrastructure that can help to raise awareness of the important role parents need to play if children are to reach (and surpass) expected levels.
- 3.33 The next section of this report presents an overview of the literacy picture for children and young people at school and provides commentary on existing school-based interventions.

4. Schools

Attainment

- 4.1 Across the North East the most recent School Census data reveals that there are 872 primary schools, 188 secondary schools, 17 pupil referral units and 63 special schools (see Table 6). A total of 212,405 children were enrolled at primary schools across the region and 157,160 at secondary schools, equating to a total pupil headcount of 369,565 at state-funded schools.

Table 6⁵²- Number of schools across the North East

	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Pupil Referral Units	Special Schools
County Durham	225	34	1	10
Darlington	29	7	1	2
Gateshead	67	10	1	6
Hartlepool	30	5	1	2
Middlesbrough	41	7	3	4
Newcastle upon Tyne	72	14	1	7
North Tyneside	55	16	1	6
Northumberland	124	45	1	9
Redcar and Cleveland	44	11	1	3
South Tyneside	45	9	1	4
Stockton-on-Tees	59	12	1	3
Sunderland	81	18	4	7
North East	872	188	17	63

- 4.2 Attainment data for primary and secondary schools across the region highlights a contrasting picture. This has, at least in one press article, being described as the '*North East Conundrum*' with suggestions that many children from the region are becoming lost when they attend secondary school⁵³.
- 4.3 Ofsted's annual publication of which schools are performing well and which are struggling revealed that the 855 primary schools inspected across the region up to December 2013 performed strongly when compared with the national average. Across the North East no primary schools were classed as inadequate and 20% were graded as outstanding. This can be compared to a national average of 2% of primary schools graded as inadequate and 17% outstanding. However the region's secondary schools are faring less well with 6% of the 182 secondary schools inspected classed as inadequate (higher than the national average of 5%) and only 19% rated outstanding, below the national rate of 23%.

⁵² Source: School Census Data 2014 (January 2014)

⁵³ The Journal 15th March 2014 'High-Flying North East primary school pupils slump after move to secondaries'. <http://www.thejournal.co.uk/news/north-east-news/high-flying-north-east-primary-school-6836017>

- 4.4 By the time they leave secondary school, the proportion of young people in the North East not in education, employment or training (NEET) is almost twice the national average, the second worst rate in the UK. The most recent data on NEETs indicates that there are 6,860 16-18 year olds across the North East are not in education, employment and training, equating to a rate of 7.6%. It is likely that many of these will also struggle with literacy and may have negative attitudes to learning, education and qualifications (which in turn may be passed on to their children).
- 4.5 Assessment of Key Stage 2 data for reading and writing provides evidence of the strong performance of the region's primary schools with children across the North East achieving levels that are consistent with the national average (see Table 7).

Table 7- Key Stage 2 results for reading and writing 2012-2013

Local Authority	Key Stage 2 Reading		Key Stage 2 Writing	
	% Pupils achieving L4+ in reading	% gap achieving Level 4b in reading for FSM pupils and non FSM pupils	% Pupils achieving L4+ in writing	% gap achieving Level 4b in writing for FSM pupils and non FSM pupils
County Durham	88	15	84	19
Darlington	89	13	84	15
Gateshead	89	10	84	14
Hartlepool	89	13	85	18
Middlesbrough	83	15	84	17
Newcastle upon Tyne	85	12	83	15
North Tyneside	89	9	85	17
Northumberland	87	13	85	21
Redcar and Cleveland	89	13	86	16
South Tyneside	89	11	85	13
Stockton-on-Tees	85	19	85	16
Sunderland	87	13	84	14
North East	87	13	84	17
England	86	14	83	16

- 4.6 The data indicates that for both reading and writing North East children are performing above the national average with a greater proportion of children achieving Level 4 and higher. Whilst the gap in achievement for pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and those not eligible for free school meals is lower across the region than the national average, the data highlights that the reading levels of children from households in receipt of means tested benefits are lower than non-FSM pupils.

- 4.7 Indeed in three local authorities, namely County Durham, Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees, this gap is greater than the national average. The most recent School Census⁵⁴ reports that 45,620 children across the North East at state funded nursery and primary schools are eligible for and claiming free school meals.
- 4.8 Consistent with the concept of a North East Conundrum, at Key Stage 4 all but two of the region's local authorities fall below the national average for the number of pupils achieving five GCSE A*-C and three are more than eight percentage points below the national level (see Table 8).

Table 8- Key Stage 4 results 2012-2013

Local Authority	% of pupils achieving 5 GCSE A*-C (or equivalent) including English and Maths	Gap between % achieving 5 GCSE A*-C (or equivalent) including English and Maths for FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils
County Durham	63.1	33.2
Darlington	64.8	30.5
Gateshead	61.7	29.9
Hartlepool	59.0	30.4
Middlesbrough	50.3	29.6
Newcastle upon Tyne	57.3	34.0
North Tyneside	64.8	24.7
Northumberland	55.2	35.7
Redcar and Cleveland	55.1	30.7
South Tyneside	59.2	30.6
Stockton-on-Tees	57.4	33.1
Sunderland	60.1	33.6
North East	59.3	No data
England	64.0	No data

- 4.9 No research is available which outlines the reasons behind this North East Conundrum. What is clear is that primary schools across the region are performing strongly, in particular given the below national level achievement at the early years foundation stage and the resultant impact on a child's readiness for school.
- 4.10 The data would suggest that priorities for the region are to focus efforts in narrowing the gap in attainment between FSM and non-FSM pupils and boosting achievement at secondary (not restricted to literacy). The **North East Schools Challenge** is likely to incorporate a package of interventions designed to address this conundrum by raising the aspirations and skills (including literacy) of young people to enable them to contribute socially and economically to the region's prosperity and growth.

⁵⁴ Department for Education (2014)-' School Census January 2014'.

Interventions

- 4.11 A wide range of literacy focused interventions are available to schools across the region. These range in scale, focus and cost. The diversity of interventions presents a complex and moving picture both for statutory providers of education, professionals focused on supporting children and young people, parents and the wider community. It is evident that schools (and other budget holders) are faced with making choices on which literacy interventions are likely to deliver the strongest impact and their relative value for money. The Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Fund Teaching and Learning Toolkit⁵⁵ and earlier publications such as ‘What works for pupils with literacy difficulties?’⁵⁶ provide useful summaries of educational research to guide teachers and schools on how to use their resources to improve the literacy attainment of pupils.
- 4.12 In 2013/14 schools in the region received a total of £105m in pupil premium (see Table 9), provided in addition to existing schools budgets. Ofsted has increased its focus on the use of pupil premium as part of the school inspection regime. Their most recent report concludes that overall school leaders are spending pupil premium effectively but that weak leadership and governance remain obstacles to narrowing the attainment gap. In schools judged to be inadequate, Ofsted inspectors commonly report that leaders and governors do not ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively and that in these schools, the attainment of pupils eligible for funding is poor and attainment gaps are too wide⁵⁷.

Table 9- Deprivation Pupil Premium Allocation 2013-14

	Deprivation Pupil Premium Allocation 2013-14	
	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
	£	£
County Durham	11,968,000	8,232,000
Darlington	2,373,000	1,695,000
Gateshead	4,318,000	3,052,000
Hartlepool	2,981,000	1,886,000
Middlesbrough	5,241,000	3,359,000
Newcastle upon Tyne	7,127,000	4,816,000
North Tyneside	4,237,000	2,689,000
Northumberland	5,430,000	3,868,000
Redcar and Cleveland	3,540,000	2,624,000
South Tyneside	3,906,000	2,903,000
Stockton-on-Tees	4,427,000	2,894,000
Sunderland	6,938,000	4,766,000
North East	62,486,000	42,784,000

⁵⁵ <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

⁵⁶ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007)- ‘What works for pupils with literacy difficulties?: The effectiveness of intervention schemes’. Third Edition.

⁵⁷ Ofsted (2014)- ‘The Pupil Premium: an update’. July 2014

- 4.13 In terms of literacy this emphasises the importance of targeting support to schools judged to be inadequate and assisting them in using evidence-based interventions that can raise literacy levels as part of a coordinated and sustainable programme. It is unclear to what extent this role may form part of the remit of the North East Schools Challenge but organisations such as **Schools NorthEast**, the region's 36 Teaching Schools⁵⁸ and existing professional networks have the potential to deliver a step-change in literacy levels across these schools.
- 4.14 Providing an accurate overview of the different literacy interventions used across the region's 1,140 schools is beyond the scope (and resources) of this research. Building an accurate picture of the interventions used would require in-depth consultation and survey work with schools across the region. The Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Fund Teaching and Learning Toolkit and Department for Education guidance do provide details on commonly used interventions and approaches to improve literacy levels, including (please note that this is not an exhaustive list):
- Accelerated Reader
 - Better Reading Support Partners
 - Catch Up Programme
 - Every Child a Reader (ECaR)
 - Every Child a Talker (ECaT)
 - Read Write Inc
 - Reciprocal
 - Talk for Writing
- 4.15 It is also important to emphasise that the strength of the evidence-base varies, which in turn presents an additional challenge for schools looking to select quality interventions. Whilst the Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Fund Teaching and Learning Toolkit can provide guidance, the use of an evidence-based intervention does not necessarily guarantee positive outcomes (attainment and/or enjoyment) as this will be strongly influenced by how well schools implement the intervention and establish appropriate follow-up support and learning pathways for pupils.
- 4.16 The following sections provide an overview of other literacy interventions available to schools across the North East. Data on take-up rates have been included where this information has been provided.

National Literacy Trust

- 4.17 The National Literacy Trust delivers a number of in-school interventions to boost literacy attainment and also instil a sense of enjoyment of reading and writing within children and young people.

⁵⁸ June 2014: National College for Teaching & Leadership

- 4.18 The **National Literacy Trust Network**⁵⁹ supports schools to develop outstanding literacy provision by providing literacy leaders with tools, resources and inspiration. Network membership is promoted to any professional working in or with schools to improve pupils' literacy including literacy coordinators and senior leaders with responsibility for literacy. Network members are able to access a wide range of resources and professional development opportunities. Specific resources include the recently updated whole school literacy audits (primary and secondary), which are designed to help schools to audit their current provision and put in place an improvement and/or action plan⁶⁰.
- 4.19 Across the North East a total of 61 schools are members of the Network, which equates to approximately 6% of all schools (with the majority of these located in Middlesbrough due to the National Literacy Trust's **Literacy Hub**⁶¹ programme).
- 4.20 The **Premier League Reading Stars** (PLRS) is a partnership between the National Literacy Trust and the Premier League. The project targets Year 5 and 6 pupils who are struggling to reach end of key stage expectations and in danger of falling behind. In secondary schools it is aimed at Year 7 and 8 pupils who did not meet Key Stage 2 targets.
- 4.21 The PLRS project has delivered positive impacts on pupils' attainment and motivation both in reading and writing with three out of four children making at least 6 months' progress in just 10 weeks and one child in three making a year's progress, or more as a consequence of their participation⁶². Based on information supplied by the National Literacy Trust a total of 90 schools across the region delivered the PLRS project in 2013-14 (approximately 8% of all schools).
- 4.22 The **Young Readers Programme**⁶³ aims to motivate children to read for enjoyment, prioritising those in areas of deprivation. The programme runs a series of events that celebrate reading for enjoyment, providing children with choice strategies which help them to develop as readers. Children also become the owners of new books that they choose for themselves, thus increasing book ownership, which has been shown to have a positive effect on educational attainment. Teachers and support staff deliver the programme in schools nationwide with schools being encouraged to visit and foster closer links with their local library where possible. Based on information supplied by the National Literacy Trust, in 2013-14 a small number of Young Readers Programme projects were delivered in Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton on Tees and Redcar and Cleveland.

⁵⁹ http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/our_network

⁶⁰ http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/our_network/evaluation_tools

⁶¹ http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/communities/literacy_hubs

⁶² http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/nlt_research/5623_premier_league_reading_stars_impact_report_2013

⁶³ <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/yrp>

- 4.23 The **Words for Work**⁶⁴ programme aims to empower young people from disadvantaged backgrounds towards successful employment through teaching vital literacy and employability skills. The programme is a school-based intervention that focuses on supporting young people to develop effective speaking and listening skills which are recognised as essential in the workplace. The programme recruits and trains business volunteers who are partnered with schools and deliver the Words for Work programme to young people.
- 4.24 The most recent evaluation report for the programme demonstrates the positive impact on young people's speaking and listening skills as well as increasing their awareness of the importance of communication skills in the workplace⁶⁵. The programme has been delivered in a small number of schools in Middlesbrough as part of the aforementioned Literacy Hub. The programme is designed to support young people in year groups 8, 9 and 10 although a primary-age version of the programme is currently being piloted.
- 4.25 The demise of the majority of Education Business Partnerships across the North East has removed much of the regional infrastructure for facilitating interventions such as Words for Work that bring schools and businesses together to motivate, inspire and teach young people the importance of a range of skills in the workplace, including literacy.
- 4.26 The National Literacy Trust's **Annual Literacy Survey** provides details on children and young people's levels of and attitudes to reading. The survey has been administered since 2010 and provides a national level dataset on reading attitudes and behaviours that can influence and inform the nature of interventions to encourage reading for pleasure. No similar data set exists for the North East although data has been established for Middlesbrough as part of the Literacy Hub programme and is being used to inform activities both in school and out of school involving a range of partners⁶⁶.

The Reading Agency

- 4.27 **The Reading Agency** delivers a range of programmes across the UK in partnership with libraries, schools and prisons. The **Summer Reading Challenge**⁶⁷ is the UK's biggest reading promotion for children aged four to eleven years. It was started in 1999 and in 2013 reached 810,089 children with 66,760 children joining the library to take part. An overview of the delivery of Summer Reading Challenge across the North East is provided in the next section of this report.

⁶⁴ http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/words_for_work

⁶⁵ http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0002/2824/2012-13_Evaluation_Report.pdf

⁶⁶ http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/nlt_research/5998_young_peoples_literacy_in_middlesbrough_in_2013_one_year_on

⁶⁷ <http://readingagency.org.uk/children/quick-guides/summer-reading-challenge/>

- 4.28 **Chatterbooks**⁶⁸ is a network of children’s reading clubs coordinated by The Reading Agency. The Chatterbooks groups are run in libraries and schools to encourage reading enjoyment and can be used with children aged four to twelve years. It has not been possible to obtain data on the number of Chatterbooks groups active across the North East.
- 4.29 **Reading Activists**⁶⁹ is a programme that aims to give young people aged eleven to twenty-four years opportunities to learn new skills by setting up reading and writing groups and helping others in their local communities. There are currently four local authorities in the region with Reading Activists groups.
- 4.30 The **Six Book Challenge**⁷⁰ is a programme for people aged 16 upwards who need to build their reading skills and confidence. The programme helps get people into reading for pleasure. An evaluation of the programme undertaken in 2008 demonstrated that the programme was effective in building the confidence of participants as well as showing them that reading was an enjoyable activity. Nearly 60% of participants identified literacy gains and the research also states that participants began to incorporate reading more in their lives, including sharing reading with their children⁷¹.

Booktrust

- 4.31 Booktrust has a number of programmes that support primary and secondary children as well as project for children with additional support needs⁷².
- 4.32 **Booktime** is a national free books programme for Reception-aged children, which provides each child with a free book pack. In the current year the programme delivered 1,392,000 books across England equating to two for every child starting school. Across the North East 196 Booktime-linked events have been delivered in libraries attended by approximately 7,576 children and 666 adults. Some 890 North East schools have received Booktime book packs. To support parents Booktrust have also produced a leaflet designed to help parents and carers read with their child.
- 4.33 The 2013 evaluation of the Booktime programme conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research found that 66% of respondents reported that it had increased children’s enjoyment of reading and 50% reported that it has increased the frequency of sharing reading at home. The scale of impacts was associated with how the schools used the resources and whether they ‘made the most’ of Booktime. The report also states that schools who reported to be ‘partially successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’ in promoting reading for pleasure came from those with a higher average percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals⁷³.

⁶⁸ <http://readingagency.org.uk/children/quick-guides/chatterbooks/>

⁶⁹ <http://readingagency.org.uk/young-people/quick-guides/readingactivists/>

⁷⁰ <http://readingagency.org.uk/adults/quick-guides/six-book-challenge/>

⁷¹ The Reading Agency (2008)- ‘Six Book Challenge 2008: The Impact on Readers’. December 2008.

⁷² For details of all Booktrust’s programmes visit <http://www.booktrust.org.uk/>.

⁷³ The National Foundation for Educational Research (2013)- ‘Evaluation of Booktime in England 2012-2013. April 2013.

- 4.34 To support secondary schools in encouraging reading for pleasure Booktrust has established the **BookBuzz** programme. In 2012, 1,400 schools across England took part in the programme with each receiving a range of books, resources and guidance. The programme is bought in by secondary schools. In 2012-13 71 North East schools signed up for the Bookbuzz programme.
- 4.35 **Letterbox Club** focuses on improving the educational outlook for children aged 5-13 in foster families by providing them with a parcel of books, maths activities and educational materials every month for six months. Letterbox Club is sending parcels to 299 children in the North East in 2014.

Beanstalk

- 4.36 **Beanstalk** is a national charity that recruits, vets, trains and supports volunteers to work in primary schools with children who have fallen behind with their reading⁷⁴. Volunteers are recruited from the local community or through Beanstalk's company reading scheme. Recruited volunteers visit their local school twice a week for 90 minutes per visit during term time with each volunteer working with the same three children for a year. The intervention is bought in by schools and costs £540 per Beanstalk reading helper (volunteer) per year.
- 4.37 Beanstalk currently has 73 reading helpers supporting 193 children across 49 schools in County Durham and Tees Valley with a further 12 reading helpers supporting 36 children in 3 schools in Tyne & Wear.

Other interventions

- 4.38 There are a range of other interventions that are actively working with schools to support children with literacy difficulties. These range from national providers such as **Achievement for All** which is using a whole school improvement framework to deliver a range of improvements including literacy to localised providers such as **Book Happy** which is delivering a range of reading interventions with schools across North Tyneside. Other notable national providers include **The Reader Organisation** and **The Communication Trust**.
- 4.39 The **BBC School Report** also merits inclusion in this report as the programme gives 11-16 year-old students in the UK the chance to make their own news reports for a real audience. It is a collaborative project run by BBC News and BBC Learning. Using lesson plans and materials from the website, and with support from BBC staff and partners, teachers help students develop their journalistic skills to become school reporters. The programme provides fun and creative opportunities for children to develop their literacy skills as part of a national profile activity.

⁷⁴ <http://www.beanstalkcharity.org.uk/>

- 4.40 Establishing robust whole-school approaches to addressing literacy has the potential to draw together a range of interventions and ensure that these effectively meet the needs of children and young people with literacy difficulties. The **Reading Connects** and **Early Reading Connects** programmes provide examples of previous Government-funded initiatives designed to support the development of whole-school reading approaches to improve children and young people's reading attitudes and frequency⁷⁵.
- 4.41 More recent examples include the aforementioned **Bookbuzz** programme from Booktrust and the **Reading Quality Mark** established as a partnership between **Liverpool City Council** and the National Literacy Trust⁷⁶. This initiative, responding directly to the recommendations of the Liverpool Education Commission, is focused on ensuring that no child in the city leaves primary school unable to read. The Quality Mark provides a framework to coordinate a range of interventions that are designed to promote reading for pleasure, including supporting and involving parents to take an active role in their children's learning.
- 4.42 In Sunderland, the **Foundation of Light**, Sunderland AFC's registered charity, has launched the **Improving Futures** programme following an award from the Big Lottery. The programme will provide to support 160 families in disadvantaged neighbourhoods who may be experiencing multiple and complex needs. Using the Foundation of Light brand and the engagement power of football, the programme will identify young children and families through local primary schools and put interventions in place to support the child's learning and also improve the home environment. Literacy is incorporated within the programme which will run for four years. The Foundation of Light also delivers **Family Learning Through Football** which works with parents and children to promote personal development and learning with adults while building and improving relationships within the family.
- 4.43 Both Newcastle United and Middlesbrough Football Club also have their respective charitable arms, namely Newcastle United Foundation and MFC Foundation. The approach of using the brand of football clubs (and other sports clubs) can prove highly successful in inspiring and motivating children and young people as well as engaging families who lack the confidence to participate in learning and education opportunities delivered through schools and colleges. Importantly the approach can prove effective in changing attitudes and behaviours of those with low literacy and providing them with progression pathways into new learning opportunities. The challenge for these, and many other providers, is continuity of funding to maintain and sustain partnership work with schools and other services.
- 4.44 Effective coordination of literacy interventions, both at a school level and wider, has the potential to maximise the use of resources, avoid any unhelpful competition for resources from the range of providers and deliver a package of support that provides the best prospects for improving a child's literacy and sustaining this improvement through school and beyond.

⁷⁵ http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/resources/practical_resources_info/358_archive_resource-reading_connects_primary_school_handbook

⁷⁶ <http://www.liverpoolexpress.co.uk/new-drive-to-get-children-reading-for-pleasure/>

Summary

- 4.45 Attainment data for the region reveals that generally primary schools are performing well and exceeding national levels for reading and writing. However performance at secondary schools dips with all but two of the region's local authorities falling below the national average for the number of pupils achieving five GCSE A*-C. The data would suggest that priorities for the region are to focus efforts in narrowing the gap in attainment between FSM and non-FSM pupils and boosting achievement at secondary.
- 4.46 A wide range of literacy focused interventions are available to schools across the region. These range in scale, focus and cost. The diversity of interventions presents a complex and moving picture both for statutory providers of education, professionals focused on supporting children and young people, parents and the wider community. Efforts are required to improve the coordination of literacy interventions, both at a school level and wider, to maximise the use of resources, avoid any unhelpful competition from different providers and deliver a package of support that provides the best prospects for improving a child's literacy and sustaining this improvement through school and beyond.
- 4.47 The next section of this report reviews the literature highlighting the importance of reading for pleasure and outlines some of the approaches available and in use across the region.

5. Reading for Pleasure

- 5.1 Raising literacy levels should not be regarded as something that is solely the responsibility of schools. A range of out of school activities and self-directed learning can support improvements. For example reading for pleasure has been revealed as the most important indicator of the future success of a child (OECD, 2002⁷⁷). Many of the research publications reviewed for this report suggest that considerable effort is required to reinforce the message about the importance of reading for pleasure in particular within communities where literacy difficulties are the highest.
- 5.2 A recent publication by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2014⁷⁸) on reducing poverty in the UK concludes that educational inequalities are driven by families' cultural resources as well as economic resources, and books and reading are central to this. The authors call for more research on how schools, parents and library services can promote reading and learning outside the school gates, particularly among children whose parents have lower levels of education.
- 5.3 Public library services remain under pressure due to a range of factors including local authority budgetary constraints, technological innovation and changes in consumer/user preferences. Over the last few years the rate of library closures has increased despite efforts from local communities to keep them open. Restructuring has not been restricted to the closure of library buildings but has also reduced the capacity of library services to deliver activities designed to encourage children to read for pleasure. Based on the most recent data from 2013 there are 204 libraries across the North East⁷⁹, however this number is likely to fall due to ongoing budget pressures. It has not been possible to access data on the number of Children and Young People's librarians across the region, albeit anecdotal evidence suggests that some of these specialist roles have been removed due to budget pressures facing library services.
- 5.4 The progressive loss of public library service infrastructure presents challenges across the North East for delivering a Universal Reading Offer⁸⁰ and encouraging and supporting children, young people and adults to read for pleasure. National campaigns have been used to promote and encourage reading for pleasure, including the 2008 National Year of Reading and the recently launched 'Read on. Get on' campaign which has been launched by Save the Children⁸¹ and aims to get all 11 year olds reading well by 2025. At a local level a number of local authorities, including Birmingham⁸², Oxfordshire⁸³ and Liverpool⁸⁴, have established reading campaigns designed to improve reading levels amongst children and young people.

⁷⁷ OECD (2002). Reading for change: Performance and engagement across countries. Results from PISA 2000. New York: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

⁷⁸ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2014)- 'Reducing Poverty in the UK: A Collection of Evidence Reviews.

⁷⁹ <http://www.cipfa.org/services/research-and-statistics/comparative-profiles/public-libraries/cipfastats-library-profiles-english-authorities-2013>

⁸⁰ http://readingagency.org.uk/about/Universal%20Reading%20Offer%20Presentation_March21.pdf

⁸¹ Save the Children (2014)- 'Read On. Get On: How reading can help children escape poverty'.

⁸² <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/birmingham-mail-launches-born-read-6777608>

- 5.5 In libraries the aforementioned Summer Reading Challenge is a well-established reading for pleasure programme for primary aged children. It is organised by the independent charity The Reading Agency. The challenge is designed to motivate children to read more independently and often and provides opportunities for whole family in reading and a variety of free creative events. In many local authorities the Challenge is being supported by Young Volunteers who help young children engage in reading activities. Data provided by The Reading Agency indicates that there are currently 152 Young Volunteers aged 12 to 24 in the North East.
- 5.6 The 2009 evaluation report highlights the contribution of the Summer Reading Challenge in maintaining or improving children's reading performance over the summer months when compared with those that had not participated (avoiding the 'summer dip'). The Challenge was also successful in boosting children's inclination to read at home and widening the reading range and repertoire of those who participate⁸⁵.
- 5.7 In 2013, 22,648 children across the North East registered to take part in the Summer Reading Challenge at their local library, equating to 9% of 8-12 year olds in the region. Of these 43% were boys. A total of 14,694 children (65%) completed the Challenge and 1,147 children joined their local library. Overall participation in the North East increased by 3% when compared with 2012, however this should be set against a national average increase of 9%.
- 5.8 No data is available to evidence the extent to which children and young people eligible for free school meals and/or behind expected levels are participating in the Summer Reading Challenge. The 2009 evaluation report indicates that children who take part tend to be already committed readers although the report recommends that practical support should be given to children, including those eligible for FSM and those who are not, whose family circumstances make it difficult for them to participate in the Challenge.
- 5.9 Clearly there is considerable scope to boost the participation of the region's children and young people in a range of reading events and cultural activities. Greater effort needs to be focused on ensuring that participation levels are raised for target groups and communities where reading for pleasure and literacy levels are the lowest.
- 5.10 Yet in order to raise participation levels on a sustainable basis it is necessary to challenge children and young people's perceptions of reading and writing. The most recent Annual Pupil Survey undertaken by the National Literacy Trust⁸⁶ reveals that 10.1% of young people do not enjoy reading at all and a fifth of young people (20.2%) say that they rarely or never read outside class. The report also found that young people who reported to enjoy reading very much are nearly four times as likely to read above the level expected for their age compared with young people who do not enjoy reading at all. Similarly, young people who read outside class daily are five times as likely to read above the expected level for their age compared with young people who never read outside class.

⁸³ <http://www.oxfordshirereading.co.uk/>

⁸⁴ <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/liverpool-city-readers---campaign-6767853>

⁸⁵ UKLA (2009)- 'Summer Reading Challenge 2009 Impact Research Report'. December 2009.

⁸⁶ National Literacy Trust (2014)- 'Children's and Young People's Reading in 2013: Findings from the 2013 National Literacy Trust's annual survey'.

- 5.11 A similar data set is not available for the North East although establishing a baseline on the views of children and young people across region is likely to provide useful information for policy makers, library services and schools.
- 5.12 Future efforts to engage children and parents in reading needs to recognise and reflect an increasing use of technology including touch screen devices such as tablets and smartphones. Recent research published by the National Literacy Trust that explores parents' perspectives on the use of technology during the early years revealed that three-quarters of children have access to a touch-screen device at home⁸⁷ and that between 2012 and 2013 the use of tablet computers by 5 to 15-year-olds has increased three-fold (14% to 42%).
- 5.13 The report concluded that research has begun to show that there are benefits to looking at or sharing stories using both print and a touch screen compared with looking at stories in print alone, particularly for children of lower socioeconomic status. For all groups, looking at stories in print and on a touch screen was found to be associated with greater enjoyment, irrespective of socioeconomic status. The report also found that poorer children who use both books and touch screens to look at stories are less likely to perform below the expected standard for their age than if they only look at books. In summary the report states that not only does technology offer a route into reading for disadvantaged children, but that children are more likely to enjoy reading more if they look at stories using both books and a touch screen, compared with using books only.
- 5.14 Whilst further research is needed to understand the opportunities and challenges presented by digital media, any strategy to promote reading for pleasure specifically amongst at risk households will need to reflect the increasing use of digital media both at early years, primary and secondary levels as well as a channel to engage and support parents. A programme of joint workforce development and innovation across a range of stakeholders, including schools, libraries and family learning, may help to showcase emerging practice and effective use of digital media to engage and inspire future generations of readers.
- 5.15 Whilst bookgifting programmes can help to address issues relating to the availability of books in the home, evidence would suggest that to be truly effective they have to be supported by concerted efforts to raise awareness of the importance of reading (and other literacy skills). Specific approaches are required to raise awareness and change behaviours within 'at risk' households to enable families to engage in reading and learning activities that are delivered in supportive, non-judgemental and fun ways. This message is strongly reinforced in the recently launched *Read On. Get On.* Campaign by Save the Children which also highlights some of the challenges facing parents in low-income households from supporting their child's reading such as lack of confidence to read with their children or working shifts and long hours which limit the time available to spend with their children.

⁸⁷ National Literacy Trust (2014)- 'Parents' perspectives: Children's use of technology in the Early Years'. March 2014

- 5.16 Booktrust's Reading Habits Survey 2013⁸⁸ found that significant minorities of adults in England have negative attitudes towards reading with nearly a fifth (18%) reporting to have never read physical books and 27% preferring the internet and social media to reading books, rising to 56% among 18-30 year olds. The research also found that on average, the higher the socio-economic group that someone is in, the more often they read (27% of DEs never read books themselves, compared with 13% of ABs). Consequently children growing up in households where their parents have a negative attitude to reading and where physical books are not available are themselves less likely to read outside of school.
- 5.17 **Seven Stories** (National Centre for Children's Books) is based in the region and delivers a wide range of imaginative and creative activities that are designed to inspire children and young people to enjoy a lifetime of reading for pleasure. During 2013/2014 some 81,753 people visited Seven Stories and 18,557 children, young people and families took part in their outreach activities. In 2013 Seven Stories was awarded the National Lottery Award for the Best Education Project in recognition of their work.
- 5.18 In total 29,271 children and young people took part in Seven Stories learning and participation programmes and projects in 2013/14 with 10,714 school pupils visiting the centre. Seven Stories has established links into a range of target communities across the region by locating their learning practitioners in schools to support family engagement and to embed reading for pleasure in all aspects of school life⁸⁹. They also provide CPD for educators that focus creative approaches to embed reading for pleasure.
- 5.19 Effective promotion of reading for pleasure, both in school and out of school, should be an integral component of any approach to raise literacy levels. However the loss of public library service infrastructure and the absence of school library service provision present ongoing challenges for the North East. There are however key assets in the region such as Seven Stories that can help to encourage more children and young people to read for pleasure both inside and outside of school.

Summary

- 5.20 Reading for pleasure has been revealed as the most important indicator of the future success of a child. Approaches to supporting and encouraging children and young people to read for pleasure are not the sole preserve of schools and a wide range of partners can play a role in motivating and inspiring children to see reading as a pleasurable pursuit in its own right.

⁸⁸ Booktrust (2013)- 'Booktrust Reading Habits Survey 2013: A national survey of reading habits and attitudes to books amongst adults in England'.

⁸⁹ Seven Stories Annual Review 2013-14.

- 5.21 The capacity pressures facing the region's public library services, in particular the loss of specialist reader development posts including Children and Young People's Librarians, is creating difficulties in engaging children in a range of creative and fun reading activities. To some degree this is also compounded by the loss of school library services for the majority of the region's local authorities.
- 5.22 Although a range of reading initiatives are delivered across the North East their effectiveness in engaging children from families in more disadvantaged areas is unclear. In addition the absence of any regional data on children and young people's attitudes to reading (and writing) means that it is not possible to assess the impact of reading initiatives or campaigns (regional or national) on increasing levels of self-directed reading for pleasure.
- 5.23 The next section of the report highlights the important role that out of school activities can play in improving literacy levels and importantly raising the confidence of children and young people.

6. Out of School Activities

- 6.1 Schools are not the only place where children and young people can be supported to improve their literacy levels. A wide range of after school and out of school activities have the potential to engage children and young people in activities designed to foster an enjoyment of reading, improve their writing skills, help them to develop their speaking and listening skills and provide opportunities for family learning and participation in a range of creative and fun learning experiences (encapsulating Tickell's notion of a 'partnership curriculum').
- 6.2 Although not specifically focused on literacy the evaluation of the Full Service Extended Schools (FSES) initiative, which was launched in 2003, concluded that the programme was impacting positively on pupil's attainment and impacts were clearest in the case of pupils facing difficulties. The programme also generated positive outcomes for families and local people. The report also concludes that the efforts to develop similar approaches would be helped by a strategic framework in order to link the efforts of schools with those of other organisations and agencies tackling similar issues (not restricted to literacy)⁹⁰.
- 6.3 The Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Fund Teaching and Learning Toolkit presents an overview of the evidence base around extending school time and after school programmes. These generally reflect that enrichment activities (such as arts engagement or reading initiatives) may have positive benefits on attitudes, but these alone will not improve academic learning. However for many children and young people changing their attitudes (and those of their parents) is an essential component of efforts to improve attainment levels in school but providing an environment more conducive to wider learning out of school.
- 6.4 The Department for Education's recent response to the Education Committee's inquiry into underachievement by white working class children⁹¹ outlines the potential to lengthen school days in particular to support disadvantaged children. The response states that *'longer days can mean schools have more time to work with pupils who need additional help, and can open up opportunities for pupils to access purposeful, character building activities that help them build the confidence to succeed when they leave school'*. At the time of writing no further detail has been provided as to how the costs of any extracurricular activity would be met, however this may present opportunities for a range of organisations that support literacy improvement to extend their partnership work with schools.

⁹⁰ Department for Education and Skills (2007)- 'Evaluation of the Full Service Extended Schools Initiative: Final Report'. University of Manchester.

⁹¹ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmeduc/647/64704.htm>

- 6.5 However in terms of accessing wider learning opportunities outside of the school gate, it is evident that participation in arts and cultural activities across the North East is lower than the national average. Findings from the Taking Part survey⁹² reveal that people in the North East were significantly less likely to have engaged in the arts on three or more occasions in 2011/12 than people across England as a whole and significantly more likely not to have engaged at all.
- 6.6 The funding portfolio for 2015-18 announced by **Arts Council England** for the North East includes 40 National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) and 2 Major Partner Museums (MPMs) with a total investment over the three year period of nearly £54 million⁹³.
- 6.7 Across the region it is clear that many children and young people, and their families, are missing out on opportunities to engage in a wide range of learning activities and creative experiences outside of school. This is particularly evident for children from lower-income households⁹⁴. These cultural events and learning activities provide opportunities for children and young people to practice and improve their literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) in different social and learning contexts. Importantly they can also be effective in raising a child's confidence, boosting aspirations and instilling an enjoyment of learning (both inside and outside the classroom).
- 6.8 Cultural participation also provides opportunities for families to experience learning together, and as such, can encourage parents to take a more active role in supporting their child's learning and development. The **National Trust's** campaign on '50 things to do before you are 11½' provides an example of an initiative designed to provide ideas and opportunities for children and the families to learn together⁹⁵.
- 6.9 A key message for the region is that in-school literacy interventions and wider out of school learning opportunities are both important in delivering sustainable improvements in the literacy levels of children and young people. Effective parental involvement is a necessary to create a home environment that is supportive, encouraging and effective in improving children's literacy levels.
- 6.10 Across the North East there are examples of activities and programmes that are working to engage children, young people and their families in a range of out of school learning activities. Children's University (CU) is a national initiative that aims to promote social mobility by providing high quality, exciting and innovative learning activities and experiences outside normal school hours to children aged 7 to 14 and 5 and 6 year olds with their families. The programme is open to all but aims particularly to reach children and young people facing socio-economic and educational disadvantage.

⁹² Arts Council England (2012)- 'Taking Part 2011/12: Findings for the North East region.

⁹³ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/our-investment-2015-18/>

⁹⁴ For further information on participation and engagement in arts and cultural activities see Consilium Research and Consultancy (2014)- 'Equality and Diversity in the Arts and Cultural Sector: Evidence Review'. Arts Council England

⁹⁵ <https://www.50things.org.uk/>

- 6.11 There are currently five CU programmes working across Northumberland, Sunderland, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-On-Tees. The success of local CU programmes in engaging children and young people is dependent on a number of factors, namely: schools buying into the initiative, attitudes of parents and carers; the capacity of the coordinating organisation to develop partnerships and engage participating children; and the availability of local learning activities and experiences to inspire and motivate. It has not been possible to access data on the extent to which children below expected levels for literacy are engaging in the CU programme where their school has bought in this service.
- 6.12 Specifically with a remit to boost participation in the arts, the Arts Council England funded Creative People and Places (CPP) programme aims to focus investment in parts of the country where people's involvement in the arts is significantly below the national average. The North East currently has three CPP programmes, namely *bait*⁹⁶ covering South East Northumberland, *East Durham Creates*⁹⁷ covering County Durham and *The Cultural Spring* covering Sunderland and South Tyneside. Both programmes are working to provide a range of opportunities to participate in the arts through the use of taster sessions and commissioned programmes. These programmes have the potential to contribute either directly or indirectly to improving the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of participating children and young people.
- 6.13 **New Writing North's** Cuckoo Young Writers programme⁹⁸ gives writers aged 12-19 years the chance to experience working with a professional writer to gain advice, support and feedback on their work. Cuckoo Young Writers runs sessions across the North East, with groups meeting in Newcastle, Sunderland and Cramlington (in partnership with the *bait* CPP programme), and more planned for the future.
- 6.14 The **North East Culture Partnership** is committed to developing a 15 year vision for culture in the region. It is currently in the process of developing a 'Case for Culture' which centres on how to get more people in the region to engage with culture, to demonstrate its economic benefits and consider how culture can contribute to health and wellbeing as well as build routes to employment⁹⁹. Identifying how to coordinate the potential of the cultural sector to support literacy should be explored as part of this process.

Summary

- 6.15 Out of school activities designed to foster an enjoyment of reading, improve writing skills, develop speaking and listening skills and provide opportunities for family learning and can contribute to efforts to improve literacy levels. However participation in arts and cultural activities across the North East is lower than the national average and in particular so for children from lower-income households. The region's cultural partners have an important role to play in extending reach into communities where participation levels are lowest to support the development of literacy skills as part of creative and fun out of school learning activities.

⁹⁶ <http://baittime.to/home>

⁹⁷ <http://eastdurhamcreates.co.uk/EDC/>

⁹⁸ <http://www.newwritingnorth.com/projects-cuckoo-young-writers-page-2244.html>

⁹⁹ <http://www.northeastcouncils.gov.uk/news.asp?id=1628>

7. Family Learning

- 7.1 Family learning programmes can provide the building blocks for new learning journeys for adults and for improved attainment by the children. They can also deliver wider outcomes including gains in confidence, journeys to employment, increases in social cohesion and changes in aspirations¹⁰⁰. Although literacy, numeracy and language are not primary outcomes for wider family learning courses, many programmes embed such skills in activities for adults and children. Family learning activities can also lead to children showing improved motivation and behaviour at school.
- 7.2 Across the North East a wide range of organisations are active in delivering family learning programmes, including local authority adult learning teams, national providers such as **Barnardos, Pre-School Learning Alliance, Save the Children** and **WEA** and regional providers such as **Seven Stories, Children North East, Northern Learning Trust** and **Foundation of Light**. Across the North East there are network meetings of family learning managers. At a national level the **National Family Learning Network** is an alliance of three family learning organisations (Campaign for Learning, ContinYou & NIACE) creating a support network for over 10,500 practitioners.
- 7.3 It has not been possible to obtain data on the take-up of family learning activities across the region, in particular the extent to which families of children at risk of developing difficulties with literacy are engaging in family learning opportunities. Expanding provision does not necessarily ensure increased take-up. Whilst statistics included in this report can evidence the need in many communities for support it is important to understand and respond to the drivers of demand.
- 7.4 Family learning providers (in partnership with other services) need to be effective in identifying and engaging families in need of support if any step-change is to be realised in literacy outcomes for children across the North East. Building the capacity and confidence of parents to support their child's learning can help to sustain literacy improvements achieved within early years settings and the classroom by creating positive home learning environments¹⁰¹.
- 7.5 The challenge for a range of stakeholders is to address and reverse negative attitudes to learning and in some cases a mistrust of statutory services within some communities in order to encourage families to participate in family learning opportunities.

¹⁰⁰ NIACE (2009)- 'Providing the evidence: the impact of wider family learning: A report commissioned by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills'.

¹⁰¹ The ORIM framework is used nationally to support the emphasis on the role of parents as their children's first educators. The framework has four elements – providing **O**pportunities for learning, showing **R**ecognition of the child's activities, **I**nteraction with the child to encourage further activities, providing a **M**odel in the area of learning. The framework was developed for parents to use in supporting their children's acquisition of literacy skills, but is widely used in wider family learning to promote learning across the generations.

- 7.6 This process can take some time and involve a range of informal activities and support prior to parents progressing to accredited provision such as, for example, the Parents with Prospects programme¹⁰² which provides information, knowledge and guidance to equip young parents with the skills to become caring and capable parents.
- 7.7 However, evidence from the CANParent scheme, which was launched in 2011 and offered mothers and fathers in Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire, Camden in London, and High Peak in Derbyshire £100 vouchers to spend on parenting classes, highlights the difficulties of encouraging families to participate in ‘top down’ programmes. To date the programme has attracted just 2,000 parents out of a possible 55,200 (3.6%)¹⁰³. Consequently, whilst providing support to parents on a range of areas, including helping them to prepare their child for school, has the potential to improve literacy levels, the process of engaging the families in most need has to recognise the time taken to build up trust within disadvantaged communities and raise the confidence levels of parents to participate.
- 7.8 The closure of libraries and Children’s Centres has created difficulties for providers of family learning by taking away community based ‘neutral’ venues from which to engage and support parents. Whilst alternative venues can be sourced these incur hire charges which many providers struggle to absorb and more fundamentally can reduce take-up by parents thus limiting the viability of sessions which often require a minimum group size to proceed.

Summary

- 7.9 Family learning programmes can provide the building blocks for new learning journeys for adults and for improved attainment by the children. They can also lead to children showing improved motivation and behaviour at school.
- 7.10 Family learning providers need to be effective in identifying and engaging families in need of support if any step-change is to be realised in literacy outcomes for children across the North East. Building the capacity and confidence of parents to support their child’s learning can help to sustain literacy improvements achieved within early years settings and the classroom by creating positive home learning environments.

¹⁰² <http://www.prospect-training.org.uk/pwp--parents-with-prospects>

¹⁰³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/mother-tongue/10745128/David-Camersons-parenting-classes-flop-as-barely-any-parents-show-up.html>

8. Teaching Assistants

- 8.1 Teaching Assistants are widely used in schools. Their duties can vary widely from school to school, ranging from providing administrative and classroom support to providing targeted academic support to individual pupils or small groups. Their effectiveness in raising attainment has been the subject of considerable debate within the education sector. The Education Endowment Fund provides a useful overview of the evidence base relating to their impact on academic attainment¹⁰⁴.
- 8.2 Teaching Assistants often provide an important link between schools and the local community. Many Teaching Assistants live within the school catchment area and have social networks with parents of children attending their school. They are also known to children attending the school and can prove effective in disseminating information about local events and activities within the community. Whilst Teaching Assistants may be offered work outside term-time on holiday/play schemes, the majority work within school terms.
- 8.3 Based on the most recent data, schools across the region currently employ 14,071 Teaching Assistants (see Table 10 for local authority detail). This represents a sizeable workforce and local capacity that has the potential to be more effectively utilised outside of the classroom (after school and during school holidays) to support children with literacy difficulties and engage target families in family learning activities.

Table 10- Number of Teaching Assistants by Local Authority¹⁰⁵

Local Authority	Number of Teaching Assistants
County Durham	2,189
Darlington	534
Gateshead	911
Hartlepool	826
Middlesbrough	1,090
Newcastle upon Tyne	1,327
North Tyneside	1,102
Northumberland	1,787
Redcar and Cleveland	859
South Tyneside	717
Stockton-on-Tees	1,262
Sunderland	1,467
North East	14,071

¹⁰⁴ <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/teaching-assistants/>

¹⁰⁵ School Census Data 2014

- 8.4 Although many Teaching Assistants may not wish to work outside of term-time, either due to personal preference or their own childcare responsibilities, it is still likely that a sizeable proportion may be willing to extend their contracts to specifically engage and support children to participate in a range of activities designed to improve their literacy levels and build their confidence. Importantly, the role should also extend to working with parents of children with literacy difficulties to help and encourage them in supporting their child's learning.
- 8.5 It is estimated that contracting a Teaching Assistant earning £16,000 per annum to work an additional 10 days (either two consecutive weeks or blocks of days throughout the year) would cost around £700 (includes salary and on-costs). Extending the use of Teaching Assistants can provide additional capacity for programmes and projects already active across the region and crucially help to recruit target families to engage with literacy and parenting support that is available in their local area.

Summary

- 8.6 Teaching Assistants often provide an important link between schools and the local community. Many Teaching Assistants have social networks with parents of children attending their school and can prove effective in disseminating information about local events and activities within the community.
- 8.7 Opportunities to deploy this workforce to engage and support children to participate in a range of activities designed to improve their literacy levels and build their confidence should be explored. This should include after school and school holiday provision. Teaching Assistants may also be well placed to work with parents of children with literacy difficulties to help and encourage them in supporting their child's learning and facilitating their access to family learning and parenting support provision.

9. Volunteers and Social Action

- 9.1 The use of volunteers is a common approach to support the delivery of literacy interventions in formal settings such as nurseries, Children’s Centres and schools and also outside of school in a range of community settings or in the home. The recently launched Read On. Get On. campaign includes volunteering as one of its actions, in particular referencing the enabling role that employers and schools can provide.
- 9.2 Several of the national charities that focus on reading and literacy currently have or have previously used volunteers to support the delivery of a range of schemes designed to support children and young people with literacy difficulties. Examples include (please note this is not an exhaustive list):
- **The Reading Agency**- Summer Reading Challenge Young Volunteers and Reading Activists
 - **The National Literacy Trust**- Literacy Champions and Words for Work
 - **Booktrust**- Literacy Catch up Project
 - **The Communication Trust**- Communication Ambassadors
 - **Beanstalk**- Reading Helpers
 - **The Reader Organisation**- Volunteer Programme
 - **Business in the Community**- Time to Read Programme
 - **Edge Hill University**- Better Reading Support Partners
- 9.3 Programmes such as National Citizen Service and organisations such as vInspired¹⁰⁶ engage young people (predominantly 14 and above) in a range of social action initiatives, which have included local activities designed to promote reading and improve literacy skills.
- 9.4 Across the North East a number of organisations are involved in delivering social action projects. **Youth Focus NE** currently deliver a young person-led pre-employability training programme which addresses six key skills including communication¹⁰⁷. **Leading Links** operate a Youth Ambassadors project where young people deliver a range of activities including supporting summer transition and engaging younger children in positive out of school activities as part of the Children’s University programme¹⁰⁸. **Gentoo** are also delivering their Turning Pages project to place volunteers in schools to work with children on a one-to-one basis.

¹⁰⁶ <https://vinspired.com/>

¹⁰⁷ <http://youthfocusne.org.uk/reducing-the-skills-gap/>

¹⁰⁸ <http://leadinglink.co.uk/index.php/youth-ambassadors>

- 9.5 Library services across the North East also use volunteers to support a range of reader development activities (not restricted to children and young people). The most recent data from CIPFA indicates that there are 1,406 library volunteers across the region¹⁰⁹. Nurseries, Children’s Centres and schools also use volunteers and many have their own volunteer programmes to support a range of activities.
- 9.6 Baby and toddler groups are also largely run by volunteers. These groups don’t need to be registered with Ofsted but some may choose to become members of the **Pre-School Learning Alliance**. A review of Netmums undertaken as part of this research suggests that there are approximately 480 baby and toddler groups across the region.
- 9.7 A range of other organisations are actively seeking volunteering to support literacy. The Volunteer Centre in Hartlepool is recruiting Reading Helpers and the charity Success4All¹¹⁰ is recruiting volunteer tutors/befrienders to support children and young people as part of after-school clubs and summer clubs¹¹¹.
- 9.8 What is apparent is that there are a wide range of projects and activities that are currently using volunteers to support different age groups of children and young people with different aspects of literacy (for example reading or writing) or build the confidence and skills of parents to support their child’s literacy and learning. The profile of volunteers is also diverse ranging from young people providing mentoring support to younger children to adults providing peer support to parents and carers of children who are struggling with literacy.
- 9.9 The dedication and efforts of all volunteers in the region should be recognised and celebrated and forms part of a coordinated approach to improving literacy across the North East. However the diversity of schemes presents a complex picture both for children and families in need of support and organisations and services with responsibility for improving children’s literacy and learning outcomes.
- 9.10 Establishing any intervention that uses volunteers requires initial investment in recruitment, training and disclosure checks and on-going management covering deployment, quality assurance and addressing volunteer turnover. Investment is also required to put in place appropriate systems to assess the impact of the intervention both on the volunteers and those they support.
- 9.11 Greater coordination and cooperation across the various projects and activities using volunteers to improve literacy levels can help to share the set-up and delivery costs, improve volunteer retention and progression, retain volunteer capacity within communities and make it easier for local services to identify which intervention model would best meet the needs of the child and their family.

¹⁰⁹ No data provided for Middlesbrough and Stockton on Tees. <http://www.cipfa.org/services/research-and-statistics/comparative-profiles/public-libraries/cipfastats-library-profiles-english-authorities-2013>

¹¹⁰ <http://www.s4a.org.uk/>

¹¹¹ Accessed from Do-it on the 10th September 2014.

- 9.12 There is particular merit in recruiting young people that have experienced literacy difficulties and/or are from disadvantaged communities to deliver peer support for younger children as they will learn new skills and build their confidence which will increase their capacity to support their own children when they become parents.

Summary

- 9.13 There are a wide range of projects and activities across the region that are using volunteers to support children and young people with different aspects of literacy or building the confidence and skills of parents to support their child's literacy and learning. Greater coordination and cooperation across the various projects and activities using volunteers to improve literacy levels can help to share the set-up and delivery costs, improve volunteer retention and progression, retain volunteer capacity within communities and make it easier for local services to identify which intervention model would best meet the needs of the child and their family.

10. Key Findings and Conclusions

- 10.1 This scoping report provides an overview of the literacy picture across the North East. It does not purport to be definitive. It is clear from the consultations and desk-based research undertaken that both the picture of literacy needs and available support is by no means uniform across the region.
- 10.2 There are many reasons why people from all ages struggle with their literacy, ranging from severe educational needs to disillusionment with learning and low aspirations. Literacy learning is central to and influenced by a huge range of experiences, agencies and providers. Experiences at home, in school and work all exert an influence on a learner. Equally important are influences of an individual's social network, the wider community and official agencies. Efforts to improve literacy levels either on a local authority or cross authority basis need to recognise the range of influences on learners at early years, primary or secondary stages.
- 10.3 National evidence highlights specific groups who are likely to struggle with literacy. In school there are groups of consistent low attainers across the Key Stages, including: boys, pupils eligible for free school meals, some ethnic minority groups, pupils with English as an Additional Language, pupils with Special Educational Needs, pupils with high rates of mobility between schools, and looked after children. These characteristics often interact and place a pupil at increased likelihood of under-achievement.
- 10.4 Whilst early years providers and schools play an important role in identifying children and young people who are struggling with literacy, statutory education settings are not the only place where learning and support can take place. National evidence reinforces the importance of the home environment. Parental skills, and an awareness of the important role they play, are essential to providing children with the best chance of success in learning in school. However across the North East 17% of adults have literacy levels at Entry Level 3 or below (below that expected of an 11 year old). Consequently efforts to deliver sustainable improvements in literacy levels need to focus both on raising attainment within statutory education settings and crucially addressing the literacy needs and confidence of parents to enable them to play an active role in supporting their child at home.
- 10.5 Analysis of Early Years Foundation Stage data reveals that the North East performs below the national average for communication, language and literacy. The proportion of children from disadvantaged areas achieving expected levels is also below the equivalent national figure. Less than half of children from the most disadvantaged communities in County Durham, Gateshead, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland and Stockton-on-Tees achieve the expected levels in literacy.
- 10.6 The number of Children's Centres across the region is decreasing and staffing capacity has been significantly reduced thus removing some of the support infrastructure to engage and support local communities. The capacity of the public library service has also been reduced, in particular the number of children's librarians who can support and engage children and families in a range of positive literacy activities.

- 10.7 This loss of infrastructure presents real challenges for early years services in building links with local communities and providing effective support for the parents and carers of children who are below expected levels for literacy, communication and language.
- 10.8 Yet Children’s Centres are only one part of the equation. A high proportion of families use informal childcare and as such effective approaches to improve literacy skills in children during early years needs to build the skills and confidence of providers of informal childcare as well as the child’s parents or carers.
- 10.9 Despite concerns regarding the poor literacy skills that many children have when they start school the region’s primary schools are performing strongly and are currently achieving Key Stage 2 reading and writing levels above the national average. Continued effort is however required to narrow the attainment gap between children eligible for the pupil premium and those that are not. In this regard there are local authorities in the region where this gap is wider than the national average suggesting that targeted support may be required.
- 10.10 At Key Stage 4 all but two of the region’s local authorities fall below the national average for the number of pupils achieving five GCSE A*-C. The emerging North East Schools Challenge is likely to incorporate a package of interventions designed to raise the aspirations and skills (including literacy) of young people to enable them to contribute socially and economically to the region’s prosperity and growth.
- 10.11 What is clear from this scoping report is that there are a wide range of interventions in use across the region that aim to support children and young people with literacy difficulties. What is evident is that no single intervention holds the key but that in practice several interventions, both in-school and out of school, may be required over a number of years to deliver a sustained and lasting impact on the literacy levels of children and young people who have literacy difficulties. The absence of effective coordination therefore runs the risk of a range of literacy stakeholders delivering a fragmented programme of interventions that fail to properly embed and sustain literacy gains and importantly address negative attitudes and behaviours around effective literacy practices.
- 10.12 Schools across the region have a key responsibility to demonstrate leadership and establish coherent, whole-school approaches to improving literacy that bring together a range of interventions delivered in-school, after school and in school holiday periods. Mobilising existing capacity and infrastructure in different ways can support stronger engagement with parents of children who are struggling with literacy. Exploring opportunities to maximise and extend the role of Teaching Assistants and to make more effective use of volunteers can help to deliver a range of activities that both raise literacy levels but also change the literacy practices and behaviours on a more sustainable basis.

- 10.13 There are examples of innovation and new models of delivery within the region suggesting that further work is required to transfer learning and knowledge and embed effective practice across the 12 North East local authorities. New approaches may not involve traditional literacy partners but organisations and services that can play an essential role of extending the reach of support services into families and communities where literacy needs are the greatest. In this regard the regions social housing sector, employers and key community and voluntary sector organisations can play a stronger role in enabling existing services to work with children and young people as well as parents and carers to build confidence, skills and aspirations.
- 10.14 The region's cultural sector also has an important role to play in providing children and young people with new experiences through participation in activities that can foster an enjoyment of reading, improve writing skills, help to develop their speaking and listening skills and provide opportunities for fun learning experiences. Yet cultural participation across the region lags behind national levels and children from lower-income households are less likely to have engaged in out of school activities than children from more affluent areas.
- 10.15 What is also evident from this scoping research are the challenges of accessing and sharing relevant data to support planning, decision making and impact assessment. It has not been possible to obtain information from a number of providers on the uptake and/or coverage of their interventions across the region. This may be due to a number of factors including the capacity required to compile the data or perceived sensitivities around releasing the data given the competition for buy-in from education settings. The absence of this data limits the ability to coordinate effectively on a local or regional level and promote a coherent offer to children, young people and families.
- 10.16 There are other data sets which are either not publically available (e.g. information contained in the National Pupil Database) or not currently captured by services or delivery partners. This can present difficulties in undertaking more detailed analysis of the profile of people accessing literacy support or participating in literacy activities (in school and out of school). Further work is required here to answer some important questions on the reach and targeting of existing literacy provision and services such as *'How many children eligible for free school meals are participating in the Summer Reading Challenge'*, *'What proportion of families are taking up the two year free childcare places'*, *'How many children are assessing as requiring support for communication and language at the 2 year development check?'* and importantly *'What are the attitudes of children and young people to literacy?'*
- 10.17 This raises more fundamental questions as to how relevant literacy data is captured and shared and what changes, if any, can be made to existing data collection infrastructure. By way of example can details of literacy interventions be added to pupil records (thus facilitating longitudinal tracking and analysis of progress) or can library management systems be improved to strengthen targeting of provision and highlight low take-up (by area/pupil/school)?

- 10.18 Whilst many public services are being squeezed due to ongoing budgetary pressures there is continued investment in the region that could play a stronger and/or more effective role in improving literacy levels. In this regard simply influencing mainstream budgets or discretionary funding has the potential to deliver the necessary 'system change' to raise literacy levels on a sustainable basis. This includes the use of pupil premium, the programming (and reach) of the region's National Portfolio Organisations and 2 Major Partner Museums, the actions and delivery of the North East Schools Challenge as well as local authority library services, adult and community learning and family support provision.
- 10.19 Reshaping existing provision alone however it not enough. To be effective service providers need to understand and take into account the drivers of demand for literacy support and work to increase demand for communities where take-up of support has traditionally been low. Campaigning and messaging has a role to play but approaches that build awareness and confidence from within communities are also necessary to establish a cultural shift where poor literacy skills accepted. The method of delivering literacy messages is important given that trust and credibility are essential components of efforts to change behaviours. As such social housing providers, volunteers, local community and voluntary groups are equally as important (and in some communities more important) as schools in cascading key messages about the importance of literacy and support available.
- 10.20 The challenge for the region is how best to knit together existing programmes and interventions as well as influencing relevant networks and mainstream provision. This is likely to require the capacity and knowledge to work across boundaries as well as the independence to challenge poor practice and the status quo. The size of the region and scale of literacy needs suggests that efforts have to be targeted to specific communities, however the process of learning has the potential to inform the 'next practice' for all those with a stake in raising literacy levels across the North East.

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The report has also been shaped by consultation with members of the Society of Chief Librarians North East meeting held on the 23rd September 2014.

Appendix 2: Skill Levels

Entry Level 1 is the national school curriculum equivalent for attainment at age 5-7. Adults below Entry Level 1 may not be able to write short messages to family or select floor numbers in lifts. Adults with ICT Entry Level 1 skills are able to get information from an ICT-based source and follow recommended safe practices.

Entry Level 2 is the national school curriculum equivalent for attainment at age 7-9. Adults with below Entry Level 2 may not be able to describe a child's symptoms to a doctor or use a cash point to withdraw cash. Adults with ICT Entry Level 2 skills are able to use ICT to communicate, as well as enter and edit small amounts of information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience.

Entry Level 3 is the national school curriculum equivalent for attainment at age 9-11. Adults with skills below Entry Level 3 may not be able to understand price labels on pre-packaged food or pay household bills. Adults with ICT Entry Level 3 skills are able to interact with and use an ICT system to meet needs, as well as present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience.

Level 1 is equivalent to GCSE grades D-G. Adults with skills below Level 1 may not be able to read bus or train timetables or check the pay and deductions on a wage slip. Adults with ICT Level 1 skills are able to select and use a variety of appropriate sources of information, as well as enter, organise, develop format and bring together information to suit content and purpose.

Level 2 is equivalent to GCSE grades A*-C. Adults with skills below Level 2 may not be able to compare products and services for the best buy, or work out a household budget. Adults with ICT Level 2 skills are able to use a variety of appropriate sources of information and evaluate its fitness for purpose, as well as evaluate and use different methods of organising and presenting information, taking into account fitness for purpose and audience.

Appendix 3- Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered early years providers must follow the EYFS, including childminders, preschools, nurseries and school reception classes.

The EYFS Profile¹¹² summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. It is based on ongoing observation and assessment in the three prime and four specific areas of learning, and the three characteristics of effective learning, set out below:

The prime areas of learning:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

The specific areas of learning:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

Characteristics of effective learning:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

¹¹² Standards and Testing Agency (2014)- 'Early Years Foundation Stage Profile: 2014 Handbook'.

Appendix 4- Data Tables

Table 11- Number of Lone Parent Households

Local Authority	No. Lone parent households with dependent children
	2011
County Durham	45,646
Darlington	11,001
Gateshead	18,579
Hartlepool	10,785
Middlesbrough	16,657
Newcastle upon Tyne	24,960
North Tyneside	19,130
Northumberland	23,040
Redcar and Cleveland	14,113
South Tyneside	17,040
Stockton-on-Tees	18,787
Sunderland	26,717
North East	246,455

Table 12- Number of Children Aged 0-15 years

Local Authority	Number of children 0-15
County Durham	45,300
Darlington	10,200
Gateshead	18,000
Hartlepool	9,000
Middlesbrough	14,100
Newcastle upon Tyne	25,500
North Tyneside	27,300
Northumberland	18,400
Redcar and Cleveland	12,500
South Tyneside	13,100
Stockton-on-Tees	19,300
Sunderland	24,800
North East	237,500

Table 13¹¹³- Number of Children's Centres by Local Authority

	Children's Centre
County Durham	43
Darlington	6
Gateshead	12
Hartlepool	10
Middlesbrough	8
Newcastle upon Tyne	17
North Tyneside	12
Northumberland	20
Redcar and Cleveland	12
South Tyneside	12
Stockton-on-Tees	12
Sunderland	20
North East	184

¹¹³ Source: School Census Data 2014 (January 2014)