

CASE STUDY 1 | Nationwide | Education

Dads' reading programme boosts children's literacy and numeracy

PROJECT

Fathers Reading Every Day (Fred)

PURPOSE

To improve children's educational outcomes and wellbeing

FUNDING

£6.50 per child for new books for 360 children in the first year and 309 in the second, from grant-making organisations Shine (Support and Help in Education), the Walcot Foundation and the JJ Charitable Trust

BACKGROUND

Children who are not read to by their fathers get left behind at school, suggests analysis by Newcastle University for the recently-launched Read On Get On campaign. The research estimates seven-year-olds who are not read to by their dads are more

than 13 months behind in language skills by the time they reach 11, compared with those who have been read to daily.

The Fatherhood Institute was keen to address this issue and in its search for tried and tested projects came across Fathers Reading

Every Day (Fred), a programme devised in the United States. The organisation secured permission and funding to import it to the UK.

ACTION

The first step was to find schools serving deprived areas where the

programme could be piloted. Fred co-ordinator Charlie Rice identified a cluster of eight primaries in the London borough of Lambeth, as well as three schools in Salford. Teachers were given information about the project and training in engaging fathers from autumn 2011 and the project got off the ground the following spring.

One of the Lambeth schools was Holy Trinity Primary, where teachers completed an afternoon of training as well as taking part in an after-school session with colleagues from across the school cluster. They drew up a list of books likely to appeal to fathers, which the institute then sent them.

Kirsten Piper, the school's assistant head responsible for the curriculum, said the school was motivated to take part in the

ACCELERATED PROGRESS

Greater than expected progress in reading



Greater than expected progress in numeracy



Source: Boys' Development Project



Get Real helps young people to get into education, employment or training

CASE STUDY 2 | London | Social care

Housing project supports homeless young people

PROJECT

Get Real

PURPOSE

To help homeless young people get into education, training or employment and become self-sufficient

FUNDING

Initial investment of around £32,000 to convert two properties to house seven

young people. Running costs are funded from housing benefit averaging £90 a week per young person plus a £5 a week service charge

BACKGROUND

Mohammad Bashar Al-hneidi joined Barnet Council as its youth mediation co-ordinator in 2009, helping to prevent youth homelessness by resolving family



As well as improving children's attainment, the programme has kickstarted a greater involvement in school life for some fathers

extending the programme to early years settings in Lambeth, Southwark, Leicester and York and is running training sessions to spread the project to other areas.

OUTCOME

Fred improves children's attainment in reading, writing and numeracy, suggests an evaluation of the second year of the pilot by the Boys' Development Project, published last month.

Of 224 children whose reading was assessed, 42 per cent made greater than expected progress compared with 11 per cent among children who didn't take part in Fred. Of 184 children whose numeracy was assessed before and afterwards, 22 per cent made greater than expected progress compared with nine per cent among those who did not take part. And of 227 children whose writing was assessed, 20 per cent made greater than expected progress compared with 15 per cent among non-participants.

Fathers reported the scheme had improved their relationships with their children while teachers said children were more enthusiastic about reading and more focused.

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programme due to its potential to increase the involvement of fathers, who she says can be "really difficult to entice". Children made invitations for their fathers to a launch party featuring a presentation by Rice. Sixty fathers at Holy Trinity signed up to the four-week programme. They chose a book with their child and received welcome packs, with a reading log.

Staff were on hand to offer support and encouragement to those lacking in reading confidence.

Fathers committed to reading to their children for 15 minutes a day for the first two weeks and 30 minutes a day for the second two weeks. At the end of the programme, they were invited to a celebration party.

Rice describes Fred as a "great

kickstart" to fathers finding a role for themselves in school life.

"Afterwards dads said they had more of an understanding of their children's school life and wanted to get more involved in it."

Holy Trinity is continuing the programme and teachers have incorporated it into the school improvement plan. The Fatherhood Institute is now

disputes. In cases where mediation did not work, many young people were housed in temporary accommodation and were then "lost" within six months, he says. "The majority dropped out of education, started smoking – and not just cigarettes – and lost track of their aims and objectives," he explains. "They believed that if they stuck with temporary accommodation long enough, they'd get a council home eventually. I was saying to them: 'Get real'. So that's how the project got its name."

ACTION

Al-hneidi was keen to provide an alternative for these young people, by converting properties into

shared accommodation. The idea was they would receive housing and individual support to help them become self-sufficient and fulfil their potential in exchange for a commitment to education, employment or training.

However, he initially came up against resistance from other professionals concerned about potential antisocial behaviour given the fact the accommodation would be unsupervised.

When housing duties transferred from Barnet Council to its arms-length management organisation Barnet Homes in 2012, Al-hneidi presented the idea to the organisation's executive and within three months it was up and running.

The first three young people, aged between 16 and 18, moved in in February last year. As the first point of contact for many homeless young people in Barnet, Al-hneidi was able to identify those most likely to commit to the scheme.

When they move in, participants get about three hours a week of one-to-one support from Al-hneidi for the first six weeks. He helps them get their lives on track by establishing what they want to achieve and the steps they need to take. He drops into the houses unannounced around once a week to ensure young residents are progressing with their education or employment, and getting on well,

and to help them with any issues that have come up such as sorting out benefits. He also facilitates a regular meeting to help them resolve any disputes. The idea is young people can stay in Get Real houses for up to two years before they move on, but there is flexibility depending on their needs.

OUTCOME

Nine of the 11 young people who have been housed by the project so far have got into education, training or employment and sustained it as a result of the scheme. The other two were already in education or employment and received support to stick with it.