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## **Early-intervention literacy programme for children serves to increase their academic attainment at GCSE, improve their life chances, and generate significant economic benefits for society**

**Two independent research reports commissioned by the KPMG Foundation into the long-term benefits of Reading Recovery, a school-based literacy programme for the lowest achieving children aged five and six, reveal that the intervention helps close the GCSE attainment gap between these children and their peers. The research shows that Reading Recovery has the potential to deliver up to £1.2 billion<sup>1</sup> to the economy in the form of increased lifetime earnings and reduced costs for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services.**

New independent research<sup>2</sup> by Professor Jane Hurry and Dr Lisa Fridkin of the UCL Institute of Education highlights the sustained effects of Reading Recovery ten years after intervention, when children receiving the programme had taken their GCSEs.

The research report, 'The impact of Reading Recovery ten years after intervention', found that, when compared to the lowest attaining children who did not participate in the programme (the comparison group), children who benefited from Reading Recovery were:

- More than twice as likely to achieve five or more good GCSEs including English and mathematics: 49% vs 23% in the comparison group
- Less likely to leave school with no qualifications: 2% vs 7% in the comparison group
- Performing only 5% below the national average at age 16 in GCSEs, despite having been in the bottom 10% of readers at age six
- Requiring no intensive special-needs support (a Statement of Special Educational Needs, or Education, Health and Care Plan [EHCP]), while 10% of the comparison group had a Statement or EHCP at age 14, and 9% at age 16

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis by Pro Bono Economics in 'Assessing the impact of the Reading Recovery programme – an economic evaluation' estimates potential benefits to UK society from Reading Recovery of £940 million to £1,200 million across the 101,000 children supported since 2005/6

<sup>2</sup> *The impact of Reading Recovery ten years after intervention – A report for the KPMG Foundation*, Jane Hurry, Professor of the Psychology of Education, UCL Institute of Education and Dr Lisa Fridkin, Teaching Fellow in Psychology, UCL Institute of Education, December 2018; *Reading remediation at age six: long-term effects on qualifications and support at age 16*. Hurry, Jane & Fridkin, Lisa, 2018. Paper submitted for publication

Building on these findings, the study by charity Pro Bono Economics, 'Assessing the impact of the Reading Recovery programme - an economic evaluation', calculates that across the 101,000 children in England who took part in Reading Recovery between 2005/06 and 2016/17, for every £1 invested (£290 million in total) the programme has the potential to deliver a return<sup>3</sup> to UK society of up to £4.30 (£1.2 billion in total) by improving long-term outcomes for each child over the course of their lifetimes.

The potential benefit of Reading Recovery support was calculated as being up to £12,100 for each child, compared to around £2,800 in costs – a net benefit up to £9,300 per child. Of this:

- Up to £9,100 is attributed to a child's higher lifetime earnings as a result of increased employment and higher wages
- £2,900 per child represents savings to local authorities, since children are less likely to require a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP).

Reading Recovery provides literacy support for the lowest-attaining five- and six-year olds through daily one-to-one reading sessions with trained specialist teachers. The current research forms a key legacy of the Every Child a Reader programme, which ran from 2005 to 2011 and was backed by the KPMG Foundation in collaboration with the UCL Institute of Education, government, and a coalition of funders.<sup>4</sup> Reading Recovery was at the heart of the school-wide Every Child a Reader strategy.

Currently 18% of children do not meet the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics test according to the latest government data,<sup>5</sup> highlighting the need for further support for some of the most hard-to-reach children. In 2018, more than 20,000 11-year-olds had reading standards so low that they either could not be entered for the National Reading Test or took the test but did not achieve any score.<sup>6</sup>

Andy Haldane, Chief Economist at the Bank of England, and Co-Founder and Trustee of Pro Bono Economics, said: "The impact of early intervention cannot be underestimated but often we fail to quantify it properly. Doing so is crucial if we are to make good policy choices. Early intervention to improve reading ability appears to have the power to put young people on a different branch of the life-tree – a higher and stronger branch.

"The UK fares poorly in international league tables of basic literacy and numeracy. Programmes like Reading Recovery have the potential to move the societal dial in ways which, longer-term, could boost the skills and productivity of people, and the economy at large. I welcome the timely and important report from Pro Bono Economics and the KPMG Foundation."

Melanie Richards, Chair of The KPMG Foundation, said: "The KPMG Foundation was established 18 years ago to drive social change. Supporting the work of those with innovative solutions aimed at tackling the big challenges facing some of the most hard-to-reach in our society, this project is the culmination of 10 years of work.

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<sup>3</sup> This return is achieved through: higher rates of employment and earnings; a reduction in the requirement for SEND support in schools; reduced costs of property-related crime, and lower health service costs. Please see Table 1 for further information

<sup>4</sup> Every Child a Reader funders included the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the KPMG Foundation, Man Group plc Charitable Trust, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, SHINE, the Indigo Trust, the JJ Charitable Trust and the Mercers' Company

<sup>5</sup> National curriculum assessments: phonics screening check in England, Department for Education, 2018

<sup>6</sup> National curriculum assessments: Key Stage 2, 2018, Department for Education (provisional)

“The impact of poor literacy and numeracy skills cannot be understated. All too often a child’s life chances are mapped out from an early age based on their background rather than their potential, and this is something we must change.

“It is heartening to see from this research that, by investing in targeted early intervention programmes, the long-term negative impacts of poor literacy skills can be prevented. There is still a way to go if we are to level the playing field and remove the inequality that characterises the education and careers landscape in the UK. But this work highlights the long-term benefits that can be achieved by acting early and by delivering targeted support to those who need it the most.”

Professor Gemma Moss, Director of the UCL International Literacy Centre (ILC), which runs the Reading Recovery programme in Europe, said: “We welcome these research reports from Professor Hurry and Dr Fridkin and Pro Bono Economics. Tracking the impact of early interventions over the long-term is unusual in education, yet it is a key element in building an evidence-informed profession.

“Too many children across the UK experience great difficulty learning to read and will face diminished life chances because of it, without early intervention. Difficulties start early and tend to persist. They are particularly common in disadvantaged children.

“Children who come into the Reading Recovery programme are children exhibiting considerable difficulty in learning literacy skills, and who need individual tuition with a highly trained teacher to be able to progress. Reading Recovery is a profound and long-lasting early intervention programme. Offering these children early intervention is essential in narrowing the gap between poor readers and their peers. By ensuring that these children have the literacy skills to fully access the curriculum, Reading Recovery prevents further costs to schools and the public purse further down the line.”

Lord Jim O’Neill, Patron of Pro Bono Economics and Trustee at SHINE, a co-funder of the Every Child A Reader strategy, said: “I am delighted to see such impactful results not just in terms of levelling the playing field between disadvantaged children and their wealthier peers, but also to see a programme that can significantly boost productivity and skills in the long term and offer wider economic benefits to society. I hope that these excellent results will see the Reading Recovery programme expanded in future.”

Throughout 2019 the UCL ILC, in collaboration with the KPMG Foundation, is seeking to reach more children around the country to improve their life chances by scaling up Reading Recovery. They are calling for:

- A coalition of funders to invest in further UK trialling of Reading Recovery on a large scale, exploring joint working with interested research bodies
- The education sector to take note of these research findings, which are particularly important at a time when education policy and infrastructure is intended to fuel collaboration and evidence-based practice
- Schools to consider the opportunities presented by multi-academy trusts, opportunity areas and other initiatives for primary-secondary collaboration to commission Reading Recovery as an early intervention strategy to improve children’s outcomes and reduce costs in the secondary phase, given the long-term benefits
- Local government to note the potential to make real savings in high-needs SEND budgets as a result of investing in Reading Recovery

For further information about these findings, and to review the full reports, please visit: [www.home.kpmg.com/uk/en/home/insights/2018/02/the-kpmg-foundation.html](http://www.home.kpmg.com/uk/en/home/insights/2018/02/the-kpmg-foundation.html)

## ENDS

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## Notes to Editors

### About the UCL International Literacy Centre (ILC) and Reading Recovery

- Reading Recovery (RR) is a school-based literacy programme for the lowest achieving children aged five or six, which enables them to reach age-expected levels within 20 weeks
- The RR programme in Europe, and associated teacher training programmes, are accredited, monitored and supported by Reading Recovery Europe, based in the ILC at the Institute of Education, University College London – the world-leading centre for education and social science research, teaching and engagement
- RR teachers are trained and supported locally by a national infrastructure of RR teacher leaders
- The programme involves a short series of one-to-one lessons for 30 minutes every day with a specially trained teacher. Letter-sound relationships (phonics) are taught in every lesson
- RR is different for every child, starting with what the child knows and what s/he needs to learn next. The focus of each lesson is to comprehend messages in reading, construct messages in writing, and learn how to attend to detail without losing focus on meaning
- Whole-school practice is supported through RR by improving opportunities for all pupils, as classes move through the school with much reduced numbers of children struggling in literacy. In addition, staff can benefit from training and support from highly skilled literacy experts (RR teachers) and access to detailed diagnostic assessments to help determine children's literacy learning needs
- Research shows that no other intervention achieves such positive, long-lasting results so swiftly. According to the Education Endowment Foundation, there are only a handful of literacy catch-up programmes in the UK for which there is good evidence of success. Of these, RR receives the highest rankings for strength of evidence of impact given by international and UK 'What Works Centres'
- In Europe, RR is currently implemented in England, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, Denmark and Malta. Internationally, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand all have RR implementations
- To find out more about RR please visit: [www.ucl.ac.uk/international-literacy/reading-recovery](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/international-literacy/reading-recovery)
- Follow RR on Twitter: @ILC\_IOE #ReadingRecovery
- Follow RR on Facebook: @InternationalLiteracyCentre [www.facebook.com/InternationalLiteracyCentre/](http://www.facebook.com/InternationalLiteracyCentre/)

### About Pro Bono Economics

- Pro Bono Economics (PBE) helps charities and social enterprises understand and improve the impact and value of their work
- PBE matches professional economists who want to use their skills to volunteer with charities
- Set up in 2009, PBE has helped over 300 charities large and small, covering a wide range of issues including mental health, education, employment and complex needs
- PBE is supported by high-profile economists, including Andy Haldane (Bank of England), Sir Dave Ramsden (Bank of England), and Diane Coyle (University of Cambridge) as trustees, and Kate Barker, Lord Jim O'Neill, Robert Peston, Martin Wolf and Lord Adair Turner as patrons. Lord Gus O'Donnell has been Chair of the Board of Trustees since September 2016
- For further information, visit [www.probonoeconomics.com](http://www.probonoeconomics.com)

## About KPMG Foundation

- The KPMG Foundation was established in 2001 with an objective of unlocking the potential of children, young people and families in the UK who, for primarily social reasons, have not achieved their educational potential
- Early intervention is a key tenet of the Foundation's objective. Strategic philanthropy guides grant making: by improving life chances the Foundation also strives to make long-term cost savings for society
- Since 2001, the KPMG Foundation has given over £13million to 68 charitable projects
- The KPMG Foundation is led by a Board of Trustees comprising Melanie Richards (Chair), Robin Cartwright, Christine Gilbert CBE, Rachel Hopcroft CBE, Peter Sherratt and David Woodward
- For further information, visit [www.home.kpmg.com/uk/en/home/insights/2018/02/the-kpmg-foundation.html](http://www.home.kpmg.com/uk/en/home/insights/2018/02/the-kpmg-foundation.html)
- Follow the KPMG Foundation on Twitter: @KPMGFoundation

## Tables of Findings

### **Table 1 - Summary of Benefits**

The following table provides a summary of the estimated benefits from the Reading Recovery programme as outlined in the Pro Bono Economics report:

Benefit category	Programme benefits	Benefit per RR pupil
Increased lifetime income	£640 to £930 million	£6,300 to £9,100
SEN Statement/EHCP costs	£290 million	£2,900
Health service costs	£1 million	£10
Crime costs	£11 million	£100
<b>Total benefit</b>	<b>£940-1,200 million</b>	<b>£9,200-12,100</b>

Figures are present values and in 2017/18 prices. Please note that the total benefit figures have been rounded.

### **Table 2 and 3 - Long-Term Effects of Reading Recovery Support**

The following tables provide a summary of some of the key results from 'The impact of Reading Recovery ten years after intervention – A report for the KPMG Foundation', by Jane Hurry, Professor of the Psychology of Education, UCL Institute of Education and Dr Lisa Fridkin, Teaching Fellow in Psychology, UCL Institute of Education. The differences between the two groups can be interpreted in terms of Reading Recovery's impact on each outcome.

Source: Hurry and Fridkin (2018)

Group		5+ A*-C GCSE including English & Maths	5+ A*-C GCSE	5+ A*-G GCSE	Entry level only - GCSE below G	No passes	Total
Comparison Group	Number %	31 (23%)	16 (12%)	64 (47%)	15 (11%)	10 (7%)	136 (National Pupil Database GCSE data on two pupils missing)
Reading Recovery Group	Number %	41 (49%)	11 (13%)	24 (29%)	6 (7%)	2 (2%)	84

### Special Educational Need Status at ages 14 and 16

	No SEN	School Action	School Action +	Statement
<b>Age 14</b>				
Comparison Group (N=128)	48.4% (n=62)	24.2% (n=31)	17.2% (n=22)	10.2% (n=13)
Reading Recovery Group (N=76)	64.5% (n=49)	14.5% (n=11)	21.1% (n=16)	0% (n=0)
	No SEN	School Action, School Action +		Statement or EHCP
<b>Age 16</b>				
Comparison Group (N=138)	67.4% (n=93)	23.9% (n=33)		8.7% (n=12)
Reading Recovery Group (n=84)	72.6% (n=61)	27.4% (n=23)		0% (n=0)
Total (N=222)	69.4% (n=154)	25.2% (n=56)		5.4% (n=12)