



Quick Reads Impact Evaluation Report 2012-13

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“Quick Reads is made possible by the support of authors, publishers, and partners. Our mission is to bring the pleasures and benefits of reading to everyone.

One in six adults of working age in the UK find reading difficult and may never pick up a book. NIACE works with its partners to improve this situation.”

Foreword

I'm delighted to be able to write the foreword for this report, looking at the success of Quick Reads over the past seven years. When the very first collection of Quick Reads were published in 2006 only the most ambitious amongst us would have thought that this ground-breaking literacy initiative would still be going in 2013 with the continued support of the publishing industry and best-selling authors. They were published in response to the cries of many, many learners and teachers asking for novels appropriate for adults with good plot, good characterisation and in simple language.

As this evaluation report illustrates the reason for the ongoing success of Quick Reads is the overwhelmingly positive impact that this initiative has had. Each and every year we meet adults whose lives and attitudes to themselves and reading have been transformed. For the vast majority of learners with poor literacy, Quick Reads are the very first book that they have not only completed but enjoyed. They then go on to read many more books, discovering a love and enthusiasm for reading which they pass on to their friends and families, perhaps most importantly setting the perfect example for their children and grand-children.

Both tutors and learners continue to see the benefits beyond reading. This report details the significant increases in communication skills, aspirations and even better job prospects that the initial boost to their confidence that learners had through learning with Quick Reads. A big vote of thanks is needed for the publishers, for Dame Gail Rebeck who had the initial idea, for the hundreds of teachers who have supported QR and the thousands of learners. And of course the authors – writing a complex plot in 90 pages is no mean feat!

Carol Taylor, OBE

Director of Development and Research

NIACE

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1. Summary

NIACE has been leading the outreach work for Quick Reads since its inception in 2006. We produce a range of resources to encourage the use of Quick Reads by a range of practitioners in formal and informal settings. We maintain a contact database of around 14,000 'Friends of Quick Reads' and regularly update them with news, ideas for using the books and case studies to maximise reach and impact and we maintain the Quick Reads website.

This impact evaluation report is primarily based on an online survey of Quick Reads users sent out to NIACE, Unionlearn and The Reading Agency's network of organisations running its Six Book Challenge scheme.

In summary, this report finds:

1. Working with intermediaries such as tutors, community workers and union learning reps is successful in getting Quick Reads to the people who will most benefit from them;
2. Quick Reads continue to reach new audiences;
3. Readers/learners and the people who support them place a high value on the books and resources;
4. Using Quick Reads has a positive impact on literacy levels and literacy confidence of readers and learners; and
5. Using Quick Reads has a range of additional benefits for learners in terms of progress in learning and reading including improved confidence and improved communication skills.

The National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) exist to encourage more and different adults to engage in learning of all kinds. The focus of NIACE's work is to represent the interests of, and improve opportunities for learning for adults who have benefited least from previous education and training, and through that focus, the extension and enrichment of opportunities for adults more generally, wherever and however they learn. Since 1999, the Institute has worked on over 600 development, research, and consultancy projects including large-scale project work, national training programmes, national evaluations, quantitative surveys, and qualitative studies as well as case studies of good practice. NIACE's business crosses the sectoral boundaries of post-16 education and training and operates in all fields of UK education and training, including local authority organised provision, the further education college sector, higher education in universities and colleges, employment-led learning involving both employers and trade unions, learning in the voluntary sector, and through the media.

2. Introduction

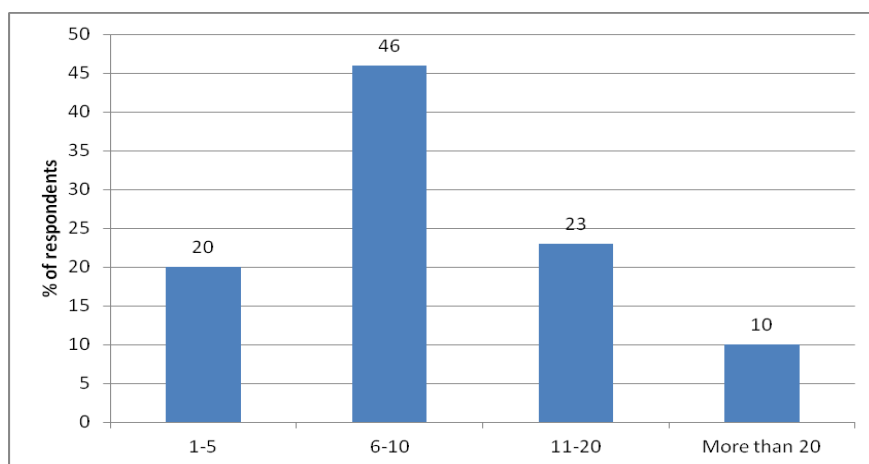
The aim of this evaluation is to capture the impact of our work on the lives, skills and attitudes to reading and learning of adults using Quick Reads. It covers the period 2012–2013. Findings support previous evaluations and demonstrate the breadth of audience, connecting with hard-to-reach people to encourage them to read and enjoy books. It shows that Quick Reads has a strong positive effect on new readers' attitude and behaviour towards reading. It suggests that access to Quick Reads supports adults' progression through literacy levels, by embedding reading habits and a love of books in thousands of people's lives, offering a transformatory experience. This consistently strong impact has been shown in each of the impact evaluation studies of Quick Reads undertaken since 2008.

Once again, this year we have encouraged reading groups in workplaces and community settings through promoting case studies and circulating toolkits and resources to establish and support groups. Two of these groups were visited by Dr Sam Duncan from NRDC, Institute of Education, University of London and her analysis can be found in her research report, *Reading for Pleasure for emerging adult readers* (January 2013). Seven reading group case studies can be found on the Quick Reads website (www.quickreads.org.uk).

3. Methodology

In November 2012, we sent an online survey out to our Quick Reads network, Unionlearn's network of union learning representatives and The Reading Agency's network of organisations running its Six Book Challenge scheme. We offered an incentive of a prize draw to win free sets of books and received 317 responses. The overwhelming majority of respondents (93%) use Quick Reads with groups of learners and a rough estimate of the total number of learners that respondents work with is around 17,918. The average size of groups is shown in **Figure one** below.

Figure one: size of group



Base: all respondents who used Quick Reads with groups of learners = 296

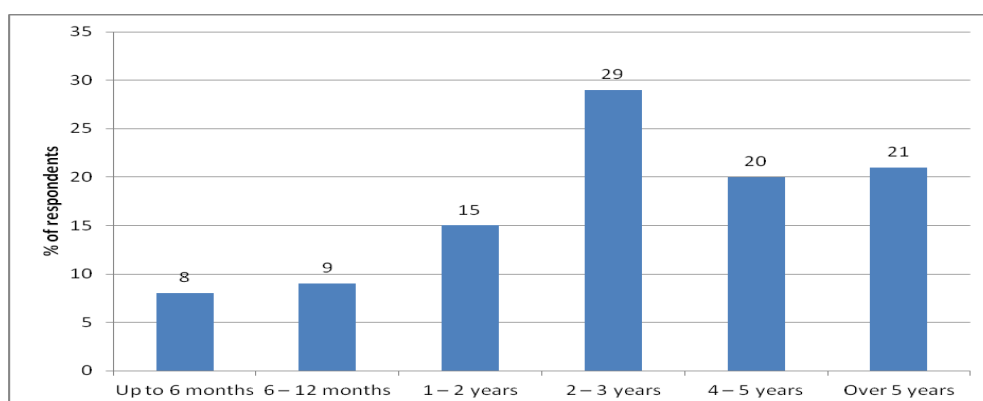
4. Findings

4.1 Extent and breadth of using Quick Reads

The majority of respondents have been using Quick Reads for two years or more but we continue to reach new audiences as 17% of respondents have been using Quick Reads for less than a year.

Figure two below shows that we are sustaining our engagement with users of Quick Reads and still widening our reach to new audiences.

Figure two: Length of time respondents had been using Quick Reads

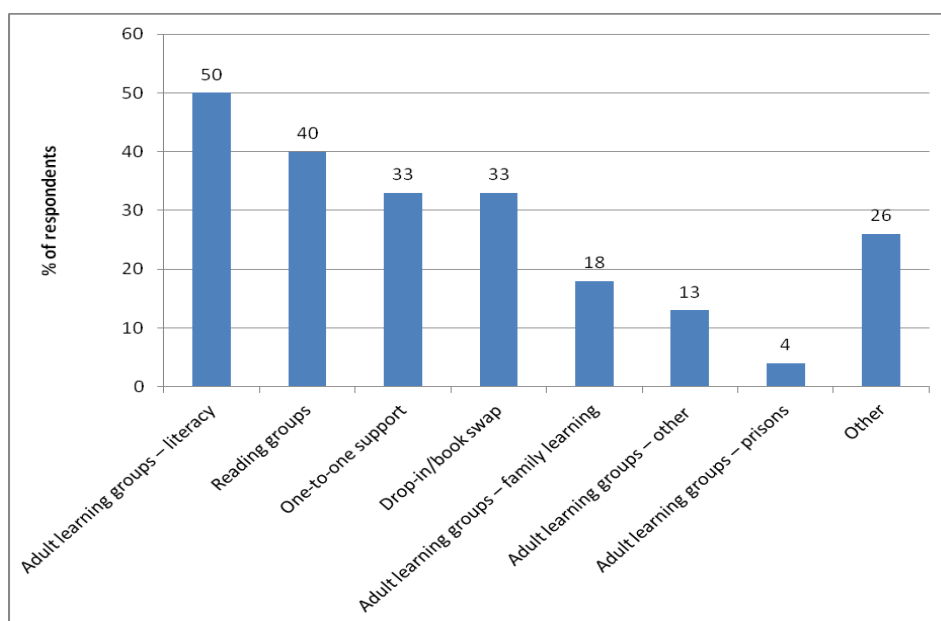


Base: all respondents = 317

The survey reveals a rich diversity of using Quick Reads to improve literacy and encourage reading for pleasure in a variety of ways including reading groups, one-to-one support and drop-in sessions or book swaps (see **Figure three**). Half the respondents said that they use Quick Reads with literacy adult learning groups. Respondents are also using Quick Reads:

- in libraries;
- in workplaces;
- as resources in schools;
- with ESOL classes;
- with probation learners;
- in Further Education colleges;
- with Youth Clubs;
- as part of Union Learning Days;
- as part of courses; and
- with learners with learning difficulties/disabilities

Figure three: Ways respondents had been using Quick Reads



Base: all respondents = 317 Note: respondents could select more than one answer

These findings show that respondents are less likely to use Quick Reads in prison adult learning groups (4%). However, we know this is unlikely to be representative because of the difficulty in reaching prison staff via an online survey. Feedback from our work in offender learning and with the National Offender Management Services indicates Quick Reads are used regularly in prisons with offenders and staff through literacy classes, reading groups, book swaps and the Six Book Challenge.

4.2 About the books and resources

The overwhelmingly majority (93%) of respondents said they would recommend using Quick Reads to their colleagues. Over half had ordered copies of the 2012 titles and several respondents borrowed them from libraries as they lacked funds to buy them. Comments on the books are notably positive and demonstrate the range and breadth of contexts.

Books have been excellent to encourage readers as they are fairly short with adult themes so students are genuinely interested and engaged. There is something for everybody. All the resources are clear, varied and easy to use and adapt.

I have found that many of my learners who have never read for pleasure can find something of interest from the Quick Reads range. The books are manageable for people with dyslexia or issues with their reading confidence. I have often found that a learner, who previously was uninterested in reading or lacked confidence to read 'real' books, has been engaged with reading through Quick Reads and gone on to read regularly for pleasure.

We use the books to generate discussions, as a basis for making predictions, and to use as an 'understanding text' resource.

They are useful for a wide range of readers, e.g. low literacy skills, busy (e.g. full-time workers, single mums), ESOL learners, teenagers, reluctant readers

They provide a platform for so many types of learning. I've used them to develop learners' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

I use them with literacy learners, people learning to write and ESOL learners. They can be used adaptively with learners from Access 2 to Intermediate 2 learners (SCQF levels). I was introduced to these books by a dyslexic relative, and I've never looked back. I take them to all my lessons across various teaching and tutoring jobs. They are part of my teaching toolbox!

Around one third of respondents have used NIACE resources with the books and all of our feedback suggests they are very useful (56%) or quite useful (44%).

There has been an increased emphasis on informal learning and reading in the groups I work with and using the books and supporting resources together is especially effective for multiple uses e.g. reading clubs, libraries in the workplace.

They helped to give guidance to tutors who were leading on reading groups for the first time.

They are flexible resources that also provide a platform for discussion and supporting activities.

Around two-thirds of respondents had not used these resources and some were unaware of them. Although some respondents such as union learning reps may not require teaching resources, we will ensure that, as a result of these findings, we will work with Unionlearn to promote these resources more widely to increase their uptake.

Respondents were asked what they most valued about Quick Reads and their comments are set out in the appendices of this report. The main points are summarised below.

- Easily accessible – font size, layout, length
- Can be used in a variety of ways
- Reasonable price
- Variety of titles
- Well-known authors
- Wide range of topics
- Audio available
- Easy to order
- Written for adults, therefore not patronising
- Aid group discussion
- Appealing to a range of learners.

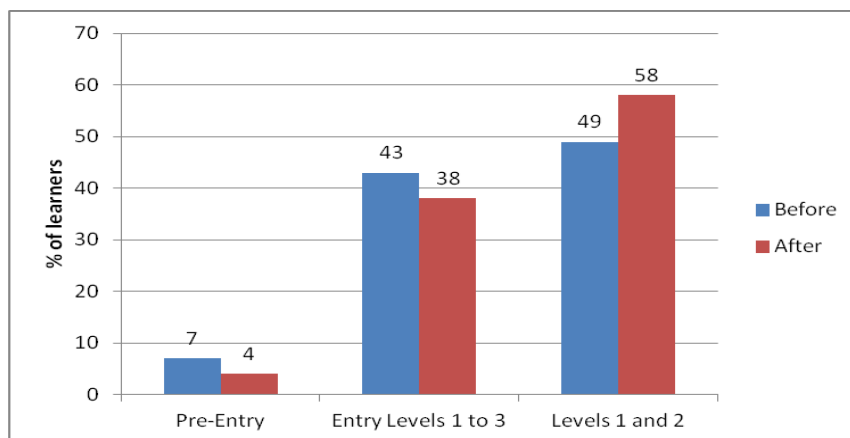
4.3 Learner/reader skills, confidence and attitudes

Our findings suggest that learners' literacy levels improve through using Quick Reads. Respondents felt that more of their learners were at Levels 1 and 2 after using Quick Reads (58% compared to

49%) and a smaller percentage were at pre-entry level (4% compared to 7%). This is supported by recent research by the NRDC (2013):

“Participants reported gains in word, sentence and text level reading skills. They spoke of expanding their vocabularies, increasing their confidence reading longer and less familiar words, of understanding more complicated sentences and paragraphs (“sometimes you have to read them over a few times to get what they are saying and then once you get it, it’s clear-the sentence makes sense and you move forward”).”¹

Figure four: Percentage of learners at each national literacy level before and after using Quick Reads



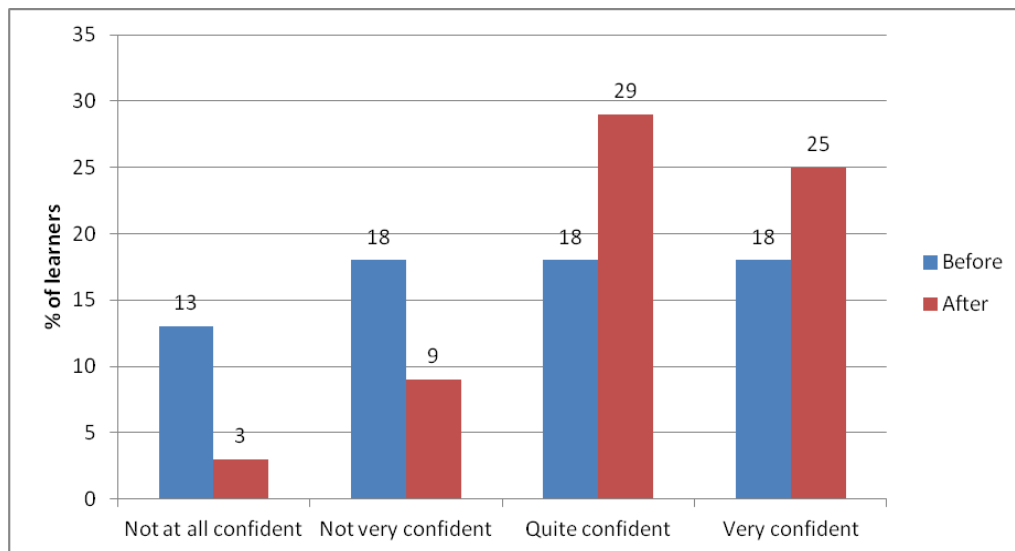
Base: total learners of all respondents who used national literacy levels within their provision = 6,793

Interestingly, respondents also felt that Quick Reads improved their learners’ confidence and this was much greater than the change in their literacy levels. The percentage of learners who were either not at all or not very confident drops by 19 percentage points while the percentage of learners who were perceived to be quite or very confident increases by 18 percentage points.

As **Figure five** below shows, the percentage of learners who were quite and very confident increased dramatically after using Quick Reads and there was also a huge drop in the percentage of learners who were not at all confident.

¹ Duncan, S (2013) Research report, Reading for Pleasure for emerging adult readers, NRDC, Institute of Education, University of London

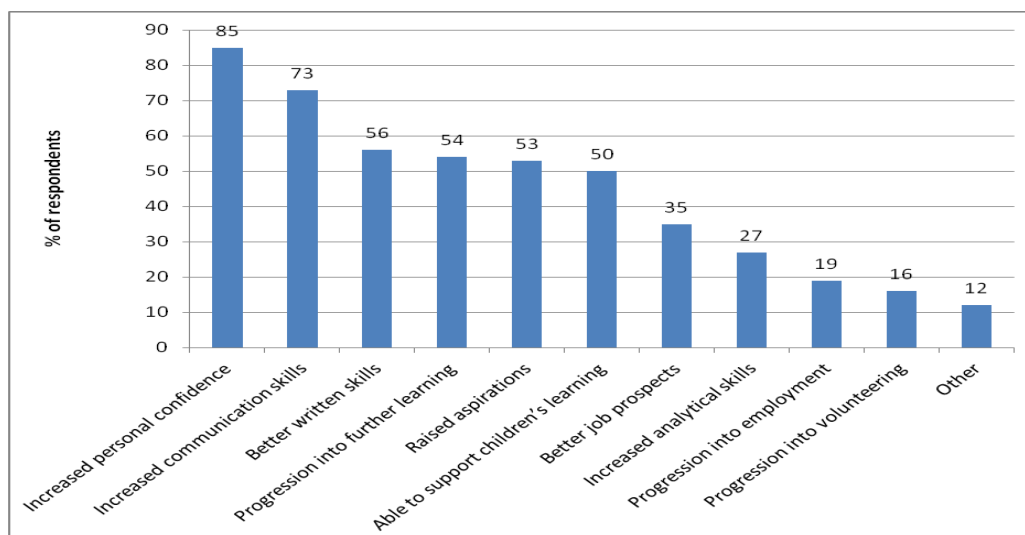
Figure five: Percentage of learners at each confidence level before and after using Quick Reads



Base: total learners of all respondents = 17,918

Around two thirds of respondents reported learners to be either a bit or much more positive towards reading and learning. An overwhelming 95% of respondents felt that Quick Reads had provided additional benefits to learners including increased personal confidence (85%) and increased communication skills (73%). ‘Other’ additional benefits cited by respondents included a willingness to move on to harder and more diverse books, greater independence (for example through choosing their own book to read or visiting a library by themselves), and developing an enjoyment or love of reading.

Figure six: Additional benefits Quick Reads have provided to learners



Base: all respondents who felt Quick Reads provided additional benefits to learners = 300 Note: respondents could select more than one answer

Over a third of respondents had observed other changes in the lives of their learners as a result of using Quick Reads. Many of these changes are related to the benefits above, particularly increased personal confidence and communication skills. However respondents have seen the wider impact that these benefits have for learners:

Improved communication as people will talk to people they would not have talked to before when they are going to borrow a quick read book, improved self confidence as people have something else to talk about apart from TV shows, kids see parents reading and copy them, more relaxed evenings as reading is calmer than TV, more sociable as people swap ideas and books and recommend other books. Biggest change is people starting to take evening classes after having read some quick read books and got reading confidence.

The biggest change is when adult learners complete a book for the first time in their lives! It's a milestone that many never believed possible. The benefits are somewhat intangible, but the satisfaction on achieving a goal that they never thought possible is far wider than simple increasing confidence. It can help put prior fears and insecurities aside.

Many respondents identified a new or remembered love of reading as being a further benefit to learners:

A desire to read - a forgotten love of reading rekindled

Some of my learners have developed a real love of reading and now take quick reads on holiday to read by the pool, or disappear somewhere quiet at home so they can get through a couple of chapters to see what happens next. This is amazing for those who did not have the confidence to read.

Other respondents have seen a greater awareness of other people's views and needs:

Some learners have reflected on the titles they have read via the Six Book Challenge and written book reviews which are then discussed in class. This has helped some learners to become more aware about other topics and to recognise that everyone has different views on things.

Learners are quicker to help others in the class who are struggling with reading, maybe giving strategies that they use to help them remember a word or pronunciation.

Findings indicate that Quick Reads can play a critical role in changing attitudes to reading. Specific examples include that learners are:

- taking books home to finish;
- asking for support to read where they wouldn't have before;
- willing to read aloud;
- swapping books;
- buying books;
- trying new genres; and

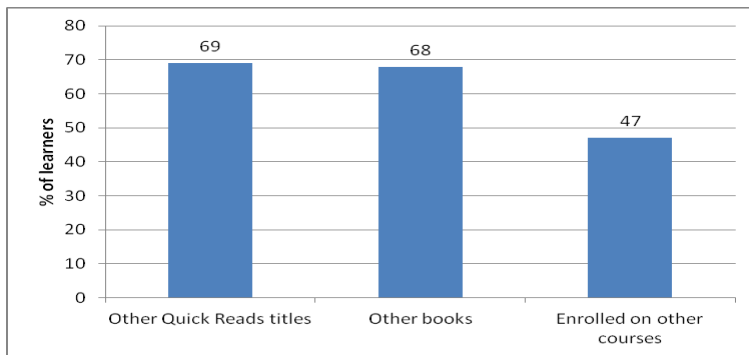
- are enjoying reading and doing it for pleasure (often for the first time).

Respondents who had not observed changes in learners' wider lives spoke about the difficulty in attributing changes to one specific aspect of the learning taking place. Some did not have access to the information needed for this question, while others had not been using Quick Reads for long enough to observe any changes. None of the respondents reported negative wider changes to learners' lives.

4.4 Further impact

The survey findings indicate that Quick Reads provide an important first step to further reading and learning as shown in **Figure seven**.

Figure seven: Progression routes of learners after Quick Reads



Base: total learners of all respondents = 17,918 Note: respondents could select more than one answer

Findings also indicate that learners have progressed to taking evening classes, literacy/numeracy classes, FE courses and Open University courses. Respondents suggested learners went on to find reading and other learning more interesting and some cited examples of learners going onto read other books written by the same author, "One learner enjoyed the Maureen Lee book so much she has now read several of her full length books." Respondents who had seen a change in learners' attitudes to learning suggested they went to try different things where they wouldn't before, were motivated and encouraged by seeing their own improvement, had become involved in their children's learning and were more likely to learn/read at home.

As they have improved reading skills they have become more confident in general as individuals - this is also reflected in their attitudes to learning as they have more of a 'can do' approach.

All of the learners' attitudes towards learning generally have improved.

They are far more likely to try out different things, whereas previously, there was a reluctance to step out of their comfort zone.

They all enjoy classes better when they can see their own improvement and the lessons are made more interesting for them now.

5. Conclusions

The responses to this survey and on-going feedback throughout the year suggest that the Quick Reads initiative continues to go from strength to strength. Our findings clearly demonstrate the following:

Working with intermediaries such as tutors, community workers and union learning reps is successful in getting Quick Reads to the people who will most benefit from them. Adults who lack confidence to read books are unlikely to go to a shop or a library and pick up a Quick Read for them. We work with a range of intermediaries to support adults with low literacy competence and confidence to engage in reading through using Quick Reads as a tool to successfully engage with emerging and new readers and this strategy appears to be successful.

Quick Reads continue to reach new audiences. The initiative is in its seventh year and continues to widen its audiences. A major push has been to get the books used in settings other than formal literacy classrooms through the development of Quick Reads Reading Groups. Producing materials to accompany the new titles keeps the initiative fresh and up to date.

Readers/learners, and the people who support them, place a high value on the books and resources. There are some interesting recommendations from respondents set out in the appendix and we will continue to listen and act on these suggestions where practicable. The positive feedback reinforces our belief in the books and provides a robust case to continue to develop new materials. The resources to support the 2013 titles have received 757 unique downloads to date and the Reading Group Toolkits, 547 unique downloads.

Using Quick Reads has a positive impact on literacy levels and literacy confidence of readers and learners. When Quick Reads are used as part of literacy teaching, it is difficult to extrapolate how much reading these books is a determinant of learner progress. However, the range of quotes from tutors suggests they can play a pivotal role in developing literacy skills and confidence.

Using Quick Reads has range of additional benefits for learners in terms of progress in learning and reading including improved confidence and improved communication skills. Data suggests a wide range of benefits for readers and learners including developing a reading identity as someone who can read, engage in varied reading practices, and understand the value of the additional benefits that reading can bring.

6. Appendix one: comments about the books and resources:

The authors are well known which makes them attractive to learners.
They are short enough for emergent readers to be able to tackle, either independently or with support, while still long enough to be a good read.
Useful for emergent readers and ideal for library groups, used in prison library literacy groups and by Family Learning tutors in the county.
We have found them excellent as they are exactly like a normal book and have such a wide range of subjects. They are written by good authors and so students can progress to another book by the same author. They are easy to use in class and in one-to-one sessions.
They have been a fabulous learning tool and the CDs have been great tool for developing oral skills.
It develops all types of reading skills such as bringing previous knowledge to the table and reading for comprehension and discussion.
They provide an excellent introduction to reading for pleasure for reluctant readers without requiring learners to invest in a long novel. The popular authors and recognisable covers help learners to identify with their preferred titles/genres and to pick mainstream books in the future.
As the Quick Reads are not intimidating, they are great to start with. Once a student realises that they are not 'hard work', the majority move to a second book. Have recommended to ESOL tutors for this reason.
The books are at a level where they provoke interest but not long enough to bore, the groups which I work with have a high turnover and we are able to work on a weekly turnaround with the books to keep interest/ involvement high.
Quick Reads help encourage those who claim never to have read a book before to achieve their goal of doing just that. They are very popular for learners completing the 6 Book Challenge as they feel that they are not an overwhelming size and they offer a good choice of titles which will not be too difficult to read.
I find that my adult learners enjoy reading adult stories even though their reading skills are not quite at adult levels. I recommend them to fellow tutors as a confidence boost for learners as well as a very good learning resource.
They are an excellent way to get literacy students to start reading. The stories are well-written, not patronising, written by well-known authors, and are excellent for stimulating discussions.
These books are visually attractive and topical. They deal with topics/stories that would interest students whose reading age often restricts them from engaging in adult topics. They are status symbols and students are happy to be seen reading them. They are great for students who aspire to be 'adult/competent' readers.
The books are excellent examples of writing sentences; in paragraphs and help students to extend their vocabulary; explain well known phrases. Above all it promotes group discussions; using a dictionary and finding phrases and meaning of words on the internet.
I work in a school and the texts are very useful for disengaged older readers, year 10 up. They are short enough to use with small reading groups as they can be completed within a half-term. They are NOT just for adults.
I think the books are great and have them all in the LRC so I am constantly promoting them to tutor who work with ESOL, Basic Skills, Life Skills and Foundation Studies
I love these books as a resource!!
Because they are so handy, so easily available, so cheap and can be swapped and shared with many. Not only does it improve literacy but confidence, staff moral, friendships and more.
They are fantastic resources for our foreign students who, unfortunately, do not read fiction off their own backs. As an in-class resource students benefit from the variety of language available.
A good format, eye catching and fun. They are well explained and enjoyable. They take the

pressure off readers to complete a long book, they give readers the chance to accomplish reading an entire book
I am a Union Learner Rep and deal with employees at all levels for reading. I have used Quick reads to get people back into reading or those who have never read a book. I now have several groups who ask on a regular basis for new books and are also using the library.
Quick Reads are fantastic for stimulating reading among reluctant adult readers. The subject matter is varied and relevant to suit a wide variety of tastes and they are convenient to carry around in a pocket. The print size and layout of the books means that they are not too daunting and the covers are sufficiently enticing to arouse interest among some of the harder to reach learners. I am delighted at the impact they have had and I love the way they are recommended between fellow learners. There is no embarrassment about reading them and other users of the centre (even staff) have caught on to this fabulous resource and asked to borrow books from our Quick Reads Library. I've used them for more than 2 years in a variety of ways and I have found them to be one of most valuable resource I have used to date for encouraging adult learners to take up reading again.
The books attract all sorts of readers, the keen but time poor as well as the under confident. They get talked about.
They are quick, which means students stay engaged for the length of the book. It also allows students to remember what has happened, and therefore gives us time to concentrate on more higher order skills such as predictions, reviews
Learners coming back to reading or discovering reading longer text for the first time, enjoy the adult themes and the sensed of satisfaction that they have 'read a book'. The topics used in the books can lead to wider learning, speaking and listening, writing, discussions etc.
I really like these little books. They can be carried anywhere, take up little room and the reads are suitable for all. The font size is just right; you don't feel as if you have to peer at the book. There is a good mix of fiction and non-fiction and my customers usually tell me what they have enjoyed and what they would recommend.
They are a great introduction to reading for learners who can read, but don't do so. Some of my learners are now hooked and encourage others including members of their families to read. I really enjoy using these with learners.
I think that lots of different occupations be they tutors, librarians, those involved in union, workplace and community learning can and should get involved.
I have found them a valuable resource in prison education classes, not only by encouraging emerging readers but by allowing students to try a variety of different styles of writing without feeling overwhelmed or intimidated. I only wish we had greater numbers of multiple texts.
I have had comments from learners with dyspraxia, dyslexia and dyscalculia that the books are an ideal size to read as a slow reader and that the stories are good. Often shorter, easier reads are also aimed at a lower intellectual ability and my learners find it refreshing that with Quick Reads this isn't the case!
I have encouraged other Speech and Language Therapists who work with adults to promote Quick Reads and to create displays of available books for their clients.
Excellent initiative - Even people who just 'don't like' reading, are attracted to these books.

Appendix two: comments from respondents who had seen changes in learners' attitudes to reading:

Those who used the Quick Reads were impressed by their content and were more positive about reading (particularly styles of books that they wouldn't ordinarily pick up).
I work with deaf adults with additional needs so BSL might be a person's first language so literacy levels may be quite poor. Also people using our service may have had poor educational experiences in the past and are reluctant to be seen making errors and so will try to cover over what they don't know or avoid activity altogether. So it is important that a positive attitude is cultivated towards learning across the board. Taking a book home and returning to engage with some support should not be underestimated. Being able to download as Kindle books also a great help.
Students have been engaged in the different stories in the books and have been swapping books to read in their free time.
Learners enjoyed using Quick Reads for pleasure and, as the reading was done out of class, all idea of pressure was removed, so that even those who previously had had no tradition of reading for pleasure/relaxation eventually discovered, through judicious choice of appropriate texts, that they could enjoy following the text, picking up expressions and vocabulary on the way, yet with no requirement to report back on their learning. Often they were not even aware that their level of English had improved, although rates of progress - obviously - varied.
They particularly liked being able to try new genres.
Students see it less of a chore, they see it as a gathering rather than a literacy based event, they don't realise that they are improving their analytical skills, literacy, confidence in discussion etc. Positive embedded learning.
Readers love to start on the Quick Reads before building up to try the challenge of other books. People with disabilities or who have had a stroke enjoy the book with tape and CD included so they can read and listen at the same time.
I find the quick read books a wonderful resource and learners often say -'This is the first book I have ever read and I'd like to read more now.'
Some of the students have started to recommend books to one another. In the past they would be reluctant to even admit they were reading.
Generally the books are approachable and quite engaging so learners feel encouraged. A few of the books are not so good and a bit off putting. None of the books are really suitable for learners below Entry 2.
Excellent progress, students were proud that they had finished a book - for the first time in years and that the story line was engaging.
Some have read a book for the first time and ask to take them home and read for pleasure. This is unheard of with the students I teach who are often permanently excluded or on the verge of permanent exclusion.
Even though some learners could not read very well, independently, they enjoyed listening to the Quick Read stories on CD and having a go at following the text. Some learners enjoyed drawing pictures about the stories. At the end of courses, most learners said they had really enjoyed the books and wanted to read more. Several said they would join the local library so they could borrow some more.
Hard to quantify but students who previously would never read are now taking books out of our class and main library. Several also read books with their children now.
They feel they have been on an adventure as they have read more books and enjoyed some of which they would not have initially chosen
Quick reads are a good way of getting people who don't think they are interested in reading to start reading. Especially people who put off picking up a big book due to lack of time or confidence. They also gave people tasters of a different type of book (e.g. Crime or self help or chick lit) than they would read normally and introduce people to new writers that they would not have bothered with before,

e.g. They would not pick up a big full length novel by and unexplored writer, but they will give a quick read a try.
Even those service users not confident readers, enjoyed the books been read out loud and the discussions that followed - therein increasing social skills.
I have a very mixed cohort of learners in terms of their age, life experience, literacy levels, and confidence and so on. Some are technologically savvy, others less so. A book is such a simple and accessible resource for almost all to enjoy and to be able to instil in my learners a joy of reading for its own sake can only benefit them in their lives, their search for work and also provides a wonderful opportunity to escape into their own imaginations. Yes, I have seen my learners develop a much more positive attitude to reading since we introduced the Quick Reads titles into the class as part of a lending library.
Reading quick reads definitely had an impact on enthusiasm and made groups discuss reading. These books combine perfectly with the 6 book challenge
They described themselves as becoming reading addicts
Learners understand the reading side of learning more; they can see sentence structure, identify punctuation. They enjoy the challenge of a spelling test by selecting words read from a particular chapter.
Parents were much more likely to read at home, all parents joined the local library.
They all feel different about reading and are reading in their own time for pleasure
On the whole everyone is amazed when they have finished their first book
A significant number of learners have taken Quick Read books home to read. About half of my current classes are recording the number of Quick Read books they read in a personal reading diary. They are also writing a comment about each book they read and giving it a star rating of one to five (five being the highest)
Most staff has busy lives and workloads. Quick Reads gives them the opportunity to start reading again: for fun, information or just to relax.
All competent readers but said that they have broadened their reading experience with 2 going on to outside book clubs. 1 felt more confident in saying what they felt about the books.
They have added another dimension to our classes and provided a useful resource and an impetus for discussions.
I think all students were more positive about reading as they had enjoyed the stories and also felt that the books were well written and kept their interest. Another factor was that the stories were short enough and easy to read within their busy lives, even those students who were reluctant readers felt encouraged and motivated to read more for pleasure afterwards.
more people are starting to pick up books and take them home to read bring back and swap for another book
The books are enjoyed and students like swapping and sharing their reviews. Those that thought they didn't have enough time for reading have found they could read quite often, the smaller size of these books makes them appear less daunting.
Many of our clients who have tried Quick Reads are much happier reading now. Also it has become a pleasurable activity for some people who thought they couldn't enjoy reading anymore and for some who had never read much before their brain injury.
One customer who had stopped reading altogether, came and said how pleased she was with the Quick Reads. The customer is partially sighted and she had lost all her confidence in reading. Quick Reads had got her into reading again. A very happy customer.

Appendix three: comments from respondents who had not seen changes in learners' attitudes to reading

The books are too hard for anyone below E3. They cannot read them alone. Quick reads are for E3 upwards and do not encourage those who are just starting out.
They all loved them and were already 'lovers of books'.
We haven't really got a group. Our last ULR left and we have only what she left behind. There is just me and one other person.

Appendix four: comments on what respondents most value about Quick Reads

That they are easily accessible, and are short so can be broken down as an achievable longer term task, also as they are enjoyable, they can be used with others in the learners wider support network, outside of class.
I think the 'Quick' part means that reading one doesn't seem like climbing a mountain, plus the content is varied and appeals to a wide audience.
Books can be read by anyone - and are good for encouraging learners to read for pleasure.
User friendliness to the reluctant reader - font size, length, layout.
Multiple copies at the local library - which means all members of the group, can have their own copy.
The chance to introduce/reintroduce the GCSE students (many mature students) to reading before giving them the pressure of reading the set course books.
They are presentable, welcoming and not at all scary looking - no great tomes! They look 'do able'. This to an individual that has poor reading skills, and thinks of books as an unpleasant memory from school is vitally important.
Their low cost, the good authors, the range of subjects and the way we can link learning to them or use them just for pleasure. We run the 6 Book Challenge each year and many students use QR for that. We have large displays in College about the new titles.
The wide variety of texts available - this summer, thanks to the release of the new James Bond film (and to the opening of the Olympics!), the 'Quantum' parody was much enjoyed, while having a shorter version with which to introduce friends to the works of Alexander McCall Smith was wonderful, as he is a writer whose work I greatly admire, but whose books are very complex for non-native speakers to get through
That I can provide material suitable for the older pupil.
Quick Reads provide a platform for staff members to 'dip their toes' into reading. They are able, in a safe and comfortable environment, to come to the learning centre and choose books at their leisure, have a chat and share their thoughts about books they may have read.
The fact that they are popular titles and authors. They are short, learners are not overwhelmed at the prospect of having to read one and they make a great group discussion topic
The fact that reluctant readers enjoy the plots and are eager to finish reading.
They provide excellent value for money and encourage readers to engage in reading as they are so easy to read. They have a wide range of titles and there is something to please everyone.
They tempt adult learners to look inside. They are not patronising
They're an inexpensive introduction to reading for pleasure which learners can then pursue independently.
Quick Reads are accessible to all- they are short in length, so can be read by people who have demanding jobs, although they do not lose anything in quality. They are affordable- a lot of people cannot spend money on books, which is such a shame, but with Quick Reads they might be able to purchase the books.

They are an exciting way to encourage 'anti- readers'. They demonstrate that reading can be fun and not boring!!
The varied genre keeps a level of interest within the group, and there is not an expectation of topic, each book provokes different discussions and offers some reader an insight into a topic they would never have normally explored.
Diverse and appealing subject matter written in a very accessible way which makes them the ideal choice for those new to reading.
They introduce people to a range of classic to non classic reading, fact, fiction and biography.
The way they inspire confidence in adult learners who almost always attend class initially with hang ups regarding reading books
Quick Reads are attractive and easy to read. They have encouraged my learners to read, some for the first time. They are also affordable.
I really like that the learners have access to a high quality of books but in a simpler format that they can enjoy NOW!!!
Making good adult authors/stories available to students who's reading age is below their chronological age.
'Proper book' by 'proper' authors, just in a very accessible way
Dignified layout and especially the 'normal cover' doesn't stigmatised users
The fact that they do not look like 'Easy Readers' - students are more willing to be seen reading them.
the variety and different levels with the writing being larger and smaller, with them being short the fact that it doesn't take long to complete boosts confidence
They make credible and adult led reading books that don't embarrass learners and also allow them to read a whole book.
Variety of titles - something for everyone. The learners perceive them as more manageable because they are shorter than 'real' books.
Ability to get learners to communicate in a constructive way
Their format makes them easy to pick up and read during short breaks in the workplace. The inspirational values they promote are far more conducive to encouraging the reader to self development through learning than if they were to spend time reading gossip and celebrity magazines, with their focus on material aspirations, which is often, sadly, the only alternative.
An easy to use tool for a learner to get interested in reading about a subject they possibly wouldn't read about otherwise.
They are short, sweet, easy and enjoyable to read; as soon as I finish one I want to read the next. At Learning at Work Day or World Book Day they go very quickly.
Variety of title, their cost and their size. They are a good draw and if individuals with a good basic level of education but are reluctant to read, if the don't have to; they are a good way in to the habit. For better / well educated individuals the variety and length gives them the opportunity to read about a subject they would not commit many hours to. In this age of continual change and need for lifelong education it is important that those considered capable are not over looked and are challenged to continue learning.
They are a manageable introduction to the world of reading for pleasure.
I value their capacity to stimulate a renewed interest in reading among my adult learners. That my learners can experience the 'joy' of having immersed themselves in a book is thrilling. That they want to read more and are prepared to recommend titles among their peer group is very exciting and rewarding to see.
The breadth of range and their reflection of mainstream reader interests so that under confident readers feel they are gaining access to the world of real readers.
They provide learners who very often cannot find suitable reading material with a doorway to reading
Does not need much fund rising on my part to be able to afford to buy a lot of books!!!
Well known authors writing books- not just extracts from other novels.

A cheap way of encouraging others to read. It doesn't matter if some books aren't returned although we do encourage people to return them so someone else can benefit. People can browse the books away from their office, slip one into their pocket so colleagues don't know they have it and perhaps tease them about reading.
The variety of titles that is available. There is something for everyone, whether you are an avid reader or a beginner.
The opportunity to encourage learning within the family network and support families of the armed forces.
They enable both flexibility and adaptability of learning and teaching. They are part of my core teaching toolkit!
We use Quick Reads for our regular 'conversation cafe' events which invite speakers of other languages to come along to an informal session where we have discussions on various topics enabling participants to practise their spoken English but we also spend some time with each group showing and explaining the Quick Reads collection so they can develop their reading skills too. They enjoy the Quick Reads collection as they are well presented and attractive. As they are written by popular authors the participants feel involved a more holistic reading experience rather than singled out as a separate group.
The interesting variety of stories. Some fact and fiction. They are not too bulky in size to 'scare' the reader off.
Content is adult enough for teenagers to engage, but writing standard high enough to allow me to buy and justify. Covers attract students to take them from the shelves. Price means I can buy multiples.
The ability to prepare resources that include writing/reading and speaking and listening
Accessible, inexpensive, work with different levels of ability and confidence, are not marked out as remedial material so a great leveller among mixed groups.
That our staff know about them and are very keen to find out what the new ones are so they're very useful as conversation starters to help us find out what our staff are interested in and to help the formulate their own personal learning plans
The range of topics, presentation and 'adult' feel which is often missing in prison environments.
They are great to encourage staff to read. They are cheap, quick to read and can easily be marketed.
They are short, use simple language, but are real stories. The best ones for our readers tell a proper story but are not too complex to retain the storyline or theme. East End tales - with its anecdotal descriptions of life in the East End was one of the best. Short simple stories with comedy, family life and romance are favourites amongst our readers
The variety - there is something for everyone. The speed at which they can be read - crucial in people's busy lives. They have been described as an opportunity to 'submerge into another reality without being daunted with the time that might be needed to complete a book'.
They are a useful resource within the organisation and a good promotional tool to use during Adult Learners Week each May.
These are great to begin conversations with---just wish that there were e-quick reads as our focus has been on digital learning & to have the option of having eBooks would be smashing.

Appendix five: comments on changes from respondents who had seen a change in learners' attitudes to learning

Adults who are becoming regular readers are beginning to understand the importance of being able to read, and how not having the skill becomes a barrier to so much. They start to appreciate how important it is for their children to learn, and for them to be able to support them, so they (the children) can have better futures.
'Learning' has traditionally been seen, in many cultures, as a classroom-based activity, and there tends to be resistance to the concept of acquiring knowledge individually and informally, so while Quick Reads undoubtedly helped some learners to appreciate that there were additional ways in which they could learn, for a small number this emphasised the dichotomy, so that while reading at home might be enjoyable, this contrasted with their classroom experience, which in the comparison seemed slightly less enjoyable than hitherto.
Some of the staff members who have accessed the learning centre for Quick Reads have been drawn into enquiring about courses such as functional skills and distance learning courses.
The books give the students a sense of achievement. For many, it is the first book they have finished. They enjoy discussing them in class, and it is also an excellent way to look at grammar and punctuation within a real context.
Some have gone on to level 1 literacy with local providers
Readers of quick reads have shown more positivity to work, applying for work and promotions, and learning/training in work
Some students even write about the books they read in their spare time!
Most learners had learning disabilities/difficulties and often find it difficult to concentrate and remember things. Several learners seem to have improved their listening skills. Some have become more confident at speaking out in a group.
Once they see they can learn they seem to flourish
Getting people to realise that they can make time to sit and read, rather than watch TV for instance, got some people to have the confidence to sign up for evening classes and in a few cases for open university degrees. Once people realise they can make a small change, it gives them the confidence to make a big change.
They all feel more positive about learning. Many have said that being able to read has opened up their lives, enriched it.
Much more interest in starting college/OU courses. Also more interest in starting other non academic courses, pottery, and cake decorating, crafting, music to name a few.
Improving their basic reading skills has a wide impact on other curriculum areas especially maths where questions can be long and the meaning unclear. Reading and discussing plots etc can help students to gain inferred meaning.
Learners enjoy and some have gained more confidence in reading out loud. One particular dyslexia learner had never read aloud and her mother saw me the following week to say how different her daughter was and how she appreciated that she was given the opportunity to read with the other learners.
Some have gone on to do apprenticeships at work.
Most are affected by medication and now know that they can achieve their literacy goals with support and patience.
Spelling 'rules' are being applied when reading which means that more of the text is being read and understood accurately
It has given them confidence and given ULRs a way to discuss learning opportunities.
Many learners have joined the local library for the first time.
Encouraging people to read allows them to consider other learning and becoming involved with their children's education.

The success of the Quick Readers has encouraged other students to be more positive about improving their own literacy skills and literacy work and this has also reflected in their attitude towards learning and going onto take other courses.

Some have enrolled in further education at night school

Reading for pleasure has made students want to read more and they automatically have a story with characters they can discuss with others and write about too.

Being able to find activities which can self motivate a client who has had a brain injury is hard. Clients at Headway in Bedford who have enjoyed using Quick Reads are really keen to have more Quick Read Books to read. They have improved their skills not only of reading - but have learnt to be self motivated to practise skills on their own and this can enhance their lives in many ways.

Appendix six: comments on how to improve effectiveness of Quick Reads

- Make them free
- Bring out books for lower levels learners
- Develop books for younger readers (aged 14-16)
- Editable e-book versions (e.g. that can highlight, change font size/colour)
- More different types of literature, e.g. classics, plays, comics, poetry, short story anthologies
- Make sure previous titles remain available to purchase
- More resources, e.g. worksheets, suggested questions for reading groups, space for learners to make notes at back of books
- Release more each year
- More marketing/advertising, e.g. in bookshops/supermarkets, get a celebrity on board
- Make it easier for learners to buy them
- More books suitable for different cultures
- Have an online Quick Reads forum for learners to discuss books, post their reviews, recommend other books etc.
- More books which are less gender-specific
- Glossary of more difficult words
- Include suggested further reading at the back

Appendix seven: tables of responses

93% of respondents (296) used Quick Reads with groups of learners.

Table 1: Number of groups respondents used Quick Reads with	
	%
1 – 2	47
3 – 5	34
6 – 10	13
More than 10	6

Base: all respondents who used Quick Reads with groups of learners = 296

Table 2: Average size of respondents' learner groups	
	%
1-5	20
6-10	46
11-20	23
More than 20	10

Base: all respondents who used Quick Reads with groups of learners = 296

Table 3: Length of time respondents had been using Quick Reads	
	%
Up to 6 months	8
6 – 12 months	9
1 – 2 years	15
2 – 3 years	29
4 – 5 years	20
Over 5 years	21

Base: all respondents = 317

Table 4: Ways respondents had been using Quick Reads	
	%
Adult learning groups – literacy	50
Reading groups	40
One-to-one support	33
Drop-in/book swap	33
Adult learning groups – family learning	18
Adult learning groups – other	13
Adult learning groups – prisons	4
Other	26

Base: all respondents = 317 Note: respondents could select more than one answer

Table 5: Percentage of learners at each national literacy level before and after using Quick Reads

	Before	After
Pre-Entry	6	3
Entry L1	8	7
Entry L2	13	10
Entry L3	18	15
Level 1	24	26
Level 2	20	24

Base: total learners of all respondents who used national literacy levels within their provision = 6,793

Table 6: Confidence levels of learners before and after using Quick Reads		
	Before	After
Not at all confident	13	3
Not very confident	18	9
Quite confident	18	29
Very confident	18	25

Base: total learners of all respondents = 17,918

Table 7: Percentages of learners who experienced changes in attitudes towards reading since using Quick Reads	
	%
Much more positive towards reading	44
A bit more positive towards reading	24
A bit more negative towards reading	2
Much more negative towards reading	1
No change	29

Base: total learners of all respondents who had seen changes in attitudes towards reading = 12,472

Table 8: Percentages of learners who experienced changes in attitudes towards learning since using Quick Reads	
	%
Much more positive towards learning	37
A bit more positive towards learning	28
A bit more negative towards learning	1
Much more negative towards learning	1
No change	33

Base: total learners of all respondents who had seen changes in attitudes towards learning = 9,357

Table 9: Progression routes of learners after Quick Reads	
	%
Other Quick Reads titles	69
Other books	68
Enrolled on other courses	47

Base: total learners of all respondents = 17,918

Note: respondents could select more than one answer

Table 10: Additional benefits Quick Reads have provided to learners	
	%
Increased personal confidence	85
Increased communication skills	73
Better written skills	56
Progression into further learning	54
Raised aspirations	53
Able to support children's learning	50
Better job prospects	35
Increased analytical skills	27
Progression into employment	19
Progression into volunteering	16
Other	12

Base: all respondents who felt Quick Reads provided additional benefits to learners = 300

Note: respondents could select more than one answer